



Season 4, Episode 3: Going Noodle + Venus Flytrap Books

Mon, 8/16 • 56:39

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:10

Hey readers, welcome to the Currently Reading podcast. We are bookish best friends who spend time every week talking about the books that we've read recently. And you should know we won't shy away from having strong opinions. So get ready.

Kaytee Cobb 00:23

We are in light on the chit chat, Heavy on the book talk and our descriptions will always be spoiler free. We'll discuss our current reads, a bookish deep dive, and then we'll press books into your hands.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:33

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And I love it when books surprise me.

Kaytee Cobb 00:41

and I'm caving...

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:43

Here we go. You can do it. It's your name.

Kaytee Cobb 00:46

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I'm constantly searching for the drug-like high of the perfect book. This is episode number three of season four and we're so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:57

Oh, Kaytee is the constant. You're totally right. It's the constant search for that....perfect book.

Kaytee Cobb 01:04

Scratching the itch?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:05

Yeah, it really Oh, and we we do find it sometimes. And then it makes all it makes. Oh, the books that come after. That's a tough, tough follow.

Kaytee Cobb 01:14

Yeah. And then and then you just want it even more the next time like it's I mean, it's totally a drug. Reading is a drug. You heard it here first. No, you didn't. You've heard it a lot of places. It's fine.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:24

Absolutely. All right, well, so we'll let you know right here at the top that our deep dive today is going to be answering the question, what is your venus flytrap genre, that genre that consistently sucks you in but then you read books in that genre and you're like, "Oh, it's just not for me". Why do I keep doing this for myself?". So we're going to tell you, Kaytee and I are going to tell you what our venus flytrap genres are. But we also got a lot of feedback from our listeners. So they're going to tell us what some of their venus flytrap genres are too. So that's really, really interesting. But Kaytee, before we do that, you wanted to tell them a little bit about something that they can do for us that really, really helps the show and helps the business of the show.

Kaytee Cobb 02:08

Yes, if you guys are already following us on Instagram, you may know that last week, we opened up our not annual but occasional listener survey. And we are attaching that to a giveaway this time because we really want your responses. So here at the top of the show, I want to let you know that that survey is open through August 22, which if you're listening in real time is the Sunday following this episode release. You will get five entries to our current giveaway for completing that survey if you add your email address at the end, and we really, we really love your feedback. You guys, we would love to know, what are your favorite parts of the show? What are your favorite Patreon bonuses that we offer? What are your you know, how do you listen to Currently Reading? All of that info really helps us make sure that this show is exactly what we love and exactly what you love, which is the best of all worlds. So click through the link in show notes or hop over to Instagram, fill that out and get some giveaway entries for helping us out for that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:07

Alright, Kaytee, definitely the answers that we get in this survey, they make a difference. We've gotten some fantastic ideas in the past for things that we ended up executing on for the show. And we've stopped doing some things that people told us that they really didn't like so this isn't one of those like, "Oh, we want your feedback, but we're really not gonna listen to it". We legit want to know what you guys love about the show and what you think could be stronger. We're feedback junkies. Now Kaytee, you have decided on there being some really great prizes for this giveaway. That's one thing I feel like we do with some of the money that we make on Patreon is we like to have juicy giveaway prizes right? We're not just giving away some ARCs here. What is the prize for this giveaway?

Kaytee Cobb 03:52

You guys, we're pretty excited about this one. So what we decided is we are going to have one grand prize winner that wins a Kindle Oasis. That is the fancy new waterproof version of the Kindle. Meredith just got her it's she's in love with it. She sings about it all the time in the shower. I can tell you this.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:07

Yes, I love it. Now, Kaytee, can we also add that if they win the grand prize, they also if they want, we will buy them my special cover, which is the thing that I love most about the Oasis? Can we throw that in?

Kaytee Cobb 04:18

Absolutely, we will be including the best leather cover that makes it a reading experience to read on a Kindle Oasis. And if you are one of our second, third, or fourth winners, you will get \$100 gift card to the indie bookstore of your choice or bookshop.org. And that way, everybody is just going to be drowning in good books, which is our favorite thing to do to readers. So go enter go, you know, take the survey and help us out. We want to bless you with books.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:46

Yes, if you bless us with your feedback, we will bless you with more books. It's a virtuous cycle. I love it. Okay, all right, Kaytee. So let's get started talking about our bookish moments of the week. What have you got?

Kaytee Cobb 04:58

Okay, my bookish moment this week, this is the sweetest bookish moment ever. So for anyone who follows Mindy on Instagram, you have already seen this, but I have to shout it out here also. Her youngest Jubilee turned six last week. And Jubilee has Down Syndrome and like many of the rest of us was not up for a big social gathering for her birthday. So with my big boys away at camp, my two youngest and I were invited to join their family and celebrate her birthday. So just her family and my kids and that was it, right? We did all her favorite things that day, we did shadow dancing and sandbox and night, night and cars. And one of the things that happened was totally unprompted Jubilee, Noah and Onalee, who are my two littles sat down on the couch in the living room and started playing library. So one child would approach the librarian with a stack of books, and another would check them out for them. So she had a book on her lap and would go beep or beep depending on who was being the librarian and check them out to the patron of the library, everything about it. They came up with this idea, and then they executed it on their own. It was adorable. It was the cutest thing I've ever seen. And the perfect activity for the children of two bookworms to engage in at a birthday party. So bookish moment for sure.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:15

It was so cute. And Mindy has that on her Instagram feed. If it was a story, I'm sure we can convince her to make it a highlight, right? Because I want people to be able to see that there's video of this and it is absolutely adorable. It's so so cute.

Kaytee Cobb 06:27

They're so cute.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:28

All right, good. All right. Well, Kaytee, I feel like this is, I love it when we have bookish moments that really, really draw the differences between the two of us because you brought a really, really sweet,

bookish moment that I love. And I'm bringing a bookmark that looks like it's splattered in blood. Okay, this is my favorite bookmark, ever. And this is saying a lot because I actually don't collect very many things at all because I'm a neat nick I don't like things, but I collect books and bookmarks. Bookmarks are my thing. And I don't like just like, I'm really I'm a very I'm a bookmark snob. Like, I don't want a bookmark, like you can buy at Barnes and Noble, right. I'm not interested in you know, there's nothing wrong with that, but it's just not special. This I saw on Instagram somewhere. And I immediately was like, I don't care if that is made in the the the deepest part of Africa, meaning as far away from me as possible. I must have it. I don't care how much I have to pay for it. I have to have it. It's acrylic. So it's see through and it's rigid, right. So it's it's not like a normal bookmark that that's kind of fabricy or would move. And it just is so perfectly blood splattered. And so its see through when I'm holding it up to you right now, Kaytee, but when you put it into a book, like a really murderous book, The effect is perfection. It is so jarring when you first if you're not expecting it, it's so jarring. It is so perfect for 90% of the books that I read. This, I ended up finding this on Etsy and we will put a link to it in the show notes. Because it only ended up being \$10. It wasn't I didn't end up having to spend ridiculous amounts of money for it. I mean, yes, you know, that's not the cheapest bookmark on the planet. But it's not the most expensive one. But it is my favorite one. I have never gasped when upon receiving a bookmark and I did when I got this one it is it is my precious.

Kaytee Cobb 08:38

That is so precious. And I you know I really also like the idea of like the juxtaposition of you putting it into like a sweet, frothy rom--, like middle grade or something so it's like...

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:48

No! I never

Kaytee Cobb 08:50

[inaudible]... and it's blood spattered pages.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:53

I would never ever do that. Just like I'm I guess that, you know, whenever I choose a print book, part of my ritual is that I have to choose the bookmark that goes with that book. Yeah, it's a thing. It's a thing. I will take 10 or 15 minutes.

Kaytee Cobb 09:06

Wow,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:07

of my extraordinarily busy life. Look how it looks against paper. Look at that! I'm sorry. This \$10 thing is just just brightened my life up. I'm Johnny saw it and he was like, "you have a problem". I happen to be standing. I opened it standing right by the sign that you and Mindy gave me which says "Welcome. Let's talk about serial killers", which is in my front hallway. And Johnny's like "you have a problem".

Kaytee Cobb 09:40

I think you should start to like, you can make like a shrine right there. Just put like a small bookshelf underneath that sign and you can just have like knives...

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:48

killer. My crocheted killer Mermaid, which is also my precious. Yeah, I'm getting. I'm getting a collection together. All right. All right, Kaytee, let's start talking about we're 11 minutes talking about current reads. We've people are really they're...they're drumming their fingers here, Kaytee, they're ready for some booktalk. Okay. Okay, what have you got for us? What's your first why current reads this week?

Kaytee Cobb 10:10

You guys, I'm gonna go up up and up. That's I want you to know that as I go into this so my first book this week is called Charming as a Verb, by Ben Philippe. So we're gonna meet Henri. We all want to be friends with him. He's charming with a capital C. As in he names his smiles, ranking them on a scale. He started his own business. He's first generation Haitian immigrant, and he has a dream to attend Columbia. So I did not make that clear, but this is YA because he's trying to get into college right? The only person at school who seems not to like him he's universally beloved, is Corinne Troy. She discovers that the business he built is not totally legit and aboveboard and blackmails him into helping her or she'll reveal his deception to all his clients. Then commences a book that is very much like She's All That so if you grew up in the 90s like me, you love those 90s rom-coms, you loved Freddie Prinze Jr. making over Rachael Leigh Cook upwards of 20 times, maybe I don't know, perhaps, then eventually, you know that things are going to get more complicated than either of them expected. And that's all well and good. I actually really enjoyed the story overall. But there is a pivotal spoilery scene, so I will not tell you about it. That's the crux of the conflict in this book. And it made me so mad, I was fuming. I wanted to throw the audio book. I wanted to stuff my earbuds down our main character's throat and yell at him so badly, he'd be able to hear me from his intestines. I am not a type one rule follower. Although my one wing is very strong. And I cannot believe how angry I got at this book. The question for your reader is whether or not the fully charming and delightful rest of the book can make up for the absolutely stupid moment toward the end of the book, because for me, it ended up being three and a half ish stars overall. And I wanted to love it. I really wanted to love it. And instead, that part really clouded the experience for me. So that is Charming as a Verb by Ben Philippe.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 12:11

All right. Well, my books this week are going to go up, down. All right, so let's start up. Let's start up. This is the book that I really like. Yes, exactly. Right. I don't want to leave you on a down note. So we'll leave it on an up note. Okay, so this first one I liked a lot. This is The Stranger by Harlan Coben. Have you read Harlan Coben Kaytee?

Kaytee Cobb 12:33

I have not.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 12:36

Weirdly, I haven't either. I hadn't either before I read this, but but after reading this, I'm like where has Harlan Coben been all my life? Let me tell you what the setup is. Alright, the stranger from our title

appears out of nowhere. Perhaps maybe you're in a bar, maybe you're in a parking lot after taking your kids to swim lessons. Maybe you're in a grocery store, just looking through the melons. And all of a sudden, there's this person, you don't know them. Their motives are completely unknown to you. They tell you something, and the information that they give to you is undeniably true. Then they whisper a few words in your ear and disappear, leaving you to pick up the pieces of your shattered world.

Kaytee Cobb 13:24

Whoa.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 13:25

So our lead character in this book is Adam Price. And Adam has a lot to lose. Adam reminded me of every guy in the neighborhood that I lived in here in Austin. He's got a comfortable marriage. He's married to a beautiful woman. They've got two wonderful kind of perfect sons, all the things that make up the suburban American dream, right? Big house, pool, job, strong marriage, blah, blah, blah. Then Adam runs into the stranger. And the stranger tells him something that is absolutely devastating to him. It's a devastating secret, and it's about his wife, Corinne. So Adam goes home and confronts Corinne. And his whole life absolutely implodes. And then the imaginable and the unexplainable happens next, and Adam has to figure out if his life has ever been anything what it really really seemed. Kaytee, this book was pure guilty pleasure. That's the word, that that's the phrase that I kept thinking about when I was reading it. So one of my favorite Instagram followers that I've mentioned to you guys a couple times is @Katieladyreads, she is one... she's my one of my absolute favorites, if you like completely unvarnished opinions about books. She's a great follow. Don't follow her if you don't like it when people say bad things about a book that they don't like. I like her authenticity, so just be forewarned, but she's a really big fan of Harlan Coben. And so between that and other listeners mentioning him as a part of All Things Murderful really recently, I just had to give one of his books a try. I really loved this very twisty mystery. And really the word guilty doesn't shouldn't really apply because there's absolutely nothing that anyone should feel bad about liking this book. I just think that I use that word initially, because the reading of this book was so easy and interesting, and you just don't want to stop and you feel guilty because you don't want to do anything other than read this book. It was such a specifically wonderful kind of reading, right? It's a very specific state. I should mention that I listened to this on audio and I thought it was really well done on audio. And for sure, this was that let me offer to fold another load of laundry even though it's not my turn kind of book, right? I was looking for chores to do, because I just had to find out what was gonna happen next. Now, I always like to give you guys notes as to the reading experience. So I'll say that the for the first 20 minutes ish of the book, which is probably the first couple chapters, I was a little bit giving it side eye. There was a some setup at the beginning that just kind of had me going, I don't know about Adam. He kind of was, he kind of, Adam was, Adam bugged me to begin with to be honest, and I wasn't sure I wanted to hang with him for the whole book. But and and also, I had no idea what kind of book this was going to be. So going into this, I didn't know is this mystery? Is this paranormal? Is this cop drama?, I literally had no idea other than the fact that the setup that I just gave to you. So this is how much I trust my girl crush @Katieladyreads. I kept trying to guess which direction the mystery would end up. And I'm happy to report that I had absolutely no idea. By the time that we got to the end, I couldn't foresee the ending at all. And yet when it came, it made perfect sense. So it wasn't one of those out of the blue thriller kind of I'm just going to throw this in at the very end. It made really good sense. He let us play along. That's why I'm going to call this a mystery and not

a thriller. I will tell you that I am definitely going to read more Harlan Cohen, because this is just milkshake reading at its best. And I'm looking forward to watching the Netflix show that's based on the book. So this is The Stranger by Harlan Coben.

Kaytee Cobb 17:21

My second book, this is one that I picked up because I don't think we as a podcast have ever been tagged in so many posts about a book that we have never talked about on the show. So I had to read The Ex Talk by Rachel Lynn Solomon. Here's what you guys need to know. I actually did a little survey on my Instagram stories, because at 12% in, I was like, bored out of my mind. And I was like, Why are y'all tagging us all those posts about this book, like I'm so bored right now. I had enough people that I trust that talk me into it that I decided to keep going, which means now I can actually bring it to the show and I can tell you all about it. So here's what we have. Shay and Dominic work together at the public radio station in Seattle. Shay has been an NPR nerd for her entire life, closely associating the station and its programming with her father who died recently. She's been working there for a decade and is truly invested in the job and her co-workers, all her co-workers except Dominic. He is a fresh graduate with his Master's in journalism, which he annoyingly mentions at every opportunity. And he acts like he knows everything about everything. He's like a mansplainer at its finest right? When the station budget is being cut due to low listenership, Shay proposes a show called The Ex Talk, in which two exes will give relationship advice live on air, and their boss thinks it's a great idea. And that Shay and Dominic should be the ones who lead it. It takes off of course, but it's also built on a lie because the two cannot stand each other and have never dated and obviously never will or bla bla bla bla, will they right.? So it's a romance. It has great steamy sex in it, which I will say is one of the reasons that people were able to talk me into it. I did eventually get invested in the story and the characters and I loved the podcast element of it. Because like most public radio shows this one goes out to Seattle Public Radio, but then gets put on Apple podcasts. Right? That's how I listened to Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me every week. So my podcast apps. So it really added some great elements to the story. Dominic has had to face up to model minority prejudice because he's Asian. Shay and her mom are both walking through grief at losing her dad. The station's boss is the actual worst misogynist a-hole in the world. So we tackle mediocre white manhood in a special way. But it takes a while to get into this story. I almost abandoned it. And then Instagram talked me into it and then I almost abandoned it again. But at about 25% I was invested enough to keep going and mostly I would say that's too long of a runway for a good romance. You want to care about these people, you want to get invested right away. And this one did not do that for me. I am glad I stuck with it. But it was only again, like 3.75-4 stars closer to the four star end of the spectrum. But it took way too long for me to really care about Shay and Dominic and the excellent cast of side characters that she included. So that one is The Ex Talk by Rachel Lynn Solomon.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:29

Okay, Kaytee, let me tell you how I feel about talking about this next book. You know how when you have, when your littles are really little,

Kaytee Cobb 20:36

yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:37

And they'll they don't want to do something that they don't want to do. And they go noodle.

Kaytee Cobb 20:41

Oh, yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:42

You know what I mean by that, right? Okay. I've everything about talking about this next book makes me want to go noodle. Like mentally this book makes me want to go noodle. Like I just, that's the physical manifestation about how I feel about this book. I just don't, I just I'm so no, I hated it. I hated this book. I despise this book. Kaytee I'm, this is not just the wrong book at the wrong time. Kaytee I despise this book, which is not to say that everyone else should this which is my own personal experience of this is Kaytee. I don't think you had the same experience. But you really liked it. This is How to Stop Time by Matt Haig.

Kaytee Cobb 21:22

Yeah, I totally pressed this book.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 21:25

I, which is totally fine. And and again, I know, I knew going into reading this book, I was super looking forward to it because I know how many people love it. So like, I totally get it but I'm the outlier on this. Alright, let me remind you guys what this book is about. So Tom Hazard has a dangerous secret. He looks like an ordinary 41 year old but he has a rare condition. Then because of that he has been alive for centuries. He basically ages at a much slower pace than normal. So I'm, if I remember correctly, it's something like one year for every 15 years that humans age. So he's lived all of these. He's lived through history. So he's performed with Shakespeare. He's been on a pirate ship with Captain Cook. He shares cocktails with Fitzgerald. And now he just wants an ordinary life. So he moves back to London, his old home and he becomes a high school history teacher. And as soon as he start work starts work, he meets a cute young French teacher at his school, and they kind of hit it off. But the Albatross Society which is the secret group secretive group that protects people who have this condition that Tom has, they have one rule, which is you can't ever fall in love, right? You can't do that because we can see what what direction that's going to go. It's messy. So as painful memories of his past and the strange, really unpredictable behavior of the leader of the Albatross Society, threatened to derail any life, calm life, peaceful life that Tom wants to have. He realizes that the one thing he can't have may be the one thing that will save him. This is our setup. I want to go noodle on this book. I from the very star, Now let me say you guys have heard me say I love Matt Haig's The Midnight Library. Big, big fan of that book. So going into this, I was very much so this is a buddy read with Roxanna. So we went into this very much excited about reading it. And by the way, I just want to say it was not right on the heels of reading A Gentleman in Moscow. It was not the next book because I understand that you might be saying, Well, if you went right into it after that, we had two books in between. So this was not because of that. But I... both of us. It was just a study in we wanted to just tear our fingernails out from with Tom specifically from the very, very beginning because the premise is interesting, for sure. I like a long sweep. I like it. This is not time travel, right. It's not time travel but it sort of is in the way that you read it because of the way that he lives his life. I wanted to throw this book. If it had not been on my beloved Kindle Oasis, I

would have thrown this book. I Tom is well, Roxanna described this book as being time travel, navel gazing, and that's exactly what it felt like. It was the entire book was about him feeling sorry for himself. And that is something that triggers me so badly. And I was gonna describe this book as it reminded me of Addy LaRue, because I wanted to describe it as being kind of like an enneagram four. But here's the thing. I've thought a lot about this. This is not an enneagram four book. Because what this is the reason it triggered me so much is this is an enneagram one going to four in stress. So it's not any of the good parts of an enneagram For, it's all the crap parts that we once bring to for when we're in stress. So it's the no one understands me, I feel worse than anybody else I, you know, lots of self pity, like that's how I get when I'm really when I go to stress right. So I think part of the reason it triggered me was that that element of just poor me, pity party the entire time, it overshadowed everything, because he would have this really interesting experience. And then the second he was out of that experience, and back in his whatever place he was living, he would just go for four pages of feeling sorry for himself. And then there was this, there's this thing that he's trying to accomplish all throughout the book, which I won't spoil for you. But he never actually did anything to accomplish that thing. He would just talk about how upset he was at that thing, not having been attained, but he was never doing anything. He was just complaining about it. So okay, if you're watching The Bachelorette, he is all the great sadboy energy. And I just wanted to smack him. He's all the like, drama and sadness and looking out of a window on a rainy day energy. That just it I just, oh, at the end of it, I just was like 100 years is too long for human to live in. Certainly 900 years is 900 years. I just wanted them to be over. I just wanted to put a gun, put a bullet right through his head and just end it because it was so we will all just needed to be put out of our misery. So this was How to Stop Time by Matt Haig.

Kaytee Cobb 26:43

I loved everything about that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:44

There is I want to hear I want you to tell me why you loved it. Because I know how much you loved it. And I respect you so much. I like I want to know what I missed. Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 26:55

For me, it was all, it was all setting. like Tom is the vehicle that gets us there. But the idea that one person could have done everything you talked about, acted with Shakespeare being on a pirate ship, had tea with F. Scott Fitzgerald, all those things that one person and he slowly unfolds his life and says, you know, back when I was doing blah, blah, blah at this time in my life. I loved getting to feel like we had one character that took us through that entire arc, which can't happen, except in time travel in a regular story, right? That that is what I loved about this book. But that's not what I was talking about, though. I loved everything about that, like this is one of those times that I do wish that we recorded on video, because of all the faces and the way you grabbed your cheeks when you were talking about it. Just like oh, our listeners are gonna be so sad that they missed all of this. Just like how they're sad that they didn't get to see you, as you talked about A Gentleman in Moscow. They are now going to be sad that they didn't get to see you as you talked about this because it's like the flip side of that. It's it's I love it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:56

It is the complete flip side where where Amor Towles makes me want to be very just rigid with joy. This book made me want to go noodle with despair.

Kaytee Cobb 28:10

Yeah, you have to like use your appendages to like hold your body up just so that you can continue to talk to me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:16

You should see me hitting my, my, you know, my list where I go through like what book is next? When I saw that it was coming up next. I was like, No, please don't make me talk about this book. But I have to. Because you know, that's the rule. For me, the rule is, if I liked a book, or I hated a book, I absolutely have to talk about it. Right, right, that I might be able to skip a meh book here or there. But I had if it's a one or a five, I have to talk about it. And this was one. I didn't I didn't like this book at all.

Kaytee Cobb 28:45

And Roxanna was the same huh? What kept you guys reading?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:49

Because we just wanted to see honestly, by the time we were like 60% and we were like we just want to see him meet a horrible end. I mean, we're like we were just hoping...

Kaytee Cobb 28:58

Unsatisfied. I feel like...

Meredith Monday Schwartz 29:01

Well, I'm not gonna give away anything from the ending. But we Yes, it was. It was kind of great because it was a buddy read. We've had so many buddy reads, where we've been reading books that we really like, right? This was really... We had one buddy read where we DNFd a book together. We just were like, yeah, we're out. It was misogyny filled and we were like we did we got no time for that. And then this one was the only book that we that we read start to finish and we both just hate, buddy hate read.

Kaytee Cobb 29:29

Yeah. See, those have their own joy to them though, right.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 29:32

We definitely enjoyed texting each other and having someone else experience the vitriol that we were hearing. It was really nice. Yes.

Kaytee Cobb 29:40

Okay. I love that. Okay. All right. That was great. I loved that. So my third book this week, like I said, I'm going up and up. My third book this week is My Time Will Come by Ian Manuel. So if you friends, Okay, listen, just pull over just listen to me. If you've read Just Mercy, The Sun Does Shine, A Knock at

Midnight, and you're wondering to yourself, when is Kaytee going to tell me the next perfect book for me? It's right now. That's, it's right now. That's what I'm doing today. So *My Time Will Come* is written by Ian Manuel, who was just 14 years old when he made a terrible mistake and was sentenced to life in prison without parole. The United States is the only country in the world that sentences 13 and 14 year old children, overwhelmingly children of color to life in prison without parole. What is wrong with us you guys? In 1991, Ian was holding a gun during a botched attempt at a mugging, this is rough, when he shot Debbie Baigrie in the face. This is the crime. She's a young, white mother of two. It's not sugarcoating. It's not shied away from, it's not denied. She survived. She went on to offer him forgiveness and even started a written correspondence with him while he was in prison. But to take away someone's life, and hope and chances for redemption, because of the worst thing they've ever done is a heartbreaking crime in its own right, which is how Bryan Stevenson, Bryan, my love Bryan, and the Equal Justice Initiative got involved in the story. Ian tells his story of poverty and being raised in the projects basically, and being convicted, and solitary confinement where he was kept for over 18 years, ostensibly to keep him safe from predators and the general prison population. But it's also thought to be cruel and unusual punishment of its own. Of course, we do not end in hopelessness, we hear about poetry, capturing his heart, we hear about forgiveness and redemption. And we may or may not be left wiping tears out of our eyes, the more of these stories that get told, the more of these stories that we read, the more likely we are to get to a place of institutional change, the more likely we are to have a heart shift that moves us to action, the more likely we are to leave this world a little better than we found it. And that is a huge part of why I read. That's why I continue to bring books to the show that challenge us as readers and humans. That's why I continue to press these books into your hands because we have the chance to change things. And oftentimes for us as readers, for you, listener and for me, for Meredith, and for everybody else that tunes into the show, it starts with a book. That's how we change things. And this is one of those books. So pick it up, read it, please. I love it. It's *My Time Will Come* by Ian Manuel.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:36

That sounds amazing. I'm so glad that we have another book to put up there with some of those great ones.

Kaytee Cobb 32:42

And his poetry is interspersed with his story. So you get like his words flying off the page, as well as the ones that are written there to like nail them down as well. So that juxtaposition is really great, too. So

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:55

All right, good. That's a good one. Okay, all right. So this is my favorite. Like I said, I was gonna go up, down and then up again. This is probably my favorite of the three that I'm talking about today. Because I read *The Butterfly House* by Katrine Engberg. So here's the setup. At the very start of our book, we start out we jump right into a scene in a hospital. In fact, in the coronary care unit at one of Copenhagen's leading medical centers, we see a nurse fill a syringe with an overdose of heart medication and then stealthily into the room of an older male patient. Six days earlier, a paper boy on his route in central Copenhagen stumbles upon the naked body of a dead woman lying in a fountain with arms marked with small incisions. Her cause of death was exsanguination, the draining of all the blood from her body. This is not for HSPs. Clearly we know that this is no ordinary murder. And so lead

investigator Jeppe, a coroner who's recovering from a really painful divorce and in the beginning of a brand new relationship takes on the investigation and his partner Annette Werner, now on maternity leave after an unexpected pregnancy and birth is restless at home with a demanding newborn. While Jeppe pounds the streets looking for answers, Annette decides to do a little freelance sleuthing of her own, but operating on her own exposes her to dangers that she can't even begin to fathom. So this is a serial killer murder set in Copenhagen that is the second in a series. That's right. I've read further into a series here, which I love. I really, really liked this series a lot. And it's this is just the best kind of police procedural. So the mystery itself had me going from start to finish which is always good for me. I think I might have guessed a few different things before the end, but it very much kept me guessing all the way through. I also really love the relationship in this book. It's kind of reminiscent of the mysteries of Deborah Crombie and Elizabeth George, where you have the two lead investigators that are really really great together, not necessarily in a romantic relationship, but just in a really great working relationship. I love the relationship between Korner and Werner, which is where they, rhyme.

Kaytee Cobb 32:58

Oh, no.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 33:57

So I love that also, in this particular book, they are, in this series, we have the mystery, which is always really interesting. But then they also delve into the private lives of each of the detectives. And I really, really love it with this particular author, she does a great job. And Annette is on maternity leave. And that part of this book was very interesting for me as a working mom, who both loved and hated my maternity leaves, because you feel like the world is moving on without you. I understood the push and pull that she was experiencing. And the way that played into this particular investigation and mystery was really, really satisfying. I liked it a lot. I also love the Copenhagen setting. Each of the books has, the two books that so far in the series, they have a really great sense of place and I listened to them both on audio and I highly recommend that that way because the audio narrate narrator is Graham Malcolm who's one of my favorites, and he does a fantastic job with the names and the places that are in our story really, really does a great job of helping you kind of make sense of all of all of those. In print, it would be more difficult for me. So overall, this is a really, really solid police procedural in a series that is an auto buy for me as soon as she comes out with a new one. You can bet I'm going to download it and I'm going to be listening to it. Alright, so that is The Butterfly House by Katrine Engberg.

Kaytee Cobb 37:01

You also brought two audio books this week. Meredith, that is strange.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:05

I did. Yes.

Kaytee Cobb 37:07

That is out of the norm for you.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:09

I had a really good run, I go in fits and starts with my audio. And I had a really good run of audio books there for a little bit and then a really long then I got stuck behind one. That and I ended up really, really slowing down.

Kaytee Cobb 37:22

Mm hmm. All right. Well, those are our six correct reads. We did it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:26

Yes, we did it. Okay. All right. Let's talk about our deep dive, which is venus flytrap genres. So the reason that we got this idea of talking about this is that we got a message on our Currently Reading bookish friends Facebook page, right. So this is for our Patreon subscribers only \$5 a month. It's a great group. Everyone should feel free to join Patreon just to get into this.

Kaytee Cobb 37:54

For sure, yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:55

So in this group, one of our favorite bookish friends Holly Mascaro, left a message saying, I have a deep dive idea similar to the catnip genre that you guys talked about, what is your venus flytrap genre? That's the genre that keeps attracting you. But it's a trick and you actually don't like it and yet you keep going back to it. Holly says "mine is YA. I always want them all. But always they're a 50/50 hit or miss for me. And yet you'll always find me hanging around in the YA section". What Kaytee is your venus flytrap genre?

Kaytee Cobb 38:36

So when I went to prepare for this deep dive, I don't know if it was like, I had just finished my period. I was very empathetic. It felt like I went through this entire thread and I was like, Oh, yeah, totally that one. Oh, no, no, that one is the best. So I felt like the bookish friends were all just very much getting me that day. My favorite one which is probably the most likely for me is from one of our bookish friends named Deborah she says "this is a very apt description, Holly venus flytrap". She loves that. Mine is any kind of family drama like Little Fires Everywhere. Or all this could be yours. I'm interested by the premise but then the actual story is just always unlikable people being gross. And that is my favorite thing on the internet today. I'm like yes, that is unlikable people being gross. All those books I just want to throw them but then I'm like, oh, family drama. I get sucked in by that every time which is why I've read all the books that then got mentioned underneath they're like oh yeah, right The Nest, All This Could Be Yours, Little Fires Everywhere. The other Celeste Ng, Everything I Never Told You. Oh my gosh, unlikable people being gross times a million right.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 39:45

I love that. I love that phrase. Well, one of another one of our bookish friends Amanda Counts said, "Oh, I love this question. I've always thought that I love true crime. But when I look back at my Goodreads list, I rarely have success with them. Just keep trying like why doesn't this work for me? I love murderly things". She says "my latest complete failure was We Keep the Dead Close", which is a book that I've actually heard a lot of people who normally do love true crime don't like. So my question

for Amanda, we Amanda, you'll need to let me know. Have you read The Yoga Store Murder? Just answer that question for me Amanda in the on the Bookish Friends group when you hear this.

Kaytee Cobb 40:25

Right, I like that one. One of the other one of our other favorite Bookish Friends is Tiffany. She's our favorite eight, I think, right? Well, actually, there's a lot of great eights in the bookish friends group. She said legal thrillers. And honestly, as I went down that list, I was like, Oh, no, that one definitely stands out to me. But then I felt like actually that is I don't know what the opposite of a venus flytrap is. It's like the the corpse plant where I don't even go near it. I I'm like legal thriller, I already fell asleep hearing about that. I'm not looking at that, I'm not interested in that. So that one's not actually a venus flytrap for me. But I like the idea of legal thrillers. I just don't go there because I'm because they actually smell bad to me that it's not a venus flytrap. It's a corpse plant.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:10

Right? It doesn't it doesn't tempt you at all. It doesn't appeal to you. Well, a lot of people. A lot of people, including Laurie Brown say, "for me, it is the popcorn thriller, right. I used to like those books, but now I hate them. And they're manipulative, twisty selves. Anytime I succumb to something new and shiny in that genre, I regret it" and she says "give me a literary mystery". Absolutely so many people said and I am one of these people. I get drawn in not only like just getting it from the library, I will pay cash dollars for popcorn thrillers over and over again thinking this is going to be the one this is going to be you know the the one, the exception that proves the rule type of thing. But so many times I end up just saying "why do you do this to yourself Meredith? Why do you do this to the audience? Why are you reading these popcorn thriller books?". So that was probably the answer that we got most all the way through here.

Kaytee Cobb 42:08

Yes, I agree. A lot of people saying like Jessica said not meant not mysteries that one's catnip, but thrillers are venus flytrap. And then Aubrey Cheadle went even harder into that and she said not a genre in general, but Riley Sager as an author. He's a venus flytrap for me. And I like that a lot.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:24

Yeah, yeah, but we just talked about this right? I literally am a 50... 50/50 rating with Riley Sager. And yet he's an auto buy author for me, I will buy everything that he puts out even after this last one.

Kaytee Cobb 42:38

Okay, for myself, when I look at my TBR shelf, which is you know, books, I was so excited about that I bought a copy. And then oftentimes they sit there and they sit there and they sit there and eventually I give them away or they sell them to the used bookstore. It is why like Holly mentioned and but this is very specific, because I've pressed Tell Me Three Things, I co-signed Mary's press Slay by Brittany Mira Morris, my favorite book of 2020 was Pride by Ibi Zoboi, there's good YA out there. But over and over again. I'm searching for that Hi, those three books over and over again and not getting it. And instead I find high school drama. That's annoying. What I want is YA fantasy. I want life and death situations with vampires or magic or another world and regular way. It's just, it's not it's not there for me. And yet I keep buying those books and I keep hoping this next one and then I get something like

Charming as a Verb where I'm like, child, I'm going to slap you and shove my earbuds down your throat like I'm so tired of these bad decisions from YA protagonists and it makes me mad.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:42

Right that's exactly that's a major reason why just regular YA I almost never even try like so that's my what did you call it?

Kaytee Cobb 43:51

Corpse plant?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:52

Corpse plant. Right? I just don't even I'm not even tempted by it. So popcorn thrillers for sure are this for me. And also rom-coms. I fit let to a lesser extent I'm less likely to spend my cash dollars on it. But I still feel like I will try a rom-com over and over, different rom-coms over and over again and then just consistently go No, I just it just doesn't work for me. It's just not something that's going to work for me at all.

Kaytee Cobb 44:23

And mine is a romance genre. I love enemies to lovers romance. I love that like biting attraction to each other at the beginning. But my venus flytrap is friends to lovers. I feel like they're so close to each other enemies to lovers friends to lovers, but I cannot stand friends to lovers books they drive me crazy. I'm like, Can you call us just like, figure it out and get in bed and just stop it like I'm over you doing this thing. Just stop it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 44:49

Right because they're actually not they're really really different on a trajectory, time trajectory, you know, in enemies to lovers usually, like we figure it out and move in the right direction. Friends to lovers they've kind of been...

Kaytee Cobb 45:01

They fiddle faddle around Yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:03

For exactly right? Listener Brittany Block says "I hope I don't get too many tomatoes thrown at me. But my venus flytrap genre is curmudgeon stories". And then I like what she says next. "I also hate hopeful books". I really love Brittany. And I tend to lean towards really dark. And I think it's because it's the polar opposite of me in real life. And it's fascinating to me. So I think there's probably a lot of people in fact, there are other people in this in this thread who said, Yeah, curmudgeon stories, I like it over and over again. I am tempted by them, but then they just don't do it for me. But I just really like that Brittany says that she doesn't like hopeful books.

Kaytee Cobb 45:42

Hope is dead to me. I'm over it

Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:44

Hope is dead. That's so boring. Anything hopeful. Oh, and Maudeen Wachsmith says that she her venus flytrap genre, which I thought this was really, really smart is award winners. She says "I keep thinking I'd like it since it won a prestigious award. But 90% of the time, they fall completely flat". And I think a lot of us have had that experience. Right? The awards. We start hearing about these award winning books and we're like, maybe this one will be the one that is that makes me understand why it won this prestigious award and then it just doesn't. It's not It's not the one

Kaytee Cobb 46:18

Doesn't work. Doesn't work.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 46:20

Stacey Stacey Rutledge Chin says historical fiction with beautiful usually floral covers, which again, I think how many of us have fallen into this trap? She talks... Someone else says oh, you know, "is it is it the ones with the backs of the women on the cover"? And Stacey's like "I don't have any trouble, you know, not reading those books, but it's the ones with the flowers to get me." which is like the I'm there, I'm with her on this.

Kaytee Cobb 46:46

Woman's backs... over it. Gorgeous flowers, Oh, I might need it. Love it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 46:51

All right. And one one more Stephanie Sides says most of Reese Witherspoon's book club picks. I keep reading them. But like you said about YA, it's about a 50/50 shot that I will hate them.

Kaytee Cobb 47:04

Our Bookish Friends are so smart. I love our Bookish Friends.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:07

Okay, are there so that was a, that was a great thread. And that thread is such I mean that when was what 75,75-80 comments By the time it it kind of kind of wound up. But it's a great example of how much fun we have in that group. And how many people say, Man, the \$5 a month that I pay, even if I didn't get all the extra content, I would do it just for that because it's such a fun group of readers who become really good friends, which is really, really a good time.

Kaytee Cobb 47:34

It really is. It's I mean, and we always say like we couldn't, we couldn't have forced it to happen. But the way it did come together, we're just so happy with like, the way that these relationships form is just the best. It makes me so happy to hang out on there.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:48

It's really fun and everybody is welcome. So if you want to be a part of that group, please come join us. We would absolutely love to have you. Alright, can you let's press some books. What book do you want to press this week?

Kaytee Cobb 47:58

Okay, the book I want to press this week I've actually had on my potential presses list for a very long time and I decided this is the time to do it. So it's called The Paper Magician by Charlie Holmberg. This is Charlie Holmberg's debut novel. It's the first in a series. It is YA fantasy, maybe closer to new adult fantasy, with a very little bit of romance, very tame. I have read three of the four books in this trilogy when I discovered it, but now there's a fourth, right? Although I gave them each, you know, three and a half, four stars. I constantly think about the world that she built. So all these years later, I read them in 2014 and 2015. It remains a favorite of mine and I continually suggest it as like an under the radar gem when people are saying I like YA fantasy. You know, I feel like I've read all that stuff that's out there. This is the book for you. We arrive in a Victorian world in which magicians work in just one material and Ceony Twill, our heroine, enters the cottage of magician Emery Thane, which is the best name, with a broken heart. Having graduated at the top of her class from the Tagis Praff School for the Magically Inclined, Ceony is assigned an apprenticeship in paper magic despite her dreams of dispelling metal. In this world, you bond to your element. And that's the only one you get forever and ever. As Ceony begins to learn under the strange, quirky but kind Thane, she finds that the spells are more marvelous than she ever could have imagined. She animates paper creatures, bring stories to life by ghostly images and even reads fortunes. Of course all magic has a dark side and Ceony needs to learn to recognize that as well. The story comes to a head when an Excisionor, a practitioner of dark flesh magic invades the cottage and rips Thane's heart from his chest. To save his life Ceony must face the evil magician and embark on an unbelievable adventure that we that will reveal his soul to her. If you've read these books, you can keep going with Charlie Holmberg. She has also written some other great ones like Magic Bitter Magic Sweet, which is kind of like a less sexy version of like water what like Water for Chocolate has that same like cooking eliciting emotions through food, the the emotions that the that the chef feels get transferred into the food. I really loved that one as well. But if you want to get lost in a magical world and you like some darkness mixed with a little bit of like, you know, heart fluttering The Paper Magician by Charlie Holmberg first in the series is a fantastic start to an under the radar gem that I think you will love. So again, that's my press this week. It's The Paper Magician by Charlie Holmberg.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 50:44

How has this one escaped me? It's got a gorgeous cover too.

Kaytee Cobb 50:47

Oh my gosh, the whole I love it. I love it so much.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 50:50

Oh, I feel like Why? Why has this escaped me? It's also \$0 on Kindle unlimited.

Kaytee Cobb 50:57

Hey, there you go.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 50:57

So if that's if that's something that you take part in

Kaytee Cobb 50:59

You can read it for free.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 51:01

Great press, Kaytee. I love it. Okay. All right. So I am going to press a book that is in the Venus flytrap genre for me. The sort of rom-com... Is this a rom com? This is not a rom... This is not a rom-com. This is a sweet romance about adults that takes place in contemporary time, right? Because, you know, I like my sexy times back in history. Right? So this is why but this is not that this is takes place in the current time. This is Ellie and the Harpmaker by Hazel Prior. And this is more of like a hugging book. I really really liked this book. And it's something different. So our lead characters Dan Hollis. So Dan Hollis lives a happy solitary life carving really beautiful Celtic harps in his barn in the countryside of the English Moors. Here he can be by himself away from social situations that he doesn't always get right or completely understand. On the anniversary of her beloved father's death, Ellie Jacobs takes a walk in the woods, and she comes across Dan's barn, she's enchanted by his harp collection. And Dan gives her a harp made of cherry wood to match her cherry socks. He stores it for her ready for whenever she's she'd like to take lessons. So Ellie begins visiting Dan almost daily and quickly learns that he isn't like other people. He makes her sandwiches precisely cut into triangles, and repeatedly counts the 17 steps of the wooden staircase to the upstairs practice room, at least soon realizes that Dan isn't just different in many ways, his world is better. And he gives her a fresh perspective on her own life. You guys, this is a love story. I hate the word romance. Because this is more this is a love story. This, but it's different than anything that I've ever read. And I have to say like when I talked about on the show, at first, I really want to say that there was a part of me, as I started reading it, that was a little bit uncomfortable. Because I don't think I really understood going into it, I started reading it because it just had this beautiful cover that Dan, the male character is autistic. And this is not something that's shied away from in any way, shape or form. He's fully functional, but definitely affected by his autism. And yet, this is a love story. And it includes all the facets that are included in romantic love. So first, I am going to admit that I was a little bit I was a little bit uncomfortable with this. But so for that reason, especially the sexual element elements, which were not graphic, they still made me kind of tiptoe around them emotionally just a little bit. There was kind of a childlike quality to Dan, that continually made me feel just a little bit of unease in the construct of a romantic relationship. But the reality is that this is a part of every adult life and that it is true for people with autism too. This book does what it seems to me to be a really good job of portraying the way that someone on the Autism disorder would have that play out in the life of a man. It's a lovely story about two lovely people who love each other really well. And I ended up enjoying it a lot. It's a great book. And I would definitely recommend it for anyone who's looking for just a very sweet love story. So this is Ellie and the Harpmaker by Hazel Prior.

Kaytee Cobb 54:36

I'm actually much more interested in that this time hearing you talk about it than the first time that I heard you talk about it. And I don't know what is so different this time, but I like it and now I want to read it, a lot.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 54:48

Good. Well clear. Well, you must have talked about The Paper Magician before right?

Kaytee Cobb 54:53

I don't think so. I don't think it's ever been mentioned on the show. It's just been sitting in my phone waiting for a perfect moment.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 54:59

That makes me feel a lot better. Man, I was like, Kaytee, how did The Paper Magician... that seems to be like so right up my alley? How did that get out? Okay, that makes me because I'm like, was I just sitting there in a fugue state when you were talking about it?

Kaytee Cobb 55:10

No, I read them in 2014. So well before our Currently Reading phase.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:15

Got it. Okay, well, that's a good one. So good. Well, maybe we'll each read each other's press. I always like it when we do that. All right. We are over an hour, so I am happy to report to everyone that that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me I'm Meredith @Meredith.reads on Instagram.

Kaytee Cobb 55:33

And you can find me at Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks on Instagram.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:36

Full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in the episode and timestamps, so you can zoom right to where we talked about it can be found on our website at currentlyreadingpodcast.com.

Kaytee Cobb 55:46

You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:52

And if you want to join our fantastic book conversations over on Facebook with our Bookish Friends group, support us on Patreon. It's just \$5 a month and you get all kinds of extra content in your podcast feed and 1000 new bookish friends. You can also rate and review us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. Those things make a huge difference towards us finding our perfect audience.

Kaytee Cobb 56:18

Bookish Friends are the best friends, you guys all of those things are helping us grow and get closer to our goals. Thanks for doing that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 56:24

Alright, until next week. Happy reading Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 56:26

Happy reading Meredith