



# Season 6, Episode 27: Meredith Meeting Authors + Tropes We Are Tired Of Reading

Mon, Feb 12, 2024 • 57:07

**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 as you know, we won't shy away from having strong opinions. So get ready.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:24

We are light on the chitchat heavy on the book talk and our descriptions will always be spoiler free. Today we'll discuss our current reads a bookish deep dive, and then we'll visit the fountain. I'm

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:33

Meredith Monday, Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And I might actually be excited about meeting some authors.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:42

Oh, and I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in Arizona. And I have to tell myself, at least it's only books pretty regularly. This is episode number 27 of season six. And we're so glad you're here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:54

Right? We could have worst vices we could have worse shopping habits. I don't collect Birkin bags.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:00

Right. That can get very pricey. Exactly,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:04

exactly. So these are the things we tell ourselves. All right. So we are going to tell you right up here at the top that our deep dive this week is going to be full of spicy opinions because it is going to be about tropes we are so sick of and I know I have several Kaytee, I'm sure you have several tropes that we're tired of. We wish people would just move on. So we'll get to that later on. But first, let's go to our bookish moments of the week. Kaytee, what have you got this week?

**Kaytee Cobb 01:35**

Okay, this is not a new bookish moment. Like it's never been done before. But Meredith, I was just telling you right before we started recording, I got new bookshelves. Again. This because I have these beautiful handmade like handcrafted bookshelves that my dad and I built at our home in Santa Fe, I did move them all the way to Phoenix with us wrote it into our real estate contract, they are very full. And now they need to be culled and reserved for my precious books right there, the beautiful shelves, they get the beautiful books, the ones that are my favorites. But that means there's a lot of other books in our house that need homes. So my darling long suffering husband did take me to IKEA yesterday on a date. And this afternoon. In just a few hours, we put together a big other wall unit that is right in our entryway, which was the place that we had a big flat wall. And it has it's almost 110 inches long from one end to the other and eight feet high. So it has a lot of space. It has some cabinets on the bottom. So we can put some either outgoing books or like things that just aren't as pretty to display. And then otherwise, it's just very big, open shelving. And you know, we got to the house. We unloaded all the boxes, and Jason told the kids, we're here we're feeding your mother's addiction. And I said but at least it's only books. Yes. So here we are more books at my house. That's what's happening.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:58**

Look, happiness is a new wall of bookshelves as far as I'm concerned. You know, I did that in my dining room last year, and it's one of the best things that I did. It was all told a \$400 investment right? It has completely changed my use and love of that room. It's now my library that I allow food in a la Jamie Golden. And it just has brought so much joy and you know, as I always say to my best friend who is not too much of a reader, every hallway is an opportunity for bookshelves. That's true. Look at your hallways look at your entryways. I would even say, Is there room for a bookshelf in your bathroom? I don't know. Just look at

**Kaytee Cobb 03:39**

it. Maybe if it has a big wall. There might be room. Exactly. So your laundry room. I have a book in my laundry room. It's Laundry Love by Patrick Richardson. Everybody needs that book in their laundry room. Why should I have a whole bookshelf? It's fine.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:51**

Exactly. We need to think differently about how we put books in our home and so I fully now my question for you is are those shelves I know the ones that your dad built? You did some really fantastic lighting in there. Are you going to light these new? Are they Billy bookcases like what now

**Kaytee Cobb 04:10**

they're, they're Ivar bookcases. So there are untreated pine, which probably will get painted eventually. But it allowed for the most customization as far as where I wanted shelves to be and how tall they were and how much space they take up on the wall. And so we're going to try it out. Let's see how it goes. I'm very excited about them. Right now. There's no lighting on them, but you never know. I love putting lighting on things. We have my Lego bookshop that has lights all over it like I just I love a well lit space so it's possibility

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:41

excellent Okay, well I love it. I'm I you know I fully support your habit your addiction. It's a good one. We're codependent in that way. We are not like we're making fun of addiction or codependency those are very serious topic. ones that have touched our lives so we're not making light of that we just are making light of books aesthetic Okay, my bookish moment of the week is the fact that they have announced they are announcing the authors who are going to be at the Hamptons Whodunit. Yes comp this mystery and thriller conference that Elizabeth Barnhill and I are going to in April, I am so excited. I have never been to The Hamptons. I feel like the Hamptons are very me, or I am very Hamptons. I don't know, I feel like I feel like I'm going to be very comfortable there. And I'm so looking forward to it. But they keep announcing these authors Kaytee, and we have I've already told you we have SA Cosby. super looking forward to that I'm gonna read at least one if not two of his books before I go. But this week, they announced and this is just this is just a few. Megan Miranda, Jean Kwok, Peter Swanson. Will Dean, Tessa Wiegert, one of my favorite new police procedural series authors. And Ursa Sigurdardottir. Yes, is going to be there. And again, that's just a small smidgen of the mystery and thriller authors that are going to be there. I am so excited to go to these panels. Elizabeth has a lot of hookup amongst these people. She knows a lot of people, so I probably will be meeting them. Now why am I okay with this, because in that case, it feels like it's not like I've paid to like I don't feel like the people are forced to talk to me in that. You know what I mean? It's a little more casual. Yeah, it's a little more organic. And while I still I'm sure will be tripping over myself and be nervous in the moment, I'm not like refusing to go like I do when, you know, when I go to like, David Sedaris and like, stand in line, and he'll sign your book. And I just can't do that. That's the situation I just can't do. Because it's like he's been forced to do that. He doesn't want to meet me. He didn't want to say something funny to me that he said to 500 other people, but in this case, it feels much more organic. I'm really looking forward to this conference. I'm very

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:00

excited for you. I feel like this is a gateway situation. And I'm really hoping that it does lead to like, oh, authors really do love to actually meet the people who love their books. And maybe I'm not totally against it. If a mortals happens to be in town, I might just go look at him close by. No,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:18

see, now you've taken it a step too far. Now can you put it out but again, you now you are taking it into these authors or authors that are really like baby step.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:29

It's a baby step Meredith. Okay,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:33

Amor Towles and Louise Penny, right? We're not we're this is not to say that they're like so much better authors than the ones that I mentioned. That's not true. It's just that I don't feel as precious

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:43

about right your identity hasn't been formed around exam authors that you're meeting and although

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:49

I do love me some Ursa Sigridardottir and I cannot wait, I hope she speaks English only so that I can because she's Icelandic. Yeah. Did you get that from the last name?

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:01

You've practiced saying it so many times. Because now you're not going to have to look like an idiot when you're like, hey, if it

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:07

rolls off my tongue now at this point, I can I I'm never going to mess that up. But I hope that she speaks English enough for us to be able to talk about her creepy AF books and and really get into it. So I love this.

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:20

I love it. 100%

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:21

All right. Kaytee let's talk about some of these books. What are your current read? What's your first current read?

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:27

Okay, my first current read this week is one that I bought when I was in the UK last fall. And it was so good. So it's called *The Kingdom Over the Sea*, which is great because I was over the sea when I bought it. And the author is Zohra Nabi so I got this at Foyles during my UK trip. And it is a debut middle grade fantasy novel, five star read. Absolutely phenomenal. Here's the setup. I'm taking this mostly from publisher blurbs because it's a pretty decent summary without being spoilery when 12 year old Yara's mother passes away she leaves behind a letter and a strange set of instructions. It says my own Yara if you are reading this, then something terrible has happened and you're on your own to return to the City of Zehaira? You must read out the words on the back of this letter. Good luck, my brave girl. Yara has to travel from the home she has always known to a place that is not on any map Zehaira? A world of sorcerers Alchemist and simmering magic but Zehaira is not the land it used to be. The practice of magic has been outlawed. The Sultan's alchemists are plotting a sinister scheme and the answers Yara is searching for seem to be just out of reach. She must summon all her courage to discover the truth about her mother's past and her own identity and to find her place in this magical new world. So we start out here in the regular world that we live in, and then we are thrown into this magical world. Yara is a smart and compelling protagonist and an orphan. She has us rooting for us and wanting to solve the mystery of where she came from and how she ended up in our world as soon as possible. It's fantasy. It's got a little mystery. It's got a diverse cast and pulls from Middle Eastern Myths and Legends has *The Adventures of Bronte Mettlestone*, the discovery of Amina El-Sirafi, and the wonder of *Ten Thousand Doors of January* all put together in a single middle grade package. What phenomenal.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:13

Sounds so good. It's so good.

**Kaytee Cobb** 10:15

This is billed as a combination of Aru Shah and 1001 Nights. That's what the publisher bills it as so I hope our friend Bunmi is listening today, because I need both her and Roxanna our show regular to pick this one up. I do believe that it will be a five star read for both of them as well. This novel does have a sequel releasing later this year in April, May in the US, but I have my pre order in at Blackwell's there, so it matches my current copy which has gorgeous French flaps, foil designs on the cover a few illustrations inside, it's perfect because it's just the kind of fantastical fantasy to capture my middle grade readers look to page illustration.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:56

It's so beautiful.

**Kaytee Cobb** 10:59

Yeah, this is The Kingdom Over the Sea by Zohra Nabi.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:04

Oh, that sounds so good. I've been, I have really been in the mood for a really, really good middle grade. Because we're not getting a never like, I feel like we should be getting a Nevermoor and we're not, we're never getting a Nevermoor. So for more I know. And so I have really, really been looking for that exact same kind of like wonderful fantasy kind of middle grade. So that's been a craving I've been having good. That's not so good. All right, good. Well, I have three very different books to bring to you today, which I always feel good about when I'm not just bringing three of the same kinds of books back to back. So this first one I really, really liked. I hardly ever do this, but I'm starting out with a romance. This is a book called Work of Art by Mimi Matthews. Okay, here's the setup. As she was growing up in rural Devon Shire Felida Satterthwaite has always been considered more odd than beautiful. She has one particular physical feature that is very remarkable, but in London, the same oddity has made her a sensation amongst the ton and worse, it has caught the eye of the super duper evil Duke of Moreland, a notorious art collector obsessed with acquiring one of a kind treasures and he decides that he wants to add felida to his collection to escape the Dukes clutches. She's going to need a little help. Enter Captain Arthur Haywood, gorgeous, slightly grumpy, absolutely perfect, grievously injured in the Peninsular War, he can no longer walk unaided, let alone shoot a pistol. So what can he do to help he has nothing left to offer except his good name, reader. He marries her. I love this book so much. This is so good. You know how sometimes you get stuck in a pattern where you're picking up? Well, this is actually happened to me a lot in 2024. I pick up a book and pick up another book. And I just seemed DNF it nothing feels exactly right. At the point when I picked up work of art, I must have had 10 DNF 's back to back I was getting really frustrated. Then this book caught my eye on the shelf on Kindle Unlimited. And the second I opened it up, I knew it was going to be perfect. You know, I love a Victorian or Regency romance. I love a curmudgeonly lead male character and an innocent heart forward female character. And this is exactly what we have here. But there are a couple of things that make this book different. Actually three things. The first thing is that the lead character is a little bit curmudgeonly, but he's really better described as being reserved. This is not a book where the lead character is kind of a jerk. And then he's only nice to the woman that he falls in love with. I feel like that's what we get a lot in these Regency romances. That's not what we're doing here. Arthur Heywood is wonderful. He's just a

guy who doesn't enjoy big parties, and he doesn't want to live in London. He likes a quieter life in the country. And that makes him perfect for our lead female character Felida. The second thing that makes this book different than for example, the Tessa Dare novels that I do love so much, is that this book is very closed door, the characters are not prudish at all. They are in love, and they want to do all the things that they don't get into a lot of detail about what they wanted to do specifically or about what they did do specifically. This is a book that from that standpoint, you could absolutely hand to your mom or your teenage daughter. It's realistic, but not graphic. And I really liked that combination. It's also really romantic. Like it's, it's not sexy in that way, but it's romantic. But the way that this book is really different from other books that I read in *The Shawn* rates that I kept feeling like I knew what was going to happen next. And then that thing wouldn't happen. Something different would happen. But what actually happened wasn't weird or out of the blue or nonsensical, it absolutely made sense. It just wasn't predictable after I relaxed into the fact that this book wasn't going to progress along predictable lines. I just enjoyed it for where the story took me. This was the perfect read in front of the fire for that late Friday afternoon, going into a long weekend. It just felt perfect for the winter season. Perfect for my mood, and I am so glad that I found Mimi Matthews, because I am definitely going to put her books into my Kindle. And on my list for when I want that gooey, gooey, ever. So romantic romance. These books are perfect. This is a Work of Art by Mimi Matthews.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:54

Okay, I'm glad you addressed to Tessa Dare connection because I definitely felt some *Duchess Deal* vibes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 16:01

And there's that's definitely there. Okay. And it's got a lot of the spicy lead female character, you know, the kind of back and forth between the two of them, but it just doesn't have the open door element of things. So this would for me, I could totally do this on audio, for example. It's just, it's really romantic. It made me want to cuddle with my husband. You know what I mean? That,

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:23

yeah, no, it was good. Okay, my second one. I guess I'm taking the spot this week. I'm bringing the first murderers to the show.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 16:31

All right, good. Well, I've got murder coming.

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:33

Don't worry. I figured it was gonna be there. My second one this week is *The Morning Show Murders* by Al Roker. Oh,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 16:42

yes.

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:43

I told you I was gonna read those.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 16:44

Yes, yes, you did.

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:46

Okay, I'm not really sure what happened here. But basically Libro FM sent the January 2024 ALC list and I saw this one on it. And I love AI Roker. So I just dove in unexplained I don't know that's not a good reason to read this book. So here's the setup. Billy Blessing is our main character. He's been a staple on the TV show Wake Up America. It's a daily morning TV show for decades. At this point, his Manhattan restaurant is a huge success and his smile is legendary and charming and all the good adjectives you can use about it when his co anchor Jen Macaulay brings her strongest spine to contract negotiations. Billy is accused of coaching her behind the scenes when the network's Big Boss is murdered at his luxury home his own luxury home the boss's luxury home Billy is the first one on the suspect list. The Coc au vin that is proved to have poisoned Jerry Gallagher leading to his death came from Billy's restaurant, even though there's no record of an order from him that night. And when a list of women and a little black book surfaces Billy knows the murder is more than meets the eye. The stakes continue to get higher as a video of a secret meeting in Afghanistan many years ago surfaces and the participants in the meeting are being picked off one by one by a trained assassin. It's a race against the clock to not only clear Billy's name, but to keep a ruthless international assassin off his own tail as he unravels this mystery. This book is what we like to call a kitchen sink book. AI Roker has decades of experience as the star of a real life morning show at the Today Show. And here it feels like he was trying to write his memoir, but make it fun and murder and fictional. Instead of getting as much behind the scenes as I wanted. We got entirely too many plot threads all coming together in disjointed ways. The action ramped up to level 11. But the central mystery felt like it deserved to be maybe a four on the action scale. I do live an amateur detective situation in which our main character has to clear his name. By the end of this thinking that I'd much rather read AI Roker is actual memoir still being narrated by the author, then continue on with this series. The audiobook was being released a new with his narration, which is why it was in the January 2024. ALCS, but the book itself was released in 2009. Something I didn't discover until I finished the story that excuses some of the other critiques I would have brought to the show, including the fact that it feels a little dated in terms of how women are treated in the storyline and the way that the mystery is unraveled as a whole high marks for a peek behind the morning show TV scene. But this one was only a three star read for me overall, even though I wanted to live it because again, I weirdly love AI Roker. So this was The Morning Show Murders by AI Roker. All right, well,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:24

Kaytee I mean,

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:25

honestly, Meredith, I told you, I was gonna dive in and you were like, are you really like? I mean, you knew better and I did not



**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:34

but you know, as long as it was what you want it to be and now you've satisfied your curiosity and your fandom to AI Roker. So I understand

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:41

thats correct. Yes, all those things are satisfied. And now I never have to touch that series again.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:46

Okay, well, my first book that I brought was sweet and romantic and swoony and full of cut making me want to cuddle this next book is pretty much the opposite of that. I'm in my true crime era. Once again. Hmm, this book is While Idaho Slept by J Reuben Appelman. Okay, so I'm just going to give you a quick overview of the crime that we're covering here in this book, because it's immediately going to be apparent to you, you're going to remember it. This is not a very, this is a very recent crime. Just after 4am on November 13 2022, for University of Idaho students were viciously stabbed to death in an off campus house, the killings would shake the small blue collar college town of Moscow, Idaho, and the story would be absolutely everywhere. It became a social media obsession. Absolutely everyone was talking about it. Well, the Moscow police department, the FBI, and the Idaho State Police searched for the killer, unending conjecture and theories blazed online. There were chat rooms and Reddits and subreddits and platforms that came out just for this YouTube channels that were born just to talk about this particular case for more than a month. internet sleuths and YouTubers and law enforcement investigated in different ways until a suspect a 28 year old PhD candidate studying criminology, was arrested at his home 2500 miles away in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, on the day before New Year's Eve. So this is the crime that we're talking about in While Idaho Slept. This book was recommended to me heartily by our good bookish friend Alex Cox, who had let me know that it was a really well done work of true crime. And she was right. And while I wouldn't give it five stars, I would give it a solid four stars and in true crime, that's doing pretty well. This case, of course, was one that all of us were shocked by the victims were young, popular, attractive, and they were murdered in an absolutely gruesome way. So of course, we knew that we were going to get a book about it, I think what I didn't expect about this book would be was that it would be such a good combination of sensitive and substantive, sensitive, because appaman, the author really gives us a full portrayal of not only the victims here, but also of their families, he spends a good portion of the first half of the book concentrated on who these people were, there's no question that the details he provided made the fact of the way that they died a lot more impactful, he did a very, very good job of letting us know these four victims and substantive because the other half of the book was really concentrated on the police investigation and how they caught the killer, which involved everything from cell phone records, traffic cams, and familial DNA. There's even some elements of touch DNA that ended up trapping the killer. And that was really fascinating to me, they need so little to catch a killer at this point, touch DNA, and familial DNA. Those are the two things in my opinion that are going to basically in crime as we know it, the author does a good job, if you can call it a good job of giving us a sense of who the alleged killer was before these crimes took place. While we probably will never know his true motivations, the author does a good job of at least giving you some context and understanding of how all of this might have happened. He also does something that I hadn't expected, which is to give us a very strong theory as to why these particular people, and I hadn't heard that anywhere else in any of the other coverage that I had watched on this. And the last bit of the book covers the way that the town and the families said



goodbye to their loved ones. And I have to say, that was done in a really touching way. It was really, really powerful. Some may be critical of the fact that this book came out quickly in fact, even before the trial takes place. I for one after reading it believed that this book had plenty to say to make it worthwhile. I also will be following the trial with even more interest now than before and hoping that justice will be done this is *While Idaho Slept* by J Reuben Appelman sounds real tough. Yeah, what is touched dna? DNA. So we've gotten so I mean, it's a really, really good question. We've gotten to a place where now literally, if you just barely touch that they know I'm not a scientist. So what I'm you know, I'm just take what I'm saying with a grain of salt. My understanding is you have to touch something very, very little, and your DNA will be deposited. So it's before

**Kaytee Cobb** 24:45

with DNA, blood and a hair sample and saliva, right?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 24:48

You didn't you don't need like a body fluid of any sort. You just need you just need to barely touch something and there's evidence on the on the one hand way that this guy went wrong, really the the one way that they were able to really, really really bag their criminal was because of touch DNA. And because he basically made a mistake and one tiny thing because he was a criminal record forensic like he was studying and getting a PhD. Yeah, yep. So he knew what he was doing this one tiny thing and that that's really what unraveled then there were once they had that then they could unravel lots of other things. It was those pieces of it if you're like me are very interested in the police investigation parts of things. It also did a great job on that, but but really, I feel like now I know those four victims in a way that before they were just like pictures in my mind, and now they feel like really holy wrought human beings, which of course they are. And we're and you know, of course, that sounds ridiculous to say, but it put much more impact around the loss of these four individuals. For me.

**Kaytee Cobb** 25:56

It's very like victim conscious and respectful. It sounds right, which

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 26:00

is so much of what we're getting now into crime and I just didn't hear I'm here. What's really

**Kaytee Cobb** 26:04

changed the tone for sure. Yeah. Okay. My third one is also nonfiction. It is one of the very last ones I read in 2023. It's called *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille T. Dungy. I love this book. So Katie and I together in 2023, we tried to read one essay every day, and this is one of the final books that we read that year. This one hits pretty close to the memoir side of the essayist coin as we follow the author Camille on a quest to diversify her Fort Collins, Colorado garden and yard, which, like when I said diversify, nobody thought I was going to finish that sentence with garden and yard. But here we are, like many of us suburbanites, Camille moved into a house in a subdivision with strict HOA laws and a green grass lawn, taking up most of her outdoor space. But lawns are what's known as monoculture where we try to eliminate all but one species of a growing thing. You know, that's why we have weed killer, monoculture is not great for the environment in a number of ways. This book had Camille examining the world around her in new ways. And a big part of it is the garden itself, the way

she incorporates wildflowers and native plants to revitalize her space, and then becomes this kind of haven in her neighborhood for all kinds of wildlife from rabbits to bees to birds. In the meantime, Camille is trying to integrate herself into a majority white community and find her own place in this world while raising a daughter and reflecting on the ways that writing as a parent, especially during a pandemic, is different from the ways that we think of being a writer and it's glamorized form, right? We think of like Ernest Hemingway, or Stephen King, like locked up in his attic, staring straight at the wall, and nothing shall bother him. So he can bust out eight novels a year or whatever. As I read, I found myself looking into more water wise ways to live in our new space and the Arizona desert where we don't get a lot of water. And we actually got rid of a section of lawn shortly after I finished this book. And it felt really good to me instead of being like, Oh, we could have saved it like it was adding No, it wasn't adding to our yard. In fact, it was probably detracting from our yard. The front yard is a work in progress. And it's certainly not Camille's call to everyone to get rid of all lush green grass. Like please don't think that this is some kind of judgy book where she's saying, if you have a lawn, you're ruining the world that's not at all what she's saying. This is her own personal journey. For many of us, encouraging diversity of plant life and the landscape around us only brings benefits across the board. And it also means a little less work, cultivating and caring for a lawn and mowing it and weeding it all the better. As far as I'm concerned, this book was thought provoking, but also easy to read. It grew my reading in ways I didn't expect and it certainly doesn't hurt but it's a beautiful book as well. The cover the endpapers, everything about it is really lovely. This one is Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden by Camille T. Dungy.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 28:52

Never ever would have that one on my radar, right? It's none of us would.

**Kaytee Cobb** 28:57

I know. Although I did see it at quite a few bookstores and the cover is very striking because there's so many like contrasting colors. It's worth picking up and I think if we hadn't been on this like essay binge, we probably wouldn't have gotten to this book, but it was really worth reading.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 29:11

I love that. I love that. Okay, so I'm going to take another left turn, and I'm going to give you a book that I didn't expect to really like very much but I ended up liking it a lot and this is a perfect like palate cleanser easy peasy book for people who like mysteries and thrillers. This one and excuse the title. One of the things I'm so sick of are these terrible titles. The Cabin in the Woods, by Sarah Alderson. Here's the setup. When our story starts, our protagonist Rose is hiding in the titular cabin in the woods. We don't know who or what she's running from. We don't know why she's running, but we know something bad has happened and Rose is real scared. From there. We get two timelines. In the present timeline Rose is working hard to stay hidden and alive. But thanks to her survivalist grandfather's training, Rose has the knowledge and skills to be able to survive in a cabin with no electricity and no heat. She also knows how to stay alert for intruders. In the second timeline. We start all the way back when Rose was a child, and that timeline takes us through her life. And from this, we find out the circumstances that led rose to this cabin. As the story goes, we get pieces of the puzzle bit by bit until finally things become clearer. But what becomes clear will surprise you. So as I said, wasn't necessarily jumping into this book, the title I hadn't heard of it before by an author I hadn't heard of before. Okay,

but I had spent all day taking down Christmas decor and putting my house back to rights and I was absolutely exhausted. Right at the end of that day, my good friend Tanya came by with this book, and a pan of fresh pecan bars. And I was too weak to resist the pull of either one of those things. So I made me a big mug of coffee in my May your coffee, be hot in your book be unputdownable mug and sat down and inhaled both of these things. And those pecan bars really are the perfect way to describe this book. This book was tempting, and inviting from the very first chapter. And those chapters are deliciously short. It was like a shortbread crust on the pecan bars. Do you see what I'm thinking? I'm very clever. All right, the rotating timelines kept me interested. And the fact that I could finish this book in the space of just a couple of hours felt really good. At the time I read it, I had read several really big long books back to back and being able to bite off an entire book in just an evening felt like huge when the pacing in this book was perfect. And well, I would definitely describe this as a thriller. It never felt like it was dumb or pandering in any way. It was just really interesting. And I really, really, really wanted for the lead character to have a good ending, I should mention that there are triggers here for sexual assault off the page, and loss of a child. Also there is some discussion of postpartum depression. But this is what I would describe as the perfect palate cleanser book higher quality than what I would describe as a one night stand book. And just the thing, if you were between two longer, more serious novels, this one is a sweet, calorie rich snack and I ate the proverbial pan. If you want to do the same, you can get this one through Kindle Unlimited right now. This is The Cabin in the Woods by Sarah Alderson.

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:42

I have to know if you used your latte machine to make your cup of coffee. I realize this is not an important question.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:48

I Yes. No, I absolutely. did. I needed like a frothy warm. Yeah. Yeah. Because to go with the pecan bars, and yet something that was kind of

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:56

like a little bit of cut, but like that creaminess. Yes, it sounds perfect. Like I know, I want the book. I want the pecan bars. I want a latte to go with. You just like planned my whole day for tomorrow.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 33:07

I'm telling you get you a friend who bring you a book. And the thing is pecan bars when she knows that your friendship really busy. Yes, absolutely.

**Kaytee Cobb** 33:16

I love that. All

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 33:17

right. So those are our current reads. That's a mixed bag. It's a lot of metal, different metaphors that we put in there. So we've got a lot there. There's something for everyone in there for sure. All right, we're gonna do a deep dive today. That was my idea. And I was I may have had COVID at the time that I had

this idea. Yeah, this was around the time that I was being grumpy about absolutely everything. And my idea was, let's just talk about all the tropes that I am super sick of and that you are super sick of.

**Kaytee Cobb 33:47**

Because you were like, actually sick of everything. I

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 33:51**

was really sick. It was really that that bound of COVID got it got me. Yeah. All right. So this doesn't mean that we hate all but every one of these tropes started out as being premises that I loved. True, right, that I was jumping into with both feet, let me just say that every one of them, I could give you examples of books that I really liked, that fit into this kind of trope. But it just I think, by nature of the fact that the premise or the book did so well, all of a sudden, I mean, look how many years we've been recovering from Gone Girl, and we still to this day are getting the dumb titles with Guerlain it like it's been more than a decade right. So sometimes we get into these grooves in genre fiction that we can't seem to get out of. So here these are a few that I wish that we could get out of. Kaytee, what was the first one that you thought of when I crankily, said that we should talk about this? Well,

**Kaytee Cobb 34:44**

the first one that I thought of is within the romance genre. And I feel like I'm already on the record as saying this but it just makes me so mad. It makes me want to DNF a book even though obviously it started in a good place. The miscommunication trope where the I literally one small correction and a conversation could eliminate the entire conflict. It just makes me so mad when people are not clear with each other. Or like when the person says the thing, and you could just be like, actually, it wasn't quite like that. And that would solve it all.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:18**

The thing is, I can't think of a single person who says, You know what trope I love. The miscommunication question like, can you I can't think of anyone who's like, I'm all in for that. I love it when that happens in my books.

**Kaytee Cobb 35:31**

I mean, if that's you, please do let us know. Yeah, I will be very interesting. Maybe it's a reflection of what's happening in that person's outside life and they want to see it play out with a happy ending by the end. Like maybe that's why you would like that trip,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:46**

or, or it's a bunch of Enneagram nines who are like, I understand how that happened. I too, could live with a miscommunication for ever for decade just Yeah, and just not saying it wrong. So maybe maybe that I think I have heard people say, well, it's not a deal breaker for me if that's in my book, you know, but I haven't so, like, you'll hear people say like, I love enemies to lovers, I will seek out enemies, two lovers.

**Kaytee Cobb 36:13**

Is that one of my love journeys to lovers.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:15

I hate friends to lovers. Yeah, I'm not as crazy about friends lovers, either.

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:19

I love enemies to lovers, though. Yeah, if they hate each other at the beginning. Oh, bring it on. Yeah, right.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:24

Exactly. It's always going to be more interesting to me. Now, has it been done and done again and done? 10 different ways? Yes. But that's a trope that I see people seeking out as opposed to miscommunication. You know, when I'm completely done with an I like, I'm to the point, I'm so done with it, that when I hear a book come out, and I see someone or hear someone on a podcast, say I'm all in like, put this in my veins, I'm like, out loud, really, really, the trope about friends from childhood, going on a trip together. And then secrets coming out because they murdered someone in high school or college. Did everyone kill somebody?

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:07

And how come we weren't invited to those parties?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:09

Right? I mean, there are so many February books coming out in February where this is, here it is they went to high school together. And then 20 years later, they're reuniting because one of the group got murdered or Yeah. And so now we all have to go back to where it happened. And secrets will come out. I do not understand how this is still a thing. Again, the first few genius, brilliant, but now it just feels like this is just not possible that so many people were a party to a murder in early college. Like just go do your homework.

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:49

Well, and they all have the exact same title. It's like the girl in the lake. The girls at the cabin. The girl like well in

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:57

these, these will all be like everyone knew something. Secret never die. We all lied. One of us is lying. You're lying all bed. I know who's lying. Yeah. Your mom knows who's lying. Yes. And she just never said anything. So it Yes, I'm that that trope actually makes my blood boil at this point.

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:22

I like that. I completely agree. Because it does feel like we got so many books that were like that for so long. Yeah. And they're still out there. Right you in the things? Okay, my murder one is I'm really tired of unreliable narrators that are based on the protagonist being drunk or drugged out of their minds. Like I don't mind finding out that our narrator was unreliable. But we had the one, you know, which I don't know if it's a spoiler, so I'm not going to name it. But if you write it, you know, it's the one from 15 years ago or so. Right? And then it feels like every book was like that, where it turns out that the what what

the person saw they were this, that or the other and can we trust them? Because they're always drunk or they're always high or they're always done it like, I don't want to I don't want to read it anymore. I'm so bored with that, like, give us a new reason to doubt our narrator sure, but I don't want to read that anymore. It's boring to me, right? Anytime.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 39:17

addiction or mental illness is the gotcha moment at the end. It's just, it's just played out. The other thing for me is siblings who have moved away from their family home and then have to go back to their family. They're drawn back to their family home where something horrible has happened. A murder, a double murder, a haunting a puppet on a homicidal spree. This is just been done so much. No, I think how to sell a haunted house is an example of a book that does that really, really well and in kind of a meaningful way. So if that is interesting to you, I would say that's a really good example of this. But this we're siblings and we don't want to go home but we have to go home Home. And now we're looking in closets and finding things that like, again, how is it that your child's parents got murdered? Like, where? Why is that happening? Or why are all of your homes haunted, and maybe you knew it back then. But you moved away and forgot about it and just left mom and dad, they're like, good luck with the Phantasm in the closet. There's

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:22

a grownups, they can handle it. I do still think of your parents as the grownups.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:26

Not my parents.

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:27

But I bet Devin, who now has two children is like, good thing. My mom's a grown up and she knows what she's doing. Sometimes I feel like that about you and me in our business. I'm like, what good thing married is the grown up?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:42

Right. And as the resident grown up in a lot of people's lives in my life, let me just say, there are no grown. It's all a mixed. It's a fantasy that we've concocted.

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:54

See. That's a good story, though. But yeah, siblings

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:57

that needs to be put to rest. Fair,

**Kaytee Cobb** 41:01

fair. I like that. I like that one. The next one I want to talk about isn't the fantasy realm. It's the Chosen One fantasy. Yeah. I didn't love a chosen one fantasy. I'm tired of reading them. I like I like an unlikely hero. I like a morally gray lead. I like somebody that toes the line between both worlds. I like a coming of age story where they don't know what kind of powers they have. But I'm tired of like, well, the



prophecy was written 100 years ago, and you are the fulfillment. I'm all done with that. I don't need any more of that. Want some unexpectedness? Now? Yep, with my fantasy, right. And so

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:41

along those lines, I completely agree with you. Along those lines. I also am really done with heroine discovers her magic powers or her magic powers were hidden all of this time and everyone, like they had to hide them from everyone as she was like, you know, lighting bushes on fire. And we're just acting like nobody knows. Nobody understood that that child was a little, you know, so

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:06

I know that like the Elsa complex from frozen. Right?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:09

Exactly. The hidden powers and borders. You know, when I get to a place and all of a sudden my power start coming through, like I've tuned into the proper radio station and all of a sudden, my powers are coming through.

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:22

Yeah, the location. I thought you meant like Menzies? Yeah,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:25

no, like a location. Okay. Because again, we're back to the same trope of I returned to this land this particular like acre of land.

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:34

Returning to a location that's that we're out on that completely. I see. I

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:40

might have another one. Are you ready? This one is more wrong, call me but it's along those same lines, the 20 Something woman who loses her job in the big city and moves back home to run family business, capital F, capital B, again, why can't mom and dad keep the pie shop running? Like why are mom and dad such woeful business failures, that their children have to leave their jobs in the big city and come back home and run the cobbler? And

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:07

why do we all want to hire our failure children that lost their jobs? Right? Like what about that whole aspect? If this person got fired in the big city? Why do you want them running your mom and pop shop? That's not a that's not a good thing? Yeah, exactly. I'm with your money.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:22

Exactly. Exactly. And then and then then nobody knows what they're doing in the cobbler is going to go completely out of business and the town will no longer have a cobbler.

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:32

And you mean cobbler like a shoe maker? Right?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:34

I do. Okay,

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:35

yeah. I'm not sure who makes peach cobbler. Okay. I just like that. We're talking about a literal Shoemaker. Yes, I like it. Yeah. But again,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:44

We're returning. It's the it's the return home element I wanted, you know, let's quest a little bit more. Let's get into the era we're

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:52

requesting out. Yes. Go on the adventure.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:55

I live at home. And then I get a secret letter in the mail or a surprise letter in the mail that tells me I need to go to Aruba. And let's let something happen there. Right. Yeah, I like that would be different that it wouldn't be something different.

**Kaytee Cobb** 44:08

Okay. I like it. I, I only have one more thing to add. And, again, it's something I'm on the record about, but I need like a Pavlovian situation to keep me away from it. And it's satire, like we talked about last week. I would like anybody to just feel free to pinch that really tender spot on my underarm. If I look at a book that says the word satire anywhere in the description, it's a style of writing. It's not a trope, but just be like, Kaytee, we know that you are obstinate. This book is not for you and just Pavlovian like little pinch so that I associate it with a bad feeling. Because actually reading it, it's bad feeling and I'm not getting it into my head. So ready to be well with that,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 44:49

right. You need like one of those snapping bracelet. Yeah, the rubber band, right. I mean, really, all of these tropes that we're talking about fall into the same category of, okay, so I'm naming all of these things. You know, that I'm so done with, I need to be sure that I stay away from books that tropes because they make themselves very clear, right? Like they're, they're not going to sneak up on you. And so I need to be sure that I'm not then doubling down on it and being like, well, maybe this will be a truly interesting new version. I do have just two more that I want to go over. I think I'm finally done with anything that centers around a podcast. Because the podcast kind of stick has become the new, something happened 20 years ago. Let's examine it. It's become the new catalyst for that,

**Kaytee Cobb** 45:37

especially true crime podcast shows. Exactly, exactly.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 45:40

And a lot of this is happening. Let me just remind everybody, why do we constantly need to be drawn back to something that happens in the past because every mystery writer wants to get pre iPhone with their plotlines. Because DNA, touch DNA, familial DNA, iPhones, traffic cams, interlaced police forces and databases, all of these things have changed crime so completely, that unless you write something that happened 3040 50 years ago, you get stuck in trying to have to figure out how to make it work. And that's becoming increasingly difficult. So you see people either placing their crimes far in the past or placing them, it's a dystopian now, it's in the future, right? Now we can like

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:27

make their way we got to get rid of those things, right? We or we can just make things

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:32

up that subvert them. Right. Right. So that and then the last one, I will mention, and I truly will not pick up a book that starts with the looks like they had the perfect life, or from the outside. They seem to have it all.

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:48

So this is like perfect marriage, that's actually a disaster. Right?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:52

They're murdering people together. They're both cheating on each other and then murdering the other people, their their children are going missing because everything was so perfect. And that is something that I'm not like as soon as I read that on the back of a book, I will just set it back down on the shelf because that trope is completely played out. Yes, thriller genre especially.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:12

Yes, I agree with that one big, big I agree with that, for sure. So

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:17

we have to know ourselves. And you can you we preach this all the time. But it is the single biggest mission for me of this podcast is to encourage people to be present in what their reading kind of mood or cravings are. Because it might be different to than what you were craving six months ago, a year ago, two years ago, embrace the fact that you've changed or moved on from something or might be craving something totally different. And if you're sick of certain tropes, totally open yourself up to new authors, new genres, totally new ways of doing things. Because that may be a way you know, for me, I think wanting to talk about all of this and being so cranky about it tells me that I've been reading too many mysteries and thrillers that have been keeping me in this little bubble. And I really am feeling the need to kind of break out into new and different constructs and authors and settings and just doing something totally different. Yeah,

**Kaytee Cobb** 48:16

I agree. The other tagline for currently reading could be reader know thyself, right. And that's exactly what this is where we talk about the tropes that we hate, and maybe you heard one that you're like, oh,

my gosh, I want more of that thing in my reading life. And that is great, because now you know yourself better. As a reader. We're not saying Nobody's allowed to read this. We're saying no, we don't want to read it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 48:36

Right. We're not saying nobody should read it. We're not saying these books are bad. We're not saying these tropes are bad. All we're saying is that there has been enough of these that have come across our desks or into our eyes or ears, that we're ready to do something different. But yeah, certainly a great way to use this episode would be to be like, Hey, I am super interested in this miscommunication

**Kaytee Cobb** 48:59

trope.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 49:00

I love it. Give me more of it. Right. All right. Kaytee. So we talked about some things that we don't want to see anymore. Let's now turn our attention to the positive and talk about some things that we do want to see. Let's make some wishes at the fountain.

**Kaytee Cobb** 49:15

Okay, read it. This sounds really fun. I'm very excited. I wish to give all our listeners the heads up about Booktenders in West Virginia. We just released this month, our 36th episode of the indie press list. We are three years and three full years of partnering with local independent bookstores often with phenomenal success. The bookish friends as a buying force work some amazing magic with their actual dollars every month and this month to celebrate our three year anniversary. We are weepy with joy at the way that the little bookstore that could was lavished upon book tenders is in Huntington, West Virginia. It jumped on all of our radars in a huge way this week and the owners Ashley and Mandy as well as their small staff including the shop dog buddy have been hard at work packing up hundreds of have orders from all over the country. They gave us a phenomenal list of five books that blew us all away. And we're very proud of the way that the bookish friends showed up for them this week, and the way that we have been able to change the trajectory for so many bookstores around the United States. But this one, especially like, it's just, it's such a little shop. It's in a little town, in a little state, like everything is little. And yet they brought huge, amazing titles to us that most of us had not heard of, which is so phenomenal. It's why we do the indie press list and book tenders especially they just like they deserve a big fat trophy for the way that they handled us. That because they had to handle us in a big way. They didn't this month, and the way that they have now handled this huge influx of business and orders from all over the country. So that's my wish being splashed. Go check out Booktenders. Yes,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:54

they are wonderful. And that indie press list stack was worth the price of admission, for sure. And anytime we can really move the needle on, you know, a business by sending them hundreds and hundreds of orders. It just feels really, really good. But that only happens. You know, this isn't a charity thing that only happens when they give us a you know, a great stack of books and the they hit it out of the park.

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:17

Yeah, it was pretty, it was pretty special 36 episodes of the indie press list. That's awesome.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:22

That is awesome. That is awesome. All right, Kaytee, my wish this week is that we would get more content around books that isn't just the marketing blurb and the author kind of going out on the tour. And what I mean is, I think I'm not going to say every book, but I think most books that have any sort of marketing machine behind them should have a book trailer. So I don't necessarily mean a trailer that's like a movie that like dramatized is that that's not what I'm saying, let's be more creative than that. There's so many different ways that we could use the video medium, to put together 90 seconds that are going to make a reader want to lick the screen of their laptop, they want that book so badly, right? There are a lot of different ways that you can do that for any genre of book, whether it's author interviews, or plot summary, or my other idea is if for any reason, you don't want to do a trailer like that. Then put together a reel that gives you like a vision board feeling a mood board, a mood board, so Holly BirdBrainbooks, one of our bookish friends and a great follow on Instagram. She also is one of the two co hosts of the Hearts and Dagger pod podcast, which I love every once in a while she does moodboards for a book, and it makes me so happy. And I just feel like it's all vibes. Like what Holly's doing is all vibes. She doesn't work for that book. She doesn't work for that publisher. She's not you know, she's just putting together the vibes of that book and making you go, do you want to feel like this? Get this book. So using colors and music and images. I feel like book marketing needs to go away from just a blurb and then sending the author out on a book tour. We need more mean if every good reads page for story graph page also included the book trailer or the book moodboard. That would add I think so many people would be like, ooh, now. Okay. Hang on a minute. Now. I'm interested. Right. Yeah. Especially, I mean, I hate stock generationally. But Gen Z's Gen Alpha. You know, y'all are visual visual people, you know, that you would rather see a visual than read just, you know, I'd say you don't read but you know, as far as what is going to quickly get you into something. I just feel like this is something that I wish we would see a lot more of Louise Penny just released her cut her new cover for her new book, which comes out at the end of October. It's called The Grey Wolf. She spells Grey properly, like my grandson's name, I got the nod. Louise Thank you. And it's such a good cover. And she just did the, Minotaur is her publisher. They just did like a super quick twenty second cover reveal. That like gave me all of the chills. Like, let's do this people.

**Kaytee Cobb** 54:28

Yes. 100%. Yes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 54:30

How do we get this message to the public? Well, you know what, I'll talk I'm going and I'm going to start talking to authors. When I go to The Hamptons who done it. I'm going to say everyone please come to my mini TED talk. My TED talks about about covers, cover reveals and mood boards and trailers for your books. Thank

**Kaytee Cobb** 54:51

you very much. Yeah. All right. That's

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 54:52

my wish ping splash.

**Kaytee Cobb** 54:54

I like it. I like it a lot. I feel like this could be another business that comes off of a fountain wish though like Somebody could be out there as a business idea, saying I will partner with you publisher, all you got to do is, you know, give me the fields you want to evoke. And I will make these one minute videos that you can put out for each of your titles that are releasing. I feel like this is there's some good ideas here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 55:18

Yeah. Or if I'm an author, I'm working with someone who's the current day equivalent of a sketch artist, and I'm sitting with them and going, Okay, here's the vibe. Here's the music I was playing when I was writing it. Here's my playlist. Here's the color palette that keeps appearing to me. And then that super visual, super talented person takes all those vibes and makes it into a real that is a mood board. And then voila, and it just one minute. Like literally, I'm not talking about a 10 minute thing. It's a quick thing,

**Kaytee Cobb** 55:49

right? Yeah. All right. I think it's perfect. Somebody start this business, let us know. We'll talk about it. Yes, absolutely.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 55:54

All right. That is it for this week of big feelings and big opinions. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me I'm Meredith at @MeredithMondaySchwartz on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:05

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:08

full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in the episode and timestamps, so you can zoom right where we talked about it can be found on our website at [currentlyreadingpodcast.com](http://currentlyreadingpodcast.com).

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:18

You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram or email us at [currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com). And

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:25

if you want more of this content, there is so much more if you want to join us as a bookish friend. It's only \$5 a month, and you will get all kinds of content and community. You can also help us by rating and reviewing us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. Every one of those things helps us to find our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:46



bookish friends are the best friends. Thank you all for helping us grow and get closer to our goals.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:52

All right, until next week, may your coffee be hot

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:55

and your book be unputdownable.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:56

Happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:58

Happy reading Meredith