



Season 6, Episode 30: Roxanna and Mary Take Over + Tropes They Want To See More Of

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Roxanna Kassam Kara 00:11

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 already know, we don't shy away from having strong opinions. So get ready.

Mary Heim 00:23

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.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 00:33

I'm Roxana Kassam Kara, a mom, a marketer and a mood reader living in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. And I feel like the grownups have gone on vacation and left me and Mary in

Mary Heim 00:37

charge. And I'm Mary Heim, a therapist and mom of one living in Wisconsin, and I am having one of those rare weeks where both my audio and paper book are absolutely killing it. And there is nothing better. This is episode number 30 of season six. And we are so glad you're here. And if you'll notice who's not here this week, just like Roxanna said we've got a first ever right Meredith and Kayteeless episode. That's right, friends, it is just Roxanna and me today. While Meredith and Kaytee are off on a business retreat, taking well deserved time to rest and do some strategic planning for the podcast. We have happily stepped in to try and fill their giant shoes while they're away. Like Roxanna said, feels like mom and dad went on vacation and left the house. And

Roxanna Kassam Kara 01:30

we've got a kegger in the basement.

Mary Heim 01:34

And now we have to clean it up before they get home. Either way, Roxanna, I am so excited to record with you today. This is gonna be so fun.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 01:43

Me too. I think we're gonna fumble our way through things a bit, but we are so excited to record together and we've got some great bookish gems for you. So today we are excited to deep dive into

tropes we want to see more of. So this is a follow up on Meredith and Kaytee's episode a few weeks ago where they talked about tropes they wanted to see less of, and we wanted to talk about the tropes we are lovingly so now let's start the episode The way we always do. Talking about our bookish moments, Mary, I think I know what yours is, but let's share it with all the listeners.

Mary Heim 02:13

I think you can probably guess Roxanna, Yes. So Okay, last time I was on the podcast with Kaytee. She mentioned that she had officially completed teaching Onalee to read and recommended a book called Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons. I have noticed lately that my preschooler has been showing signs of reading readiness. We've been casually starting to practice reading and sounding out words when we see them in the world. She's such a book kid anyways. So of course, ever the plan lover than I am, I immediately went and ordered the book that Kaytee had recommended as soon as we finished that episode, and this past week, we officially started reading School, which is like, it's so cute. I just cannot tell you how much I was beaming inside. As we started our first little lesson. It was so much fun to see my daughter so excitedly engage with reading and starting to feel this like power and autonomy that comes with reading for yourself. Of course, it's still early days. I'm not in a rush to force this on any timeline. But hands down. This is like the biggest moment in my life. I was so so thrilled that it just worked out perfectly that I get to share that today. It's so much fun.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 03:24

I love that Mary, I saw your Instagram post and I was so so excited for you raising a reader is so magical. My daughter is a big reader too. And it's just something we share together that I really, really love.

Mary Heim 03:38

I love that. Oh, I love it. What about you, Roxanna, what's your bookish moment this week?

Roxanna Kassam Kara 03:42

So for my bookish moment today, I actually thought I would bring a book a murdererful book, Mary. Oh, because Meredith's not here. So I feel like I owe it to her in all our murderful listeners. Now. I'm not bringing this as a full setup because I haven't finished this book, but I wanted to share it with everybody because I've started it and I'm really loving it so far. So it's called The Unspeakable Acts of Zina Pavlou and its by Eleni Kyriacou, so this one takes place in London in 1954. So Zina Pavlou is a grandmother from Cyprus, and she is charged with bludgeoning her daughter in law to death, and then setting her body on fire. This is not what I normally read. But the interesting thing is that the defendant, Zina only speaks Greek, so she can't defend herself to the police. She can't communicate anything to them. So then we meet Eva Georgiou, who is a Greek interpreter for the Metropolitan Police, and she's brought into the case to be seen as translator. She knows how it feels to be a voiceless immigrant woman. And as she gets to know Zina, their bond grows and her obsession with the case deepens. So you know, all the way through, you're wondering, is Zina a victim? Or is she killer? And I thought this was really interesting. It's inspired by a true story. It's a historical crime drama with really complicated kind of unlikable characters. You don't know who to trust all the way through And what I love most is learning about translating for criminals, which honestly I hadn't really thought of, and the complex role that translation and interpretation play and giving voice to a victim and the outcome of a case. So this book

was actually selected by a member of my book club Anna. Hi, Anna, who is looking for more books written by Greek authors. And so I thought I would bring this one it has an amazing 4.29 score on Goodreads, which is, you know, big for crime drama, and was selected for BBC Two's between the cover book club in 2023. So for any of those who are interested, pick this one up. It's a little bit under the radar and be sure to report back Oh, wow,

Mary Heim 05:37

that's a really unusual one. You're right. Those are lots of tropes that we I feel like don't see much of I mean, I don't read a ton of crime drama anyways, but Roxana way to tie into our deep dive right off the bat, I love it.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 05:49

Okay, Mary, let's get started. Why don't you share your first book with everyone? Okay,

Mary Heim 05:53

so Roxanna, my first book this week is called Impossible reatures by Katherine Renudell, and I'm going to admit something here. I initially bought this book with zero concept of the plotline, because of the beautiful cover and sprayed edges. This is a Waterstone's book of the year in the UK for 2023. And when I saw Bookstagram friends showing off her gorgeous, colorful, Dragon filled edges, it's like I blacked out. And before I knew it, this one was just showing up from its transatlantic flight on my doorstep. I just bought it it was like an impulse. So luckily, it was a winner for me, and when I'm really glad to have on my bookshelf here is the setup. A boy named Christopher is visiting his grandfather when he witnesses an avalanche of mythical creatures come tearing down the hill outside of his home. Meanwhile, a girl called Mal is in possession of a Magic Flying coat a baby Griffin. And oh yes, she's being pursued by a murderer, Christopher and Mal find their way into Mal's magical world, the archipelago, a land protected by the borders of Christopher's grandfather's home, and the only place on Earth where magical creatures still roam free. But something terrible is happening there, the magic is slowly being lost. And nobody knows exactly why. Together, they embark on a quest to save Mal's, beloved magical creatures and save the magic itself before our entire world suffers the consequences. Now, if it weren't clear from that setup, this is middle grade. And if I were reading with my reading this from the perspective of a child reader glasses on, this is practically perfect in every way. As an adult reader, there were some times where I felt like a few too many things are going on few to little instances of having them fully fleshed out. But truly, I recognized that while I enjoyed it so thoroughly, I'm not the target audience. And so in fact, for the target audience, I think this level of action and this level of time spent on each scene is perfectly right to hold a young reader's attention. My teeny, tiny, miniscule criticism here isn't for the book itself. It's actually just me saying I loved what was happening in this and I wanted more of this, I would love to have read like an adult perspective of this story. I wanted more of this world this quest, I wanted it in adult format. And the fact that it was written for more of a middle grader is not the books fault. Right? It's nobody's fault. The book itself was still I would still say like, excellent for any age, right? But just be mindful of the target audience when you're going into any book that you know, you're not the target audience for write of who this is written for, you know, middle graders, it's more important their enjoyment than my total kind of perfect star rating. The ending I did think was absolute perfection. There's actually a bonus story set within the same world included at the end of my copy that made me want to hug this book. It is beautiful. It's a beautiful allegory for the

preciousness and adventure of life itself. Without whacking you over the head with some moral. I can see why this one has had such a moment in the UK and I can only hope it gets some of the same do here across the pond. That is Impossible Creatures by Katherine Rundell.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 08:59

Okay, and what grade would you say this is for? Like when you say middle grade Mary,

Mary Heim 09:03

I'd say like eight to 10, maybe eight to eight to 12 I'd hand it to my nieces and nephews who are nine and 10. Easily, like there's nothing here that I'd be like, Oh, be careful of who you're giving it to. It deals with. Like there's a murder right there is like there's like some heavy scenes but it's handled lightly, gently. Not like scary or overwhelming. I think it'd be perfect for the eight and up crowd.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 09:30

Okay, and okay, that's perfect, cuz I'm thinking about Kieren. And she actually complains that middle grade sometimes does not have enough murder for her. She, she is Meredith through and through. So I'm thinking this one might be perfect for her.

Mary Heim 09:46

Yes, there it's it's light on the murderer. Yes, good. But I still think there's like threat of there's danger looming in this story. So I think it'd be perfect for carrying your little Meredith Oh, I love that. Okay, Roxana, what is your first book this week? Okay, so

Roxanna Kassam Kara 10:04

I saved this one, Mary, because I really wanted to bring it when we were recording because I think it'll be a perfect fit for you and for actually many of our listeners. So this is called The Undertaking of Heart and Mercy by Megan Bannen, have you heard about this one? Mary,

Mary Heim 10:18

I know this book, I started it and set it aside. It was a not right now for me. But the premise is thought on for me as a human being. I can't wait to hear your thoughts.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 10:29

Okay. And I will say Meredith told me a lot of people recommended it to her too. So if you're Meredith reader, or actually Kaytee reader, I think this is a book with broad appeal. So this was a five star read for me. It's a genre mashup book that is part fantasy, part romance, part mystery. It's got plenty of action, as well as character development. But really, this book is all about the vibes. So here's my attempt, think Nora Ephron sat down to write, You've Got Mail, after binging The Walking Dead. That's how I would describe this book, and then read Under the Whispering Door, because that it's three of those things all mixed together. So here's the setup. Mercy is our heroine. She's the Kathleen Kelly in the story. But instead of running a small bookstore, she rents a small funeral parlor, and is the undertaker she loves her job and finds loss of purpose in it. There's lots of funeral details here. And our hero is Heart. He is the Joe fox of the story. But instead of a big businessman, he's a marshal in this land of Tamriel. Patrolling the Borderlands and shooting the undead whose numbers keep mysteriously

increasing this book starts is *You've Got Mail*, but it is not a straight retelling. And in fact, it goes far past that, as heart and mercy have to solve the mystery of why the undead keep appearing. And whether a global conspiracy relating to big funeral business may be at its heart. So instead of big data, this is like big death, I guess. But this is not a dark book. It's more like the Tim Burton version, though there is some gore and I should also say there are some spicy scenes, mercy and heart are amazing together. They're kind of an enemies to lovers story. They're super well developed characters. But I love the side characters as well. They're really well developed. Especially Mercy's large and loving family and hearts partner out on the *Borderlands*. The story moves at a great pace. But I also felt like I really knew these people. And they were my family, which really in a story with this much plot. You know, the side characters you don't always feel are part of the story, but I really love them, especially that that loud family each of them has their own plotline and struggle they're going through, but it works together. So seamlessly. This book is listed as a romance. But it is much more than that. It starts off as a romance. But it really goes much more into sort of this plot heavy kind of pacing, and then it goes really someplace you don't expect it much more into under the whispering door. And it left me thinking long after I close the pages. So if you want something to blast you out of a winter slump, this is the book for you. That's *The Undertaking of Heart and Mercy* by Megan Bannen. I'm going to be honest with you, Roxanna. I can't remember when I started this one and set this down. And it was like okay, I know this is gonna work for me. It was just like work was busy or something else. And now you're like, can I am feeling the feelings of I need to go restart this immediately. Everything you said made me so excited to pick this one back up. Oh, I can't wait to read it. It is really good. It is really good. Now if you went in not knowing it was a fantasy. There's not a ton of world building. But you might be a bit discombobulated, right, you might be like, and I can see if you're busy. You'd be like what there's a funeral house there in this land, what's going on. So just give it a few pages. And it doesn't take a lot it like the beginning you might be a little bit confused. But honestly, within the first 20, 30 pages, you get it and you're in. So but just you do have to give it a few pages to really kind of get

Mary Heim 14:04

yourself settled in the world. That feels like a good thing to be aware of. For anyone who's picking this one up. I love it. Okay, my second book this week is *A Woman in the Polar Night* by Christiane Ritter. This is actually a classic text in translation first published in the 1930s. And I'm going to be honest with you it apparently right it's one of these books that's got a million reviews on Goodreads and I was like How have I never heard this book before. Our author Christiane Ritter accompanied her husband to live for one year in the remote island of Spitsbergen, which is now Svalbard in the Arctic Circle. Ritter's husband was a trapper who had lived in Spitsbergen for many years while she and their daughter resided in Austria, and at his request, she joins him to be the housewife for himself and his Trapper Powell in a tiny desolate cabin in the middle of truly nowhere. At first, our narrator believes that this will be a relaxing trip. A, quote, chance to read thick books in the remote quiet, and not least sleep to my heart's content, unquote. But she quickly learned that this is not the case, at least not in the middle of the Arctic in the 1930s. I first read this book in the deepest, darkest, coldest days of January in Wisconsin. And even though we've been kind of playing at Spring lately, it was the perfect book to read in this kind of dark tundra months that we had. The sense of place in this memoir is, of course, the best part about it, Ritter describes the absolute stunning beauty of the sparseness and true wilderness of the Arctic Circle in such a visceral way, I actually follow a few creators who live in the Svalbard area on Instagram. So I had a little context to the expectation of the landscape. But whereas these creators

hunker down in their twinkle light lit homes with their cozy coffees and their warm fires, and their Wi Fi Ritter describes an Arctic that is truly untouched by the world, and much more challenging, of course, than she ever anticipated for being a book written in the 30s. This one was still incredibly accessible to read. And this story truly stands the test of time. While it's described as a modern classic by the publisher, it was really an under the radar find for me, and I'm so thrilled to hopefully be able to share it today with anybody else who was living under a rock unaware of this one like myself, and if you're a mood reader, like I am, wait for those few last snowy nights that we're going to have right in the next couple of months. Or let's say you don't live in the north, then, you know, just read it and feel those feelings of Arctic chill. Maybe in the middle of summer, I don't know that is A Woman in the Polar Night by Christiane Ritter. And this is one Roxanna that I was like, Oh, I am really excited to share with Roxanna because I feel like it's going to be for you. Oh, my

Roxanna Kassam Kara 16:46

God, I was just gonna say How have I not heard of this book? You know, I love memoirs about women doing crazy things like, and this is a modern classic and have not heard of it. Like this sounds amazing.

Mary Heim 16:58

It was so so good. I think I don't know. I'm just spitballing here. But I think because it's in translation. I believe it was originally written in German. I'm not sure but either way that it is in translation. I think maybe, like was this a you know, classic in Austria and Germany? And is it maybe less so over here? Who knows? But either way, I would love to hear your thoughts. If you read it. I think this one is going to be for you for sure.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 17:25

Yeah, this will for sure. Be on my TBR I'll you know I live in Toronto. So we are also having spring like weather. But generally around March we get like another blast. So I'll keep it ready on my Kindle for that

Mary Heim 17:38

moment. tuck it away. Yeah, I love it.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 17:40

I love that. Okay, well, my next book is another one I wanted to discuss with you, Mary. It's Hello Stranger by Katherine Center. So, you know, I am a Katherine Center completest Mary, you and I both loved her first one Happiness for Beginners. And I think I've read every one since then, and really love them. But I'm sad to say that this book was not such a hit for me. So here's the setup. Sadie Montgomery is a budding artist who's thrilled to have placed as a finalist in the North American portrait society competition. So she has to create a masterpiece of a portrait to submit. But before she can do that she faces a medical issue that requires her to undergo brain surgery, Sadie wakes up for surgery to find her worst possible feet. She has a condition called face blindness where she can't recognize faces. So as she's dealing with this medical and emotional crisis, she meets two men, and she's drawn to both of them instantly. But then, of course, she's torn between them. And she can't really see or recognize either of their faces. And the story goes from there. So you know, I usually love Centers, books, and they often revolve around a big episode like this. Usually a woman facing a big challenge. Whether that's a quest to climb a mountain, or a big accident and injury or a new challenging job. This premise, I

will admit sounded a bit preposterous to me. But I thought, well, it's Katherine Center. So let me go in and see what she does with it. But I just felt it didn't really work for me. It felt gimmicky, and was filled with coincidences that really stretched believability. The end particularly relies on a huge twist that the reader sees coming, and it feels a bit ridiculous, you know, and I am the kind of reader who never sees anything coming. I never puzzle anything out and I'm always shocked. And this one I was like, Okay, I know where this is going. And maybe she meant it. You know, maybe you're maybe she meant it to build up anticipation for this. Like maybe it wasn't a twist. You were supposed to see it coming but I think just felt so beyond credibility that I couldn't really be invested in it. Now, you know, Center really did her research about face blindness. There's an author's note where she talks about it, but it just felt kind of weird, you know, all the plot twists, and not necessarily in a good way. So there was some great characters in this you know, Her dog peanut is so fun. Her best friend and their family are great. But also some characters is always one character in a Katherine Center novel that's a bit kind of cold and, you know, very two dimensional. And here it was her stepsister Parker, who is really a villain. And, you know, very cool to the point on believability, like somebody who's going through a big medical diagnosis and can't recognize you, you're just gonna keep sneaking up on her and then telling her how much she sucks like it just felt a bit like okay, you know, and so I'm in the end, I'm sorry to say, This one didn't come together for me, but I will say it did work for a lot of people. It has a four star rating on goodreads and some people really like you know, heard that premise and really loved it. So if that's you, then pick it up because it might be the perfect read for you know, Katherine Center is an auto buy author for me and I will for sure pick up her next one. But for those of you who are thinking of trying her and have not read something by her, I would go to her backlist. She is a really great backlist. And I would encourage you really to pick up any of those books you know, Happiness for Beginners as the first one and then go through any of them. They're great. Have you read this one? Mary?

Mary Heim 21:06

I have I read this one last year, I had nearly a Katherine Center completest it's I read Happiness for Beginners. And then I jumped to her more recent like when she started having these beautiful flowery covers, not Things You Save in a Fire but the red what's the red one? Oh, I

Roxanna Kassam Kara 21:23

was thinking of things you save in a fire. Now I gotta look careful what you wish for or something I can I can ever remember the title, How to Walk Away?

Mary Heim 21:31

Yes. Okay, so that's where I jumped over maybe two or three in between happiness for beginners and how to walk away. And I've loved from how to walk away on I need to go back and read some of those other ones that came out after happiness for beginners. But again, happiness for beginners is my favorite of hers. It was my first I think it's just so so good. She writes really just wonderful romances they're very close door. So if you're like, I don't want spice Katherine Center is good for you. This one I remember enjoying. But the whole time I was like, if I'm going to enjoy this book at all, I need to suspend my disbelief in a big way. And so when I decided to do that, I enjoyed it more. But I will agree with you. I saw the twist from the first introduction. Yeah, I was like, oh, obviously, obviously, this is what's happening and the fact that it then took the whole book for it to be I was like, come on, like there's gotta be something else. And it didn't it didn't challenge my enjoyment because I think I just

decided okay, I'll just roll with this. But I agree with you. Our villain drove me crazy. Is like what adult treats another adult like this? Cut her out of your life. I did enjoy it. It's definitely not her best I agree with you don't start there. Start with happiness for beginners things you save in a fire, how to walk away. Those are all really great ones. And I've got her next one on my Kindle. It's coming out soon. I have an galley from Net Galley. And I haven't read that one yet. But she's a perfect like spring transition read for me, you know? Yeah.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 23:12

So that's a really good point. And you know, you're right, because even *The Bodyguard* was really one to suspend your disbelief. But I loved that book. Like I was really able to suspend my disbelief maybe because it was post pandemic and I just wanted something really light and happy. And that when I read a couple times because it really hits a spot for me. So you're right, if you're able to suspend your disbelief, you might make this one more you know,

Mary Heim 23:33

I think something else I think that maybe made me enjoy this one a little bit more, was it the author's note at the end, or she recently had where she talks about like the point of romance is to read a happily ever after the point of like, predictability is not necessarily a bad thing in books, right? Sometimes it's something to lean on. It's something to enjoy. It's this idea of I'm gonna go to my favorite restaurant and order my favorite meal because I know that it's going to satisfy right and she talked about that so beautifully in her author's note that I was like, oh, yeah, right. Like I'm allowed to just enjoy a predictable book. You know, like that is okay. And Katherine Center herself I find her so lovely. She just as she just seems like a joy and really seems to love her readers and is very engaged online. And so I'm like all in on Katherine Center, even if her books are always at the same five star level for me.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 24:28

I hear you and she's a great follow on Instagram right. I was thinking about it. So thanks for that. That was great. Very

Mary Heim 24:33

love that. Okay, my final book today Roxanna is *The Six Deaths of the Saint* by Alix E Harrow. I very nearly didn't bring this one Roxanna because it's kind of an unusual choice. It is only 30 pages long, but holy crap. Can Alex Harrow tell an entirely fleshed out immersive and powerful story within those scant 30 pages? Here is our setup. The Saint of War spares the life of a servant girl over and over again so that she can fulfill her destiny as the kingdom's greatest warrior and protector of the king. In just 30 pages, we ride the waves of triumph and trials of a badass female night an underdog love story, a skillfully executed time loop all set in kind of an alternate medieval world that will have you gripped from the get go and won't let you go until it's over. I typically stay away from short stories in recent years, I've just learned over and over again that they just don't work for me. But this one is a massive exception to that rule. I read this back in December, and I can't think of another book that packed such a punch in such a short period of time as this one that I am still thinking about it here in almost March. I didn't expect to care about these characters. I didn't expect to be so fully transported. But I should have known better than to doubt anything written by Alix Harrow, in my reading of this one, I learned that Alix Harrow said she's working on a novel length version of this story, which you know, awesome. And also,

it's unnecessary. I can't imagine how she could possibly improve on what she's done here. But I'm for sure willing to be proven wrong and give it a try. That is *The Six Deaths of the Saint* by Alix E.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 26:12

Harrow in 30. Did you say 30 pages like it's not even no novella like that setup? Sounds like it would take so many pages,

Mary Heim 26:19

30 pages, you can sit down and read this in an hour. And I was like, Does this count? Or can you Meredith can kick me off? If I bring a 30 page book, but it was so it's definitely not under the radar because it's got a million reviews on Goodreads but it was under my radar. Never would I have been like, oh, Alix Harrow wrote a 30 page novella, if you can call it that, right. It's just a short story of standalone on my Kindle. She's just a genius. It was as developed as any well written novel, she doesn't miss use a single space. In this story. Every single piece of it is used to the utmost to move the story forward to give it real depth. I was like I if it takes a minute to realize what's going on. And then when I did, I was like, Oh my God, she's a genius. Like, I was surprised. There were twists and turns that I was not expecting, which is one of the reasons why I was a little vague in my setup, because I was like, I don't want to give anything away. It's only 30 pages. Go go read it. Because it is so fascinating. It would I just she's a genius. She's genius.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 27:30

Okay, well, this is for sure. On my list. It sounds like a great palate cleanser when you finish the book. And you know, you don't want to pick up another one quite yet. This seems like a great sort of taster to have

Mary Heim 27:39

100% Yes. All right. Roxanna, what's your last book today? Okay,

Roxanna Kassam Kara 27:44

well, my last book, Mary is, *It's Easier Than You Think: the hardest way to happiness* by Sylvia Borstein. So Mary, you convinced me to read this on our last episode, where we can sit down our top 10 books of 2023. It was on your top 10 list and just the way you described it, I kind of tucked it away thinking okay, this is going to be ready for me when I need it. And I really needed it. So here's the setup. Okay, technically, this is a guidebook on Buddhist basic teachings and principles. But what it really is, is a balm for a weary and frustrated soul. If you listen on audio, which you told me is a must. And you're right. It feels like your Jewish bubby telling you her life stories over a bowl of matzah ball soup and dropping truth bombs on you at every turn. You know, she really tells you the truth. She says, Life is full of pain and suffering. And every relationship you have will end in loss and separation. So it's not the most uplifting message. But somehow it doesn't feel that way. Because she's got this warm way of being in her voice. It's like a blanket that just wrapped up over you. And then she does say, Listen, pain is inevitable. But suffering is optional. And that suffering is manageable. And that I think I found first of all, I found it a relief for her to say listen, life is pain, just getting used to it. And that suffering is manageable. And what she says is exactly what you said in that last episode, Mary, you know, suffering comes from our resistance to a situation and we can manage that. And then she talks about how to do

that using examples from her own life. Her voice, as I said, is so comforting. It's like wrapping yourself in a big day. And her stories are really what makes this they are so insightful and they strike a chord to help you see the truth in your own life. So I found this book so helpful during a really hard unexpected time. I didn't read it like a guidebook to Buddhist teaching. Actually, when I picked up the text, I was really surprised to see that that is what it was. Uh, you know, she has a lot of principles and frameworks here. But to be honest, I didn't really pay much attention to the structure. I just let her voice stream over me and listen to her stories and her life advice and took what was helpful. And then, you know, the other stuff kind of streamed over my head, I could probably, like listen to this book eight more times and pick up different things every time I listened to it. And I, to me, I think that's how you're supposed to like it meets you where you are, and then you take from it what you can. And when you pick it up in a year or five years or 10 years, I'll meet you where you are, again, it's a great kind of touchstone for life, I think. And that's, It's Easier Than You Think, the Buddha's Way to Happiness by Sylvia Boorstein.
Roxanna,

Mary Heim 30:31

I am so thrilled. Well, I'm not thrilled that you were having a hard time and made it to find this book, I am so thrilled that this book could be here for you in hard time. I'm so thrilled that you enjoyed it. This is, you know, it was my in my top 10 books of last year, but I think it's in my top 10 books of all time. You know, it is just, you described it perfectly here. Yes, it's about Buddhism, but it's not about Buddhism, right. For me, it was really, like you said, a comforting realization, especially in this year after losing my dad of like, yeah, there's nothing that I can do to avoid the pain of life, right. But there are things that I can do to not make the suffering. So feeling insurmountable. And maybe to my fellow anxious people that's either like a that's a bomb, right? That it doesn't maybe seem comforting to say Pain is inevitable. But this realization of like, I there's nothing that I can or can't do. To avoid pain, like that's not within my control. But how I meet the pain is totally an entirely up to me. And she's so wise and her words are so beautiful and grounding. And absolutely, this is a book I'm going to read once a year, every year, right. And for sure, it is an audio and a one to listen to, like you said, I'm so thrilled that it did for you what it did for me that it was so helpful. And I've actually had a couple of bookish friends message me after our top 10 episode and say that they picked it up and loved it too. So let us both hear vos you into reading this book. If you are having a time where things feel like suffering or feel out of control, even if you're like Buddhism, I don't need a book on Buddhism. Yes, you do. You don't you just don't know you do. You just don't know it yet. Let us lovingly boss you into reading it. I'm so thrilled that it worked for you too. It was so great, I

Roxanna Kassam Kara 32:27

think actually found that message really relieving. I think in our Instagram world, we think everybody else is living perfect lives without pain. And her message that pain really is inevitable and you know, hits everybody kind of makes your shoulders go down a bit and be like, okay, then I don't have to push so hard. Like, why me? And why am I going through this not everybody goes through different versions of pain. And I just have to, you know, kind of learn how to manage my suffering. And I just found that really helpful. And then her stories, her imperfect stories, right? Like she talks about when she couldn't do that. And you know what she did instead? Like, it's not like she's holding herself up as this paragon of Buddhism. And then that I found really helpful too, because it just gave me it gives you the permission to be kind to yourself. Yeah, and I found in a hard time that was really good. Now I will say when I went

to find the audio, I couldn't find it anywhere but audible and it was an abridged version. And it was recorded in like 19 I don't know 83 or something and then like Remastered. Is that the version you listen to?

Mary Heim 33:28

So I do have it on libro.fm I wonder if that's a Canada us thing. Okay, maybe we have the license here on Libro and not in abroad. But yes, she recorded it in like the 80s and it was remastered in 96. It's, it's a backlist book Yes, that's for sure. Yes. I don't even know if Sylvia if everybody Sylvia is still around, or not, but to classic.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 33:51

Okay, so onto our deep dive my friend.

Mary Heim 33:53

Let's deep dive today. I love when you came up with this concept. Roxanna. I was like this is perfect. Immediately, like five ideas jumped right to my head of genres we want to see more of and I think Kaytee and Meredith, this discussion, let's just say this right off the bat was perfect. I think that I could probably come up with 1000 genres I want to see less. So that one absolutely so merited and also, it was really exciting to think about it in this way. What do I want to read more of what have I really loved? And don't see that much of around?

Roxanna Kassam Kara 34:27

Yeah, totally. And there were a few there specifically where I was like, you know, I would love to see the opposite of this. And then they talked at the end about how sometimes when you read the same genres over and over, you kind of see the same tropes and you get tired of them and maybe opening yourself up. And I've kind of opened myself up over the last couple of years reading more fantasy and sci fi and have discovered tropes that might be old in that genre, but to me are completely new. And so it's been really exciting because it just does feel like wow, like wakes me up completely. And then when I go back Back to my beloved genres. I've already gotten the spark of like freshness. So I'm ready to go back.

Mary Heim 35:04

I love that I hear you. So okay, what was the first one that came to mind for you that you were like this, this is what I want to read more of.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 35:11

So when Meredith and Kaytee talked about the miscommunication trope in romance and how they're so tired of it, I was like, amen, sisters. Hallelujah. Right? Yeah, I'm so tired of that, you know, there's a book I will mention that I was reading a couple years ago. And it went to the point of where the woman was sending a text message to the man, and they saw the bubbles come up, and then they would stop. And then like, that happened three times in the book, and I was ready to just fling it across the wall. Like when they're just about talk, and then they stop. Oh, so what I want to see more of is the communication.

Mary Heim 35:46

Roxanna this is on my list too? Because there's

Roxanna Kassam Kara 35:52

like, I think I feel like authors do the miscommunication to create some barrier, write some challenges. But you know what? Communication doesn't solve the problem? Those people still have issues. But at least they're clear on what the issues are. And they're trying to move towards a resolution, why don't you make that problem, the actual problem, versus just kind of the fake problem, right, like, talk about what your challenges are and what you're struggling with. And the partner might be like, well, I can't help you on that, or I'm not quite there yet. Or I hear you, but you know, I'm trying but at least you talk about it. And so two good books that I thought of that do this really well are Small Change by Roan Parrish, which is a romance I brought in the episode with Kaytee, which I really loved about the tattoo shop owner who really has some challenges around, bring her walls down. And Again, Rachel, by Marian Keyes, which I also really loved that plot doesn't depend on miscommunication. But it depends on the main characters working through their issues by communicating. And I just found that so much more satisfying, so much more refreshing, and, frankly, so much more relatable. Like, I don't look at my husband and be like, Oh, I would love to tell you something, but I'm not going to Yeah. I tell them, and we still have issues, but we work through them. Like, yeah, I can imagine as a therapist, you feel strongly about this one to marry?

Mary Heim 37:11

Yes, I literally wrote down as a full grown adult and a full time communicator. And they struggle because you're right communication doesn't solve, it doesn't magically absolve the problem. But it works you through to resolution in a way that is much more compelling to me, it is so much more interesting for me to read about how people communicate through a real problem. Instead of like, you hit the nail on the head that like I'm not interested in Oh, if I were to just say this, because that's what I feel like often the miscommunication trope books do, as soon as the character says the thing, the problem is absolved. That's going to have a word. And it's not compelling to me. So I wrote, what I want to see more of is excellent communication as a romance trope, in a book that I think does this super well, is Holiday Romance by Catherine Walsh. I'm not sure if you've read this one. Roxanna.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 38:09

I'm writing it down right now, my friend.

Mary Heim 38:10

It was the perfect, I read it this holiday season. And I think I shouted all over my Instagram, when I shared about it like, this is the book this is the holiday rom com to read this year, because they lean on, they're like abundantly clear about their issues and what is going on for them and their feelings, like they are like almost over communicate, but in like the best way possible. That was so refreshing to me. And it left so much time for the rest of the story to play out and the rest of the real life trials and tribulations of a relationship to play out. And it was so much more interesting to me, I would read the crap out of this trope, if it were more prominent. And you know, it actually ties really well into my next trope that I would like to see more of. So I'm going to roll a straight in which is married romance. And before I leave this excellent communication trope behind, I will just say I'm 34 movie 35 In a couple of months, I am like well and truly beyond. With all due respect to our 20 Something listeners, I let read

lots of 20 Something romance novel books when I was in my 20s and now I could not care. I'm like give me adults in love. That's not that 20 year olds aren't adults they are but give me like midlife and beyond adults in love. That's really interesting to me. That's what I want. And I feel like it doesn't have to be this way. But the miscommunication trope often happens in romances about younger couples. And I want to read about people like me and older so that I can be like, Oh, look what's coming. Right. So in you know, kind of this married romance trope I've only read a couple The Bromance Book Club series, which is one of my all time favorite romcom series starts off The first book is with married romance and I just I loved it I don't even care for I don't even necessarily want this, like we're on the brink of divorce. And then we fell back in love, though I do see how that could be easier to write into a novel that's like built in drama, right? But what about all of this, all of us in happy marriages, deeply committed in love, also in the thick of it with running a home and having kids and having careers? I want love stories about those people. Midlife romances, like Nora Goes Off Script are peripheral to this genre. She's not married, but it's close, right? But I really realized how interested I am in hearing about people who are like they know who they are, they know what they want, or they're figuring out who they are in this next season of their life. They've got some grounding underneath them. And I would love I would love to read more married romance. So if anybody knows of great married romance books, please slide on into my DMs and tell me because I want him give me. So

Roxanna Kassam Kara 40:56

I am totally with you. I think when I was in my 20s, I thought I would meet the perfect guy. I would get married. I would have kids. And I really didn't think beyond that marriage. Yeah, just yet. Like it was just stasis for the next. I don't know. 70 years of my life. Yeah, like I really go back and like what was wrong with me? But now I'm in it. And then guess what?

Mary Heim 41:18

It's not stasis? No, very much not. It's

Roxanna Kassam Kara 41:22

up and down. It's learning and growing. It's always new issues and challenges and growth, right. And I feel like romance writers don't give that enough attention. It my life is far from boring. In fact, it was probably more boring. When I was 20. Something like I felt very fraught, it felt full of drama. But I didn't deal with real issues, because the guy had been with was only for five months. So what what could they possibly have to work through? You know, right now with like, a 20 year background? Guess what, like, we're working through stuff. And it's great. So I agree with you. Like, why are there not more of those because there's lots of issues to work through as any married person can tell you. I know. They're not like, you know, shared work is not the most exciting thing. I get it like, I know. But there's lots of things that you could talk about that aren't necessarily affairs or aren't you know, that's I don't want to see an affair. Like, no, you know, I'd like or, like as you said, a divorce but actually people working through things like I just feel like I agree with you. I wish there were more of those. I was scrolling on my phone as you were talking because I did read a fantastic one. A couple of years ago that was recommended by Anne Bogel. I think so I will, I will look it up. And I will mention it as we're going through these drops. Okay. Okay, so my next one, Mary, and what got me started on this was actually thinking about this trope, I would love to see more of woman in an interesting job gets thrown into an adventure and has to use her skills. Roxanna,

Mary Heim 42:49

did we write these together? That's also

Roxanna Kassam Kara 42:53

right, instead of like, young ingenue, 12 year old. No, give me an Emily Wilde who is a fairy apologist, or whatever she is, and then uses her skills, not world, give me a Hench where the main character is really great at spreadsheets. And, you know, uses that in the adventure or even like we said, Katherine Centers Things You Save in a Fire, like that woman is navigating a career as a firefighter, right and has to deal with, I'd love to see that. And I love learning about the interesting job, whether it's real or fictional. And then I love seeing somebody standing in their power and their confidence. And using those things, instead of being like, Oh, God, is it me? Should I do this? And I'm sure a lot of these are because I'm in midlife now. And I just don't relate to those situations. But I also want to learn about some of these amazing careers that people are doing. So I wish we would get more of those. Yes.

Mary Heim 43:44

So this actually, it's funny. This one came for me came up for me. First of all, I think it was Kaytee. Who said like I'm done with the chosen one. Yeah, that like I would rather see a chosen one who's like 45 Yeah, right. My, my sister and I joke about how like someday in retirement, we're going to co write a book together about like, a midlife woman who is the chosen one, and she has to save the world. Right that I want. I don't necessarily mean like violence and dismantling of the patriarchy. I love feminist rage fiction. Yeah, The Change. While I love that genre, this kind of burgeoning genre, I adore it. That's not necessarily what I'm meaning here. I want to read like an underdog group of friends in midlife or middle management, or middle marriage, coming into their badass theory and learning of the very unique set of skills only they have to change and impact the world. I basically want what the Barbie movie did for the world last summer but in like fantasy book world, please and thank you or like you said, even rooted in our real world. i We're all such interesting people. Why do we keep just falling it right? Like there's so much interesting things about being a human and all of these various times and experiences. I want to read more about that. And particularly women, I'm just going to be honest, you'd rather read about a woman or you know, like someone who's not as represented. I'm white men please take a back seat for a minute. I love you. I'm married to white man. But like I, I want to read about people of color. I want to read about non binary people, I want to, like there's so much interesting in humanity. Let's set aside what we keep reading and bring some other heroes to the forefront. So I

Roxanna Kassam Kara 45:27

do feel like we are telepathic here, Mary, because that was the other one I had, you know, like, Meredith and Kaytee, talked about the chosen one. And I want to read quests and adventures exactly where the character is not the chosen one. They were not chosen from birth. They have no special abilities. Maybe they are persistent, or they're passionate, or they've spent time learning in a certain industry area. Like to me I call this the Kung Fu Panda trope. Like, it's like, you know, it doesn't have to be a special person. And that is much more relatable to me. And I love those books like the other one I would think of if you haven't read it yet, is The Adventures of Amina Al-Sirafi, which I know Kaytee brought, like that is a great one, right? A pirate who's retired, she's got creaky knees, she's kind of done with it, and then has to come back and brings back her kind of agent cohort. And they each have

different skills like that is a fun one. Like it can be a romp like that. Or I can just be like people navigating an adventure, but I love to see people using their skills to get through whatever challenge they have. Mm hmm.

Mary Heim 46:30

110% Yes. And as we're talking Roxanna, I was like, I can't wait to be in the Instagram comments and be on the bookish friends group after this episode drops because I'm like, Come on everybody. If we all band together, we can fill each other's lists of the tropes we want to read more of, I love it. Okay, I'm going to take a little bit of a hard left turn on this next one, I want to read more Gothic, middle grade, or middle grade horror. Some of the most fun I have ever had. Reading middle grade came with the Sinister Summer series by Kiersten White, which is technically Gothic middle grade, or what The Night Gardener did for middle grade horror. I don't need guts and gore. I don't need serial killers. But I do want spooky and creepy, even fantastical or mysterious that are not so bloody and sociopathic. It's fun to just be like a little bit creeped out. I love a book that makes me want to keep turning the pages and middle grade in some way. Just hit this balance so perfectly for me, I want so much more of it. And the sinister summer series is middle grade. It's perfect. It's perfect middle grade, I just finally read the fifth one. And I bought the whole series to have on my shelf to read with my kids someday. And I was just like, these books are hilarious to adults. And they're also really smart and funny for kids. And they're also kind of spooky and creepy, but they're not like I don't know gonna completely scare the pants off you or your child. It was your son. I think oh, what's her name?

Roxanna Kassam Kara 47:59

Kiersten White, Kiersten White. Yeah, she also did, like she's an adult writer to write, which is why I think she can bring such nuance to these middle grade books. Yes,

Mary Heim 48:08

yes. Like I want more of those. If somebody I would read them over and over again. So if there's more that land within this genre of like, kind of creepy, spooky, but also really funny and like self aware. And it's just perfection. I want more of that. That's a genre I haven't read much of I do love that genre.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 48:28

You're right. And I think kids love that too. Like I was saying, you know, Kieran read a book recently about like two best friends. And then one has a big secret, a big secret. And then she finally reveals it. And as she's moving, and cares was like, Mom, honestly, do I need to read about this girl moving again? How many times? I was like, Well, what did you want to see? She's like, well, could she have murdered the gym teacher or something? That's a real secret. That's something you hold on to. I didn't read 50 pages so I can get to the fact that she's moving. Amen. was like I hear you. And I did hand her the series. And she does love it. Actually. Meredith was like, Karen needs to read Wretched WaterPark. And she started there. And it's a great one. I've read it to your right. It's great for adults, and it's great for kids. And I do wish there were more of those

Mary Heim 49:14

because it's excellent. Yeah, hopefully. Maybe we're heading in that direction. Exactly.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 49:18

Okay, I'm good. I found my book wreck. So I'm going to say that before I move on. So this is a married people romance. Please do not be put off by the title or by the cover. It is good. I promise. It's so good. It's called Happily Ever Ninja. It's the fifth in the knitting in the city series, which oh my god, but you don't have to read them in order. I read no others. I wrote my Goodreads review was this book surprise me. Instead of being frothy and insipid. It's a real look at the endearing of a married relationship and the kinds of conversations and negotiations couples have through middle marriage. All wrapped up in a thriller plot. Wow. It's like you know when I think of mystery We're in Mrs. Smith like, this is actually what it should have been. It's about two spies. I think I read it a while ago, but they really are dealing with their own married issues. And it's really, it was really good. So it's by Penny Reid. And again, it's Happily Ever Ninja. So pick that one up. I'm going to look at the rest of the series to remember Anne Bogel recommending them awhile ago, and I really loved them.

Mary Heim 49:19

Never in a million years when I have found that one on my own and be like, yep, this looks like it's for me. Neither.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 49:41

I don't like, like whimsical romance or whatever it's called. I don't like when it's kind of cheesy like this, but it's not it just sounds like it is. But actually, it's a really, it's a I found it a really real kind of conversation. It was great. Perfect.

Mary Heim 50:40

I love that. Okay, noted. I'm going to read it. Alright, what else Roxanna do you have in your tropes you'd like to see more of?

Roxanna Kassam Kara 50:46

Okay, so I have a couple more. So my next one is what I'm calling the nuns in space trope. Oh, so you know, I wrote Sisters of the Vast Black by Lina Rather last episode. But what this is really about is the interpersonal dynamics of people stuck together, where they have to work through a particular issue. So as you can see here, I'm really a fan of people working through particular issues. Yeah, but I love when people are stuck together, and really have to deal with something. Now this is not the lock room trope where they're stuck together, and then they're picked off one by one, this is not a birder job. This is just a group of people who are stuck together who have to work together towards common goals. So yes, like system, the vast black there in this spaceship, there are an order of nuns, there's lots of there's a global conspiracy that they have to work through. Search with Michelle Huneven is another great one like that, right? Where they have to work together to find the new minister of their church. And In This House of Brede by Rumer Godden, like, this is why you know, I'm not Catholic, I'm Muslim, but I love reading these books about nuns or religion, because that's where I find a lot of these, this trope of people working together. And I wish I'd love more of these, I'd love them more in other areas, too, frankly, like people don't have to just work together to solve a murder. There's lots of things they have to solve. And I would love and I think this is also where you said like, I think the bookish friends will be like, well have I got the book for you. And there'll be a ton of ton of these. But I just love to see whether

that works successfully, or frankly not. You know, it's fun to read both ways. So I'd love to see more of those. And I love

Mary Heim 52:22

that. And I think my last one here is going to piggyback off that just a touch. Not really but a little bit. This is a burgeoning category. I feel like we're seeing more of it. But the self aware murder mysteries or fourth wall breaking novels and murder mysteries, like Everyone In My Family Has Killed Someone like Everyone On This Train Is A Suspect. I just really enjoy fourth wall breaking self awareness when it's done, right. It's not always done right. And that alternatively grates on me like no other. So I have to be careful with this one is I don't just want just anybody to do it right? Or I'm not going to pick up necessarily just any book that does that. But when it's done well, it's so much fun. For me. Benjamin Stevenson really does it right. It's really fun and fresh. And I would be curious to see it done in other genres as well. I'm not exactly sure. Which, like, Where would this where else would this work? Well, but I think that it could be a really fascinating way to kind of tack take on maybe even some of these more, I mean, the everyone in this, whatever. Those are like locked room mysteries, right? That's like his tail is all this time. And so to take that and kind of spin it on its head a little I'm like, super here for I would love to see that. And to it's like, kind of this group banding together a little bit in twisty ways, right, that I would find I would be so interested to read more of those.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 53:46

Yeah. What I love about those books is you know, he lists the mystery murder conventions right at the beginning. Yeah. And then he kind of refers to them. It doesn't like so it's self aware. But in such a smart way. Like your right you don't want everybody doing this. Yeah, but the right people that make you think bigger about murder mystery as a whole and what works and what doesn't work. I just found that so smart. Totally.

Mary Heim 54:07

Yes. I love it. Okay, do you have one more?

Roxanna Kassam Kara 54:10

On my last one? Yes. And what I want to see is books about older people who are not curmudgeons, you know, people who have real emotions and personalities and are working through hard things. So I find those curmudgeon books they do often they do work through hard things, and they do touch on real issues. So I will give them that. But often they make the older person seem kind of fuzzy and like warm and everybody attaches to them. They're a bit of a caricature. Do you know what these people have lived a long damn time? Yeah, they have a lot of experience. And so I love to hear about stories about older people that maybe focus on people that maybe aren't so lovey dovey, you don't like yeah, I read, The Woman Next Door by Yewande Omotoso. And oh my god, that book like it's set in South Africa. It features two neighbors in their 80s, one white and one black. And the white woman, their neighbors lives in the house that the black woman designed because she was an architect. But before she could buy it, this white woman did. And they knows each other. And it is not in an endearing way. Like they really do. But you know, them working through their own issues, what South Africa is going through at the time, like it was so powerful. And I love to read those books. You know, Fellowship Point is another one, I haven't read that one that's on my list. But people who are older who are drawing on

their experience, or maybe their stereotypes or their prejudices, and like working through things, you know, I think that's just it's fun to read, because that's not a perspective you see a ton of and they have a lot of they're not like this ingenue who's like, Oh, my God, what do I do? Oh, no, you know, they have a lot of life experience to draw on. And I find that that makes it really interesting. So I'd love to see more of those. I'm going

Mary Heim 56:00

to heartily cosign on that as someone who typically also does not enjoy a curmudgeon story, but loves older characters in books, right? I hear you so much in what you're saying of like, so often, our older adult characters are really tokenized. And it's like, these people have lived more life than any of us, they're probably the least right in real life likely to be tokenized. And we're tokenizing him to do it. I want to hear the full experience like I would love to get you're gonna get such a rich character when you have someone who's lived so much life so I hear you fellowship point is also on my list to to hopefully get to this year. So I'm going to lean in hard on that one and look and see if I can fill up my TBR this year with more books in that genre. Such a good one cosign wholeheartedly.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 56:49

Oh, this is so fun. I'm so energized and excited by this conversation very, and like you said, I can't wait to get to the Instagram and bookish friends because I feel like yeah, I'm gonna have a great TBR filling them with all these amazing stories, and it's gonna be so great. Okay, my friend. Well, it's time to go to the fountain. So I'll throw it to you. Why don't you give us your fountain wish of the week.

Mary Heim 57:11

All right, Roxanna, my fountain wish this week is to motivate anyone who has had too many unread books on their shelves to spend some time with their physical TBR pile this week. Now, if having a bunch of unread books on your shelves is how you prefer it. Or maybe you don't hang on to books after having read them and you only keep unread books on your shelves, then you can please feel free to ignore me this week. But if you like me, I have acquired just a ridiculous number of unread books. And it's time to do something about that, let me encourage you, I have tried in the past to set like a reader shelves month, or I'll set a seasonal TBR shelf with some of my unread books, and I'll get to a handful of them. But I think I found a system that's working really well for me this year. And that is setting the goal to read or cull, or sometimes both at least two books from my shelf each month. So I'm, I'm picking two books off of my shelf and saying, Okay, we're gonna get to these this month, I'm either going to read them, or it's time for them to go. And normally, I wouldn't maybe be so harsh with coloring books like this. But it's been helping me get through the books that have been languishing there for far too long. I'm talking like three, four years plus, so at the beginning of each month, I pick those books, set them aside as my like, it's now or never, and I either finally get to them. Or finally say like, alright, I wasn't motivated to read this this month. Even as a mood reader, I am challenging myself to be like, if I pick this one, and I'm intentional with it, and I still didn't feel compelled to pick it up, then it's time to pass it along to another reader to a little free library to wherever. And if I decide again, in the future that I really want to read it. That's what my library is for. Right? I can go get it, but it's helping me get serious about what I'm holding on to and really prioritize what I already own in our teeny tiny little house. So if that resonates for you that maybe this system is worth a try. So my wish is that I can motivate those of you who feel me to have some intentionality for your unread bucks pink splash.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 59:14

I love that like the and I think the two a month feels manageable. You know, it's the big cull, like go to your bookshelf and take off the 20 books and read that's like Oh, but my friends there. Oh, there go. You know, this feels like okay, and like like you said, you can always get it again just to a month. I think it's a great idea, my friend. No,

Mary Heim 59:33

thank you. What about you, Roxanna?

Roxanna Kassam Kara 59:34

So my fountain wish is actually a press of a book. Oh, that Meredith brought a few episodes ago like a while ago, but I just ended up reading it this winter and really loved it. It's called Burnout: The Secrets to Unlocking the Stress Cycle by Emily and Amelia Nagoski. Oh my god, Mary. Mary just brought it up on screen. She has it right in front of her.

Mary Heim 59:56

I reference it so much to my clients that I literally have bid on my desk all the time.

Roxanna Kassam Kara 1:00:01

Oh, okay. Well, I'm so glad this is a press from you to the therapist is really helpful. You know, I don't read a ton of nonfiction to be honest. But this one I picked up I don't know, it was on a on a kick this this January. And I had not picked it up because I thought I had heard it was kind of very millennial and chit chatty. And I don't know why that turned me off. Because it's actually an excellent book, it's one of the most helpful I've ever read. In dealing with stress, it is compassionate, it is non judgmental. And the key is, it doesn't put a ton of pressure on you, like a lot of the stress messaging are here. You know, it's like, God, life is very stressful, you need to deal with that, you know, like you figure it out. And like watch this Netflix documentary about people who live in blue zones in the Mediterranean, and they walk up these mountains, isn't that nice? Go move there. And it's like, yeah, these messages are not helpful. Like, I love my life. I've designed my life purposefully, I like my stressful job. I like my stressful family. Like, full life, that's why I'm feeling stressed. And to put the onus of more self care, like, suddenly, you know, taking a bubble bath is going to help ease all this stress is it's not helpful. And this book doesn't do that. It doesn't put even more stress on you to manage your stress. It recognizes broader systemic factors, like patriarchy, and racism in contributing to your stress, which I think helps relieve some of the burden you're feeling. And it also does give concrete actions that are doable, then I'm finding helpful, like, you know, people talk a lot about completing the stress cycle, yes. But I also found, you know, the beta chapter about the inner critic, and why letting that go is so important and how to do that, that I found it was really, really helpful. So that's Burnout, the secret to unlocking the stress cycle by Emily and Amelia Nagasaki. I loved it on audio, they alternate their chapters that they narrate. And then I went and got it as well, because I found it was a really helpful guidebook. So my, my fountain wish is that for those of you that this resonates, we'll go and pick this up and give it a try. Ping splash.

Mary Heim 1:02:06

I will throw my extra coin in on this one with you to Roxanna, it's so good. I will ride or die for the Nagoski sisters. They are they just actually came out with a new book too. They've got Come As You Are, which is about like female sexuality and intimacy. They have a new one that I want to say I'm not entirely sure I think is about like couple intimacy partner intimacy anyways, they're brilliant. I love them. This book is excellent. I'm so glad you loved it. And yes, I will press it right alongside you. Oh, that's

Roxanna Kassam Kara 1:02:37

so great to hear. It's yeah, it's a really, really good one. Okay, well, that's it for this week, everyone. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me I'm Roxanna at @Roxanathereader on Instagram.

Mary Heim 1:02:49

And you can find me at @Maryreadsandsips on Instagram. You can find Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks and Meredith is at @MeredithMondaySchwartz

Roxanna Kassam Kara 1:02:57

full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in this episode and timestamp so you can zoom right into where we talked about it can be found at currentlyreadingpodcast.com. You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcasts on Instagram, or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com And if you really want to help us rate and review us on Apple podcasts or sign up as a bookish friends, it makes a huge difference in our being able to find our perfect audience. okayish friends are the best friends thank you for helping us grow and get closer to our goals. So Mary until next week, may your coffee be hot and

Mary Heim 1:03:32

your book be unputdownable

Roxanna Kassam Kara 1:03:34

Happy reading Mary Happy

Mary Heim 1:03:35

reading Roxanna.