



Season 6, Episode 9: Feeling Extra Autumnal + Prepping Our Travel TBR

Mon Oct 2, 2023 • 47:23

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 00:23

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.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:32

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas, and I am so extra about my fall reading vibes.

Kaytee Cobb 00:41

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in Arizona, but I'm still carousing around the UK when you hear this. This is episode number nine of season six. We're so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:52

All right, Kaytee, yes, you are still going to be carousing when this goes live. I will have just gotten back jetlag going, I will be jet lagged, I have given myself a couple of cushion days before I have to jump back into work because I feel like my brain should actually be working when I when I'm working. So I'm gonna give myself a little cushion.

Kaytee Cobb 01:11

I love that. I think that's a great plan.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:14

All right. So we have a lot of different things that we want to talk about in this episode. And it's the beginning of the month, which you guys know means we need to manage a little bit of mischief. First, let me tell you, our deep dive today is going to be about planning your reading when you are traveling. And that can look a whole bunch of different ways depending on what kind of traveling you're doing. So Kaytee and I are doing that. And we wanted to talk a little bit about how we manage that for ourselves. But first, let's manage that mischief. Kaytee, what have you got for us?

Kaytee Cobb 01:47

Yes, I have both a Patreon ad and an announcement this morning for you all. So first is our announcement that as I mentioned in my bite sized intro, we are actually both going to be gone. We're going to be in the UK. We're recording this early. And then next week, we are re airing a classic episode from the Currently Reading archives. For a long time you couldn't get those first episodes. They are available now. But they're fun to revisit every once awhile. So that's what you'll hear next week. And in the meantime, as part of our Patreon ad for ourselves every month, we like to remind you what you get by joining us as a bookish friend. And in this case, while everyone here on the Big Show will be listening to a classic episode, our bookish friends will still get brand new content. This week, we have Trope Thursday, The Indie Press List, one of our favorite lists one of our favorite episodes, and this one is gangbusters bananas, we are so excited about it. And that's brand new content that nobody's ever heard before. So if you're interested or if you feel the lack of brand new Meredith and Kaytee this week, maybe you'll decide to join us as a bookish friend. It's five bucks a month you get that content, you get that community, you get all the goodies of being a bookish friend with us over on Patreon.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:57

Yeah, it's a great time to do it. Because as we've said that October Indie Press List is always great because it is spooky reading fall season reading at its finest. Yes. All right. Excellent. Okay, Mischief Managed for this month. Let's get into our bookish moments of the week. Kaytee, what have you got?

Kaytee Cobb 03:15

I have been running amok this past week, Meredith, and this is going to lead a little bit into our deep dive. But everything around me right now is about vacation planning. We leave on Sunday. So in real time, I have four days for sleeps until we leave for our big UK two week long vacation. I'm taking my husband and all four kids. So there's a lot of logistics to manage, including, of course, my reading my reading material, the screens for the children, as well as stuff like uploading that classic episode that we just talked about, making sure that Trope Thursday and All Things Murderful and everything else running behind the scenes is done and up there on time so that it feels seamless for our listeners. And I've never done a big trip like this where I was also kind of running my own business, right? Like, I haven't had to manage both sides of family life and business life and also going overseas, ever in my life. And it's been a really interesting experience, the way it's affecting my reading the way it's affecting my work life balance. Everything is kind of revolving around this UK trip right now. Yeah, yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:21

there are a lot of times where I think man going on vacation or taking time off of any sort sometimes feels like more trouble than it's worth. Because it takes a lot to do so. Yes. All right, good. Well, yes, we're going to deep dive on how we make those decisions for ourselves and our reading when we travel a little bit later in the show. My bookish moment of the week is how extra I am about my fall reading right. I mean, it is my favorite season of the year. I read murderly scary, spooky creepy all year long, but I really really get into it in the fall. And in the fall here in Texas. A lot of Fall reading is about the vibes you can create through sheer force of will. Because we don't have that nip in the air here in Texas, you don't have an in Phoenix, right? And so it's really about how can I create the fall vibes because we are in September, we're getting ready to be in October. I don't want to wait any longer. So, I lean in, I lean heavily into two things, ASMR rooms, and candles. And then of course I do as soon as I

get back from the UK, I will have all my fall decor go up that is the the first thing I'm doing that weekend that I'm back, because that's an important part of the feeling of fall, but the right candle with the right scent, the right you know, kind of wood wick doing its woodwick thing in the background, because I can't have a fire it's too you know, it's not cold enough for fire. So, that plus some ASMR rooms and I I am not even above you know, I wear tank tops and furry joggers pretty much all the time. But I switched to a whole different set. I am in all the Burnt Amber and the all of greens by sheer force of will I will create the fall vibes in my reading. I'm extra like that. And I I just will not apologize for it.

Kaytee Cobb 06:16

You're manifesting. And I think personally, I think the entire state of Texas should thank you for your service in this area. Like you're bringing it to Texas.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:26

Well, it's going to be 99 both today and tomorrow. So I'm not sure that I'm succeeding, but I am trying and that's what matters.

Kaytee Cobb 06:34

It's 100 degrees here too. It's pretty close. Exactly. It's gonna be like 60 in the UK, which

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:41

I know with lows like in the 40s. And I'm like, oh, so I actually have to pack sweater like my brain is. My brain is having a hard time making the adjustment. It is a thing. Okay, all right, Kaytee, let's get into our current reads. What's your first current read this week?

Kaytee Cobb 06:56

Okay, my first one plays right into your bookish moment. Meredith the first book I want to talk about this week is called You're Not Supposed to Die Tonight by Kalynn Bayron. I fell for this author when I read her book, Cinderella is Dead. And then Bunmi sent me a galley of this new release that just came out in June. As soon as the weather turned here, which only means started getting below 100 degrees at nighttime, which just barely happened. Right?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 07:21

Right again. We you have to get you have to get your vibes where you can get them.

Kaytee Cobb 07:26

I was like, Look, I'm not melting when it's the middle of the night. Hurray, I win. This one has all your favorite horror movie tropes rolled into a glorious ya queer diverse package. Charity is our main character. She's been working at Camp Mirror Lake for the whole summer as well as summers before this one. She plays the final girl in a game where guests pay to be terrified and reenact the cult classic film, which is called The Curse of Camp Mirror Lake so they're like reenacting picture *Scream* or *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, except at the place where they filmed it. She and her co workers have one job: to make the fake blood look real. To pop out of trapdoors to terrify their guests. It's one job to make everyone terrified. The more realistic the fear, the better the reviews, and the more the money comes piling in. They're just about to close up after one final game of the summer, but then Charity's co

workers start disappearing and one ends up dead. Will she be able to pull off being the actual final girl or is a Black LGBT teen hoping for too much? Because as we know from the tropes, that's not a good place to be in being Black in a horror movie, not a good place to be, especially when she's hoping to keep her girlfriend alive as well. After the phone lines are cut, and there's no way off the property, they have to use all the tricks of Camp Mirror Lake to sneak around and hopefully evade the psycho killer on the loose. In the meantime, they have to unravel the real mystery of Mirror Lake and what happened there 50 years ago. This book was unputdownable gory, fun, it's very teenagery and all the main characters are teens, and they're plagued with self doubt. And no one cares about them. And it's drama, drama drama, because it's YA, but it ticks all the right boxes for anyone who grew up watching those films I talked about. I Know What You Did Last Summer, the Scream franchise. It's campy, literally because we're at a camp, but it's also gory and have some body fluids and blood and jumpscare to it. Charity and her co workers and her girlfriend are a bunch of teens against the world, especially the adults of the world. You're rooting for them. You're yelling at them not to go in there not to open that door not to follow that light through the darkness. This is not the fantasy retelling of Cinderella that I fell for in Cinderella is Dead, but it hits those same nostalgic notes in a totally different way. I really enjoyed it. It was spooky it was Tropey it was self aware. It's You're Not Supposed to Die Tonight by Kalynn Bayron.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:52

Well now you're the third person that I've heard just recently read this book and really likely Yeah, I've been I've been seeing this a few different people. He

Kaytee Cobb 10:00

says, okay, okay,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:01

I have a book that also I think is great for this time of year. Very different from the one that you just described, though. I read How to be Eaten by Maria Edelman. Do you know this one?

Kaytee Cobb 10:12

I have this on my shelf because Kendra Adachi talked about it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:15

Yep. It is really, really interesting, really interesting. Okay, here's the setup. Our story starts in present day New York City. And we're in this basement room where there's a support group going on, and we have five women meeting there, and they're there to process their traumas. We've got Bernice who dated a psychopathic blue bearded billionaire. We've got Ruby, who was once eaten by a wolf and now wears him as a coat. Gretel has only spotty memories of being held captive in house made of candy. Ashley, she won a bachelor kind of dating show, but she still isn't sure what a fairytale ending looks like. And Raina well her story will shock you. Though these women start out very wary of the process and of each other, they begin to both wonder how much they may truly have in common. And what really brought them together, y'all I have been having the best luck as I mentioned in the last episode, going into books blind, and How to be Eaten is another example of a book that really benefited from my going into it knowing very little, and letting the story reveal itself. And this particular story is one that delights

in the revelation. I had no idea what to expect from this book, except that I knew it had something to do with being a modern fairy tale retelling, we get a lot of those, but this one is something completely different. This book deconstructs and then reconstructs the entire fairy tale genre flipping everything on its head. This book is a genre mashup. In fact, I can't even think of how I would shelve it in a bookstore. In my own shelving system. On my personal shelves. I had this under fairytales, which is where I would shelve it, because that's where I would go if I was in the mood, but it could have just as easily fit in my micro genre on my shelves that's called feminist rage novels. This book does both of those micro genres justice, if you like fairy tales, you are going to love that aspect of this novel, it is so much fun going in and having a general sense of what someone's might story might be. In some cases, that's very obvious. And in other cases, I really didn't know. And I love how author Maria Adelman stretches the definition of fairytale heroine and who is participating in the support group in this basement in New York City. It's so much fun to read the ways that the author has taken the original story and translated it to modern times. And she makes the situation's so believable, which sounds impossible, but she does it. I feel like in every single instance, I could see myself as the girl at the center of that fairy tale, you can just see how it all happens. I love the fact that in my normal reading, I'm trying to figure out either who or how something happened, right, like from reading a mystery. But in this book, you're trying to solve a totally different kind of puzzle. You're trying to solve what fairy tale each person belongs to. You're trying to solve how the different elements of that fairy tale are going to be shown in this modern lens. And you're trying to figure out who the villain is. In every case. Sometimes it's obvious. Sometimes it's not. I was absolutely riveted by every one of the women's stories. And I was impressed by the way that the author managed to tell these separate and discrete stories, and bring them together in a way that made them feel very connected the scenes where all the women discuss the story that one of them has just told are absolutely fascinating. There's no question there were multiple times where I was reading this book and saying out loud, like wtf is happening. There are some really nutty things that go on here. And of course, there are tons of trigger warnings in this book, including violence, assault, and a really gory scene that I'm never going to get out of my mind. This is not for HSPs and please check trigger warnings carefully. Trauma is at the center of this book, you're going to want to step carefully if you have specific topics that are difficult for you. But I love this kind of writing. I love it when you can take something familiar and turn it on its head. I love it when you write in a way that makes me feel that you trust me to be a smart intuitive reader. I love it when we see stories in a different way and realize that sometimes the fairy tale we thought had the happily ever after. Absolutely did not. This was a favorite read. I'm so glad I picked it up and I Highly recommend it. This is How to be Eaten by Maria Adelman.

Kaytee Cobb 15:04

Oh, that sounds so good. And now I'm very glad that I have a copy on my shelves.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 15:10

Yeah, exactly. I had a copy on my shelf had no memory of where I heard about it or why I had it on my shelf, but I was like, this looks really interesting. Oh, so good.

Kaytee Cobb 15:19

Love it. Okay, I am going to trust that Meredith has more creepy in her repertoire for today. So I'm going to spin us a new direction and talk about Mrs. Nash's Ashes by Sarah Adler. I think I requested this one as a galley. Or we got it emailed to us by a publisher or something, but I didn't read about it before I picked it up. So I was surprised. This is a book where I went in blind. It was nothing like what I was expecting, which was a curmudgeon story, Mrs. Nash's Ashes with a cross generational friendship. That's what I had in my head. While there's a little bit of that in there. Mostly, this is a romance, and I had no idea. Oh, we've got we've got at our core, a grumpy sunshine trope with Millicent Watts Cohen as our protagonist, she had made a best friend in her elderly neighbor and then eventually moved in to be her full time caregiver while they live together prior to her death, which happens before the novel starts. So we're not experiencing that on the page. Mrs. Nash shared her life story with Millie, including the story of her lost love. Now that Mrs. Nash is reduced to ashes, Millie takes it upon herself to travel from Washington DC to Key West Florida, with a small amount of the cremains in her backpack in order to reunite Mrs. Nash with her lost love. But the clock is ticking because her lost love is also elderly, and not in good health. So she wants to make it before this person dies. The planes in Washington DC are all screwed up due to a technical error, which is why it feels a little like fate that Hollis Hollenbeck, which is his actual name, and yes, you're allowed to roll your eyes just happens to be at the airport. He went to school with Millie's ex. And even though they didn't part on good terms, Millie and her ex, Hollis doesn't seem to hold it against her as he offered her a ride in the car he rented. All this is of course the grump in this grumpy sunshine roadtrip romance. He's a jaded writer who can't come up with a plot for his novel. And certainly he does not believe in romance because that is for losers and ninnies. He talks very little. He loves to be in control of everything around him. And he only reluctantly allows Millie to choose music for the car radio and only on the caveat that she stops talking so much. This romance, because that is what this is who knew has all the best roadtrip tropes, one bed, forced proximity and of course, the grumpy sunshine situation. The story within the story, the love story of Mrs. Nash and her life is a great one. But the third act misunderstanding made me super mad. Like if I were Millie, I don't think that I would have been able to get past it. Even knowing I was the hero of my own romance novel. I just I wouldn't be able to get there. In any case, it ended up being an enjoyable read. I'm glad I picked it up even if it was not at all what I was expecting. It's Mrs. Nash's Ashes by Sarah Adler.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:09

Interesting, but I like that you're going into books blind. I think it's a really fun way to go into a book.

Kaytee Cobb 18:15

It is it's more fun to be like I don't know what that says. Let's see what happens.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:20

All right. Well, you were right, Kaytee. I do have more gruesome, scary stuff in my repertoire for today. So the next book I want to talk about is The Puzzle Master by Danielle Trussoni. Did you read this one?

Kaytee Cobb 18:32

No, but I saw it on your Instagram and I saw people tagging you. Yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:36

So here's the setup. Our lead character is Mike Brink. He's a celebrated puzzle constructor. He's a genius of a kind, and really specific kind. He had played football, he was a really up and coming football star. But then he suffered a traumatic brain injury. And it ended his football career, but what it left him with is a very rare but real medical condition called acquired Savant syndrome. So the injury left him with the ability to solve puzzles in ways that ordinary people can't. And it also left him deeply isolated and depressed. And then Brink meets Jess price. She's a woman serving 30 years in prison for murder, who hasn't spoken a word since her arrest five years before. When Jess draws a perplexing puzzle and shows it to her psychiatrist, that psychiatrist believes that it will explain at least part of her crime, and she calls Brink to solve it. And this begins our story. Mike is fascinated by the puzzle at first and then becomes obsessed with price herself. Mike quickly realizes that the reasons behind her insistence on staying silent hide far more puzzles than he could ever know. All right, this was one that we heard about on All Things Murderful from Elizabeth Barnhill and Catherine Gilmore from Sarah's Bookshelves Live mentioned it and those are two great recommendation sources for me. And this book Puzzle Master is a wild ride. It was billed as another Da Vinci Code, and I jumped into it with a hungry heart for that kind of book. For better or for worse, as you've heard me say, if you listen to All Things Murderful, I love books with puzzles at their center. The Da Vinci Code is a great book. I like movies, like National Treasure, I like secret societies and codes and hidden treasures and puzzles that come together when light hits them a certain way. All of that stuff I am a sucker for. So this one has that and I jumped into it with both feet. There's a lot that I really liked about it. There's a very intricate set of puzzles, yes, but there's also intricate history and religion, and numerology and Judaism and Catholicism and secret societies and all sorts of interesting things in the book. And those were all very interesting. And they definitely were done in a way that I liked a lot. That is the reader was treated as an intelligent person. This book did not dumb down those portions. But the portions that involved our lead character, Mike Brink, and I hate that name to left me incredibly cold. For some reason, I just never could become invested in his character. And I tried all the way through to figure out why. I just felt like he was held at a distance for me, like he was somehow not made of flesh and blood and hearts and thoughts and heart, but instead, he was like a figment on the paper. I don't know if that's because the author doesn't write men as well as she writes women. It could be because there were several really interesting female characters in this book. And so Mike just didn't look that great by comparison. That's my operating theory. Also, there was way more telling than showing in several parts of the book that focused on the lead character, and that started to drive me crazy. In fact, I almost DNF it because of that. I'm glad I didn't though, because it was an interesting novel. And as I said, it has an intricate plotline and I wanted to keep turning the pages the whole way through. I also think that the fact that I struggle with one particular plotline that existed in this book purely for reasons based on my own complicated religious history, played into the overall way that this book landed with me again, this is an individual issue with me as a reader. I can't say any more about it because it would give things away but I definitely I tried to stay away from books with this particular plotline. And I just didn't know that it was there. So I gave this ended up giving this book 3.75 stars that is that I would recommend it to readers who were looking for a very specific kind of book and who love puzzles and secret societies. But for readers as a whole looking for really quality sentence level writing to go along with that plotline. This wouldn't be the first book that I would press in their hands. So a little bit of this and a little bit of that for me here. But definitely a fast summer read. This is The Puzzle Master by Danielle Trussoni. Interesting, maybe I'll buy it, I'll put it on

my shelf and somebody I'll go in totally blind. You know what one of the biggest problems is how much it tries to include and how much it tries to tackle. I think if there had been less of that, and maybe a little bit more concentration on the sentence level writing, then there could be something really, really great there.

Kaytee Cobb 23:19

definitely okay. Yes, I've had that issue with books before as well. So I feel that okay, my third one I'm going to try and talk you into because I think you would really like it. Okay, it's called *Sing Me to Sleep* by Gabi Burton. Now I'm going to really quickly gloss over the fact that this is also YA, but it's a debut fantasy novel that I got from my Fairyloot subscription. Which means again, I pretty much knew nothing about it, but the cover is really pretty, so I picked it up anyway. Saoirse Sorkova is our main character. She's a siren, who lies to survive, because all the sirens were wiped out in her city when the wall was built to protect the kingdom. Fantasy creatures belong outside humans and Fey belong inside, the end. So she has to protect herself and her adoptive family and hide who she truly is. This becomes more difficult as she becomes a soldier in training at the most prestigious barracks in the kingdom. She's living a double life as she also works as an assassin, which is great because that's her main drive as a siren. There's a song inside her that sings kill, kill, kill, especially when she's near the water. When she rises to the top of her class, she's just trying to stay out of the spotlight, but is instead elevated to the position of personal bodyguard to Prince Hayes, the Crown Prince, he's should be terrible, like his dictatorial eugenicist, have a father who started this entire division between humans and other creatures, but instead the prince is funny and kind. He's always trying to get her to smile and confiding in her about the ways he doesn't feel he can measure up to his father's will, as they get to know each other They begin to work together on a mystery, an investigation to catch the killer who is taking out prominent city members one by one. But the problem is that Saoirse is the killer. And the closer they get to discovering her, the more she must protect herself and her family. It's a full mess. It's amazing. It's a great one. Saoirse has deadly powers make her basically a mermaid serial killer. She uses her siren song to low people into a hypnotic state where she can control them and kill them in any way she pleases. Often, it's very gory. Well, I did read a review that only gave it three and a half stars and said, I'd recommend this to anyone who hates feeling happy or hopeful, which made me laugh out loud. I really enjoyed it. And for the record, I love feeling happy and hopeful. This was a novel for me about the ways that women change themselves to survive. It's about a woman who's strong and skilled in so many ways. She's self assured and has the powers of a siren. She's an assassin, almost like Dexter, and that the people she kills are often awful in some way. So you feel a bit of vindictively as you read. I really love this one and I put it on my shelves as a keeper which I'm always excited about with a Fairyloot book because it's so pretty and the gorgeous style of the pages sprayed edges the cover doesn't hurt that situation at all. It was awesome. I loved it it was *Sing Me to Sleep* by Gabi Burton.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:20

That sounds so good and you know that where I really love ya. I mean I can love all different kinds of way but where I really love it is in fantasy.

Kaytee Cobb 26:30

Like she's like right on the edge of YA new adult like it doesn't feel like a 14 year old you know

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:36

so right now that sent in the covers absolutely gorgeous. So yes, that is coming with me to England for sure. That looks really really fun. All right. To round out our current reads I'm bringing one that was also a ton of fun. This is Assistant to the Villain by Hannah Nicole Maehrer and this is one that has beautiful sprayed edges. All right, here's the setup. Evie Sage's family is sick and poor. And so her getting a job A good one is absolutely crucial. And it needs to happen quickly. So when a mishap with Rennewald's most famous villain results in a job offer, she says yes. And it's a really great meet cute, by the way, the way that that whole thing happens and this villain Yes, that's how he's known as the villain is not only evil, he is of course, hot AF. But Evie tries her best to ignore that and to be professional. She spends a lot of time castigating herself to be professional. But just when she's getting used to severed heads suspended from the ceiling, and the odd squish of an errant eyeball beneath her heel, Evie suspects someone wants to take the villain out. And now she must not only resist drooling over her boss, but also figure out who is sabotaging his work and ensure that he makes them pay. All right. I think part of the reason that I enjoyed the experience of reading this book so much was because I didn't really know what it was when I jumped in. This is the theme of our all of our reading now. I had heard some really good things about it. And the reality was I just needed something that was really different from the dark, True Crime book that I had just finished. So this one just whatever it was going to be it's purple, it had red sprayed edges, and it was whatever it was going to be. It was going to be lighter. And I think I've been thinking I was thinking of it somewhere along the lines of Hench which is book that we both absolutely love. But that's not what this is. This is sort of if Hench met Princess Bride, and I really really enjoyed it. I loved the humor. I loved the cozy fantasy setting. I loved the way that the book made fun of itself, and I loved the ongoing will they won't they romance between Evie and the villain. This book has Castle humor, villain humor, killing villagers in graphic and evil ways, humor and the single best frog character that I have ever met in fiction. The frog absolutely slayed every scene that he was in. Evie however, as a character is not my favorite. She's quirky without really having a specific reason for the Quirk. She's sort of like a character that is the idea of quirky. There was something about her that just wasn't fully fleshed out not unlike Mike Brink I was talking about in The Puzzle Master I felt much more like I had aligned to the motivations of the villain and he is a character that if you found Rhys from the ACOTAR series interesting, you're going to love the villain. As with so many books, I will say that this book is probably a good 75 pages longer than it needs to be but I never disliked it. It just kind of moved from very low stakes plot points to very low stakes plot points. I guess I wanted more of Linear plotline that drove everything all the way through. So I think the circles back to what I said at the very beginning, I enjoyed the experience of reading this book. But I didn't necessarily end up thinking that the book itself was super well written, it's fun. It's even maybe best described as a delightful romp. But it's not perfect. So I gave it four stars because I was in the perfect mood for something that was light and romantic. But if you're not in the mood for that, then there would be a lot of things in the story I think that would annoy you. So reader know thyself. As was pointed out in the bookish friends group by one of our listeners, this book ends on a cliffhanger. Knowing that in advance really helped me to not be irritated when I got to the end of the book, because it does end on a pretty big cliffhanger. But knowing it, and knowing that the second book is coming out in not very long. That was okay with me. But again, reader know thyself. This is the Assistant to the Villain by Hannah Nicole Maehrer.

Kaytee Cobb 31:04

What am I gonna do now? I bought it while you were talking.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:08

Yeah, it doesn't come out in very long. And I you know, what I do really want to say about this is that this is perfect for you. If you love cozy fantasy, if you love Meg's tea room, if you love the books that are those kinds of books, where you kind of just want to be in this world that sweet and funny, and kind of Princess variety. It's perfect for that. It was very, very enjoyable. I just want to be really careful that I point out that it wasn't a perfectly written book. It's the difference between best and favorite.

Kaytee Cobb 31:39

Okay, yes. And everything about it sounds perfect for me. So when does the it'll make me crazy. Well, I

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:49

mean, it wraps up enough...

Kaytee Cobb 31:51

December of 2024.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:53

No, really?

Kaytee Cobb 31:54

I can't handle it. I can't handle it. Hench plus Princess Bride, there was no chance that I wasn't gonna buy this. I mean, you could have just stopped talking then. Yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:03

you Kaytee. I think you'll definitely enjoy it. It's purple and it's purple. And the you should buy it solely for the frog. Because I can't tell you

Kaytee Cobb 32:13

what times I laughed. And during frog characters you've read that this one was so far beyond.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:19

Yeah, it's it's it's not I mean, there's that Mrs. Caliban frog, right. That's

Kaytee Cobb 32:24

the only one. Green Frog man. Right, right.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:29

All right. So those are our six current reads, I think we've given you a lot of different kinds of reads there. Right, we've got a lot to choose from. All right. Let's talk a little bit about travel reading. And obviously, as we said, at the top of the show, this is top of our minds, because we are both getting ready to go traveling, which I'm using that word instead of the word vacation. Because two things First, the trips we're taking, we're both going to the UK, right? We're not going together, unfortunately. But

we're going we're both taking trips that I would, but about seeing things we've never seen before not about laying by a pool, which is right, a very specific kind of vacation. Also, I'm going just with my friend, Betsy, but you are going with your husband and your four kids, which definitely means you are not a vacation,

Kaytee Cobb 33:17

right? That's a whole different vibe to take that many humans. It's a

Meredith Monday Schwartz 33:21

trip. And if you look at it like that, instead of like, why am I not feeling vacationing, it will serve you. So how does your reading then play into planning for something like this? Do you just say to yourself, well, there goes reading for two weeks? Or how does that work for you?

Kaytee Cobb 33:37

Well, truth be told, the first thing I thought about when you suggested this deep dive when we decided we were gonna talk about this is that Jordy's Book Club, also just went on vacation, and he put up a post, he said me, I can't wait to go on vacation and read all the books, also me and it's a picture of him with a book in his lap, staring out the window of the motorcoach that they're writing in because he's just enraptured by what's around him. Instead of enjoying the books that he packed and brought with him to wherever he went, I don't even know where he is. It says European vacation, France, Paris, France in his hashtag. So like, I mean, of course, you got to look, you got to be there. You got to enjoy it. You got to experience it, right. And I think that's exactly how I'm looking at this trip. I have been to London before I've never been to Scotland. There are so many things that we're going to see that I've never seen in my life that I have maybe experienced through a small screen on a TV but never like set foot in the hills of Scotland. So I don't want to be clocking out of the experiences we're going to have and putting that pressure on myself like Well Kaytee, you haven't read much lately. When are you going to fit that in? Is this train ride going to be the one that you can fit some reading and like I I'm trying to lay that down completely even though I've had a weird summer even though I'm getting I'm starting to feel behind on my reading In some ways, I have plenty of books to talk about. I'm not behind on my reading, I'm fine. But I am trying to lay down the idea that I'm going to get any reading done at all. That way I can look at everything that I actually put into my brain as a happy bonus, rather than a reading requirement. Yeah, are you are you expecting a lot of reading time on this trip?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:19

I mean, it's going to be very interesting. Again, I'm taking a very, very different trip in a couple of ways. I'm just going with another one other adult woman, so she's not going to need to, right, she's not going to need me to do anything, as far as you know, helping her figure herself out. Right, right, doing her

Kaytee Cobb 35:36

laundry, don't forget your suitcase. Yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:38

exactly. And then also, we're going together, because we both are so bookish. And so she would completely understand if I was like, you know, what, I'm just gonna pop in my AUDIO BOOK for a little

bit. And you know, I'm not gonna have to worry about that, she's going to interrupt me every five minutes, or whatever. So that's really a very particular thing. And also, we're going to a place that we've never been before. And this is my first trip outside of the United States, which is really embarrassing. That's really embarrassing, but it is what it is

Kaytee Cobb 36:09

That's not embarrassing. Meredith, it's amazing that you are doing something brand new at 50 years old, that you're saying, that was my life for 50 years. And now I'm going to break new ground, and I'm going to go on a new adventure. And there's not an a number where that becomes embarrassing. It's always amazing, right?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:25

I am, I'm very much looking forward to it. And so I do want to soak in all of it as much as possible. So I would sit in. So I think that we probably especially during our travels, like during our nine and a half hour flights, and that kind of thing, I can see us getting a lot of reading done, then you guys know how I feel about plane reading, I can see us getting a lot of reading done there in a different way than if I was with my kids. You know, so there's that. And also, we do plan on, you know, dropping everything and reading in various places, mostly for the Instagram pictures that we're gonna get from doing that. So I can see us doing things like you know what we're having lunch in this pub, let's read for 20 minutes on our Kindles while we enjoy lunch, you know, sitting here on this rainy day. Again, we're just gonna play that by ear. So I definitely think that's the case. The other thing is I for better for worse am an introvert and that means that even with absolutely wonderful company all day long, there is going to hit a time of the day where I need to be alone to recharge. And that usually involves me going to bed about nine o'clock with the plan to go to sleep around 10. And then I'll read for an hour, so that probably will be pretty consistent. So there will be some reading. But like you I'm not mandating how much there needs to be because I think we need to prioritize the experiences.

Kaytee Cobb 37:50

Definitely. Okay. Let's also talk about like pure logistics. Are you only bringing Kindle? Are you bringing any paper books with you?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:58

So I don't think I'm going to bring any paper books with me, I have loaded up my Kindle. I have loaded up my Libro.FM, account for audiobooks.

Kaytee Cobb 38:08

And by loaded up on Libro, Do you mean purchased or already downloaded so you're not using data?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:12

Right. Already downloaded? Okay, so that I'm not stuck someplace where I'm like, Oh, I really don't know what I want to be listening to. So I've already thought through that in advance. My very first book that I'm going to be listening to is a book that was on our Indie Press List a few months ago called By

Gaslight, yeah, do you remember that one? Yes. Victorian England. It's got all the vibes and I've been saving, saving saving it. So I'm so I've got that. So I have those things downloaded, so that if I'm away from Wi Fi, I still have access to the things that I need. We are going on this trip to largely to go to bookstores and to buy books.

Kaytee Cobb 38:50

So you're not bringing paper books, you're gonna buy books,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:53

I'm gonna buy books. And so exactly, I'm going to try as hard as I can to have them shipped to me as opposed to trying to take them home myself. But we'll see how pricing and available logistical availabilities are I do that every whenever I go someplace in the United States, that's what I do. When I go to a bookstore, I just walk in, I go up to the front counter and I say, if I buy a whole mess of books, can you guys just ship these back to me and Austin, they will always do that in the bookstores. And so then I don't have to worry about like, how much room do I have? I'm going to try to do that. But again, we got to talk about pricing and everything before we can do that. So I'm going to be buying some stuff. I'd like to buy a bunch of UK versions of things that I can't get easily here. I would like to collect some great copies of some of my favorite books of all time. If I can find some of those over there. We're gonna go to a lot of secondhand bookstores. We're gonna go to a lot of big bookstores that we've never been to before so I just can't imagine bringing any paper books what about you? Are you just Kindle only?

Kaytee Cobb 39:51

Same. Yes, I am downloading everything I can think of to read on my Kindle and also doing checkouts for my library and of course then my Kindle goes on airplane mode. So even though I'm checking out already, I'm putting on an airplane mode from the moment we get on the plane, and then those books will stay there the whole time we're gone. But I don't have to worry about them getting taken back from me. I also am downloading on Libby and libro FM, any audiobooks that whether they're the same ones that I grabbed on Kindle, or different ones, and I plan to have it's our trip is 15 days, I plan to have at least 30 books to choose from, because there's no chance I'm going to be reading two books a day, there's no chance I'm going to go through all 30 of those titles, right. But I'm just going to feel a lot better. Knowing that I have 30 books available to me. I also, I think this really takes into account, you already talked about visiting in the bookstores elsewhere in the US, but car vacations or trips versus airplane, vacations or trips, there's always something different to take into account. And in this case, where you're shipping, not just across the country, but overseas. If you buy things while you're there, it's another layer of complexity that you're adding. So my kids are like, I'm taking kids into account for my plans as well. And they all have allowance that they've been saving and saving and saving, but they'll also get a budget. And they're gonna have to think about how best to spend that money, whether it's souvenirs or a bookstore, trip or whatever it is and how to get those things home without going over there carry on and backpack space, because that's its own issue. Right. I also like you, not just By Gaslight, which is a great pick for the trip that you're doing. I'm trying to think of at least a few books that are centered in place. I talked about Waypoints by Sam Heughan last week, so that while I'm in C2, I can also be reading about something happening in that area. Like even I might pick up the second of

the City of Ghosts series by Victoria Schwab. Because I read the first one, it's Scotland, it's ghost hunters. It'll be perfect for like late September in Scotland, right?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:56

Yes, that is such a good book for any I mean, just for this time of year, people are looking for spooky season books. That one is all the vibes and for sure if you're going to be I mean, you guys are going to be going to Edinburgh right? Yeah,

Kaytee Cobb 42:08

we're going to be an Edinburgh, Glasgow and London are three main stops.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:14

Oh my gosh, it's great. It's going to be absolutely fantastic.

Kaytee Cobb 42:18

I can't wait I there's just so much that I'm so excited for my kids to see and experience and for my husband and I need to get to do together because we did travel quite a bit in our early marriage. But having a lot of babies in a very short period of time we haven't been traveling either I had to renew my passport to be able to go on this trip his expires next year. So he'll have to renew it before we go on another one. And we're excited to start filling them up again and getting our kids to experience some of the things that our parents made sure that we experienced when we were younger. So it's gonna be great.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:49

That is that is so great. I'm so glad that you're that you're taking the kids because they're old enough to all be able to remember this trip. So that's going to be that's going to be really really excellent. Well I'm going to be looking for special things for you when I'm in the Cotswolds because that is someplace that I'm going that you're not going to and you need to make sure that if you find anything that is both murder full and Scottish yes book bookmarks related you gotta grab those. It's already

Kaytee Cobb 43:14

on my list man. Love it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:15

I love it. All right, good. So yes, those are some of the things that we think about we would of course love to know what you guys think about when you travel it's so dependent on your specific trip and your you know you as a person, but we're always interested you know to know there are some people who I know will say my carry on is filled with paper books because I simply can't travel without them. I just have to so we want to hear you know from everyone how you guys handle this. Alright, Kaytee, let's make a wish at the fountain What's your wish?

Kaytee Cobb 43:46

Okay, my wish. I'm hoping that this comes true. It's October 2 when this airs, I wish to meet our London bookish friends. I am the resident extrovert on this team. Right. I'm planning a bookstore meetup for the

London area bookish friends, and anyone willing to travel to the city. It will happen the weekend following this episode. So send an email currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com. If you're going to be able to make it we're going to be at the Foyles on Charing Cross Road on Saturday, October 7. And if you want more details, you have to email me so you know what time and what I'll be wearing and how to find me. And I just want to like meet people from all the way across the ocean that listen to us regularly. I'm not a scary human. I'm just a reader like the rest of you. And I would love to give you a currently reading bookmark and hug your neck and tell you happy reading in person. That's my wish.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 44:38

That will be so much fun. I think that is absolutely wonderful. As our resident introvert I am not making myself

Kaytee Cobb 44:46

going with her blessing. Kaytee go be our face in the world.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 44:49

Exactly. Which is not at all to say that I don't love meeting our bookish friends because man I really, really do. I just don't want to disappoint any of them by meeting them in person.

Kaytee Cobb 45:00

You're killing me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:01

I am wishing. So as I mentioned at my bookish moment at the week I talked about being so extra with my fall reading and my wish is that each of you would be to so because I'm feeling like, I just want to grab all of you and take you into fall reading with me. I am going to I've already actually sent to Megan, my list of my favorite fall candles. And I've sent you I've made public two playlists of ASR ASMR rooms, these are my go twos. I have one that is called fall vibes, and one that is called spooky vibes. The links to all of those things are going to be in the show notes. I've also included my very favorite two throws that I especially love in the fall one at a higher price point one at a lower price point. They're both equally equally cozy. So my wish is that you would join me in all the creating of fall vibes to go along with your with your reads, ping splash.

Kaytee Cobb 45:59

We're pulling fall in by the teeth by the skin of its teeth. Exactly.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 46:05

Alright, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me on Meredith at [@MeredithMondaySchwartz](https://www.instagram.com/MeredithMondaySchwartz) on Instagram.

Kaytee Cobb 46:13

And you can find me Kaytee at [@notesonbookmarks](https://www.instagram.com/notesonbookmarks) on Instagram,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 46:16

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

Kaytee Cobb 46:26

You can also follow the show at [@currentlyreadingpodcast](https://www.instagram.com/currentlyreadingpodcast) on Instagram or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 46:33

And as we talked about at the top of the show, if you want to make sure that you're getting brand new content from us, no matter what kind of travels, we're on, become a bookish friend. It's only \$5 a month and you get that great new content all year round. You can also help us by reading and reviewing us on Apple podcasts and shouting us out on social media. Every one of those things helps us to find our perfect audience.

Kaytee Cobb 46:56

Yes, bookish friends are the best friends. Thank you all for having us grow and meeting up with us and telling us that's in person and get closer to our

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:05

goals. All right, until next week, may your coffee or your tea be hot,

Kaytee Cobb 47:10

and your book be unputdownable

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:12

Happy reading Kaytee

Kaytee Cobb 47:13

Happy reading Meredith