



Season 3, Episode 38: Eating Humble Pie + IRL and Bookish Friendships

Mon, 5/3 • 44:34

Kaytee Cobb 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 spicy opinions. So get ready.

Mindy Brouse 00:23

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

Kaytee Cobb 00:34

I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And friendships centered on books make my heart happy.

Mindy Brouse 00:41

And I'm Mindy Brouse, a mom to seven reading and hiking in the mountains of New Mexico. And I think sitting alone in a restaurant with a beer and a book is a pretty freakin great way to spend an evening.

Kaytee Cobb 00:51

This is episode number 38 of season three and we're so glad you're here. Mindy, we've been missing you. I am so glad I get to record with you today. This is so fun. We want everybody to know right at the top here that we will be talking for our deep dive today about bookish friendships and in real life friendships and the intersection of the two. Which is of course, something very special to Mindy and I because as our listeners know, that is a central part of our friendship. So we're going to talk a little bit about how that happened. And then what it looks like to turn other friendships into bookish ones or into in real life ones. I'm excited. I think it'll be great.

Mindy Brouse 01:29

I think our listeners are gonna love it and be able to apply a lot. I think it'll be great.

Kaytee Cobb 01:34

Absolutely. Okay, so let's get started. like we always do, though, with our bookish moments of the week. And Mindy, why don't you go first?

Mindy Brouse 01:41

Okay, I had a tough time deciding since I haven't been on a while. I was like Kaytee, can I pick one from four months ago? And yesterday and three weeks ago? She's like, No, no, you get one.

Kaytee Cobb 01:50

One moment, one moment.

Mindy Brouse 01:51

Okay. I'm gonna go with this one because it was a complete surprise, and caught me off guard. But made my bookish heart so happy. My sister texted me. It was like "Mindy, I am reading one of the most awesome books and I can't put it down and it's called What Alice Forgot". And I was like, shut the front door. Yeah, that's one of the best books I've ever read. It's in my like, top 20. And she was like, Well, how come you hadn't told me about it? And readers the truth is because I get nervous about that book. If somebody has gone through a divorce, or a really messy one, especially my sister has, she's come on the other side of it super happy. But I just you know, I wasn't sure about that book. And I was so excited Kaytee to be able to talk about all this stuff for Alice, and that whole story. And it was just it made me so happy. And it also opened up a chat because I was like, so I didn't tell you about this because such and such. Why don't you tell me like how does that affect books I can press and she did. And so it was like a two fold blessing. I got to share about the book and talk with her. And then I got to learn how to press books better for her.

Kaytee Cobb 02:57

Oh, I love that. Yeah, I love that. You know, as everybody knows now, your sister's name is Belinda in my head, because you guys are Melinda and Belinda. That makes me happy. Her name is actually Robin. But we're sticking with Belinda for now. And I'm so glad that Belinda loved Alice the way that we do.

Mindy Brouse 03:15

I know it's so great that Belinda thought it was a wonderful book. I can't wait to talk to Belinda about more. It'll be great. All right, Kaytee, what is your bookish moment?

Kaytee Cobb 03:23

Okay, my bookish moment is actually something that both of us got to experience. This week. I wore my mask that says "read books by Black women" when I went to get my second COVID vaccine this week. And I've worn it around a number of times, I got it in my BlackLIT Box, which Meredith got me as a Christmas present. But this was the time that got the most comments. People were like, getting kind of uncomfortably close during COVID time. What does that mask say? What's going on there? And I tell you what, they would ask me "Wow, do you like to read?" I was like,

Mindy Brouse 04:01

What a cute innocent question.

Kaytee Cobb 04:02

You don't know me? And then they would be like, have you read many good books by Black women? And I would be like, oh, oh, dear sir, please do have a seat. Are you ready for my TED talk? Like it was, it was excessive, and I just loved every second just the joy of getting the vaccine plus having these amazing conversations and knowing that even something like that could be bookish, you know, like I just I loved it. It was fantastic.

Mindy Brouse 04:28

I think that's so I zoomed in on that photo because when I saw I was like, What does her mask say, I zoomed in and was like oh my god, that's so perfect for Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 04:36

That's the perfect mask for me and I'm so glad that the BlackLIT box provided it for me. I love it.

Mindy Brouse 04:44

Even better.

Kaytee Cobb 04:44

All right. Let's talk about current reads. Mindy, you want to talk current reads with me? What is your first current read this week?

Mindy Brouse 04:50

Heck I do. Yes. All right. This first one I have been so excited to share about and it's a recent read for me and this is the Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley. Oh my gosh, I know you've been you've been waiting for me to finish it because you knew I was gonna love this, didn't you?

Kaytee Cobb 05:09

Yes, I did.

Mindy Brouse 05:11

Okay, guys, this book caught my eye because the cover is absolutely stunning. I honestly fell in love with it and wanted it only because of the cover. When I saw Reese Witherspoon share about on Instagram, I was like, I'm not listening to you Reese, I don't know what you just said. But I definitely need that book. And thankfully, bookish friend Liz Hein knows that I operate like that. And she trusts me. And she chose the book. And she gave it to me for my birthday. Y'all. If you're looking for a thriller, that also has some of my very favorite elements, family, loyalty, young love, this is the book for you. All of that is there and you don't know what's going on. And you're, you're pulled along by this story and you want to figure it out. But the aspect I love most about this book was the Native American culture and language in this book. I can't believe that this book is Angeline Boulley's debut, because this is very, very well done. This does not read like a debut to me at all. She is an enrolled member. I also learned more about what that means of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The main character Daunis Fontaine. Y'all her struggle with her past and her present and what to do about her future as a not acknowledged member of her tribe, that she loves and claims is a part of this journey. Her love and care for her people and always whether that be through medicine, through story through

relationships is so powerful. And you guys, I'm a huge sucker for a strong woman who loves her people. Yes, please bring me that book. This story also deals with damage and the heartache of drug addiction, though, on a personal level as well for communities. I learned a ton while enjoying a very, very well told story. Now this book is YA technically, but I'm going to call it new adult.

Kaytee Cobb 07:06

I would agree.

Mindy Brouse 07:07

Yeah, I felt like this went above young adult because of the couple of sex scenes and conversations. So I just kind of want to put that out there that you may not want to hand it to a 15 year old. But this book is already in my top books of 2021 for so many reasons. Kaytee, listeners, you know, how, when you read some books, and you love them, but then there are others that you feel like they're real. And they're living and that when you start reading it again, you're visiting your people. Well, that's what this book does. This book does this to a very convincing level. There is a powerful scene in this book that involves only women. And I'm tearing up just remembering it. I will never ever forget it. I wept. I think it was something that I wish many cultures did. This is a really really good book that guys, I read this in tandem. Liz gave me the hardback but once I started reading it, I realized I really wanted the audio too because I wanted to hear the language, spoken authentically. And then I love that they found an authentic voice Isabella LaBlanc to narrate this. And it was the first time an open audition was held for Native American women to narrate a book which I just, I just upped it. I mean, this book can't get any higher on my list. So go get this book, you guys. You won't regret it. I think you'll love it. I think it has something for everyone. That is Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley

Kaytee Cobb 08:34

And I will cosign everything that Mindy just said it was just an incredible story. I could not put it down. I could not put it down. Yeah, completely wraps you up into it. And you're looking at the cover and you're like, well, this is you know, stunning, but am I gonna like it and it's like, well crafted mystery that pulls you in a little bit thrillery, a little bit but not popcorn at all.

Mindy Brouse 08:56

So no. And the cover kind of looks like fantasy to me.

Kaytee Cobb 09:00

Yeah, I agree.

Mindy Brouse 09:01

So I thought it was going to be fantasy and then quickly realized it wasn't which was great, because fantasy isn't my jam most the time, but I'm really glad I was gonna get to talk to you about this one because I remember your face when you told me you just finished and it just pretty much said my friend. You're gonna love it.

Kaytee Cobb 09:17

It's so good. And okay, but one more thing. So it takes place on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, which has this super strong sense of place. It has kind of Beartown vibes. There's lots of hockey. Yes, yeah, Beartown, right. We loved Beartown here. And I mean, you don't have to care about hockey to care about what's happening in this book. And the way that the narrator brings in that Upper Peninsula, the upper accent to even like the white people in the book. It's just, it's so well done. It's so great. You can hear me smiling, right? It's so great.

Mindy Brouse 09:49

Yeah. And the way she kept saying "yous" and all this great, you guys. Yeah, yes. And we kept talking and I'm buddy reading this and we did say wait a minute. Is this gonna be like Beartown? It's just gonna be a Native American Beartown. And to some degree it is, but it's just, it's a much bigger picture than Beartown brought to the table.

Kaytee Cobb 10:08

I agree. Okay, well, that was a great lead off. My first book this week is called Every Body Looking. And there is a space in there, Every Body Looking by Candice Iloh. So this is a novel about Ada. She is the daughter of Nigerian immigrants who, throughout this story, she kind of reveals herself piece by piece through poems. It's a verse novel, the more it's a lot more character driven than books that I usually like. But because it's a verse novel, Mindy, you know, this right? Verse novels move so fast, every word is pointedly chosen for exactly that moment. And a lot of the pages are mostly blank, right? Like you have a column of words along one side, and two thirds of the page is blank space. So you just are moving really quickly, even though, as our listeners know, I'm not a big character driven reader. So it never felt slow or slogging, or any of the words that you often hear me associate with character driven. Ada wants to dance. But she has that second generation, immigration pressure put on her right, like her parents made this big sacrifice to come over to the US, she is expected to take advantage of that to her full ability. So there's a lot of pressure on her. So we meet her the very first chapter, she's at her high school graduation. And we follow her through her first year of college. But she's also trying to figure out what she really wants out of her life. And we get to see that through flashbacks, going all the way back to her being a young girl. And through those flashbacks, we see that Ada has suffered quite a bit of trauma. There's interviews with Candace Iloh, and she has said that many parts of this story are heavily autobiographical for her. So you know, she's not just sprinkling this in as like, fun and games, like, let's make this Black girl have to go through all this terrible stuff, because it makes the story more interesting. Like she's pulling from really personal experiences. So even though it's not a memoir, it kind of reads like one. And there aren't pretty boasts around the ending, or around certain situations. And sometimes that's hard for us. As readers, there's hard emotions that don't get explored all the way like some readers might want. I really enjoyed it from cover to cover. It was interesting the whole way through, it pulled me along. And I, like many other reviewers wish it had been a little bit longer to really explore some of those emotions and situations more. But overall, I just thought it was a really beautiful character driven verse novel, again, struggling that like YA new adult timeframe, some tough stuff in here. Lots of triggers, definitely look those up if you're worried about this book, but this one was really well done. It's called Every Body Looking by Candice Iloh.

Mindy Brouse 13:06

Excellent. Did you read that on paper?

Kaytee Cobb 13:09

I did read it on paper. Yeah. All right. What's your second book, Mindy?

Mindy Brouse 13:13

All right. My next book is *The Hundred-Year House* by Rebecca Makkai. I had never heard of this book until it arrived in my Page1 box that Meredith gifted me.

Kaytee Cobb 13:22

Meredith is all over this episode.

Mindy Brouse 13:24

Yeah, she's yeah. And *The Hundred-Year House* kind of reminded me of *The Westing Game*, but on a much more grown up level. And here we have a story about a house and how it affects the lives of people who live in it. I adored the backwards style of this book. And what I mean when I say that is that we started in 1999. And the people are living in the house, the 1955, the 1929. Then, finally 1900. Four generations of family living in this house. We start off with the tales and the myths and some of the legends, but also some creepiness that the family has passed down, involving this house, and some secrets that are refused to be discussed. So there's like hints of secrets. But it's kind of like, that's a vault, you're not getting that information. Legends involving the artist community that lived on the state for many years in the past are part of this journey. So you have stories about people who stayed there, but weren't a part of that family, and how that intersected each of the family members. So we're given the secrets or the end of the secrets at the beginning. And then we go backwards in time to find the truth, and how all of it came out how it came to be. So we're given those secrets and then we go back in time to find the truth. Do the family members in 1999 know the real story and as they say they do? And each generation we get a little bit more, but I thought it was so fascinating to watch each generation be so confident. And their knowledge you know what I'm saying? Like the arrogance of a current generation was really fantastic. I really enjoyed how that was done. And I really liked the characters, you don't get a lot of time with many of them. So just kind of a heads up for that. I do wish part one had provided a little bit more towards the end of that section. It sort of felt like Rebecca was in a rush or something to finish that way to wrap things up really quickly. But I had plenty of aha moments. I had some times where my jaw dropped open, and I giggled. And I was like, ah, and that is super fun. It's a quick read. This is nothing like Rebecca's other book, *The Great Believers*,

Kaytee Cobb 15:45

Except art. There's an art overlap. Right?

Mindy Brouse 15:48

Well, okay, right. So art, and some LGBTQ themes. Those are the only two things and those are not to the depth, like *The Great Believers*, right. And I love that book. And so I expected a different kind of story than I got. It was really fascinating to me, because this is told much differently. It's an easy read. It's quick. I can easily be talked into hippy reads that are also mysteries and have a love story. Yes, give

those books to me. Thank you very much. And when it's quick and fast. I'm there. So I really enjoyed it. Thank you, Meredith. And thank you Page1. That is The Hundred-Year House by Rebecca Makkai.

Kaytee Cobb 16:34

Nice. That sounds very interesting. I'm glad that you talked about that one. Okay, my next book this week is one that we actually buddy read together, Mindy. I'm going to talk about Her Last Flight by Beatriz Williams. This book is one that as you know, we read with our read the damn book club, and it was a total hit out of the park, which is great, because as listeners know, the one before that is one that I chose and it sucked. We don't only read historical fiction in our read the damn book club, but this one is also historical fiction. Here's the setup. We meet Janey in 1947 in Hawaii, where she's trying to dig up details about Sam Mallory, a legendary pilot who flew around the world and disappeared a decade ago. She tracked down Irene who's flying under the radar with an assumed name. But is she sure the last person who got to see Sam alive? Wearing her down story by story Janie pulls Irene's history from her. And we get to come along for the ride. And what a ride it is you guys. We get to follow this female pilot during a time when women did not fly. There are some steamy sex scenes in this book. And I want to mention that not because it's a romance not because it needs a caveat. But because I was really impressed by the way, Beatriz Williams made Irene, this character who was drawn as sex positive in a time when that was not a thing. She enjoys it. She derives a lot of pleasure from her own desire. And she isn't ashamed of her body or the way that it works. And I just really love that, especially for a story that's mostly taking place in the 30s. Like, we're just we don't see that in heroines from that time. You know, I thought that was a really bold choice by our author and it worked out great. I discourage anyone who is interested in this book from reading the full blurb on Amazon or Goodreads or whatever. Just get into the book because I felt like the blurb especially towards the end of it gets really spoilery and it is going to ruin some really great moments for you in this book if you're expecting something because of that blurb. So if you're a spoiler fiend, go for it. But if you like to be surprised, enjoy this book for what it is because it is a delight. I loved this incredible story. It's spun out between these two headstrong women about a time that isn't a World War, and is super engrossing. I loved it. I hope you love it. I think all four of us really loved it right Mindy?

Mindy Brouse 18:59

Yeah, we did.

Kaytee Cobb 19:00

It was just a big hit. And I definitely recommend it for a group of women to read together and discuss so that was Her Last Flight by Beatriz Williams.

Mindy Brouse 19:10

Getting spoilers for this book isn't like getting spoilers for some where you kind of for the stress or the tension. You might want to spoiler some people to know they're going to be okay. It's just spoiler in the worst way. You're just just listen to Kaytee and go read it. Now. You know what it's about. We don't need Amazon.

Kaytee Cobb 19:27

What's your last book Mindy?

Mindy Brouse 19:29

Okay, my last book is The Lost Queen by Signe Pike.

Kaytee Cobb 19:33

Oh,

Mindy Brouse 19:34

My gosh. All right. This is a fantastic find from the Currently Reading Indie Press List. I hadn't heard of this one either, until it was an option on the indie press. It's touted on the cover though, as Outlander meets Camelot and while I don't I don't think is that I do definitely see the Camelot and the Merlin aspects ring true in this book. It's only like Outlander in that it's set in Scotland, so there you go. That's it. There's no time travel. There's not a million sex scenes. So if you're looking for that, nope, not going to get that here. So what is this story about? This story centers around Languoreth and her twin brother, Lailoken, set in the late 500s AD. We're drawn into a tale about a family, who longs to keep the old ways while also wanting to keep its kingdom. And that's a big clash during these times. Those who carry the secrets and traditions of healing and their faith are valued, which is an important part of the story. But the wars and conquests and the greed for battle and for more land, shows you what happens when those two things meet in a really terrible way. The monks and monasteries are battling people. There's some terrible people in here. Famine and fear are ruling the common people. So they're looking to their leaders. And she is one of those people. But she's also a woman. And she's a young girl at the beginning of the book, and she has to rise to a different station in life that women were forced into back then she had to marry for the good of the kingdom and become a queen, and she had to, she has to make that sacrifice. I loved her immediately. And I wanted to know what she was going to choose and what her future held. The lives that women bear and the sacrifices they make in this time period are shared boldly in this book. And I loved hearing at the end that this entire novel was based on real historical people. Hello, what? So some long known facts about Merlin are why the author wrote this book and about this queen and her decisions and how she has been erased from history. Are we shocked that a woman was erased from history? We are not. But to get to hear her story. And the way that Signe Pike tells it. You love her. You love her love you love her brother, you love her companion, her spiritual companion, all of them. There are a few minor sex scenes. If you want to read this book, but skip them, contact me and I'll tell you exactly what page to skip. But it's not many. This is nothing like Outlander in that sense, guys. I'm like how can anyone say this is anything like Outlander, because hello, no. I do recommend tandem reading this one and not only doing an audio. The reason I had a difficult time with it only on audio for a while is there's a lot of characters whose name start with M. And they're all Scottish and they sound a little bit too alike for me. And I was like what? Why would you do this Signe, come on, do a woman a favor who's 51 and can't keep names straight. But at the beginning of the print book, it has a pronunciation guide. It has all the characters laid out for you, which I found super duper helpful. And Kaytee, it has a map. So now this book is also pretty long as 527 pages so it's not a short read. Again, I like doing it tandem because I guess I can listen to a good Scottish accent all day. Thank you very much. Just keep speaking to me. You want to read me a book, you want to read me a menu? wanna read me my own name? I don't really care. Just talk. This is book one in the Lost Queen trilogy. And y'all I'm for sure reading the second. I loved all of it. Great read. Thank you to

Fabled bookstore for putting that in the Indie Press List. I really liked it. That's *The Lost Queen* by Signe Pike.

Kaytee Cobb 23:34

I have that one waiting on my TBR. It is high up there. I have a buddy read planned for it. And I'm excited to know that you really loved it. So. And strangely, we ended up with three little pairings here for our six current reads today because I also have historical fiction based on real people for my third novel this week. That's because I'm about to eat humble pie. And I want to talk about *Hamnet*, by Maggie O'Farrell. Mindy, Mindy.

Mindy Brouse 24:04

Shut the front door.

Kaytee Cobb 24:05

Okay, so y'all know that Mindy has talked about this on the show before, right? She loves this book. And we've also talked about how I was nervous to pick it up. Because Mindy loves it so much. I didn't want to not love it, and then end up breaking her heart. So this isn't a new title. It's been mentioned multiple times. But recording with her today is the time for me to get to bring it as a current read as well and admit that I loved this book. And it is the surprise of the century, the surprise of the decade at least, that I love this book. So this is a story about *Hamnet*, but not really. It's put together in this really beautiful and interesting way where we meet *Hamnet* and *Judith* his twin and we know from page one, that *Hamnet* is William Shakespeare's son and that he dies with the plague. So we're reading we're waiting for the shoe to drop in that regard. But in the meantime, we're flashing back and forth between one fateful day in *Hamnet*'s life. And all the years preceding it that led to that moment, we get to see his father and mother and watch them fall in love. We see what his father's life was like as a child, we really get to develop this picture of this family through what feels like almost been gets like shadowy around the edges and super clearly focused on the center. I listened to this one on audio. And even though I really shy away from we're putting this in quotes, "beautiful books", I had my breath taken away multiple times by the writing. If I had a hard copy, which I will soon because I did order it from Blackwell's in England, I would have listened with the paper in front of me, so that I could put in book darts and underline phrases and passages. It is just this total gift of language and writing that Maggie O'Farrell has given to her readers. And I do thank you, Mindy for being patient with me and for allowing me to take my time to read it. I think it found me and it came to me at the perfect time for me to fall head over heels in love with it. I loved it so much. And I'm happy to admit it for all the 10s of 1000s of listeners of Currently Reading here today, it's *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell.

Mindy Brouse 26:17

Well, I just didn't think today could get any better. And then you go and do that. That's freaking awesome. That's great. I I am thrilled. And everything you said times ten. Yeah, exactly.

Kaytee Cobb 26:29

Yeah. There it is. And we I mean, Mindy did this amazing zoom group chat about *Hamnet*, which is, of course, what finally pushed me to read it. And it was just incredible to like, virtually meet with all these other readers who also really loved the story. So

Mindy Brouse 26:46

yeah, that was super fun. Thanks, Kaytee. Yay.

Kaytee Cobb 26:49

Okay, those were our six current reads. And I think that last one actually leads perfectly into our deep dive because we're going to talk about bookish friendships, and why they matter to us and why readers love to have friendships that are bookish. So Mindy, we came up with this idea together, but I want to know, what you first thought of, like, what did this what did this deep dive idea first spur in you?

Mindy Brouse 27:17

One of the things that I love about book is friendship and, and what you wanted us to talk about was, I was hoping we could be like, wow, hey, women, if you need something that's just for you, with no guilt, and something that you just want to bask in your hobby. And people that you feel connected to, that you don't serve, that you don't take care of. Whose butts you don't wipe, you don't have to cook for any of those things. I felt like I feel like that's what bookish friends have done for me. They've helped me find myself again and some way. And that is, I think, really empowering and encouraging. So that's, that's what I thought of immediately was like, Oh, it's like finding yourself again.

Kaytee Cobb 28:01

Right. And I think that really plays into kind of the way that you and I turned our friendship into a bookish one. So not everyone knows that Mindy and I met doing director training for our homeschool program three years ago in May, we're coming really quickly up on our three year anniversary. And our friendship really started because of Hamilton, the musical. Right? That was the foundation of it. And then the Greatest Showman came into play. And then there was a baby shower. And just a few months later, Meredith and I started the podcast. And Mindy, as a supportive friend, not as a podcast listener or a podcast junkie, not as a big reader decided she would take a listen, just to be supportive, just to be part of the things that were important in my life. And we turned her into a podcast listener. And then we turned her into a podcaster. But in the meantime, we turned her back into a reader. Because Mindy, you had been not reading for yourself for quite some time. Right? You it's been funny. Any of your reading time was dedicated to homeschool, read alouds, reading with your kids, reading for your kids. Right? Yeah. Instead of spending time devouring the books that made you excited and made you happy?

Mindy Brouse 29:15

Yes. And that was exhausting. Right. I shared in the very first time I was on as a as a guest. That you guys helped me see. Wait, I can I can read just for me. I can read just for fun. What?? I mean, and then I'll be like, you remember Mindy, Who did that? When she was in her 20s. And she would stay in her apartment by herself and go through like four John Grisham novels in a weekend because that's what she did. She still exists. Let's talk about her.

Kaytee Cobb 29:46

She still exists. I love that. Yeah. So that's that's how our friendship turned into a bookish one. Right. It started as a regular friendship, whatever regular friendship is. Based on Hamilton and the Greatest Showman. That's what our regular friendship was, and then it evolved. And we gave it the space to do

that. And we encouraged the bookishness of it, you and I, by reading things together talking about what we're reading, you decided to embark on this, what seemed crazy at the time idea to read the entire first season press list. So that meant there was book after book after book that you were sending both Meredith and I live reactions to what was happening within the story, right? It was

Mindy Brouse 30:28

just, that's what I put for my number one thing that built our bookish friendship was me choosing a book you had already read and loved. So it wasn't just, you know, a book that you had read, it was a press list. So I knew that that meant it was really loved. And then what you always love to call the live tweeting, I would just live message you my reactions as I was going, and I felt like that was really, the big thing that drew us close really quickly, was that.

Kaytee Cobb 31:00

On that same vein, what Mindy and I both would recommend is that if you have a bookish friendship that you think you might want to turn into something more or a friendship that you think you might want to turn bookish, that's probably our number one recommendation. It is right?

Mindy Brouse 31:17

Yes, for sure. And I put on here, kind of, you're gonna have to be a little brave, right? You're gonna have to reach out to somebody who's either in your life for real, or somebody online, who you know, reads and say, Hey, is there a book that you just love that you would like to press? Let your friend press a book because God, we all know that that's like, one of the best feelings in the world is when somebody says, I'll read a book, you press and then live message them. I have not found a person yet who doesn't enjoy that. Yes, I have done it with lots of bookish friends now. And I love it when somebody when I'm the recipient, but I also love when I'm the sender. So I say for sure, share that those moments with your friend, and you will giggle and you will maybe cry, and you will be connected in a very, very personal way. It's it's pretty much the best,

Kaytee Cobb 32:14

It is the best. Yeah. And so let's talk a little bit about the inverse of that. Like, sometimes you have a great friend that lives down the street that you'd like to go hiking with, that you will drink a beer with, but is not a reader or they like to read something that is super not something you are going to read. Right? It could be Yes, yeah, steamy romance, it could be something from the other side of the political aisle is the only thing they read. Or it could be just that they're not interested in reading. So then you but you still want bookish friendships in your life. Right? I have been shocked by even though we called them the bookish friends from beginning, I have been shocked by the number of friendships, genuine friendships that we have seen spring out of the bookish friends group, both for us, right as hosts, you and me and Meredith, and we've all created these amazing friendships there. But then we see it happening between bookish friends as well. They're excited to meet each other and talk to each other and deepen a relationship with each other. And in more than one instance, it has turned into. And we also talk about all the other stuff. Yeah, it's no longer just about books. It's a bookish friendship, or it started as a bookish friendship that turned into a real life friendship, somebody that you would be willing to travel to meet somebody that you would be willing to, you know, exchange mailing addresses with, so you can send gifts to each other, somebody that cares about when your birthday is right, like Liz, for

you, Roxanna, for Meredith, Katie for me, right? We just we have these people that when your relationship starts with books, it can blossom in really wonderful ways.

Mindy Brouse 33:48

I honestly feel like this is a big deal. For me as an extrovert, I feel like these friendships are even a lot more special to me, because we are willing to share things we love. And I think that's pretty vulnerable of us to do. And just like you said, right there about a minute that you were like, I don't know if I can read this, you know, because Mindy loves it. And I love Mindy and what will happen. And so my biggest tip into turning either an in real life friend into a bookish friend, or an online book, good friend into a real friend, is to make sure you clearly share and whatever way you feel is comfortable, that you're a safe, bookish friend so that you won't judge them that you want to hear about why they love a book and what they loved about it and why they're reading it, even if you don't agree with anything in it or whatever. I think that shows a real mutual respect that we're lacking in our culture right now. And I think that's part of the reason the bookish friends group has done so beautifully is because we have all chosen to be that kind of person. When we talk about books, and I think that started with the show that you and Meredith can disagree on a book, or you can read books that are on the other side of the aisle, or you've read books for me, in my life that aren't where you land, theologically, but you love me, and you want to understand me, so you read it, and we don't have to agree on everything. So I think making clear from the get go to somebody that you're a safe, bookish person and that you value their opinion. Even if you don't agree, I think honestly, that is key. Because if somebody feels safe with you, then they're going to share and you can't really become friends if you don't share. So you've got to open that door out of love and say, Hey, Yes, okay. You want to read Outlander aloud to me? Well, okay. Let me get a cold glass of iced water. And I love you so much. Let's do this. Right. Or, okay, Meredith longest voice message, ever, ever. And then Meredith wants to say, Mindy, I'm gonna read part of Fantasticland too that I really loved. Is that okay?

Kaytee Cobb 36:10

It's the most Lord of the Flies section, I could find.

Mindy Brouse 36:14

Yes, Meredith, because I love you. Right. I mean, as silly as that those are extreme examples, but I do think I have made some friends that we don't land politically the same. We don't land theologically the same. But we're safe for each other. Why? Because we told each other. And we've held to it. Yeah, I think that's key.

Kaytee Cobb 36:35

I think that's really important to remember too. And I do think it's something that people have said in the past, they really appreciate about Currently Reading, that we can disagree on a book and still love each other. And y'all can do this in your real lives as well. I promise.

Mindy Brouse 36:50

Yes. The last few things I want to say, buddy read. Okay, do a buddy read. So you've already heard us say, tweet, live tweets and one about a book. The other person's already read, but then read one together. Meredith can attest, she's not here, but we're just going to pretend that she's attesting that has

helped you. Yeah, her friendship with Roxanna, that that has helped them. I think doing a buddy read is key. And then guys, if you can do an in face chat about it, whether that's on zoom, or it's on somebody porch, that, that will send it I will say that those friends that I have done that with back in June or July when we did that as hosts. And then I branched out from there. And those are the people that I'm most connected to, because we've made a, we've taken the time to see each other. And that space instead of just texting. And that just makes it a lot more personal and it feels more like a friend when you're looking at each other. Right? So it doesn't have to be hours. You can say, hey, let's talk about this. We got 20 minutes. And that's okay. But I do think spending time face to face is really a game changer. So I recommend that highly.

Kaytee Cobb 38:02

I love that. I think that is a great way to really up your friendships from one level to the next, especially surrounding books. So lots of great tips there you guys let us know, what do you think how, what's the challenge here? or What else do you want to know about bookish friendships, how they work in real life? You know, we just we want to talk about this with you so find us on social media. But in the meantime, let's talk about those books that we want our friends to read and live tweet us about. What's what book do you want to press today Mindy?

Mindy Brouse 38:33

I am going with *Lovely War* by Julie Berry. I shared about this book in this season, episode 13. And then again, in my bonus episode with Mary when we did our top 10 of 2020. This is really funny because I'm talking about two YA books today. And I'm not really a big YA reader you know that I'm just typically not I don't know why. But this is a YA book that acts like it's not a YA book. It's not angsty, it's not teenagery. So I did not even know it was YA till afterwards. So I'll be quick because I have talked about it before. But we have four people living their lives and trying to find love and purpose during World War One. But we also have the Greek gods holding court about a goddess who has been accused of adultery. Her husband's the judge, and we have all these Greek gods coming and being sworn in and giving testimony in this court. And then we're going back to the young people, and back and forth. It's so unusual. And these gods are influencing and being involved in the lives of our four main characters, two men and two women. There is nothing that I don't love about this book. I devoured it truly. And every person I've gifted it to since I've read it and I have gifted it to at least six people has also devoured it. They've texted me and be like, Oh my gosh, I can't put it down. I'm like you're welcome. Mike drop. Let me just walk away. This is a classic style, love story, but told in a really fresh, different perspective. I think it's a great read. I think anyone can pick this up and enjoy it. That's *Lovely War* by Julie Berry.

Kaytee Cobb 40:10

Love that. And I will cosign it because I also loved that book. I thought it was fantastic. And the audio of it is exceptional. So know that before he'd pick it up,

Mindy Brouse 40:19

Agreed. Awesome. Well, what is your press Kaytee?

Kaytee Cobb 40:22

Okay, so the book that I want to press this week, I was thinking about friendship. And I was thinking about neighbors. And so this week, I'm going to press *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon. Stick with me here, this book changed my life. The last time we moved before we came up to Santa Fe, I read this book shortly after we settled into our home. And it got me totally fired up about not just being in a home in a neighborhood but being part of a community. And so it was this book that inspired me to turn the neighborhood that we moved into, into what I call a cup of sugar neighborhood where you can knock on someone's door and say, Hi, we live in the 50s now do you have a cup of sugar because I'm out. And the place we lived in Rio Rancho, you could not walk around the block without meeting friends and chatting with people. We had a booming Facebook group, people borrowed tools and helped on yard projects. I had neighbors that watched my children for me in emergencies, and let their grandchildren hang out at my house. It was like this mythical neighbor utopia. And then we moved. And that's sad, and it's its own story. But none of that would have happened without *The Art of Neighboring*. So before I continue to wax any more poetic about this book, I will say that it's written by two Christian authors. They go heavy on making sure that readers know that loving your neighbor is biblical. But they also distinguish between loving your neighbor and evangelizing your neighbor. So yeah, if you're not, if you're not a Christian, this may not be the book for you. But know that there is that line drawn as well. If I think about living in a neighborhood, surrounded by friends and people who genuinely care for each other, this was the book that got me there. And I love it. So even if you're not interested in reading it as a press, because you don't want a Christian book on your TBR. That's okay, I have a little exercise for you. You make a tic tac toe board, a grid of nine, you put yourself in the center square, your house goes in the center square, draw it like a five year old. The other eight squares are your closest neighbors, the two next to you the three behind the three in front. Your goal is to fill in the names of those people. And then step two is to go a little deeper jobs, kids names, etc. Step three is when you really start to build a friendship, you know, their goals, you know where they want to travel someday, you know where they grew up, or what the hardest thing we have ever had lived through is and that is the building block of this book. It gets you going in exactly the right path to build community, right where you are and create friendships with the people that live around you. It's It's incredible. It changed my life. And I love it. It's *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon.

Mindy Brouse 43:03

That's a great book. I read it. I actually just checked which is stupid of me to see I thought this was already a press. I thought that's why I'd already read it but I think you and I were just talking about it and I read it I bought it I own it was really good but as a good book, great press Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 43:17

Alright, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks on instagram. Meredith is @Meredith.reads

Mindy Brouse 43:27

And you can find me Mindy at @gratefulforgrace on Instagram.

Kaytee Cobb 43:30

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 at our website at currentlyreadingpodcast.com.

Mindy Brouse 43:40

You can also contact us directly at [@currentlyreadingpodcast](https://www.instagram.com/currentlyreadingpodcast) on Instagram, or via email at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com

Kaytee Cobb 43:49

And if you super want to help us become a bookish friend, that is the best way to support the podcast help us to grow. You can also rate and review us on Apple podcasts or shout us out on social media and keep helping us reach a new audience.

Mindy Brouse 44:02

Yes, a recommendation from you to your bookish friend is the best way to pass along your love of the podcast to others and help the show grow. Thanks for doing that.

Kaytee Cobb 44:13

Alright, until next week. Happy reading Mindy.

Mindy Brouse 44:16

Happy reading Kaytee.