



Season 4, Episode 37: Direct Recommendations + Bookish Confessions

Mon, 5/2 • 1:05:30

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 yourself ready.

Kaytee Cobb 00:24

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:34

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And sometimes reading isn't just my hobby, it's a survival strategy.

Kaytee Cobb 00:44

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I think bookish adjacent merch is almost as fun as books. This is episode number 37 of season four and we are so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:57

All right, well, that's definitely true. I can spend so much money on bookish T-shirts. It's not even funny.

Kaytee Cobb 01:03

I agree. It's becoming a problem. I have to give away almost as much as I take in. Otherwise, it'll take over the house.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:12

Oh, my goodness. All right. All right. Well, we are going to get into that. I think we're also later on are going to do a deep dive on our bookish confessions. What are some things that Kaytee and I maybe don't want to admit to, but we feel that we need to so we're gonna get into that in our deep dive. But first, this is the first episode of the month, which means that we will be doing a one tiny commercial for ourselves for our Patreon. And then the whole rest of the month, all of our episodes are completely ad free. So Kaytee, this month, what do we want to make sure people know about that might make them think you know what, spending \$5 a month for more content for Meredith and Kaytee seems like a good idea?

Kaytee Cobb 01:57

You know, Meredith, a lot of people say that one of their very, very favorite things about becoming a bookish friend is getting access to not us, but the other bookish friends. Because that is a group of almost 1900 insightful and smart and well read people that congregate together on Facebook, and on Mighty Networks for those who are Facebook averse and we have seen some amazing things happen there.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:26

Yes, yes. I am always surprised Kaytee, when there will someone will put up and this happens. I mean, the group is so active, it happens all the time. Someone will say, "Okay, this is weird. But I need a recommendation for this kind of book, or for this kind of person I need to buy for", and sometimes Kaytee, they're so niche that I'm like, "I don't know if we're going to be able to do this one". But then there'll be literally 38-40 to 54 comments, all filled with recommendations for that particular thing. And I'm always like, "Oh, this is the best group."

Kaytee Cobb 03:04

You know, one of my favorite things that happens there is after we drop a Monday episode, sometimes that almost feels a little spoilery because people just start chatting right away. And we'll see you know, people, people's bookshelves all getting shared on a thread or they're reading books when we talked about that or what kind of mood reader or planner reader are you, how does that show up in your reading life and getting to have those back and forth conversations which can't happen as often on Instagram as much as we would like them to where people are getting to know each other and making each other laugh. That's one of my favorite things.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:35

Right and finding book twins left and right and finding in you know, in real life friends, because they start buddy reading together. It's absolutely all by itself worth the \$5 a month that you pay to become a supporter on Patreon. In addition to all of that, though, of course, you get all the rest of the content that we do every month, which includes the Indie Press List, All Things Murderful with me and Elizabeth Barnhill, Kaytee Reads too Much. So much great stuff that we do every single month and \$5 a month also keeps us ad free. So it's not a lot to pay. It's a great group. And it's a really, really easy way to support what we're doing here too.

Kaytee Cobb 04:17

We love it to have new bookish friends join us that is just every time we get one of those emails. I'm like "A new friend". I'm so excited to meet this person. Absolutely. That's my extrovert side coming out.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:29

All right, so that mischief is managed. So now we are going to move on to our bookish moments of the week. Katie, what are you bringing this week,

Kaytee Cobb 04:38

Meredith, this week, I spent probably an excessive amount of time making a whole bunch of reader type mugs for our Zazzle store. I may have five different reader types and that's because we started with two. We started with you and I right, a mood reader and a planned reader walk into a bar, no, walk into a bookstore. Right. And we came up with some little bullet points that kind of describe both of our reading styles. But then our bookish friends again came to us and said, Well, I'm not really that way. I'm more like this. And so we came up with three additional titles, the deadline reader, the chaotic reader and the confused reader. And each one now has a mug in our store and you go over, Megan will link it into the show notes. And check out each of those five and figure out what type of reader you are. And then you can proclaim it proudly with your beverage every morning. And that can be any type of beverage because I made it in all different types of things too like a travel tumbler, and a pint glass and a coffee mug so whatever you're drinking, we got a cup for you.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:41

You've been super super busy Kaytee and you know you of course can also grab my favorite mug that we make the currently reading "scary books are my jam". Hashtag \$MeredithMadeMeDolt mug. If you love All Things Murderful that might also be one that you want. But lots of great things. We didn't intend to do a store an ad for our merch, but...

Kaytee Cobb 06:02

That's what I had to do this week.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:04

And you've been having so much fun doing it. Well, Kaytee, I will segue in a way because this week, I got a new bookish t shirt that says "Fiction", and then underneath it says "Because Real Life is Horrible."

Kaytee Cobb 06:19

Oh, accurate.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:20

And that has been accurate for my this last week. For me, I have really, really had a difficult last week. Easter as a holiday for a variety of reasons, has long been a difficult holiday for me. Also, my dog died 24 hours ago, I didn't think I would be able to say that on mic and not break down in tears. But I have lots of good memories of the 14 years that I had with Cooper, and 14 years of him reading by my side. So he really really really was my best reading buddy. He was the one being in the world who would let me read and never interrupted me. He just wanted to lay there and cuddle while we read and I would read aloud to him a lot. I'm realizing now that he's gone, that I really read aloud and there was a part of my mind that was thinking, "Oh, Cooper will enjoy this." Now that he's gone, I'm kind of just reading aloud to my cat who definitely doesn't care. So it has been not a great week. But to harken back to my bite size intro there are times in our lives where we need palate cleansers. There are times in our lives when we need slump busters. And there are times when reading is a survival strategy and you need an emotional support book. So the book that I'm thinking of especially yesterday was the day that we said goodbye to Cooper, I did not read all day because I could not stop crying. But few days before that I

was still having a rough time about an unrelated issue. And I read a book that I'm going to be bringing to the show in a couple of weeks. So I'm not going to tell you what it is right now. I'm not going to go into detail. But I'm just gonna give you three words,

Kaytee Cobb 08:03

A teaser.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:04

Well, it's not really a teaser, because it's the title of the book. You got to go get *Legends and Lattes*. That's all I'm gonna say. We will go into it. In the next couple of weeks you will hear in detail why that was my emotional support book. And I passed it on to several other people who also said WTF and then they read it and said I didn't know I needed that book. So we'll go into that later. All right, so those are our bookish moments of the week. Some fun, some not so fun. And that is the bookish life, right? That's the life. Alright, let's talk about our current reads. Kaytee, what's your current read this week, your first one this week?

Kaytee Cobb 08:43

My first current read this week is *Open Water* by Caleb Azumah Nelson. This is a slim novel. I would probably call it a novella. And it was pressed into my hands by Lizzi Steenbock. One of our bookish friends. She sings its praises on the regular in the *Short Story Sisters* and I finally got my hands on a copy. Here's what you need to know. It's tiny. It's less than 150 pages. It can be read in a single sitting. I did not but I did read it in two: one on an airplane and one in a car. Boom Boom done. Right? It was very wham bam, in and out situation. There are two main characters in this book. Here's where I'm going to lose a lot of people. Both of them are unnamed.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:23

No, no two unnamed characters.

Kaytee Cobb 09:26

Two unnamed characters. One, the man is a photographer and he meets The Other, a woman who is a dancer at a bar one night. She was brought there as the love interest of his best friend who is named, his name is Samuel. I don't know why we get his name and not the main characters. That made me a little batty.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:28

Well, he had to have a name for them to be able to talk about him.

Kaytee Cobb 09:45

Right. Yes, Samuel. Yeah, exactly. So the story is told from the man's point of view and in second person, here's why I just lost the rest of our friends. Right?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:55

There's five people listening now.

Kaytee Cobb 09:57

Like, "Kaytee, what are you even talking about at this point". Lizzie, I'm sorry. I love I really enjoyed this book. I hope I'm doing it justice. So it's told in second person. It feels really intimate. Because it feels like this unnamed man is sitting across from you at the table. You already know each other. He doesn't have to introduce himself because he's talking to you, about you. It's very strange situation. It achingly reveals moments of Black life that are both poignant and joyful. And ones that include micro aggressions, and macro aggressions. There's some, there's some big events in this book, but they don't feel like pivotal moments. They just feel like part of a life. You know, there's, there's also like a nearly poetic quality to the story. It's not a verse novel. But there are phrases that get repeated occasionally, including the title, open water. This is definitely a quiet book, this is not a barnburner of any kind. My review was very short and to the point in that I gave it four and a half stars, that maybe someday I would round up to five, but I think that second person and the unnamed narrators are not going to get me there. I said it's meditative and gorgeous, and kind of nothing happens. But then it also feels like everything does. I would recommend this book to the reader who wants a one sitting book. Maybe, maybe you need to pad your numbers for the year. That's fine. Doesn't mind the lack of names for the main character and loves a quiet book that makes you sigh at the end? Because that's the kind of book this is. It's not, it's not a hugging book. It's not a crying book. It's like a deep breath out when you finish.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:36

A readerly pause.

Kaytee Cobb 11:38

Yeah, yeah. Where you just take a breath. So that was Open Water by Caleb Azumah Nelson.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:45

You know what's interesting, Kaytee? I know a lot of people right now who are reading novellas, and I just had two recommended to me both of which I ordered, so they'll probably be making their way onto the show, too. It's interesting. I don't know. Alright, well, this book that I'm going to talk about is definitely not a novella. It's not a big chunky, but it's sizable 400/450 pages. Let me tell you, first of all, just because the way that this book got recommended to me, delights me. So remember, in the beginning of February when Devon had her baby in Memphis, right, and I went there to be with them. And then while we were in the hospital, the city of Memphis shut down because of an ice storm. Literally power to the entire city was gone for multiple days, which meant that by the time we were ready to go home with baby Jeffrey, we did not have Devon and Mark's home to go home to.

Kaytee Cobb 12:38

This makes me so anxious. I know how the story turns out, and it still makes me anxious.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 12:43

I can't even they're like 50 Other things that happened, but everybody was everybody's fine. And some good things happened too, like this. So in order to go home, we had to go to Mark's aunt's house. Now, I was not super happy about this because you guys know, I don't like strangers. I don't like meeting new people. I just am not very social, especially when I've been in the hospital for four nights and haven't

changed my clothes enough or slept properly. So we go to his aunt's house. His aunt's name is Char. Suffice it to say this woman is one of my favorite people I've ever met in my life. She is absolutely just the biggest sport. She took us all in, newborn, two new parents, this random mother in law, and she made us so welcome. And she and I, we hit it off like a house of fire because she is a not only fantastic, she is a reader. We got to talking about our favorite books of all time. We both share *A Gentleman in Moscow*, so you knew there was no stopping us from there. She recommended multiple books for me. The first one I immediately purchased and started reading on that trip. And that is the book that I'm bringing today. I've brought it around in a circle. I know it took me a long time. But here we are folks. You never know when you're going to meet a new bookish friend, right. Okay, this book is called *The Son* by Philip Meyer. And it's S O N like someone's son. Here's the setup. The patriarch of our story Eli McCullough is just 12 years old when a marauding band of Comanche storm his Texas homestead and brutally brutally murder his mother and sister and take him as a captive. Obviously, this is set in the middle 1800s. Despite being tortured, Eli adapts to life with the Comanches, learning their ways, their language and even taking on a new Comanche name. He eventually, out of need of survival finds a place as the adopted son of the chief of this Comanche band and fight their wars against not only other Indians but white men too, which makes things really complicated for Eli and his sense of self, a complication that will ripple through his family for generations. But then disease, starvation and westward expansion finally decimate The Comanche and Eli is left alone in a world where he belongs nowhere because at this point, he's neither white nor Native American. So he sets about making his own unique way in the world. Boy does he. Interwoven with Eli story is the story of his son, Peter, and his granddaughter, Jeanne, and her storyline is very interesting as we see her all the way up in present day as a female CEO trying to steer the ship of her family company and its complicated legacy into the 21st century. Who knew Kaytee that a Western family saga would be the perfect airplane book, but this was that. I read this in a day on my travel from Memphis back to Austin, and it was a perfect distraction for almost 10 hours of travel. Each of the three timelines gives us puzzle pieces of the story of this family. But they're told in three totally different ways by three completely different people, each one totally fascinating. This is best described as a dysfunctional family story writ large, and it's told with the grand sweep of the American West behind it. There's no question I have to say that it is an unflinching view of the American West, the treatment of the Indigenous people, the scrimmages between Native Americans and white people is told with an unerring eye toward accuracy. Nobody is pulling any punches here. There's a lot of violence and a lot of torture. It is not easy to read. In fact, Johnny's reading it now he is loving it, but he keeps coming home and going, "Wow, this is intense". It gets, it gets really intense. I also need to say, I loved this book, but there are not a lot of characters to root for in this book. This is complicated stuff. And these characters are fully formed and very complicated people. Think the family in Olympus, Texas, okay, if you were okay with that, you'll definitely be okay here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 17:09

But I absolutely loved the story. And I loved soaking in all of the Texas history. Complicated as it is, it puts into context, a lot of the things that Jackson was learning during his fourth grade year. And given that we're new to Texas, all of this is kind of California, Texas, like the back California history like the back of my hand, not so much with Texas, this book really, really helped with that. So if you love a family saga that spans generations, you will love this one. And well, I think this is a book that anyone could enjoy if you're okay with the vivid nature of the writing. I also want to put it out there that I feel like

it's a really good book that would be specially accessible for many men over the age of 50. Father's Day is coming. This one might want to be on your list. Again, I hate to stereotype. It's a book for everyone, but it would especially fit into those sometimes hard to fit hands. I totally enjoyed my time here it brought to mind, East of Eden and Lonesome Dove, both of which I really adored. So if you loved those, you will love The Son by Philipp Meyer, and thanks to aunt Char for the recommendation.

Kaytee Cobb 18:17

Perfect. I love it when that happens. And I was going to ask about East of Eden because I was getting some vibes from that setup.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:24

For sure there's some characters that are as vividly wrought as you get in that book.

Kaytee Cobb 18:29

That's always exciting. Okay, Meredith, for my second one you had you had a very nice direct recommendation for a single title. I have the book that may for me win the award for the most direct messages from people telling me I should read it ever in the history of the podcast.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:50

Oh, wow. Okay, I'm sure you I'm sure you've told me what this is. What book is it?

Kaytee Cobb 18:53

Took me a while to get to it. It's Frankie and Bug by Gayle Foreman. And this is middle grade. Right? Okay, perfect. So naturally, because I got so many messages about it, I waited months to read it because I could not. I was like, Oh, that's nice. You're so sweet. Shhhh, no more talking. Right. Finally I gave it some room to breathe like a good wine but for 10 year olds because they don't drink wine. I had read a few other books by Gayle Forman that are firmly YA. If I Stay and Where She Went, which are part of a series. They were fine. I didn't have her on my radar as like someone that I needed to seek out or autobuy and definitely not on my middle grade radar because this is her middle grade debut. In this coming of age story Bug is our main character and she is 10 years old. It's 1987 and she just wants to hang out on Muscle Beach with her big brother Danny. But Danny is growing up and wants to be with his own friends because little sisters are annoying. And so instead Bug is stuck hanging out with Frankie, the nephew of their neighbor Philip and Bug is now not happy about it. She's sure that this is just a case of forced proximity, not a potential friendship. However, the two are brought together by a mystery yay, a mystery. There is a serial strangler on the loose in LA, in the greater LA area. And they are sure that these two 10 year olds can figure out who it is before he strikes again. I love this mystery in here. I love that there's this element of danger, but it's not dangerous because they're like, you know, getting out a map of the city.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:31

Is it an actual strangler? Like a person actually strangling people?

Kaytee Cobb 20:35

Yes. Yeah, that's, that's part of this middle grade book. It's a little dark.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:40

I know. I love well, 10 year old Meredith would have loved it, right?

Kaytee Cobb 20:43

That detective work leads to conversations that open both of them up alongside the reader to learn about who you truly are, being who you truly are, and what it means to be an ally to others. There's a great element of found family in this book as the kids explore town. And while it felt like a pretty typical middle grade read to me up until about three quarters of the way through the book, that ending really sold it to me as a great story. And I did end up giving it five stars, even though I was like no, everybody be quiet. Don't tell me. I don't want to hear it. Y'all were right. I'm sorry it took me so long. It's currently my turn, because this has happened before to be personally, offended by a book that takes place in 1987 being tagged as historical fiction by readers. That's not okay.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 21:31

Doesn't doesn't feel good.

Kaytee Cobb 21:32

I don't like it. I'm not a fan. That is definitely my lifetime. How dare you. This one is a great one for the LGBT community and those who want to be great allies, especially if you're not totally sure where to start and it feels like you want to dip your toes into that water or you want to start having conversations with your kids. And you don't know what screwing up and making it right looks like. I love stories like this that make it clear that you don't have to have everything perfect before you step one foot out to do the right thing. So this one is a delight. I loved it five stars. It's Frankie and Bug by Gayle Foreman.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:09

Oh, good. Well, I'm glad I know so many people, so so many people recommended that to you. I'm glad that it ended up being a hit.

Kaytee Cobb 22:17

I'm glad it was too. And I'm also glad that I waited a little bit because I think I would have maybe abandoned it as like, why is everybody telling me this? This is just a typical middle grade read if it was so close to those recommendations.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:29

Right, right. That's like Razorblade Tears for me. And what's the other one that everybody liked and you and I both couldn't read it? What was that. It was an IPL choice. Really, really good. But

Kaytee Cobb 22:40

These Silent Woods by Ken grant. Right.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:42

Right, which I'm positive will be a big hit for both of us. So we just need to some we just need to let it breathe a little bit. Right. So. Okay, so Kaytee last week when we recorded I told you that this week I

was going to bring because I'd been bringing some books that you had said had felt useful to you. And I told you that this week I was going to bring another piece of nonfiction because what is my reading life with all the nonfiction? I finished two more nonfiction books this week.

Kaytee Cobb 22:44

What is happening? You're like revolutionizing it though. So bring it on Meredith. We love it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 23:14

I love this book and I love this author. This is NurtureShock by Po Bronson. Have you read anything by Po Bronson ever?

Kaytee Cobb 23:22

No.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 23:23

I love Po Bronson.

Kaytee Cobb 23:24

NurtureShock

Meredith Monday Schwartz 23:24

It's all one word. It's such a great title. Alright, here's the setup. NurtureShock answers several key questions that I've long had about parenting. So for example, in a world of modern involved caring parents, why are so many kids still aggressive and cruel? Why do cross racial friendships decrease in schools that are more integrated? If 98% of kids think lying is morally wrong? Why do 98% of kids lie? And also, what's the single most important thing that helps infants learn language? This one is especially interesting. NurtureShock's authors argue that when it comes to children, we have mistaken good intentions for good ideas. They demonstrate that many of modern society strategies for nurturing our children are in fact backfiring. Because key twists in the science have been overlooked. Again, I have to say, I love Po Bronson. He could write about absolutely anything and it's going to be interesting. He is fantastic. Second, I had completely forgotten about Po Bronson until I was having brunch with my brother. We were talking through some stuff that was going on with both of our kids and we were musing on how strange it is that some of the quote unquote "popular" kids are the meanest kids. Both of our children had been dealing with some of that. And we were saying why is that? And my brother immediately said, "I actually read a book that explained that. It was so good". And then he told me about NurtureShock. I immediately got it because then I'd remembered how much I loved Po Bronson and the way he explains really complicated data so simply, but even more importantly, so interestingly, right? So some of the fascinating things covered in this book, Why overpraising our kids is crippling them, and what kind of praise is actually effective. He also talks about why your teenager arguing with you is probably a good thing. How lack of sleep is severely hurting our kids, most especially our teenagers, and why Baby Einstein might not be as great for early speech development as we thought it was. I feel like Malcolm Gladwell kind of stole Po Bronson's lunch on this kind of writing in the last decade. And that makes me sad, because Po Bronson's writing has such panache and heart. This book is so dang useful to me as a parent and now as a grandparent, but it also just absolutely was

fascinating. And that is what Po Bronson does, he takes really complex scientific studies and breaks it all down so that now I not only understand, but I'm totally engrossed in what he's saying. I am adding this book to my list of books that I get for every parent at every baby shower. This is NurtureShock by Po Bronson.

Kaytee Cobb 26:31

It sounds so good. I am going to buy a copy for my shelves immediately. I almost emailed my Indie bookstore while you were talking. I cannot.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 26:40

it's really, really interesting. And I'm telling you, that guy is a genius. And I like I want him to come out with something new because his catalog is really really good.

Kaytee Cobb 26:50

Excellent. Okay, Meredith, that sounds so great. I actually brought some nonfiction today too. Mine is not parenting related, but I'm excited to talk about it. It's Black Birds in the Sky by Brandy Colbert. This is another debut and a new genre book. I didn't realize I had chosen multiple of them until I was writing up my notes for this episode. So Brandy Colbert, you might recognize the name, has written YA that I loved, middle grade that I loved, and now she's made her first steps into nonfiction and I could not be more thrilled. Black Birds in the Sky is about the Tulsa Race Massacre, a piece of American history that is little taught even in Oklahoma schools. We were just talking about Jackson learning Texas history in fourth grade. Even fourth graders in Oklahoma might get a sentence or two about this. They are not teaching it or they weren't for a very long time. The Greenwood district of Tulsa was known as Black Wall Street. But on June 1 of 1921, it was burned to the ground by a white mob. Hundreds died that day, and there were mass graves of unmarked bodies. Many survivors of the massacre refuse to talk about it even with their children and grandchildren. So it wasn't until nearly 100 years later, the historians really started to pull back the shadows around it and peel back the details of that day. Many of us as readers first learned about this event through the book Dreamland burning by Jennifer Latham. That is YA historical fiction that has one timeline about the events of June 1921. Brandy Colbert makes the story personal. It is billed in the blurb for this book as both ambitious as is any foray into nonfiction after writing life made up of telling your own stories, and intimate and that she makes this history personal to her own life. This event was really singular. Of course, it's not like there was a day that all Black Wall Streets were burned throughout the country. But then it did also play out multiple times in multiple locations throughout the US during reconstruction, and Jim Crow, and leading into the civil rights era. Colbert makes connections from the history she explores in these pages to the current events that we see in today's headlines. This book isn't long, but the prose just sings off the page as readable and personal. And it would be easy to hand to any teenager or adults that wants to learn more about that very dark day in Oklahoma and US history. This one is Black Birds in the Sky by Brandy Colbert.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 29:19

You know that and Dreamland Burning are books that I really really need to read because I am woefully ignorant on that topic. And that feels like something that we should know about.

Kaytee Cobb 29:29

But as we all were I the thing that's very interesting to me about situations like this is how small a spark it took to turn into this horrific circumstance. Much like learning about Emmett Till right in Mississippi, this tiny, tiny spark and then the mob mentality and everything that takes over and turns it into something of note historically. Gosh, I have chills everywhere. It's it's really, really well done and but both books are incredible of course. So fiction, Dreamland Burning, nonfiction Black Birds in the Sky.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 30:05

All right, good. I'm glad that you brought that one. Okay, Kaytee, I'm going to talk about a book that I feel is one of these emotional support books that I'm that I was talking about at the very, very beginning, just a book that is a balm to your soul when you need, when that's what you need.

Kaytee Cobb 30:21

I read one of those this week too.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 30:23

Oh, did you? This is Love and Saffron by Kim Fay.

Kaytee Cobb 30:27

It was that book.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 30:28

Really?

Kaytee Cobb 30:29

Yes, I finished it yesterday.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 30:31

All right, good. Let's talk about it. Because this book just makes me want to stand up and clap. I absolutely love it. So here's the setup. And again, this book has, you know, I debated about, I mean, I bring all my books, but I knew that this was one that has been everywhere, everywhere, everywhere. So if you've heard about it, forgive me. Let me just give you a short little setup. So our story is set in the early 1960s. We have 27 year old Joan who sends a fan letter to 59 year old Imogen. And from there, talk about small sparks, a life changing friendship begins. Joan, the 27 year old lives in Los Angeles, and she's just starting out as a writer for a newspaper's food section, and Imogen lives on an island outside Seattle and she writes a monthly column for a Pacific Northwest magazine. And they start to share their lives with each other. And food is a jumping off point. As they get to know each other through their letters, they build a closeness that surprises even each of them. We see them dealing with large events like the Cuban Missile Crisis and the assassination of President Kennedy, and several unexpected occurrences in their own lives. And they share it all and we get to watch this wonderful friendship grow. Okay, a couple things. I honestly would not have bought this book on my own for a couple of reasons. It sounded like a crying book, first of all, and also it's epistolary, which I don't love.

Kaytee Cobb 32:00

It very much is epistolary.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:02

And so just for those reasons, I'm out, right? Like, that's just really, but my Storybound description from Fabled, two weeks in a row I'm bringing a book from that. They sent it to me, Roxanna had it at the exact same time, and we decided to just drop everything and buddy read it together. And we absolutely loved it. But gosh, darn it, if this is not a book that does make you feel things deeply. And I say that, of course with a little bit of a smile, because there's actually a lot of joy for me in a book that makes you feel things like this one does. Because this is emotion, purely derived from loving the characters in the story, not because an author set out to make you cry by sad things happening. These are organic tears. And I'm totally okay with organic tears. And this is like the one you were talking about earlier. This is a slim novel. It is not we would definitely call this one a novel though. And usually when Roxanna and I read together, we read kind of big chonkers, or we read heavier books, because reading them together will guarantee that we get through them. But in this case, we really, really needed both of us something that was a little more gentle, this book feels like a gentle companion during hard times. In fact, the author mentions that that's why she wrote it. She wrote it at the beginning of COVID, because she felt that two of her friends really needed this kind of balm that we were talking about. It's a gentle book, but it is not boring and it's never melancholy. It's not overly emotional. Again, it just lets you really take a look into the lives of these people who you really, really like. And because I read it with Roxana, it had extra extra meaning for us, because we really enjoyed the way that that relationship developed, even though they had never met each other. As you guys know, Roxanna and I have never met each other in real life. And yet we communicate solely via voice messages multiple times a day. So it's kind of the modern day equivalent of writing letters. Right? It's more immediate, but in a lot of ways the relationship developed in the same way. So that was something that we really, really loved about it. This is a book, like I said, that I think could be enjoyed by almost every reader. It does skew female, because we're really looking at female friendships here. It's a great book to give for Mother's Day if you're looking for that kind of gift. And I think it would be a really nice book to maybe even buddy read with your mom. Yeah, I will say that I cried real tears at the end. But I was happy to do it in this case. And I think we need more sweet gentle books like this one. This is Love and Saffron by Kim Fay.

Kaytee Cobb 34:37

No one will be surprised to learn that I also cried real tears at the end. And I hugged this book at the end and immediately messaged two of my dearest friends to say "Which one of you is taking this first because you're both reading it."

Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:51

Yep. Right. And it really is that kind of book that is pretty much gonna please everybody. It's interesting. It's an valuable, you really care. There's this one construct they use that Roxane and I both thought was really, really interesting that they use this construct of the chapters are short because they're just each letter, you know. So you're not you're not reading for a long time. But as the book begins, and as it goes on, they begin sharing food and then recipes with each other. And so part of what is almost laughingly called a cliffhanger was when they would be like, "Okay, did the other person make that recipe and what did they think of it?" And somehow in Kim Fay's hands, that was something that I was like

clamoring to find out. I was clamoring to find out what Imogen thought about garlic. Because in the early 60s in Seattle, that wasn't a thing. And so Joan introduces her to garlic. I mean, it's just, you know, the Los Angeles food scene is really vibrant here. The sense of place on the island and Seattle and clam digging and all of that is really vibrant. It's just, it's a book that is very evocative of all of the senses.

Kaytee Cobb 35:59

And the time and the place, like you said, I called it Charing Cross with food. Like Charin Cross for foodies.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:05

Yes, that is a great way to describe it. If you love that. Or by the way, if you've read Love and Saffron, and you're like, are there any other books like that? Go read Charing Cross Road, whatever number that is...

Kaytee Cobb 36:19

It's a number in the 80s. I think 84.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:22

84 There you go.

Kaytee Cobb 36:25

That's Helene Hanff is the author of that one.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:28

There you go. All right. So, Kaytee, we're going to talk now, about our deep dive, wherein we're going to talk about some bookish confessions. So this was like the dark night of the soul for me, because I really had to search and say, how much of these things do I want to admit to 35,000 people? I just don't know. Forgive me, reader for I have sinned. I know. I know that. I mean, I feel like we could lose listeners.

Kaytee Cobb 36:55

Are we uncomfortable yet?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:56

Yeah. No, I'm sweating. Like I'm gonna...

Kaytee Cobb 36:59

I'm a little sweaty.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:00

Yeah. All right. Well, I'm driving. I'm no, I'm driving. So I'm gonna make you go first.

Kaytee Cobb 37:06

Oh, well okay, well, then I'm gonna start us out easy. I'm gonna go with one that is not surprising. I don't think anybody's gonna be surprised about this. I will not leave my house without my earbuds. I'm not rude. I'm not rude. I will pause my book to talk to humans in public and if I go somewhere with someone, I'm not like secretly putting my earbuds in while they're talking to me but the time it takes to get there, the errand I'm going to run afterward, I have to have my earbuds and I will be a b word about finding them, making sure they're charged because I cannot go somewhere without my earbuds.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:47

Okay, are you saying that, like when you drive alone, so when you're with the kids in the car, you have an earbud in?

Kaytee Cobb 37:53

Oh, they don't count. When I'm with the kids in the car, I absolutely have an ear bud in. If they talk to me, I will pause it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 37:59

Okay. So when you're alone in the car, like running errands, you also you don't listen through CarPlay?

Kaytee Cobb 38:07

Right. Yeah, because I have this theory that with earbuds you can listen faster, because the information almost like downloads directly into your brain rather than through the car speakers.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:18

That is not science.

Kaytee Cobb 38:20

It's science in Kaytee land, Meredith.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:23

All right. Well, Kaytee Land is already doop dee do because you're already listening at three times speed.

Kaytee Cobb 38:29

Okay. And if I play it through the car speakers, I have to put it at like 1.7. And that's terrible. Oh, interesting. Okay, like I can listen faster through my earbuds. I don't know why I do. Oh, it's not science, but it's a thing.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:41

All right. Well, that's totally fine. This is your your confession. Alright, well, then I'm going to start easy with a confession that I've already made, which is that I am adopting this new style of reading thrillers, when they are not that good. I will skim to the end, I will skim the whole thing and find out what happens at the end. But I will not bring that as a current read. But I will skim it. And if and if you ask me at a party, if I read it, I could definitely fool you.

Kaytee Cobb 39:05

I like it. I think that's great. Yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 39:08

But it's not a current read. It doesn't go in my book journal. Right? It doesn't count toward my reading totals if I skim it like that, because I'm talking about serious, I'm talking about like, dialogue only, like I can do it in 45 minutes type of situation.

Kaytee Cobb 39:21

I've done that on like three audiobooks where I got 20% in and I was like, I'm not reading this. So I would like skip to the beginning of chapters and listen to 30 seconds and figure out what was going on. And of course, I counted as a DNF. But I was like, "Yeah, I know who did it. I know what happened. I don't care about these people."

Meredith Monday Schwartz 39:38

Okay, so this goes to my thing about you got what you needed from that book. And sometimes we don't need to read all of a book to get what we need from it. All right, you go next. This is like strip poker. Like we both just took off a sock.

Kaytee Cobb 39:51

Okay, yeah, I like it. I'm gonna fan my shirt a little bit while we get going here. So I will harass people in public about reading. Do you have a book? I want to know what it is. Are we at the bookstore? I will walk around after you and see what you pick up. And I might judge you for it. Are we on a plane? I will peek over your shoulder and pretend to be reading my Kindle while I look at what's on your Kindle. I need to know what kind of human you are. And I will judge you by what's on there. And I'm not proud of it. But I'll do it. I'm not proud of it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 40:21

Right. Well, I so related to that, you know, I'm I am extremely socially anxious. So I almost never, I'm not crazy about strangers. So I will. And my husband is like the ultimate, he's so good at starting up conversations with absolutely anyone. The only time I will start up a conversation with someone is if especially if we're seated next to each other on a plane, but like, just when we're near each other. If they're reading a book, I will absolutely ask them what book they're reading, and then get into some sort of the only situation in which I can have a conversation with I will start a conversation with a complete stranger is over books.

Kaytee Cobb 41:01

Well, so same, except if I know that book and I hated it, I will not start the conversation. So I'm going to try and figure out what the book is, before I ask you. If I'm interested in it, I'll be like, "Hey, what did you bring to read on the plane today?" And then we can talk about it because I know that we're both going to be okay with it. But otherwise, I'm going to be like, I'm, I'm not talking to you.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:21

Okay, but don't you but if they are reading it and they're enjoying it like this will often happen to me that I'll ask someone that question. They'll be like, you know, the new Lucy Foley and I'll be like, insist that my eyes not roll up into my head like, force my eyes to stay straight. But then I want to I want to find out like, what did you think about it? Like, what are you, what are you liking about it? How's that how's that working out for you? You know, I'll usually end the conversation with "that's your journey."

Kaytee Cobb 41:48

That's your journey? Okay, now I know what to listen for.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:52

That's your journey. Yeah. 100% Yes, that is absolutely code for I'm judging you and I refuse to say it. Okay, all right. I'm now I'm going to take off more than a sock. I'm going to take off my shirt and tell you that I do sometimes, even with an entire collection of bookmarks, I have been known to dogear my books. I don't do it a lot. And I dogear the smallest, the smallest... like Johnny sometimes will be like, "You know, that's not even a dogear." I'm like, "No, it is." It's like it's the smallest most microscopic one. But it but I will sometimes I will do it. If I don't have anything to mark my page. I will do it because I will not remember the page number.

Kaytee Cobb 42:38

Okay, well, I wrote down physically here, I will use almost anything to mark my spot in a book except a dogear. I will grab a cheerio. Meh, probably not a cheerio. That would squash. I will grab like, I'll put a hair tie in.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:54

A hair tie. I do a hair tie a lot. Yeah.

Kaytee Cobb 42:58

Like anything I can find. A teaspoon. I don't care. I've used a fork. I will put whatever into my book and I refuse to fold the corner. And I wrote on here. I get judgy about people who dogear even when it's their own books. Why am I like this?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:14

Okay, well, that's alright, put a pin in that because later on, we're going to circle back to me having something that turns the tables on that. So do you crack the spines in your books, Kaytee?

Kaytee Cobb 43:25

I used to crack the spines. And it didn't bother me. But then I didn't. I used to go to a used bookstore and they would not accept books that had cracked spines. And I liked to be able to turn my books around and get a new book for the one that I just finished. So I stopped doing it only so I could get money for them. I don't have a problem with it for myself or aesthetically.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:47

Right. And I do have a problem with it aesthetically. So I don't so I will most like when I'm reading a paperback book like that, literally, I'll have it open like four inches.

Kaytee Cobb 44:00

Like 16 degrees? Yeah, like try to find the crack.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 44:04

It's really I'll hold it in a weird way to you know, to be able to do it because I just yeah, if I'm going to, especially if I'm gonna put it back on my shelf. I do not like it which leads me to, I do not like to lend books out. Most of the time, if I give someone a book 99.9% of the time, I'll be like, it's a book. It's kind of like lending money. Like I feel like you need to just let it go. Because if I tell myself that I'm lending a book first of all, I don't trust people to not crack spines or do big dog ears because my little microscopic dog ears do not count.

Kaytee Cobb 44:41

They could go Annie B. Jones and just tear the page wherever they're at.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 44:44

Oh my god, right. It's for this reason that I'm out. I like I can't if I let me tell you that if I lend you a book that I care about, A: you're probably in Enneagram one and so I trust you. But like, I really just mentally If I have to just be like, I'm not lending that book, I'm giving it to them. Because I will not only my worried about what's going to happen to that book, when it's not in my care, but also, I am annoying in that I will constantly think they still have that book and haven't given it back to me.

Kaytee Cobb 45:20

It will color your relationship forever.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:22

For no rational reason whatsoever, because there is no book on the planet that I can't get another copy for myself, you know what I mean? There's just, there's no reason but for that reason, because I know myself, how many times do we say, reader know thyself, I don't lend books out. I just am like, "You know what, I'm just releasing that book to you. And if I ever should get it back again, great." But most of the time, I'm like, just send it on, like, lend it out to someone else. You know, most of the time, I have no intention of getting it back.

Kaytee Cobb 45:51

This is why I buy multiple copies of books I really love that I like to lend out from thrift stores. If I see a book that I super love on the thrift store shelf, and I can get it for \$2, it doesn't have to be as pretty as my copy. That's fine. Because you can have it because I don't want it back. That's yours now. I bought it for you. I just didn't know it was for you. Because you're not taking my copy.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 46:13

Right. All right, what's your next confession?

Kaytee Cobb 46:15

Okay, I this, this one's more to the amusement of I assume my neighbors. I will push the limits of reading a physical book. If I'm super into the book, I have read my physical book while I rolled the large trashcan to the curb, which our driveway is like 800 feet long. So it's not like I just had to take it, you know, 15 feet to the curb. Like I'm like hauling this thing up a hill. And holding my book with the other hand, I have read while walking to and from the mailbox, I have put myself in full on peril going up and down the stairs while reading. I don't care. I will physically endanger myself to continue reading my physical book because especially if I'm in a groove, and I've got words going into my eyeballs, I don't want to let that go. No matter what else is happening. I this is part of also why I don't lend books, I will take it to the bathroom with me. I will read until the moment I step into the shower, quickly shower and get right back out and continue reading while I dry off like because I have to if I'm in that groove, I've got to keep it for as long as I can

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:22

See, this is why I do some of my audiobook reading in the shower because I feel like that's a great like, chunk of because I don't have as much audiobook time. That's a great like chunk of time where I can that whole time that would normally be kind of wasted because you're late, you know, just whatever it's like 15, 20, 25 minutes of really being able to get some good so that's my my shower speaker in my shower is really, really useful.

Kaytee Cobb 47:47

Yeah but I have to listen slow on a speaker, so I can't do that either. I have to have waterproof earbuds.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:52

My max is 1.5. So it all works for me all the time. Okay. Speaking of audio, I cannot, I refuse to listen to sexy time books on audio. It is the weird, prudish part of me because I am so not prudish about anything related to sex at all. But I do not like to hear sexy times in books read to me into my earbuds. I don't know why. It gives me the skeeves. I don't like it. And so I just don't do it. So I don't listen to romance, ever, ever, ever on audio. It's I'm Prudy McPrudy pants in this one way.

Kaytee Cobb 48:34

I love this one because it reminds me of a thread that Joy, one of our bookish friends started when she was like "What are you all doing while you're listening to romance on audio? Are you just like "oh, and then the [bleep] came off and you're just chopping it?"

Meredith Monday Schwartz 48:47

Nope, no, no, don't even say it. I don't even like you saying it Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 48:51

That's correct. That is exactly what we're doing. We're chopping the onion. It doesn't, like I will listen straight through dinner prep. I will stand at the stove and start to fan myself.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 49:00

I don't like it. I don't like it. I don't like people saying words like [bleep] and other

Kaytee Cobb 49:06

There's a lot of words in romance books that are uncomfortable in your ears. I could see that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 49:12

I see way too many neighbors when I'm out on my walks. And I do not want to accidentally, the other thing.... So the other reason is that sometimes I will accidentally say something that I've just heard, like, come out in my speech. And that happens to me not infrequently. So our neighborhood I see way too many people when I'm out on my walks to mess around with that. I don't like it. I don't want that...

Kaytee Cobb 49:38

But you're not worried about this with murder books. Like "Oh, hold on. I was just getting the mail. I mean, strangling someone and then"...

Meredith Monday Schwartz 49:45

No, I'm not worried about saying "Hey, knife". There's a lot of other words I don't want to say like that. Yeah, not worried about it. Not worried about my murder books on on audio. Give me all the grisly possible just don't give me any sexy time on my audio, which is weird because I love it in print. Like I'm, I'm totally, I'm completely fine with it in print. Alright, do you have one more?

Kaytee Cobb 50:08

I have one more, but it's kind of boring. I think the less boring one would be to say that if I really like you, as a human, but I don't want to read the book that you recommended to me, I will never talk about that book again rather than read it. I, I don't want to have a conversation about why I'm not reading it. I don't want it to imperil our friendship. I would just rather never even hear that title spoken out of your mouth. I will steer the conversation every other direction rather than say, rather than allow you to bring that book up with me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 50:42

I will I think I'm surprised that you wouldn't just tell them why you don't want to read it.

Kaytee Cobb 50:46

Well, sometimes it's personal. Like, like, I don't like your reading taste. That's not a nice thing to say to someone.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 50:54

Well, you could say I love that you love that book. Those kinds of books aren't don't always work for me. Like, couldn't you say it like that? You don't need to tell them I don't like your reading taste.

Kaytee Cobb 51:03

But my reading is very public. Like it's, it's out there on the internet. But I've read probably a book like that in the past because, you know, I make monthly wrap ups and you can see that I read bah bah bah. And it could just be that I just am not interested in what you are telling me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 51:20

So you're saying because it is because of that person, not the book. Okay, got it. Got it now. Yes. So you don't want to say "I'm not going to read that book I might have if you had never said anything about it. But now that you like it..."

Kaytee Cobb 51:35

Exactly.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 51:36

It's not a book that'll work for me. Okay. That is more difficult hill to climb. I will tell you that for sure. Okay, Kaytee, my final reading confession, which you know, I have gone back and forth and back, and back and forth

Kaytee Cobb 51:49

beating yourself up. I'm so excited. Like rubbing my hands with glee.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 51:52

Oh, because it was the first one that popped in my mind. But I really feel like a lot of people are going to, like, not be bookish friends anymore like this. It's really, really controversial. So first of all, I think we can all agree, I think a place where we can all agree is that people who decorate with books, but books with the spine in

Kaytee Cobb 52:16

are spawn of Satan. Yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 52:18

Right. Like we all, that's not a bookish confession, because we all agree, right?

Kaytee Cobb 52:22

Well, we have one bookish friend who disagrees. But she likes us anyway.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 52:26

Okay. Don't even tell me who that is. Because I don't I don't even want to know. However, not the same, but loosely adjacent.

Kaytee Cobb 52:36

Oh, I know, we're going I think

Meredith Monday Schwartz 52:38

I do not understand how people organize their books by color. The whole rainbow thing. I don't. I don't get it. I don't like it. I judge I judge it every single time where I'm like, "Don't tell me that you woke up this morning and decided you wanted to read a green book. Because you did not. You did not decide that today's a yellow day. So I'm gonna go to my yellow section." I hate it. That's my confession. I do not like it. The library is not organized by color.

Kaytee Cobb 53:10

Correct.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 53:10

It's organized by genre.

Kaytee Cobb 53:11

That would be weird wouldn't it?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 53:13

I hate it. I hate it. And I feel bad. Because there are a lot of people who I really, really love deeply, who are psychopathically doing this with their books.

Kaytee Cobb 53:23

So, yes, I do have a rainbow shelf. And I'm, I'm proud of it. I love it so much. It's my TBR shelf. So exactly what you're saying, like I do not, I never go over there and I'm like, "Huh, how about a blue book today?"

Meredith Monday Schwartz 53:36

But why? Why, if that's not how you're, the whole point of organization, is to make it easier for you to access something. So if you're not waking up and saying, "Periwinkle sounds like a great novel today," then why are you organizing it by color?

Kaytee Cobb 53:53

Because, okay, Meredith, it's gonna be okay. Because I, when I'm choosing my next book, I rarely have either I've already chosen for the month and I have my planned stack that I want to go to, or I don't, I don't have a plan. I'm just looking at what's on the shelves. And if they're grouped by author, or if they're grouped by genre, then I'm going to be kind of in a groove, right? Like, "Oh, look, here's all my Frederik Backman all together and here's all my Jason Reynolds all together". Whereas if they're by color, I get out of that organized frame of mind and I can just look at titles and be like, "Oh, I forgot I even had this book on my shelf. Interesting that has a black cover. I had no idea", and I'm gonna pull it off. And I do, I will admit this part. I have a lot of black and white books on my rainbow TBR shelf, and I try to pick those up more often because I don't like that they have weighed down that end of my shelf so much. I want a broader spectrum of rainbow with less black and white.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 54:58

That's a dumb reason to pick a book.

Kaytee Cobb 55:00

I don't care.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:00

It's an objectively stupid reason to pick a book. It just really is.

Kaytee Cobb 55:07

But there's so many. I mean, I can be like, "Well, I need to finally get rid of some of these white books. Look, there's like, you know, nonfiction. There's fiction. There's YA. Look at all this choice. I can't believe it. It's amazing".

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:21

All because you just said to yourself, "I need to read a black and white book because I don't like the way it looks on my colored shelves".

Kaytee Cobb 55:27

Yes. And I would like more purple books because I don't have enough. That's why I'm gonna buy Arya Winters and The Tiramisu of Death because it's purple.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:40

Oh my god. I feel like everything we're doing...

Kaytee Cobb 55:44

Are you going to divorce me now?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:46

No, no, and I'm hoping that you aren't or our listeners aren't gonna divorce me for divulging this very honest, readerly confession that I have. Now, it is absolutely true that when I just sort of take off that lens and look at the pictures of bookshelves that are organized in that way, I can understand visually why people do it.

Kaytee Cobb 56:08

The aesthetic appeal. It is not useful organization. I will absolutely agree to that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 56:16

Okay, just all the trend toward rainbow stuff like that Home Edit show on Netflix, where everything is that rainbow and I just am like, I can't do everything about that show. I have to I can't I can't, it makes my brain want to explode. I can't with the voices and then also with the rainbow. So anyway, again, that's just my own weird peccadillo. Absolutely everyone should organize their stuff the way I'm sure the way that I've organized my bookshelves would irritate some people because they'd be like, look at this room that you could do a fantastic rainbow shelf. Why isn't she doing that?

Kaytee Cobb 56:53

With white shelves even like they would just stand out so beautifully.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 56:57

Exactly, exactly. So we all have our own peccadilloes. We all have our own readerly confession. So we are going to start a thread on social media. And I'm sure this is the time, this is the time to become a bookish friend y'all because there will also be a real just kerfuffle, balls to the wall kerfuffle, in the in the group not like fighting each other but people will be very, very real with their reading confessions in the bookish friends group. That's where the best conversations have been for sure. All right. Kaytee. Let's press some books. What are you bringing to press this week?

Kaytee Cobb 57:32

Okay, I am bringing a book from the red section of my books.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 57:37

Kaytee, no, you cannot start using that to intro your books that no Megan, edit that out.

Kaytee Cobb 57:42

The books I've read are alphabetical. Leave it in Megan, leave it in. Okay, no, I am bringing a book from the E section of my fiction shelf. It is *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo. And this book is very singular in many ways, which is why even though it's nothing like *Open Water*, it made me think of *Open Water*. The only other similarity I could find is that Bernadine Evaristo and Caleb Azuma Nelson are both Anglo Nigerian writers, which I thought was interesting. Okay, the reason this book is so singular, in *Girl, Woman, Other* we have interconnected stories, and lives that form a novel, somewhat like *How High We Go in the Dark* that I brought to the show last week. This book is a book that requires attention in order to make connections. I started reading this book, and then when I saw my first connection, I went back and started writing things down about characters, and where they show up in each other's stories. The web of lines and names that I had written out by the end was kind of a mess. But it was also a really wonderful and graphic way to see the ways that all of us have lives that intertwine with one another. The part that makes this book really unique and where I'm going to lose the readers. Here's, here's where it is. She does not use periods. She splits up each sentence in its own paragraph. It has a return between it and each paragraph has a double return. Why? Why would writers think this is okay, I do not know. She also does not capitalize the beginning of sentences only proper nouns are capitalized in this book. None of these things matter if you listen to the audio. I read it in paper. It's a book that takes some getting used to. It's a book that kind of pulls your feet out from under you a little bit because you're like wait, we have rules for a reason. Why would you ignore them? Right? This is one of the cases where the UK cover is 10,000,385,000 times better than the US cover so if you think this is a book that you might want to keep on your shelves, I did, even though it was well outside of what I would consider my comfort zones, get you to Blackwell's to get a UK copy because ladies you are worth it. This book is *Girl, Woman Other* by Bernadine Evaristo.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 59:56

Very interesting. Not a book I'm going to be checking out.

Kaytee Cobb 59:59

What do you say? "I love that journey for you."

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:00:02

That's that's your journey Kaytee. See, I decided to be a little more honest there, though. But Kaytee, if you think it's good enough to press it, that's all that matters.

Kaytee Cobb 1:00:12

It's really, it's really an incredible book, even if you have to get through a few of those things at over yourself as a reader.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:00:20

And sometimes that is, I mean, that harkens back to last week reading out of our comfort zone. Sometimes those can be the very ones that end up making the deepest impression. So I shouldn't say that I'll never read it. Because I've many times read a book that I said that about and been like, why the heck did I keep this from myself for this long? Alright, well, we talked earlier in the show about Po Bronson. And because all of a sudden, I was remembering I was like, why the heck have I not thought about him for so long? I just had to press what is absolutely my favorite Po Bronson book, which is called What Should I Do With My Life. This is a career book that is absolutely a page turner. And that is a difficult needle to thread because basically what he's doing in this book, and I read it many, many years ago, read it in 2008. I still think about this book all the time, because it covers a niche in nonfiction that is just especially cat nippy, to me, which is what happens when people go from the job, a job that they have to pay the bills, and decide that they are really, really, really going to find work or a career that plays to their passions. Sometimes they're very niched passions. So we have everything from a Silicon Valley real estate agent who opens a leather crafts factory in Costa Rica. We have an LA lawyer who becomes a priest. We have a Harvard MBA catfish farmer turned biotech executive, and on and on and on. It is absolutely fascinating to read these profiles of people who figured out what it was that really makes them want to get up in the morning. And then they figured out a way to make it work to make money off of it. So if you have ever wondered, I don't know who says like, figure out what you know, figure out what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life. Oh, yeah. Who says that? Is it the Patagonia founder? I think it might be. This book is profiles of people who've done exactly that and it is absolutely fascinating. If you're feeling stuck in your career, or you're feeling like maybe "I want to hide a side hustle because I want to figure out how to inject into my life, something that really gets my juices flowing and sharpens my saw", this book is for you. It's an absolute page turner. I loved every page of it. It's What Should I Do With My Life by Po Bronson.

Kaytee Cobb 1:03:03

So there's no but there's not like a 10 step program in here, right? It's just profiles.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:03:07

Its profiles. And throughout the reading of it, there are through lines that help you really figure out how to figure out what you're interested in. It is not a coincidence, Kaytee, that I read this in 2008 and in 2008, I launched Penelope Loves Lists, which was my website about being a type A super organized

person, which is really the precursor to Currently Reading because all of the things that I learned there, I brought into this this project.

Kaytee Cobb 1:03:39

That's how I found out about you was through Penelope.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:03:42

Exactly. So that it was very life changing for me, and it convinced me that side hustles, which is something that I'm very passionate about with the all the women who work for me, many of them have side hustles that we've really worked on together to grow. Because I think that sometimes a side hustle can be exactly your next lily pad or jumping off point to finding that thing that really gets your juices flowing, that you might also be able to make your career. I'm fascinated by that concept. And this book just gives you everything related to that. If that if that interests you get this book right now. You'll love it. Love it. All right, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me I'm Meredith at @Meredith.reads on Instagram.

Kaytee Cobb 1:04:29

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:04:33

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 1:04:43

You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram and tell us your bookish confessions or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:04:51

And if you want more of our content, as we said become a patron subscriber for just \$5 a month. You can also help us out by rating and reviewing us on Apple podcasts and shouting us out on social media to your bookish friends. All of those things help us find our perfect audience.

Kaytee Cobb 1:05:08

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:05:13

Alright, until next week, may your coffee be hot

Kaytee Cobb 1:05:15

and your book be unputdownable.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:05:17

Happy reading Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 1:05:18
Happy reading Meredith.