



Season 5, Episode 45: Special Guest Jaysen Headley @Ezeekat

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Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:10

Hey readers. Welcome to the Currently Reading podcast. We are bookish best friends who spend time every week talking about the books that we've read recently. And as you know, we won't shy away from having strong opinions. So get ready.

Kaytee Cobb 00:23

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:33

I'm Meredith Monday, Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas and making new bookish friends makes me so happy.

Kaytee Cobb 00:41

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I love when social media peer pressure is a good thing. This is episode number 45 of season five, and we are so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:53

Oh my gosh, we are so incredibly glad to have you here because you guys we have a very special guest joining us on the show. And I feel like we need to think so many of you that we have this special guest joining us today is the booktoker and YouTuber and booktagrammar, Ezeekat otherwise known as Jaysen Headley. We are so glad to have you with us today, Jaysen.

Jaysen Headley 01:19

Oh, thank you so much for having me. I'm really glad to be here. Yeah, I one day, all of a sudden, there were a whole bunch of people that were your fans in my comments are like you have to go on the show. Like what has happened like where did this all come from? What did I miss something? And then I you know, I did some digging and

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:35

right we wished it at the fountain and it came true!

Kaytee Cobb 01:40

that it did. Let's start out since hopefully everybody already knows you. But why don't you introduce yourself briefly to our audience?

Jaysen Headley 01:48

Oh sure yeah, my name is Jaysen. On the internet, I go by ezeekat. But I feel like at this point, most people just call me by my name anyway, which is Jaysen and I am a bookish content creator. I also create content in other spaces, like nerdy TV shows, board games, all kinds of things. And I've been doing this now for a little over three years. I do this full time now, which is really cool. And I create content on tiktok, Instagram and YouTube as well as Twitch and I make content pretty much every single day. So that is that is what I do. That's my entire life at this point, which is pretty cool.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:20

And I was saying that it feels weird to be talking to you because you are so often in my devices. I can't tell you how many meetings I have almost been late for. Because if I have like three or four minutes in between, I have meetings all day long, right? That's all I do. If I have three or four minutes in between, I like need some comfort. I'll just go to easy cat. And then you'll be like talking about a book or two and I will be like oh crap the meeting starting and I've gotten completely into you talking about watching Barbie Thumbelina movie, and I'm like, completely engrossed in what you're saying. And I'm laughing hysterically. So you are such a source of comfort for me. And I'm so glad we're going to introduce you to the currently reading listeners.

Kaytee Cobb 03:02

And I'll say my kids are fan child doing very hard right now. Also kids, we watch all the Disney stuff. We watch anything with a stuffed animal. We watch half the board game stuff all together as a family and they are like, tell him we said hi.

Jaysen Headley 03:16

Oh, I love that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:18

Very fun. Okay. All right. Well, let's go ahead and get started with our bookish moments of the week. Kaytee, do you want to lead us off this week?

Kaytee Cobb 03:26

Yes, I do. So this week for me, my bookish moment sounds like a bad thing but then it turns good. I had a great week last week hanging out with my bestie and as soon as he left town within a single hour of dropping him off at the airport, I had lost my voice and had full laryngitis. So I'm a little bit froggy today. And that's why. I got up the following morning, couldn't speak at all, like small grunts and squeaks. That's all that was happening here. My husband was out of town. So I'm home alone with no voice, four kids. And all of a sudden they turned into marvelous mom babysitters. And the two older ones especially stepped into we'll take care of you because you always take care of us mode. They cleaned up, they made lunch, they helped with dinner. My only job was to lay on the couch and read all day long. So I did. I finished a 500 page book in two sittings took many naps played lots of happy color. And

when it was glorious, especially because when I realized I was sick, I was crying copious tears to my besties about how I was probably never going to read again. And I have all these changes coming up in my life that might break my reading for good. And it turns out, I was just sick. I wasn't actually having like an existential crisis. So once I got sick, I was like, oh, that's what was going on. And my reading is not broken. And I still get to be a podcaster which I'm very excited about.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:47

Yes, exactly. Well, and all that work that you've been doing to raise those four kids is now coming to fruition. This is why we raise humans that we want to be around right?

Kaytee Cobb 04:57

Truly Yes. And it's working. I can I couldn't believe it. I was like, look at them coordinating who's going to clean the bathroom while the other one makes lunch? That's amazing.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:06

That is so good. That's so good. All right, Jaysen, what is your bookish moment of the week?

Jaysen Headley 05:10

Well, I was also very sick this past week. And that made reading very hard. And I'll tell you, what you shouldn't read when you get sick is WebMD about your symptoms, because that will just convince you you're dying. It's like, well, this is not good. So my bookish moment of the week was I got a really cool arc in the mail. So I don't you know, as a content creator, I get sent a lot of books, but I don't ever request arcs. I never, for the past two years, I've not requested a single arc. But every once in a while one comes through, like I have a PO box that people send stuff to and every once awhile I'll get one and sometimes people will reach out first, and sometimes they won't. And this one I got sent. I don't know if you guys have ever read Jason June, but I'm a big fan of Jason June's work, I had to go grab it because I was worried I was gonna forget the title. But Jason June is such an incredibly nice human being. I love his work. And just recently released a book that I reviewed like last week, and he sent me an arc of his new book that doesn't come out till September. And it was such a surprise, because I just had no idea it was coming and like signed it and everything. It was called The Spells We Cast. It's his first like fantasy book. But when I opened it was just like such a, I was just, I this was like, peak. I was so sick that I wanted to just like lay on the floor and cry every day. I'm so opening that was just such a burst of joy. I was just so excited. And I think it was nice to get that little gift without knowing, you know, because a lot of times people will reach out. They're like, Well, how do you feel about reading this and reviewing this or doing this kind of thing for this kind of thing. And it just was like a little gift, like it just showed up out of nowhere. And it just made me so happy. So yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:38

that is very fun. It's got a gorgeous, gorgeous cover, too.

Jaysen Headley 06:41

Yeah, yeah, I'm excited for it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:43

That's a good well, and the fantasy book will be right up your alley, because that's a huge part of what you read right is, I mean, would you say you're 90% fantasy?

Jaysen Headley 06:52

um, I would say maybe more like 60 to 70%. I read a lot of contemporary and I read a lot of YA contemporary, which I'm trying to talk more about on my channel, because I feel like in general, I've talked more about the fantasy. I've talked more about middle grade, but I really love why a contemporary because it's just such easy reading. So a lot of times if I need when I need a break from fantasy, which is almost every time I finish a fantasy book, I need something like a palate cleanser, and why contemporary is just such that they're like these little cute little rom coms. Right. But I'm also excited that he's dipping his toe into fantasy as well. So yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 07:24

all right, excellent. Well, my bookish moment of the week is how many people have deemed me in the last week, saying they're sort of mad at me, because their reading is broken. And they're never going to read again. And they can't wait till November, because they read the Fourth Wing. And Jaysen, I just saw that you when you did the piece of content that I just saw, which I think was very recent. You were about halfway through the fourth wing. So can I ask, are you still halfway through? How are you? How are we feeling?

Jaysen Headley 07:55

That's the book I was going to talk about on my current reads section. It's actually one of them. Yeah, perfect. Yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:00

Excellent. Excellent. So let's squash that. Let's put it we'll put a pin in that because I am absolutely dying to know what you are thinking about it or what you thought about it when you finished it because that's I've been really waiting to see what your opinion was going to be on that. But yes, tons of DMS from people saying What have you done to me? Now I can never read another book. I'm so mad at you and yet I'm so glad that I read this book so that's been a lot of my week is just consoling people, consoling people trying to and trying to tell them trying to help them through choosing what they should read next when the answer is there's no good answer whatever comes next you're not gonna like read something garbage. That's that's your read something you're gonna hate. Exactly. Okay, let's start talking about our current reads then Kaytee what have you got first?

Kaytee Cobb 08:46

Okay. I may have considered bringing 100% books that you can find on Jaysen's Instagram page because it has been a big influence in my reading life. But I decided instead to try to find some current reads that I haven't seen over there to try and sell him and the rest of you on them. So I'm pretty sure this first one is a winner Garlic and the Vampire by Bree Paulson. Have you read this Jaysen?

Jaysen Headley 09:08

I have not read it but I am familiar with it. Okay, I think I ordered I think I own a copy because I'm pretty sure I ordered it because a few of the people that I follow had recommended it but I have not read it yet. Okay,

Kaytee Cobb 09:18

I think this one is going to be a winner for you. So this what the blurb starts with a farm fresh debut graphic novel starring a heroine who's braver than she realizes. And she's a garlic clove. So Garlic is our main character and our heroine. She and all of her vegetable friends help run the Farmers Market in town alongside which Agnes who brought them to life through her magic. They help her grow non sentient vegetables and everyone chips in with the planting and the harvesting and the weeding and the selling but Garlic has a little anxiety. She's always worried that she's doing something wrong, especially after last week when she tripped and spilled Celery's supplies all over the farmer's market, so she's sure that he hates her. It's so cute.

Jaysen Headley 10:05

It sounds adorable.

Kaytee Cobb 10:07

When her village of vegetable folk learns that a bloodthirsty vampire has moved into the nearby castle, they all agree that in spite of the fact that she's full of self doubt, and frankly terrified, Garlic is the obvious choice to confront him. Because garlic and vampires obviously have a natural enmity. So Garlic pulls up her teeny tiny big girl panties, jumps on board, which Agnes is Crow, and makes her way up to the castle. What she finds there is surprising, and delightful, and shows us all how we sometimes make assumptions, whether it's about the kinds of creatures will find in a scary castle, or the kind of people who read graphic novels, or anything in between my six year old, plopped down next to me on the couch when I was reading this, and was just as delighted by the pictures. And the story as I was. This book sounds simple and cute, but it tackles everything from prejudice and bullying, to anxiety, and self doubt. It's gentle and cozy. And there's already a second one in the series called Garlic and the Witch that I can't wait to get my hands on. I have another six year old in my life. That's like a bonus Nice. So I sent her a copy for her birthday. But I also sent the cover to my trans sister to tell her that she needs to read it and plan on giving a copy to my 70 year old mother, because it's a fantastic book for everyone. Please, please, please pick it up. Anytime you need a little bit of a smile. It's Garlic and the Vampire by Bree Paulson.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:31

That sounds excellent. I absolutely love it. And it sounds like something that Jaysen will love too.

Jaysen Headley 11:37

I agree with you that it sounds very cozy I love cozy.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:40

and that's another one that I can see the cover in my head. It's so cute. Because now I'm gonna see her with little tiny big girl panties.

Kaytee Cobb 11:47

I mean, they're not depicted in the story. But I was like, well, obviously that's what she's doing right now. That's exactly it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:54

Okay. All right. Jaysen, what is your first current read that you want to bring to us?

Jaysen Headley 11:59

Sure. I'll talk Fourth Wing first, I guess. Yeah. Thanks. Should I read the description?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 12:04

No, I don't think you need to read the description. I think we have talked to this book to death. We just have talked this book to death. And this is my fault. It's 100% My fault. So yes, let us know. Let us know what you're thinking about it.

Jaysen Headley 12:19

I'm very nervous to talk about this book. So what's interesting is, if you ever see me talking about reading a book, and then it just mysteriously vanishes, I just move on to the next book that I'm talking about. You never, you never really see anything, probably means I wasn't a fan. And typically speaking, I really don't like reading really popular books on booktube. While they're popular, because what ends up would inevitably have to booktalk books go through this like this kind of like cycle, right? They go where everybody's reading it. Everybody loves it. Oh my gosh, it's so amazing. And then you get into the people that are like, Actually, I didn't really love it. And here's the reasons why. And then the people who loved it, start flooding their comments so angry. And then you know, eventually everybody forgets about it. And that's when I'm ready to read it when nobody, nobody cares anymore. But a couple friends of mine were like, please read me like you have to read fourth link, I had found a copy, like right when it first came out. And I was like, Oh, this is a pretty book, I'm gonna buy it and the fact that nobody can find copies. I was like, I feel like I need to read it because people who want to read it can't even find it. So I should read it, and I didn't love it. And like one of the only people that didn't

Meredith Monday Schwartz 13:23

No, there's a lot of people who didn't love it and that's totally okay, we talk all the time about how we might really really love a book but it's totally not right for the other person. So say exactly how you feel about it. There. We this is what we do we have open space for it off for differing opinions

Kaytee Cobb 13:41

and for clarity. Jaysen I have not picked it up yet because I'm terrified of hype and I'm like listen, you all can get past the cycle. And then I'll read it when you're done with this whole like orgy that you're having around for

Jaysen Headley 13:52

Yeah, and that's usually what I do but in this case I picked it up before the hype was what it is now even when I found it in Barnes and Noble I was in LA and I believe they had it a week early like I don't even

think it was out yet because sometimes if they don't have like a hard launch Barnes and Noble will just put them on the shelf to have them on the shelf because then they have more backspace room. And so I found in Barnes and Noble I was like oh, this is a pretty book. I'm just gonna pick it up while I'm here. And then like the next week, I was like oh my gosh, Fourth Wing. I was like, All right, well, I picked that up that's good. I'm sure the hype has not helped because the hype a lot of times the more someone tells me to like something the less likely I am to like something but I think also I read you know, I read a lot of really heavy fantasy and I don't think Fourth Wing is a bad book. I think for people who are looking for what Fourth Wing is I think it's perfect right? It's like a summer blockbuster to me it's kind of like a Marvel movie. Not a lot of depth. But a lot of fun and a lot of action and over the top dramatic and I think for a lot of people that's what they're looking for like they want like a really fun actually read that they don't have to think too much about right for me. I read a lot of pretty like crunchy fantasy. And so when something is this light a lot of times I want more world building, I want more depth, I want more, you know, I want all of that. I really liked that the main character is disabled representation. And I've heard from a lot of people since I mentioned I was reading it that have the same disability as heard that they feel like it was represented really well. And I think that's really, really cool. So I love that. And I think there's a lot to be said for action is pretty well written. I think for me, personally, the book really has two maybe my two least favorite tropes in all of books. And when I started reading, I recognize that this is what was happening. I was like, Oh God, and one is like enemies to lovers. I'm sort of sometimes fine with but what I really don't like in the enemies to lovers space is the bullies to lovers. Like I don't like when a character is like a total bully, and then they end up liking each other. Like, to me, that's just Yes, I'm attracted to red flags, like that's what that kind of says to me. And the other one is that I'm not a big fan of like competitions and books, like books that are about like a contest or a competition, you know, like Hunger Games, things like that. And this book kind of does both of those things. So I knew within the first 50 pages that I was like, well, it's gonna be rough for this one to win me over. And I've read books recently that had similar tropes that managed to kind of win me over in the end. So I was like, I'm gonna get I'm gonna give it some time. And I think the first 100 pages, I was like, really not into it. And then like the second 100 pages, I was like, Okay, I think I'm getting into this. And then the rest of the book. I was like, No, I'm not.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 16:22

The Dragons didn't do it for you.

Jaysen Headley 16:24

I liked the dragons part. Like I liked the dragons. The Dragons actually, were probably my favorite part like the the dragons and how they bonded with the dragons and how they worked with the dragons. I liked all of that. I think I really didn't like the romance aspect of the book. And the characters, almost all of the characters are incredibly obnoxious throughout the course of the book, and some of them are just borderline like, you want to reach through the pages and smack them a little bit, right. You're just like, oh my gosh, why? Like, why are you so annoying? Some of it is intentional. There are certain characters and I don't want to spoil anything. But there's certain characters where you're supposed to be annoyed by that, like they're doing things that are annoying. And so yeah, I think for me, I wanted more of like, I just wanted a deeper like a deeper dive a deeper fantasy story. It read a lot to me like Sarah J Maas. Yeah, in fact, I told a group of friends that I'm in, I said, if you had given me this book, without any of the pages saying who the author was, and just told me it was written by Sarah J Maas, I

would have 100% believed you, because it had a very similar rights. But I don't really love her books either. So because they're the same thing, right? Like they're very, I described as like a fun movie to go see in theaters, you know, like there are movies that you only go see in theaters, because they're just if you watch them at home, you can catch how like they're kind of on that shallower level. But you see him in theaters. They're so fun to watch the spectacle. Yeah, yeah, there. It's a spectacle. And there's definitely a place for that. Right. And that, to me is what Fourth Wing is. And I think I read Fourth Wing outside of the theater, at home with my microwave dinner, and I just like,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 17:53

right, right? Yeah, well, I mean, what you picked up on is the fact that we talk a lot about reader know thyself, and when there are tropes in a book that we know don't work for us, that automatically is going to make it a little bit more difficult. Some books can get us over it. But a lot of times, like there are certain tropes that the Emily Henry's new book Happy Place has a trope in it, that so many people loved that book. But for me, I got 20% in and I was like, I know this isn't going to work for me, because this particular trope just renders everything. I just can't do it. So I'm just gonna kind of quietly step away from it. So yeah, if you don't love competition, and you don't love enemies to lovers, I can absolutely see that. So you are not alone in not being a super fan of Fourth Wing. I think you're absolutely right, that it's that big summer blockbuster that happens to be in the fantasy light genre, which we don't normally get. And I think that's part of what's making it such a juggernaut is that we don't normally get the big summer blockbuster in that genre. So if people are kind of like, this is something new and different. And it is it's fantasy light. It's not crunchy fantasy. It's not, you know, it's not that big. world building. Absolutely. So I've everything you said about it. You know, although I felt differently about it, I completely see where you're coming from.

Jaysen Headley 19:14

Yeah, I think I mean, especially for booktok, like it's the perfect booktok book. It has all the booktok tropes that everybody loves. And it's essentially a YA book about adults, like the writing is very young adult, it feels like I'm reading a young adult fantasy book, but then all of a sudden, the characters are like doing things that you wouldn't want young adult characters to do. So it's perfect for booktok there's no doubt that it was going to be a booktok sensation, because it literally takes all of booktok's favorite things and puts them in a really digestible package. And I think that's really cool. And so yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 19:44

yeah, exactly. It's a juggernaut to be sure someone will be studying this. Okay. My book, my first current read is going to take us in a very, very different direction than Fourth Wing. I just a couple of days ago finished The Whispers by Ashley Audrain. and Ashley Audrain was the author of The Push, which of course in January 2020 was a big huge blockbuster book. Here's the setup. On the surface of The Whispers. The premise makes us think that we are squarely in domestic suburban thriller territory. We open our story on Harlow Street, the rich neighborhood where our characters lives start the book. We're right in the middle of a catered barbecue. A catered barbecue. As a Texan this is very difficult for me to say. Everyone is drinking and chatting and being really impressed by the picture perfect hostess and her family... that is until said picture perfect hostess explodes in fury because her 10 year old son disobeyed her and everyone at the party hears her lose it, it's really awkward, and it's really public. And then months later, that same young boy falls from his bedroom window in the middle of the night. And

our story centers on what happens over the next three days, as each of these women in the neighborhood grapple with what led to that terrible night. Okay, so I wasn't at all sure that Ashley Audrain could write a book that is better than *The Push*. But somehow she has. And with this novel, she is squarely in the auto buy category for me. *The Whispers* I'll start by saying is incredibly page turning short chapters rotating points of view, it flies by this is the kind of book you want to get lost in in a long flight, you'll want to curl up and read and you won't care when the plane lands as long as everyone leaves you alone with this book. But this book is more than a propulsive thriller, as with *The Push* Audrain gives us a deep, deep exploration of motherhood. This time from the points of view of four very different women, each of whom are living through their own kind of pain through the mother that they've been, or that they want to be. You will see this book comped with *Big Little Lies* and that's not a horrible thing, but I think that that comp misses the mark a bit. You won't find silly mommy politics here or quibbles over the PTA fundraiser. This is something deeper, much darker and much more personal. The other thing that you'll hear people talk about, I'm sure is how unlikable the characters are again, they're not wrong. But if you're going to say that these women are unlikable, then I think you need to ask yourself if you are likeable, because Audrain pushes us in this novel to ask, would any of us be that likable if someone can see deep into our truest thoughts our basest feelings or our most embarrassing insecurities? I would say not. Audrain forces each of us in front of the mirror to ask. I think I'm the main character of my story. But am I really the villain in my story? Maybe we all are. The thematic construct of whispers and whispering is used to great effect here. Audrain uses that soft sound to bring us in close and then creep us the eff out. She uses it to engender close friendships. And then big betrayals, she uses whispers to calm and soothe and then to threaten. It's chilling and a perfect device for the story that she's telling here. I want to fully underscore with huge highlighters, the huge trigger warnings that abound in the story, especially around the issues of infertility and pregnancy loss. These are depicted in a visceral way. So please proceed with caution and take care of yourself if these issues are hard for you. So yes, you can comp this book to *Big Little Lies*. Or I think better to Moriarty's other better novel *The Husband's Secret*. But really Audrain is in a league of her own here giving us incredibly dark stories of very realistic women. Because make no mistake, we know these women, and we are these women whether we want to admit it or not. This is *The Whispers* by Ashley Audrain.

Kaytee Cobb 24:17

Do you read much thriller or horror in your reading Jaysen?

Jaysen Headley 24:21

I don't every once in a while I do but that sounds really good. That sounds like something that's really good. But I will say I do love mommy politics when you were talking about what you said it doesn't have any of those. Yes, I

Meredith Monday Schwartz 24:30

like that too. That's something that I enjoy. That's just not the kind of thing that we're gonna that we're going to be dealing with here.

Kaytee Cobb 24:37

I have to say when you said she explodes at the barbecue, I thought you meant like physically. Oh, and I was like, Well,

Jaysen Headley 24:43

I was like oh my god

Meredith Monday Schwartz 24:46

catered barbecue is dangerous. No, it's not a physical explosion. It's a it's a very vocal explosion. All right, Kaytee, what's your second read?

Kaytee Cobb 24:55

Okay, the second one I want to talk about today is *The Celebrants* by Steven Rowley. I set up this book for you and you're going to be like, Oh, Kaytee that sounds real sad. And that's fine. Just sit with me for a second. We'll get over it and actually talk about it. In *The Celebrants*, we meet a group of 50 year olds who met in college at the end of their college careers. When they were 22, one of the six members of the group tragically died. At his funeral, his name is Alec, which happens prior to the start of the book. But as mentioned throughout, the remaining five members lament that he didn't really understand how much they cared for him. They decided that they will make a pact to throw each other living funerals throughout their lives. But there are rules. You only get one funeral, so you must choose wisely, when to call in your portion of the pact. It can't just be because you had a bad day at work or you don't feel good. It has to be a big deal, because the other members of the pact all agree to drop everything and be there for the funeral in question. As happens when you're 22 These are very big promises. The friends then drift apart in location, especially after graduation, but stay in touch I'll be at sporadically. Now at 50, one of their members, Jordan of the couple Jordan and Jordy has decided to call his funeral because it's time. His husband Jordy isn't ready to eulogize his still living husband, and for sure this one is different from when animal lover Marielle got divorced, or when super loaded, Naomi's parents died in a car crash. Or even when art dealer Craig pleaded guilty to fraud and was going to go to prison. This one feels much more final. Cue the sad faces and the crying emojis what Kaytee, you love books about joy? What are you doing here? Right? This one's about funerals. Why would you do this? And I will not deny that I finished this book on the couch one morning, both laughing and sobbing in the same moment with like actual laughs coming out of my mouth and actual tears going down my cheeks. Its is a big feels book. But that's what Steven Rowley writes. He picks up our hearts, He tenderly places them in a box of soft blankies like newborn kittens, and then maybe not accidentally backs over them with a car. It's fine. Sometimes, we need to feel things. This book is about growing into middle age. It's about how friendships change over the years and being there for your people. Even when it's inconvenient or painful. It's about celebrating the lives we have, even when they aren't what we planned or expected. I am a Stephen rally completed, and I will continue to be one. He is an auto buy author for me. The man gives me a laugh and a cry in this case at the same moment exactly when I need one. And I love him for it. This was *The Celebrants* by Steven Rowley.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:40

Oh, I'm so glad that that worked for you, Kaytee

Kaytee Cobb 27:43

I loved it. It was so good. And I'm like, I better talk about this with somebody other than just Meredith because she's gonna be like, Wow, that sounds like something I would never read.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:51

It does. It does. In fact, after I read that wiener dog book that he the first of his first book with the wiener dog that I can't I don't want to be backed over. I don't.

Kaytee Cobb 28:03

In a box of kittens.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:07

No, but I'm so glad that that worked for you. I'm really happy about that. Whenever one of his new books comes out. I'm like, Oh, I hope I hope it lives up to his last one. Kaytee loves it. I do. Have you read Jaysen, have you read any Steven Rowley?

Jaysen Headley 28:19

I have not. I am familiar with the author, but I have not read any of his books yet.

Kaytee Cobb 28:23

He's a delight.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:24

Yeah, Kaytee loves him

Jaysen Headley 28:26

Oh, I haven't read it yet. But I only own it. I love it. All three that that'll be my first one. All right.

Kaytee Cobb 28:26

The Guncle. I gotta say if you are a Guncle like I handed the uncle to my kids guncle. Oh my gosh.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 28:38

What's your second book, Jaysen?

Jaysen Headley 28:40

So the second book, I have to have the book like in front of me. So. Yeah. So this is a book that I read in May. And now I'm rereading it because we're reading it as part of my book club for June. The book is called Ander and Santi Were Here. It is by Johnny Garza Villa and quite frankly, I think I was telling someone the other day that as I'm rereading it, I am starting to think it might be my favorite book. I just love it so much. Yeah, um, do I think it's the best book? Do I think it's the best book I've ever read? Probably not. I've read other things that I think like when I think about like the best book I've ever read, like things like Babel come to mind. Yes, but reading this just brings me I don't know, it's I guess maybe it's like, I feel like a lot of times people talk about their comfort reads and I don't know if I every time I hear that I'm like, Oh, I get the idea but I don't know if I have like a comfort read. This is my comfort read this is like the first time I think I've experienced the book, right like as soon as I finished it, I wanted to reread it. It's a book that I probably will reread again afterwards. I'm going through and actually like highlighting and annotating at this time, which has been really fun. But the story is essentially about the

main character is non binary. The name is Ander. And they are living in San Antonio and they're basically an artist they've taken a year off before college to do art around town. They paint murals on walls, things like that. And they're they're struggling with, I guess they're not struggling with their identity. They're all kind of like unapologetically themselves, but what they kind of struggle with is that they are a legal American citizen, and all around them in their community, a lot of bad things are happening to undocumented citizens and things like that. And they've kind of found that they can sort of ignore that, because they don't really have to worry about it, because they've got their ID no big deal. And so it's sort of like Ander deals with the privilege within a marginalized community, which I think is interesting. So Ander meets Santiago, who starts working at their family's restaurant, and they kind of have this instant connection. I mean, it's very much a love story. And so you kind of see them fall in love and their relationship. But then of course, you know, something happens. And we start to get ICE agents involved. And it starts to be kind of a story about immigration and the systems that are in place that makes it really hard. And the systems in place that make it really hard for especially young people that don't have a family or a place to go back to if they get deported. And so it's a book that is like on one page, I'll be laughing because it's so funny. And it's the way the characters speak just bounces off the page. Like they just feel so real to me, like they talk to each other, the way my friends and I talk to each other when nobody else is around just saying the snarky just nappies, sometimes meanest things to each other, but all out of love. And that's how the characters speak to each other. But then on the next page, I'll be sobbing my eyes out or I'll be really be like swooning because it's just such a beautiful love story. And it has this amazing message. So I think it's interesting, cuz it's a book that I really wasn't on my radar. And I actually got reached out to to do a promotional post about the book on tiktok. And I was like, yeah, it's got a pretty cover, and I read the description. It sounds great. And now it's become this book that I just recommend so highly, and that I'm rereading. I never reread books. So the fact that I'm rereading something a month after I read it is like a pretty huge deal. And it's just a book that just fills me with so much joy. I really love it. So that's Ander and Santi Were Here by Johnny Garza Villa

Kaytee Cobb 31:54

Well, I bought it while you were talking. Good job.

Jaysen Headley 31:58

It's just really beautiful. And I think it's also a very the care it is a young adult, contemporary, but the characters are all of legal age. And so I say that because it is very sex positive book. And I really liked that. I think I like that more. YA books are starting to be that way. Because in the past, so many have not been there. And I think it's much better to talk about that and the safety of and like how to be safe while doing those things than it is to just pretend it's not happening, right. And this book does that very, very well. And so I appreciate that as well. It's just like I said, it's a book that bounces back and forth between romantic and funny and heartbreaking and sometimes all three at the same time. It just really love it a lot. So yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:39

it has all of that substance that you that you're really looking for.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:43

Yeah, yeah. Well, and I love what you said too. And I think Kaytee, we should probably do a deep dive on the difference between the best books we've ever read and our favorite books we've ever read. Because I think that's a really interesting topic. Yeah, did you and we can take this out Jason if you don't want to talk about this, but as far as comfort reads, did you did you read Legends and Lattes?

Jaysen Headley 32:43

Yeah, I will gladly read a book where nothing happens for 300 pages if the characters are like deep and intricate. The one my friends make fun of me the most for is The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue, like, I adore that book. Nothing really happens in that book. But I just love the characters and the depth of the characters and they're all kind of raw, not very likeable characters. I will gladly read 300 pages of that over like a 300 pages of all plot any day.

Jaysen Headley 33:29

I did read Legends and Lattes. Yeah, did you and I really liked Legends and Lattes. Yeah, I really like cozy fantasy. I mean, I think cozy fantasy, I think is for a specific audience. I think sometimes I've even had people tag me in their videos where they like, I read this cozy fantasy book that Jaysen recommended, and I did not like it. It was so boring. I'm like,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 33:47

no fighting.

Jaysen Headley 33:49

Yeah, but it's, but it's like, well, that's kind of the point. The point of cozy books is kind of to be a little boring and to like, just be cozy and chill and nice. And I really like Legends and Lattes. That was kind of the book that got me into cozy fantasy. I think that's true for a lot of people. Yeah. Since then, I've it's kind of become a genre that is like one of my go to genres that I like seek out. Yeah, but yeah, I really enjoyed Legends and Lattes a lot.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:14

Yeah, we absolutely loved it. And I was able to talk to Travis and it was so much fun, too. And I really think that we over the course of the next 24 months, man, we are going to be swimming in cozy fantasy.

Jaysen Headley 34:26

Yeah, he's definitely started something. I mean, the genre was there. But I think Legend and Lattes made it mainstream because I also think a lot of cozy fantasy that was already being written or that has come out since is mostly independently published. And the great thing about booktok is it can take a book like Legend and Lattes, which was initially indie published and make it a big deal. You know, we've also seen this with Katee Robert, a lot of her books are indie published but then are like huge because of booktok. And I think what we're seeing is a lot of smaller authors now writing these really excellent cozy fantasies and getting visibility because As people read Legend and Lattes, and they want something else to read afterwards, they want more of more of that kind of thing.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:06

Absolutely. Yeah. My second book is going to be another left turn. But another five star read for me. I love this book so much. This is Clytemnestra by Costanza Casati. I really like saying that too

Kaytee Cobb 35:19

that sounds like a tongue twister.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:19

Clytemnestra by Costanza Casati. But it's not, like try it. Costanza

Kaytee Cobb 35:24

I'll sound like an idiot.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:25

No, it's really good. It's good. I say it all the time. I just walk around saying it. So okay, but I loved I absolutely loved this book. So I first heard about it in the Fabled spring book preview. And then a couple of months later, Catherine Gilmore was talking about it on Sarah's bookshelves Live. And Catherine really kind of just had me double down on how interested I was in this book. So here's the setup, and the marketing blurb gives away way too much. So here's what I'm going to tell you. This is a retelling of the Greek story of Clytemnestra. A name you've probably heard, but you can't quite place. But after you read this book, you will never forget her. She's a princess of Sparta, a woman. Yes. But in Spartan society, women are strong individuals, and we're trained as fierce fighters, you definitely do not want to mess with Clytemnestra. But she's also the product of her time. And as a princess, she is married off once for love. And once most assuredly not, she is a fierce mother who loves her children, the ones she raises and the ones she loses. She has a sister who adores her sometimes problematic sister, the famous Helen of Troy, kind of nestra story is filled with circumstances that made me gasp out loud as they happened. And times when I thought if I were her, I would never survive, but survive. She did. And she thrived. And she got vengeance and she got justice. And she rules as a fair Queen better than her husband ever did. And she was loved. And she fully loved. Her story completely encapsulates the female experience. And it's absolutely incredible. Like I said, Five star book, this will be up in my top five of the year for sure. I keep thinking about how many Greek retellings that we're getting right now. And I think there's two reasons, I think, because they are able to center female stories in a new and fresh way. And I think that that's interesting. And I think also, retelling a Greek myth does a lot of the plot work for an author, they don't have to make up crazy outlandish things because crazy outlandish things are already baked into the story that they're going to be telling. And you guys, that is so true in this story here. I mean, if you decided to tell a story about a guy who's gonna go halfway across the world to find a golden fleece, no one is going to believe that but because we're in the world of Greek myths, we just accepted as fast as fact. And we go on with the journey, this plot and Clytemnestra is absolutely nuts, but we benefit from it because you can't stop turning the pages. But the true strength of the story is the narrative voice of Clytemnestra herself, in Casati's hands, our heroine is luminescent. She's as real as any person I've ever met. She's brilliant and driven, yes, but she is just as much loving and scared, and lonely and betrayed. Her story is about her relationships and betrayals, the hands of the men around her Good lord. But it also is so much about her being a sister and a mother. And it's about Clytemnestra surviving and living a life of purpose. Even when she could have laid down and

died she had been so wronged. As I mentioned, it's the story of a woman and it resonates as much today as it did in ancient Greece. As I got into this book, I realized that I was unconsciously comparing it to Stone Blind by Natalie Haynes, and this book is not the same. It's very, very good. But I want to be clear that it's not the same. I found that if Clytemnestra was written by an Enneagram One wing Two which it most certainly was then Stone Blind was written by an Enneagram Eight. Stone Blind is just out to push every single button possible from its construction to its pros to the action of its characters. And that's not what we have here in Clytemnestra. This is a more faithful retelling that has changed the lens to center the client investor character, and that in and of itself is interesting. Where Stone Blind, shocked or provoked us. This book gives us deep cell level understanding of our main character Clytemnestra was deeply affecting every chapter took me deeper into her story. And while it wasn't a quick read at almost 500 pages, it's one I won't forget and it's earned a place on my forever shelf. So this is Clytemnestra by Costanza Casati. So so good. Okay, we are going to do a deep dive here. Jaysen we are going to talk a little bit with you all things Ezeekat, if you don't mind. And at any point, of course, you can tell us Oh, of course. I don't feel like answering that question. Maybe you can take that out. But exactly, exactly. But the first question that I have, and then Kaytee, I promise I will not take over all of his time. Where does Ezeekat come from?

Kaytee Cobb 40:20

That was my first question too

Meredith Monday Schwartz 40:22

it's got to be what everyone asks.

Jaysen Headley 40:24

Yeah, no, it's so funny is this is this is the number one question everybody asks, and I don't have an answer to it. I mean, it kind of have an answer, but it's not very exciting. So the first job I ever worked, I worked at a pet store. And we sold a catnip that was called the brand was Cucamonga, catnip and I was I just really liked the cat on it. I thought it looked really fun. I loved the time, it was like what it's like what you were saying I was a fun word to say. And you'll remember early on in the internet days, we did not create emails that were our first name dot our last name at Gmail, we created fun emails, right? So my email that I used was kucamonga kat with two Ks K at the beginning, and then the K for cat@whatever.com, right. And at a certain point, as I grew up, and became more of a professional in the world, having to spell that out every time I went to a store, and they were like, Let's add you to our email list became exhausting. So at a certain point, I was like, Okay, it's too much, I'm just gonna do a short make a shorter version. So it's easier to say and easier for like user names and stuff like that, which became ezeekat. And when I started my Instagram, back in the day, when I started my accounts, I didn't start them with the intention of making bookish content. So it was never like, I'm gonna make it Jaysen reads, it was never that was never my intention. I just wanna you know, I started Instagram, because everybody was like, well, there's this new thing called Instagram, you gotta check it out. And I was like, All right, well, I'll use same username I've been using for everything. And now it's just become part of it, right? Because at this point, it's just the username I've used. And so now I've now I'm just now I'm just running with it. And so, but yeah, it kind of just happened sort of by accident. And I think it's a blessing and a curse. Because I think the it might have been better for me at some point if my like, actual name had been in my regular username. But at the same time, I'm very fortunate that I never

named any of my channels, Jaysen reads or Jaysen likes books, because my channels have grown to encompass so many other things. And I think that works with like a really ambiguous, easy cat name, as opposed to something that's specific to one genre of nerdery. So

Kaytee Cobb 42:25

nerdery is the adjective I use for you a lot. Or noun. That's because it's like, my favorite part of your content is that you're like unabashedly happy to be nerdy. And I also am like that, and I love it. I think it's so fun. Yeah. Awesome. Okay, so you said reading is not your only identity? Where do you fit reading into your life? Like, if you were a pie, how much of your life is a reading life Versus a gaming life? Or Disney life? Or a cat life? I mean, because you got kitties too, right?

Jaysen Headley 42:58

I mean, I think especially when I think about my content, because I started out in the booktok, Bookstagram space, that is always sort of the foundation. So I always tell myself, if I'm only going to post one piece of content today, it's got to be a book video, right? If I'm gonna post five videos, that can be all kinds of things. But if I only get to do one thing today, it should be something book related, because that's kind of my foundation. That's where a lot of my following came from. And I do read a lot I make time to read every single day, I would say that actual like, actually, actively reading is probably my number one hobby, with the exception of I also play a lot of video games, even though I don't talk about that as much on my channel. But now I stream on Twitch five days a week. So I am like, I stream on Twitch and tiktok playing video games five days a week, those are kind of like to like biggest pieces of the pie. I think board games are really great. But most of the time, I mean, I play a lot of solo board games as well. But a lot of board games involve having other people around. So we typically we tend to do one if we're lucky two board game nights a week, where we actually get to play some games with people and do that, which is really fun. So it is not as big a part of my life as I wish it was like I would happily do like three board game nights a week if I could. But that's not really feasible when you have to get other people involved. And then yeah, I also watch a lot of shows which I put a lot of that on the internet as well. But yeah, I think the reading is probably the biggest reading and video games, I would say the biggest chunk of my pie. And what's great is that a lot of video games I play, I will listen to audiobooks while I play them. So I'm able to kind of like, do the two things I love the most kind of at the same time, which is really fun. So yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 44:27

which is another question that I had, which is what is your what does your pie look like as far as how you take books in print? Ebook audiobook? What are your kind of what are your percentages?

Jaysen Headley 44:38

Yeah, probably, I would say 95% audiobook. I have a hard time even reading a book or adding it to my TBR if I know there's no audiobook version of it. So I've talked about this a little bit on my channel, but I'm dyslexic. So audiobooks are really important to me. And even when I read print, like right now I'm with honor and Santi you're here I was mentioning that I'm doing like an annotation of it. I I listened to the book while I read it. And that's how I do my annotations. Just because for me sitting down to actually like read words in front of my eyes is can be very hard and very straining, especially if I'm not feeling good. It's like impossible like, because they're, you know, when you're dyslexic, you have like

coping mechanisms and things that you do, to employ to like, still be able to read and like live a normal life. But if I'm not feeling good, or if I'm tired, those things just don't happen. So audiobooks are really, really key to how I teach how I take in most of the books that I read.

Kaytee Cobb 45:30

That's one of my favorite ways to read. I call it a tandem read when I've got the audio being spoken to me while I've got the text in front of me, I love being read to. And that's I'm like, basically, I paid somebody to read to me, this is fantastic. Exactly.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:41

Well, let's talk a little bit more about the annotations that you do. Because you do like you said, You do all kinds of different pieces of content on your site. A lot of its book related. Some of its not and even that I'm not a board game person, but I will watch you talk about a board game. Yeah, you just cracked me up and again, see comfort viewing? So your annotation series that you do. How do you decide what books like you? You've done Percy Jackson, one and two? Yeah. How do you decide what you're going to like? Tell us a little bit more about what you do when you're doing the annotation of a book.

Jaysen Headley 46:18

Yeah, I mean, if it's like Ander and Santi Were Here my annotation process is literally I'm just highlighting with different colors. So like I have a I have a different color for each of the main main characters. And then I have a color to highlight like specific moments of like love or specific moments where they discuss art, or specific moments where they talk about, you know, immigration or racism or things like that. I find most of the time, it's easier to annotate a book I've already read. But every but sometimes I will do it with a book I haven't read, like I read Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevon earlier this year, and I annotated that on my first read Percy Jackson. Those books are great for what I call like deep annotation, which is where I'm like literally drawing on the pages and creating little like scenery and things on the pages and kind of like kind of creating a work of art within the pages. Because there's so many visuals, there's always something visual going on. milligray books are great for that, because there's always something visual and beautiful and popping off the page and these creatures and these moments and the scenery and so Percy Jackson is fun for that. Because then I get to add all these little whimsical things to the page and it kind of lends itself more to that. It's hard to do whimsical drawings, if you're reading like babbles example, right? It kind of just depends on the type of book that it is. I did an annotation last year was one of the first big ones they did, which was Legendborn and Bloodmarked. And there was no highlighting was just like tabbing. So I did like a full tabbing of that book. So I tagged a bunch of things that I really liked and followed certain themes through the book and Legendborn I had already read. So that was a reread, and then Bloodmarked, it was a first time read. But luckily because it was a sequel, that's the hard thing is if you want to like go in and like really look for themes, you kind of have to know which themes are already in the book. And so doing a reread is always nice for that. But every so often, like I said, with Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, I was able to annotate that. Whenever I read Discworld books, and I'm reading though I'm reading all of those for the first time, I just use tabs and I just have lines that I think are good or funny. And so it just kind of depends on the book, how deep I'm willing to go with with that process.

Kaytee Cobb 48:14

Are you much of a re-reader? You mentioned that reading rereading within a month was very unusual.

Jaysen Headley 48:20

But yeah, I almost never reread because when I think about my TBR and I think about the piles of books on my floor I think oh my god, I cannot possibly reread something when I've got 50 Other things that I need that need to be read right there on the floor. Right? But I think I kind of like look for excuses to do it when I do it. Right so like Percy Jackson, the excuse for rereading it was that I was going to do this annotation series so that was like a really good excuse because I only really read I think the first one and it was a long time ago so I didn't want to remember anything about it. That's the other thing is I have a terrible memory. So if I wait long enough, it feels like a first read anyway because I don't remember anything happened. Yeah. And then Ander and Santi, the excuse was that well, I'm going to make it my book club pick for June. So that gives me an opportunity to reread it that doesn't feel just like for lack of a better word, wasting time. I know Rereading is never a waste of time but to me sometimes that's how it feels. So I'll give myself like excuses, right? Legendborn my excuse for that was Bloodmarked just come out and I didn't remember really anything of Legendborn so I was like I need to reread this before I read Bloodmarked and I was really glad that I read them back to back because they they kind of feel like back to back books. So yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 49:27

yeah, I am. So into this idea. We deal with the same thing where we feel like the reads If we can't take the time to reread a book, which we need new content. I invented an entire podcast series so that I could reread my favorites, the Three Pine series from Louise Penny, and going back and doing deep deep deep the annotation so that we can do a podcast episode you know, talk for an hour and a half on one book. It's such a different way to experience a book and your your annotation series really has given me I'm not as artistically talented like you are. But the way that you basically have color coded based on theme or different characters. And it's just given me different ways to think about interacting with my books. And I remember the books that I read in that way more like you. I don't remember details of most of the books that I read, but when I read it deeply like that I do. And so it's just a different way to interact with the book. And you've really inspired me on that. Oh, that's awesome. Yeah. And it does create kind of like a work of art or a moment in time. And I think about people 50 years from now pulling that book off the shelf and being like, wow, okay, I really have a sense of what she was thinking as she was going through this particular book. And that's a that's a unique way to read a poem.

Jaysen Headley 50:41

It's also great for content because people get so angry when you start highlighting in books, that they want to tell you how angry they are. And that's the engagement. So the video does typically pretty well. So if you can make people angry people probably watch your video. I don't recommend it, because it's a lot, then you have to deal with all of that. But yeah.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 50:59

All right. Well, that leads me to a couple other questions that I want to ask. So at some point, not very long ago, in fact, was it April, when you took the dive to becoming a full time content creator, which is a

really big deal? And so I wanted to ask, like, what was the deciding factor for you? How did you finally arrive at that point, because it's a really scary precipice to be on the edge.

Jaysen Headley 51:24

Yeah, it was very terrifying. I have been working in retail in some capacity. Since I was like, 16, I really loved the job that I had, like the day job that I had. And for a long time, I was really proud of the fact that I could balance both of those things, right, like, I would wake up early, I would film a couple of pieces of content, I would post one, I would go to work on my lunch break, I would post the next one, I would come home at the end of the day, I would film some content and posts that. And I just gotten to this group, right, like, and I felt really great about that. And financially, you know, I had friends, even a year ago, or a year and a half ago, they were like you should think about doing this full time. And I was like, I just don't, I just don't know, I don't I don't feel confident enough in that I'm worried that it won't work out. And so it took probably a lot longer for me to finally take the dive than was probably necessary. But eventually what happened was I started getting invited to the thing is like, companies will sometimes reach out and be like, hey, we want you to come to this thing. We'll fly you out, we'll bring you to it. You just have to be available. And you'll be like, when is it happening? And it'll be Tuesday, and they'll be like, Oh, well, we would fly in on Friday this Friday. Like it's not, there's never heads up, it's always the week of. And then I would have to like rearrange my whole work schedule to possibly make it work out. And sometimes it worked. And sometimes it didn't. And it got to this point where I was missing opportunities for this thing that had sort of started to become like my main focus, because of my day job. At which point I was like, Okay, I need to figure this out. Because for the longest time, they weren't interfering with each other, but now they are. So I think that was like the final deciding point of like, I need to figure out what I want to do. And so it definitely was not a spur of the moment decision. I think I talked to my husband about it, I think for like six months to a year before I actually did it. And we had a plan for when I was going to do it. I made sure that I felt good financially about like kind of averaging what I was making every month that I could survive on that. And so there was a lot of planning that led up to me finally doing that. But I mean, here we are. Just month three, because I left my job at the end of March. And it's going really well. I'm always enjoying Yeah, I'm always surprised when I continue to be okay. I think that's, that's the weird thing. Like, sometimes I'll be like, even just the other day was like, oh, gosh, I don't know, I don't have a lot lined up for July yet. And then within the next couple of hours, I got two emails, they were like, hey, we want you to do this thing in July and here's what we'll pay you and I was like, oh, there we go. July is we got July setup, you know, and what's great is that I created a lot of those relationships before, you know, I had a lot of foundation in place before I took this job into it. And I think that's really helped a lot. So

Meredith Monday Schwartz 53:59

absolutely, definitely.

Kaytee Cobb 54:01

Okay, you mentioned your husband, is he a reader also? Not really like thanks for all your books in our house.

Jaysen Headley 54:08

He so he will some he reads a lot of comics. And he will sometimes read a book can listen to a book on audiobook like if me and another friend are reading it he'll sometimes get involved with that we used to do like read a book a month kind of thing like and I would he would take a recommendation from me and he would listen to it on audiobook like on the way to work and on the way home. But now he works from home so it kind of takes away some of the that dedicated time. So he doesn't read as much as like fiction, but he does read a lot of comics. So that's that's kind of his his focus, I guess

Kaytee Cobb 54:39

perfect cuz he's, he's on your Instagram more than my husband even wants to talk about books. So I was like, well, he's got to be at least somewhat supportive.

Jaysen Headley 54:47

He's always very supportive. Yeah, he's very supportive of all of this and definitely my biggest cheerleader and very supportive of everything that I have done and accomplished to this point. He just doesn't support necessarily through like reading the books that I love, but he does support through like being supportive. So yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 55:04

perfect. And the videos that you guys do together I absolutely love. Okay, so for those of us who want to support you, and we want more content from you, we want as much ezeekat as we can possibly get. So obviously, we subscribe to you everywhere follow you everywhere. We'll have all of that in the show notes. Yeah. Is there another place? Is there a paywall we can get behind?

Jaysen Headley 55:26

Oh, so this is a tricky question. And I will answer it, but I'm going to be very vague. So I currently have a Patreon. But I don't advertise it a lot. Because come August, something is going to be happening, that is going to sort of change how I do things in regards to Patreon and kind of that sort of service. So I would say for now, the best thing you can do, like if you really want to support on Patreon, please, by all means do, there's not I don't do a ton on Patreon right now, because it's kind of in this weird, Limbo moment until a couple months from now. But come August, there'll be some really cool things happening, that will be a really, really great way for people to get like more financially involved, if they're interested in that. And I'm so excited about what that thing is. But for now, the best thing is just to follow me on the places so that when that happens, you will know about it perfect, because it's going to be probably one of the most exciting things that I do this year. And I can't wait to like actually be able to talk about it. But it's definitely going to be very in the kind of in the theme of like what I'm doing, like what's going on on Patreon, but on kind of another level. So it'll be really cool.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 56:35

Awesome. Awesome. All right. So follow easy cat absolutely everywhere. All right, Kaytee, do you want to wrap there? Or do you have any more specific questions that you want to ask?

Kaytee Cobb 56:46

We are over an hour. But my last question that that I promised I would ask is, if you are a gamer, a board gamer, and a bookish person, I saw the My Shelfie board game, what are your other like bookish board game recommendations? Oh,

Jaysen Headley 57:02

My Shelfie is great. There is another there's like a book or a library, sort of like fantasy library themed game called Ex Libris. That is really cool. And that has to do with like opening a like magical bookstore. But then I love to recommend games that are like very reading focused. So for example, there is a series of games called Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective. And in those games, they give you whole books of reading material basically to like follow a story where it's almost like a choose your own adventure style thing where you go. And you're basically trying to compete with Sherlock Holmes to try and solve a case. So you get the case, and then you'll be sent out into London to go and like interview different people to try and solve the case. And you get points. At the end of each case, Sherlock will ask you questions. And you'll get points based on how accurately you answer those questions in regards to solving the case. So there's a lot of games like that that are very like reading and book focused. And another one that we recently played that I really like is called Artisans of Splendent Vale. And this is kind of a role playing light type of game where each player plays one of four different characters that have like different specialties, and they go on adventures in this world, and it has kind of like a colorful storybook look to it. But what's really cool is each player has their own little Choose Your Own Adventure book. So you follow along. And then at certain points, certain characters will have to say your character will get they'll be a little prompt and you'll get your line. So you say your line and like based on things that happen you get to interact as your character. I love to recommend stuff like that to readers because it's not necessarily like a book focused. It's not necessarily like a game with a theme of books, but it's a game that I think people who enjoy reading will really love.

Kaytee Cobb 58:47

Right? I love it. I love it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 58:50

Those are good recommendations. Alright, so now we are going to visit the fountain and at the fountain we get to make whatever bookish wish that we want to make. So Kaytee, do you want to lead us off?

Kaytee Cobb 59:03

Yes, mine actually plays into a little bit of a theme that we talked about this week. So I'm going to wish that everyone looking for comfort reads right now would read A Psalm for the Wild Built by Becky Chambers. So we're getting lots of posts looking for comforting reads. It's like the transition and seasons three years into a pandemic. It's book hangovers from people reading the Fourth Wing. It's a vibe. So pick up the Monk and Robot series by Becky Chambers starting with A Psalm for the Wild Built. Our monk here is a non binary tea monk named Dex who travels through the world with a small tea wagon, serving tea to the people of Panga. There's no technology in this future world because robots have become sentient and gone off into the wilderness to live their best lives without humans. Dex's life is u ended when they meet the robot called Mosschap, who has decided to journey to humans in order to ask the question, what do people need? Sometimes it's as simple as a fix on their bikes, flat

tire, some times it's as profound as connection and community. This book is a warm hug. It's a cup of tea, next to a crackling fire. It's conversations and friends long into the night. And it's like coming home after a trip and like smelling your house and getting into your bed for the first time after you've been away for a while. So now, you can go directly from Psalm for the Wild Built to A Prayer for the Crown Shy because it's duology and you can live your best cozy sci fi life whenever you need this little perfect warm hug by Becky Chambers.

Jaysen Headley 1:00:33

I love those books. It's so good.

Kaytee Cobb 1:00:36

So good. I love them, too.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:00:38

All right, Jaysen, what is your bookish wish,

Jaysen Headley 1:00:41

This may already have come true by the time this gets posted, because I don't know how long how far in advance these are recorded. But I am going next weekend to Booknet Fest, which is a very, very small little book festival here in Florida. They've been off for the past couple of years because the pandemic is their first year coming back and is organized by Mari and Sam, who are two pretty big book talkers and booktubers. That'll be my first time ever going. And my wish is just that it goes really well, that everybody has a good time because it's a festival that's really it's not author focused. It's not like oh, we get a bunch of authors and you do signings up, it's very much about the community. So the panels have to do with everything from like book discourse to getting wrecked book recommendations, like the hub people on stage, giving you recommendations based on what you're looking for. I'm gonna be on a panel about cozy reads, I'm gonna be on a panel about how to be yourself when you're creating content. It's very much a festival that's aimed at the book online community and like bringing them together in a really special way. So I just hope it goes. Well. That's my wish is that everybody that goes has a wonderful time, and that it's just a wonderful convention that leads to many more afterwards.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:01:46

I want to go. Yeah, that sounds great. That sounds perfect. Well, we will join you in hoping that that goes really, really well. And it's a ton of fun, too. All right. Well, I have a wish that is to get a random question answered. Because I just got to know the answer to this. And then I have another wish. So Jaysen, when you do a lot of your videos, you have your bookshelves behind you, right? Yes. And one of the books that is very close to the back behind your head a lot of the time is one of my favorite books of all time favorite. And that is Scythe. Oh, yeah. Okay. My question is, and and it is troubling how many times I've asked this in my own head, do you own all the books in the series? Or do you just own Scythe?

Jaysen Headley 1:02:27

So now I do own all the books in the series. At for a long time, I just owned Scythe And then I finally read Scythe a little over a month ago, and then I read the second book, Thunderhead. And I haven't read The Toll yet, though, I'll probably read it in July, it might be one of the first things I read in July. And then a friend of mine just gave me a copy of Gleaning. So I now do have the entire series. It's just that the other books haven't made it onto the shelf just

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:02:53

to this is now we've arrived at the crux of my question, you have your books color coded? Yeah. How are you going to shelve the other books in the series? Are they not going to be next to each other?

Jaysen Headley 1:03:06

Oh, I don't know. I have to figure that out. When I can see, sometimes what I do, what I'll do in that case, is I'll try and put them on the very end, so that I can put there Yeah, and then you don't you don't necessarily see them the mess up. The problem is that I'm starting to get away from the color coding because what started as one square of my little bookshelf is now going to end up being a whole shelf eventually, which is going to be Discworld books. So every time I read one I added to the shelf, but we've officially officially hit the cap on one of my squares. So it's going to just keep expanding. And that may mess up my whole my whole system. So we'll see. All right,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:03:44

so maybe at that point, you could shelve the whole series together, even though they're different colors.

Jaysen Headley 1:03:49

Yeah, maybe we'll see.

Kaytee Cobb 1:03:50

Okay, I'm gonna have to send you a video of my Scythe special editions, because I do shove them together, but they're gorgeous. They're from Fairyloot and they have the sprayed edges and like yeah,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:04:01

they're so pretty well, I'm finally picking up The Toll because I've been saving it for a really long time because I just haven't went like six years. Yeah, so I I'm finally picking it up. So that's another part of the reason why this series is front of mind for me. My wish.

Kaytee Cobb 1:04:16

What's your wish?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:04:17

My wish is that everyone would go right now and go to either Instagram or book talk and follow Jaysen. Ezeekat is E Z E E K A T. It's going to be in the show notes. But you know that you're thinking about it. Just go do it right now. He's not joking. He's got almost 656,000 followers on Tiktok this guy is the real deal, you guys so just while you're thinking about it, go hit follow go hit subscribe. You will be so happy that you did. So those are our wishes. Ping splash.

Kaytee Cobb 1:04:49

That's a follow on to the wish that I made in Episode 39 of season five which was to go follow you and and to harass you, which is how this whole episode happened. and also if you wanted to tell him that he would be great on currently reading that would be fun. And it was less than 24 hours later that you were like, Okay, I guess I'll come on.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:05:10

We're not joking around with our wishes. They're they're really, really early. 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 1:05:23

and you can find me Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks on Instagram. Jaysen, where's your favorite place for people to connect with you?

Jaysen Headley 1:05:30

Oh, I would say tiktok and Instagram which is @ezeekat but I'm pretty much everywhere at this point. So you can probably find me somewhere but yeah, tiktok and Instagram are where I post the most every single day.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:05:41

All right, 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 them can be found on our website at currentlyreadingpodcast.com.

Kaytee Cobb 1:05:52

You can also follow the show after you follow @ezeekat on Instagram or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:06:00

And if you want more of this kind of content, of course, you can become a bookish friend. Join 2000 other bookish friends on Patreon and keep the big show completely ad free. You can also rate and review us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. Every one of those things helps us to find our perfect audience

Kaytee Cobb 1:06:20

and our perfect guests. Thanks for doing that y'all bookish friends are the best friends.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:06:24

Alright, until next week, may your coffee be hot

Kaytee Cobb 1:06:27

and your book be unputdownable.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:06:29

Happy reading.

Kaytee Cobb 1:06:30

Happy reading.

Jaysen Headley 1:06:31

Happy reading