



# Season 3, Episode 15 - A Guest Current Read + Casting Actors into Books

Monday, November 9, 2020 • 48:57

**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 read recently. And as you already know, we don't shy away from those strong opinions. So get ready.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:24

We are light on the chit-chat, heavy on the book talk, and our descriptions will always be spoiler-free. 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 I think libraries are just about the best places in the world.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:43

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And Meredith can get me to read almost anything. This is episode number 15 of season three, and we're so glad you're here. Meredith, I feel like you've been bossing my reading lately.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:56

I've read a lot of things that you and Mindy liked, too. So yeah, it's kind of a little circle thing that we have going on. It's been fun. Alright, so before we get too far into this, a little bit of housekeeping, so it is the second week of the month, which means we get to take out advertising space on our own show. Because you know, we only have one paid advertiser, we want to keep it that way. So this week, we're gonna do our own ad. Kaytee, we want to talk about why some of our listeners have chosen to become supporters of the show who we call Bookish Friends. And this is of course, through Patreon. What do you have for us this week as to what one of those listeners said?

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:33

Okay, so we did a patron survey and one of our patrons whose name is Kate, not related, I don't just choose friends and Bookish Friends named Kate and Katie and Katherine. But she said, "I love getting to share with the hosts in the Facebook group that I read a book, they recommend it and hear back directly from them. I read Winterhouse on Meredith's suggestion, and seeing her excitement that I liked, it was really wonderful. I don't have many in person bookish friends. So these unexpected moments of bookish joy are my favorite part of being a patron." And I love that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 02:03

Yes, for sure. My favorite part of doing the show is recommending books and then having people tell us when they really liked it, or it was impactful in some way. And the bookish friends group on Facebook is the place at least for me, where I interact most on social media. And so yes, that's, that's very, very fun to be able to have conversations when we liked books. And also sometimes when we don't like books, but it stays. It's just such a great group that even if we disagree about how we felt about a book, it's a great conversation. I love that part of it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:38

Yes, it's always civil. And it turns out our Mighty Networks group is turning out the same way. So this survey was done in August. And we've since introduced a new group for our patrons to be able to connect with us if they're not Facebook-friendly. So that's just another way that people are able to start conversations, create their own bookish friendships, and then again, give us feedback on things that we read. And sometimes it's, "Oh my gosh, I hope Meredith and Kaytee don't hate me because I hated this book. And they loved it." And I love posts like that, too!

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 03:08

Me, too. Exactly. Because, right, the conversation is always so great. And I love that we can just be completely transparent about it. Nobody holds back, just because they know we're going to read it or respond to it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 03:21

Alright, so if anybody wants to join us for five bucks a month, we invite you to become a bookish friend, you can do that at [patreon.com/currentlyreadingpodcast](https://patreon.com/currentlyreadingpodcast) and we would love to have you join us.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 03:31

So later on in the show, we are going to be having a conversation about the way Kaytee and I visualize or maybe don't visualize our reading. So the question came up, when I'm reading a book, Kaytee, when you're reading a book, do we think about what the characters look like? Or the setting? Do we cast characters in our minds from like actresses or actors? So we're going to have a conversation about what that looks like, later on in the show. But first, let's talk about our bookish moments of the week. Kaytee, what do you have for us this week?

**Kaytee Cobb** 04:04

Okay, my bookish moment of the week is going to play out later on in the show today, because I got to record a segment for today's show with one of our younger bookish friends, Esther, who is one of Mindy's daughters. She got to read a galley of a book and then I read it as well. And we're going to talk about it as a current read, but it was just so fun to sit down with 15 year old Esther, and kind of guide her through what does reviewing publicly look like? And how to give a book description with no spoilers and like kind of bring up the next generation of readers and reviewers. It was just really delightful for me, so I had a great time sitting down with Esther to record that. I can't wait for that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:44

I absolutely adore Esther, she is so smart. And she's got such personality. I'm interested to see what she thought about this particular book, too.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:54

Okay. All right. Well, my bookish moment of the week is not necessarily the happiest thing in the world. It's sort of bittersweet. For some reason, in the middle of the week, this last week, well not for some reason I was having a back and forth with my fantastic library and my librarian, who was always so awesome to get me any of the books that I asked for. And they just, it's just the best library. And I just had this moment where I missed my library so much because it's been closed, obviously since March as it should be. But we've had curbside delivery, curbside pickup, available for months now, which is so much better than nothing. It's really a great system, and they have it very streamlined. But I miss being able to just go to the library and browse the shelves and I miss those books that you find serendipitously. I miss Jackson being able to be in the library, because it's, it's one thing for me to put in hold for myself, like I have a good handle on what I want to read what's coming out and all that good stuff. But for Jackson, a huge amount of his reading for pleasure has come from him being able to just pick something off the shelves. And so, you know, I obviously, I know why we still are in the the place where we are. And if we need to honor that safety, that's the most important thing. I just know that when all of this is over, and it's safe for the library to reopen again, I will be really, really, really happy because I missed the books. I missed the people. I just missed the kind of Saturday afternoon tradition of doing it. So I know we all feel that way. And we'll all look forward to that.

**Kaytee Cobb** 06:31

Yes, me too. Same, same.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 06:33

Alright, so let's talk about some of our current reads. What were you reading this week?

**Kaytee Cobb** 06:40

Okay, my first read this week was actually a gift from my aunt who sent me a book written written by the friend of a friend. So she doesn't know this person directly, but she sent me 96 Miles by Laura esplin. So I've never met this person before. I've never met my aunt's friend before. But she was like, Kaytee, this seems like something that you and especially your kids might enjoy.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:02

So this is middle grade. But it's kind of Apocalypse-Dystopia middle grade, which I didn't know I needed. I definitely needed it. It's awesome. So we've got a few main characters. And the the two boys that we're centering our story on are named John and Stew Lockwood. Their dad, Mr. Lockwood is a prepper. And everybody in their tiny town in Nevada knows that he's a prepper. So when the power goes out, and then stays out, and then stays out, the town starts trying to pool their resources, trying to figure out who has what, what's going on around the town, how are we going to keep ourselves, you know, from starving, or whatever. And the catch here is that their dad, Mr. Lockwood, went out of town, right before this power outage happened. So they have neighbors just down the road, they go over there and spend the night each night. But during the day, they're allowed to play Xbox and whatever,

because it's the Nevada summer, and the oldest child is 13 or so. I'm not saying I would choose those for my own children. But that's what happens in this family. So he goes out of town, the power goes out, they start going to the neighbor's house, and they realize the power is not coming back on. Eventually, of course, an inciting incident happens, because people know that they have all these supplies. And these kids have to start walking. So their friends live 96 miles away through the Nevada desert. And they have to make it within three days. And of course, there's a reveal about why this three-day timeline is on there. But it's very important that they get to this other ranch within three days. So this book, made me want to go buy all the things and become a prepper. I became totally terrified, but like something awful is gonna happen. And I need to have supplies on hand for the apocalypse. That's what's gonna happen when you read this book. Just know that going in. Also, don't tell anybody that you have all the supplies. That's not going to work.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:59

Right. You want to be a secret prepper. That seems important.

**Kaytee Cobb** 09:02

Yeah. Don't be posting on Instagram about your stash, you guys, because when the apocalypse happens, people will come get it. You totally feel for these kids. You want to make sure that everything works out well for them. For the first two thirds of the book, roughly. There is a lot of walking in the Nevada desert. This book, with the exception of the flashbacks where we're kind of piecing together what all happened to their stash and why they're having to make this trek on their own. Those are very action packed and pretty exciting. But when they're walking through the desert, it's about as boring as walking through the desert. Like you're not. You're kind of like okay, well. Now we're setting up camp again, I guess. Are we gonna make it? I don't know, did we walk all 32 miles today. When we get to that last third of the book, things pick up really quickly. Really exciting. I definitely set it on my own kids shelves when I finished. I think it's going to be great for my 10-year-old. But just know that going in even as a read aloud that This book for a while is going to feel like something's got to start to happen, right? Something's going to go on with this kid. It did do a great job making me feel like I was in the Nevada desert. I was actually walking, I needed to prepare for my own emergencies in the future. So she did a great job with setting she did a great job with her characters. Just the pacing of the novel had me yawning every once in a while, wondering when we were going to get to the good stuff. So that was 96 Miles by Laura Esplin.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:30

My first read this week is a difficult one to set up and you will immediately know why. I read Malorie by Josh Malerman. Okay, so this is the follow up to the smash success, Bird Box, right? And we have talked about Bird Box many times on the show. It is fantastic. It is one of those books that I have recommended to so many people. It is scary. It's a page turner, it's perfect for what it is. What I'm not sure it needed, was a follow up. But I do want to say, so I don't I can't really set up Malorie for you. Because if you haven't read Bird Box I refuse to come anywhere near anything that is going to spoil Bird Box. So what suffice it to say, all right, that blindfolds are the key to survival in this world. There are creatures everywhere around and one glimpse will drive you to horrific violence. And this is horror, you guys. So let's let's be very real about that. Bird Box and Malorie. Malorie is our lead character in both novels. I really can't say much more about the plotline of Malorie, again, without potentially spoiling Bird

Box, which I'm not going to do. But I will say that I that while I don't think that Bird Box needed a follow up.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:59

And you know, this is one of my publishing world pet peeves. I don't understand why people can't just write standalone books anymore. I feel like everything is being pushed into a duology or a trilogy or series of some sort. So so I just think Bird Box could stand on its own. But Malorie, although it was a very different kind of book was still a really good book, I enjoyed it all the way through. It's not going to be one that I'm going to be rushing to press into everyone's hands, but it because it is much quieter. And I say that in the exact way you think I mean quieter. It is not boring, but it is not a rip-roaring roller coaster ride that bird boxes, it's much more character driven. So what I would say about it is if Bird Box felt too plot-driven, Malorie is going to be the book for you because it's very, very character driven. And you care very much about the characters. And it's not like nothing happens. There's definitely a plotline to follow. But it I just think overall, it's difficult to follow up a book like Bird Box. I wasn't mad at this book, but I think there was a tremendous amount of pressure to follow up a book like Bird Box. And so this one was kind of by its very definition, a little bit of a whomp, but again, I didn't hate it, I wasn't mad at it, and I thought it was well written, just not at all like Bird Box. So that's Malorie by Josh Malerman.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:27

Okay, so for my next read, we're going to go over to my conversation with Esther today, and learn about Teen Killers Club by Lily Sparks.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:37

Hi, Esther, I'm so excited to record with you today.

**Esther Brouse** 13:41

Me, too.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:42

So we have something special planned. Currently Reading was contacted by an author who wanted to know if we were interested in a galley of her new release. And I read the email and I knew it was perfect for my friend, Esther. So we got it sent to your house instead. And today, you're going to tell us a little about it. Why don't you set up this book for us?

**Esther Brouse** 14:01

Okay, well, it's called Teen Killers Club. And it's by Lily Sparks. And it's interesting book,

**Kaytee Cobb** 14:11

Give us a little bit of the storyline. How does it get started?

**Esther Brouse** 14:15

Okay, well, it starts with a 17-year-old girl named Signal who is in prison because everybody thinks she murdered her best friend. But then somebody approaches her and is like, "hey, do you want to join this

new program so that you're not in prison forever? "And of course she says yes. Because who wouldn't? Who would want to be in prison forever?

**Kaytee Cobb** 14:38

Correct.

**Esther Brouse** 14:39

And so she goes. And her and another Class A, which is a specific type of person that's in prison. They're normally psychopaths or incredibly manipulative people. And so her and another class A whose name is Nobody go to camp of sorts where there are other Class As that are trying to be part of this program. And on the first day, she learns that the program is that they're going to teach you how to kill people how to be an assassin for the government, they all train and somebody at the camp, Eric is trying to help her prove her innocence. Although Eric's one of my least favorite characters,

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:28

Which is fun, because I read it too. And I really liked Eric. So we have a very different opinion about him, don't we?

**Esther Brouse** 15:34

Yeah.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:35

So and we also have two adults at the camp who are kind of facilitating these learning experiences, including like the very first one, they have to learn how to hide a body.

**Esther Brouse** 15:45

Yeah, that's the first lesson.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:47

So this book has some trigger warnings. Do you know what trigger warnings are, Esther?

**Esther Brouse** 15:52

Yeah, it means it might trigger people who have seen some interesting stuff, or have been traumatized by not fun circumstances.

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:01

Yes. Not-fun circumstances. Correct. And so this book is pretty violent, and a little bit gory, or a lotta bit gory. It's, I mean, they're, they're learning how to kill people. They're learning how to kill hypothetically bad people, right? Because it's the dead bodies that they're trying to hide. And they're learning how to be discreet about it. But it's kind of Gosh, to me, it kind of felt like Minority Report. Have you ever watched that?

**Esther Brouse** 16:27

No, I have not.

**Kaytee Cobb** 16:28

Okay, so that's like a near-future thing where they can tell somebody's going to kill someone before they actually do. So these like they're called pre-cogs can see into the future, and they will send the police out before the murder actually takes place. And that's kind of this Class A thing, right? They're taking this personality test, sort of collecting all their data, and putting everybody into these classes of people. And Class As are psychopaths and sociopaths.

**Esther Brouse** 16:56

Yeah, it's it's a really fun book. It is a fun book.

**Kaytee Cobb** 17:00

I'm really glad that you got to read it. So tell us what you thought. What's your overall impression of this book? Would you recommend it to others? Did you hug it to your chest when you were done? What do you think?

**Esther Brouse** 17:09

I would definitely recommend it to others because it is really well written. It has a good plot and storyline. And it all ties together well, at the end. I could tell what was going to happen at the end before it happened because I read a lot of books that have plots like this, except not like this because this is intense. But it was a really fun book. And I think everybody who likes this sort of thing should read it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 17:36

Okay. Would you say this is a good entry for kids who are going to grow up to be like Meredith? Like totally into serial killers and creepy spooky stuff?

**Esther Brouse** 17:46

Yes, absolutely. 1,000%

**Kaytee Cobb** 17:49

All right. So any of you that have a pre-Meredith teenager that loves to be creeped out and loves like the ickiness of her horror and mystery, love it, this is a great option for them. Anything else you want to say about this book, Esther?

**Esther Brouse** 18:05

It has a lot of really well written characters and good character development for most everybody in this story. Except for Eric because he sucks. But um, but yeah, it's it's a good book, and I think it was well written. And Lily Sparks really did great on that.

**Kaytee Cobb** 18:23

Excellent. I am so excited for other people to get their hands on it. This episode is releasing on November 9, and the release date for this book is November 10. So you still have that last second to get a pre order if it sounds like a good fit for you. Or another kiddo in your life. Kiddo, meaning older teen, right? We don't want to hand this to a 12 year old.



**Esther Brouse** 18:44

No kids? No.

**Kaytee Cobb** 18:46

No kids. All right. Well, thanks, Esther. Thanks for visiting us on Currently Reading.

**Esther Brouse** 18:50

No problem.

**Kaytee Cobb** 18:51

So if you guys want any more of Esther, we actually recorded with her on our third Covideo this summer. So that's the one with all the kids. We had six of our 15 kids come on and record with us and Esther was one of those quote-unquote, kids. She turned 15 right after that. So that's where this perspective is coming from. And you can totally go and get a little more of Esther if you want to check that out. I'll put the link in the show notes. All right. Thanks for visiting Esther. Have a great day.

**Esther Brouse** 19:19

You too.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:22

That book definitely sounds like one that I would like now and I would have for sure liked it when I was 15 years old.

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:29

Yes. I knew as soon as Esther lit up talking about it. I was like this is totally a Meredith book. Because you two are such book twins in this specific area of your reading life.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:39

Yes. Yes. That sounds like a really, really good I'm gonna have to get my hands on that one. Okay. All right. So my second book, also murderful. So we're keeping with the theme here, although not quite so gory. This one I read *The Turn of the Key* by Ruth Ware. And I really have to say I like Ruth Ware a lot. She is not 100% slam dunk for me all the time I have read a couple of hers that I thought were kind of stinkers. But for the most part, if I'm in the right mood, she can often just kind of be a perfect kind of read for me. And that's where this particular book slots. It was just the right time, the right weather, the right season. I liked it a lot.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 20:18

So here's our setup with *The Turn of the Key*. So, when our lead character Rowan Cain, finds this particular ad in the newspaper, it sounds too good to be true. A live-in nannying post with a huge really outsized salary. And when she arrived at the house, which is called Heatherbrae house, she falls in love with the luxurious house. It's got all these smart home elements to it. She falls in love with the setting. We're in the beautiful Scottish Highlands and the picture-perfect family. It's all too good to be true. So because we're in a Ruth Ware novel, we know it's about to go horribly awry. Perfect as it



seems, there is pretty quickly in this book, a ton of creepy stuff happening. There's the constant and really, really creepy surveillance from the home's cameras, and there are a lot of them. There's malfunctioning technology that wakes people up with booming music, which is really nerve-jangling. There's the girls, one of whom is extraordinarily creepy. And then there's the fact that Rowan gets left very quickly alone with the children for a huge long period of time with no adults around at all except for the handyman. We don't exactly know, is he fantastic and romantic or easy, creepy AF. So what Rowan can't know is that she's stepping into something that is so much worse that it seems than it seems. And that it will end up with a dead child. And with Rowan herself in prison awaiting trial for murder.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 22:02

This again, I read this book at the perfect time I read this book in in, you know this The weather was getting cooler, it was getting cloudy, you just want to be under a blanket. This is not horror. It's just sort of creepy mystery. There's enough kind of jump-scares in it that it kept me interested the entire time. I do have to say you guys know how I feel about the thing sounded too good to be true. But I proceeded anyway, despite multiple red flags trope, right? This is not my favorite trope, but a lot of thrillers need us to just suspend our disbelief. And in this case, that's definitely true. Also, I don't like the trope of an unreliable narrator. And that's what we have here. So it is really an interesting trick then that despite those two things, Ruth Ware in this novel had me really interested the entire way through instead of annoyed. So I ended up liking this book quite a bit. It's not perfect, but it was perfect for when I was reading it. I burned through it. I literally I read it in a day and a half total. And I do know that this book is super polarizing, though, because when I posted about on Instagram, I got a ton of comments and they were I literally counted, split 50-50. Half the people said they absolutely loved it. Half the people said they wanted to throw it against the wall. I stand by this recommendation as a solid, creepy fall read. But I do know that it is not for absolutely everyone, but it was for me. So that's The Turn of the Key by Ruth ware.

**Kaytee Cobb** 23:46

Yes, I think I read this about a year ago. And I still think of some elements from it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 23:52

All right, what was your next book?

**Kaytee Cobb** 23:54

Okay, my last book this week is called Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body by Rebecca Taussig. This one came highly recommended to me by our bookish friend Erin, and you can find her at @craftyerinw on Instagram. She's a great bookish friend has lots of great recommendations. So she brought this to the table as one of her favorite books that she read, I think in September, and I had to get my hands on it right away. This is a memoir, written and essays and it's snarky, and vulnerable and open. And that to me those those are the three things that I think make for the best memoirs. I want all three of those things in every memoir I read. So Rebecca became disabled at a very young age. And as part of a large family who made nearly no accommodations for her. They didn't treat her differently. They didn't pity her. They didn't build wheelchair ramps around their house. They just kind of said, Well, this is how you are now and you're still part of our family and you're expected to contribute in all the same ways. And, of course, there's good and bad things about both of

those but she brings us into her story really vulnerably with regard to the way her family responded to her disability. So Rebecca tells us about her childhood, her high school experience her dating life and her love life, which was very interesting to me. And then her work life and she shows us what it means to give grace as well as what it means to kill with kindness.

**Kaytee Cobb** 25:20

And she talks about how there are people who will approach her and basically assume she cannot do anything for herself, even when she's very capable you know, putting her own wheelchair in the back of the car and then loading herself in, there are people are like, "Oh my gosh, don't fall, don't fall, don't fall," and, and how to hit that balance between, I want to be helpful. And I don't, I don't believe you can do this. I think that you're, you know, stepping out of bounds kind of thing. So I just thought this book was so eye-opening. And it felt like even though it felt, you know, quote unquote, important, it also felt like I had a good friend sitting next to me and chatting to me about everything she's kind of dealt with and her life. And I think that's really hard to maintain that balance between like, here's like, some, some hard stuff I've gone through. But let's sit down and talk about it over over tea, or over coffee or over a drink. She is saucy, and that she throws plenty of F bombs in here. So this isn't necessarily something you want to like, listen to on, like your family car trip. But she's also just really like forthright. And she's an excellent writer. So it was really powerful. And I'm trying to work out my nerve to contact her. Because you would think after two years of doing the podcast that I would no longer be starstruck by authors. But y'all it still happens. I still get like, I'm a little nervous about this, but would you be interested in minisode. So we'll see if that happens. Wish me good luck. But I just I would love to hear more and more from her. Totally, highly recommend this five star read and I also highly recommend peeping her adorable baby on Instagram. She is at @sitting\_pretty over there. And the book is *Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body* by Rebecca Taussig.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 27:06

Alright, so my, my third book, another murderful when in fact, this one is one that I initially talked about on my the show that I do as a part of our bonus content for our patrons called All Things Murderful with Meredith. I originally talked about it there because I had just read it and I was so excited. And so this one was recommended to me by Jen Hayden, who's at @jensbookshelf on Instagram. And she said that this was her favorite kind of scary, creepy book of all time, and she just really felt like it didn't get enough press. And she's absolutely right. This one is fantastic.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 27:46

This is *Relic* by Doug Preston and Lincoln child. I absolutely loved this book. Okay, here's the setup. Just days before a massive exhibition opens at the popular New York Museum of Natural History, visitors are being savagely murdered in the museum's dark hallways, and its secret rooms and the museum. And all of its kind of accompanying spaces are massive, like ginormous city blocks. Kind of our behind the scenes. People are being savagely murdered back there. Autopsies indicate that the killer cannot be human. But the museum's directors plan to go ahead with a big bash that they've been concocting to celebrate the new exhibition in spite of the fact that people are being murdered in the museum. Because you know when you have a big party coming up you really can't just cancel it willy nilly. Thank god they didn't for our story!

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 28:48

Museum researcher our lead character Margo Green has to find out who or what is doing the killing. But Can she do it in time to stop a massacre at said big bash? You got to read relic you guys. I don't normally use this word to describe my reading but this book was exciting. I was excited the entire way through. Like kid kid in a candy store. Don't close your eyes because you might miss something kind of excited. I was so excited by what was I was so interested in what was happening but also I love that it was giving me Jurassic Park vibes it was giving me Michael Creighton vibes, right? So that perfect intersection. Sometimes I get in just the mood where I want a mixture of science, really smart science, and then action. And being able to do those two things without having the pacing struggle is really masterful, and these authors have done it. This is a series and so our other lead character is Agent Pendergrast. And he is a fantastic he's an FBI agent, and he is a fantastic lead character. He gives me all the Sherlock kind vibes, he's really really smart. He knows something about every single thing. He's like, smarter than everyone in the room. But he's also a good guy. So he comes in to help solve these murders that are happening. And it's so, so good.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 30:18

This was just a wild ride from start to finish. And I liked the Agent Pendergrast character so much that I do think I'm going to try to read further in the series, because I just want to know more about him. And I would just want to spend more time with him on the page. So this was relic by Douglas Preston and Lincoln child, and I highly recommend it. It's a good one.

**Kaytee Cobb** 30:40

I love the way you lit up talking about that. And we did say right at the top where I said that Meredith can get me to read almost anything. That's what sounds like it's that's what's happening here. So hold placed.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 30:50

I will tell you that Johnny's reading it right now. And he is completely sucked in by it. He was at the beginning, he was sort of like, which is what he often does, especially when the book is kind of a, you know, a sizable, and this is a sizable book. And I actually read it in mass market paperback, which I can't even remember the last time I had read a mass market paperback, but I kind of enjoyed the nostalgic feeling of it. So he's reading my copy of it. I bought like \$1 I think it was like \$1 \$1 USD. So he's reading that. And by the time he got like, 20 pages in he was like, oh, man, that book is a packed wallet. So he's, he's about two thirds of the way through it now. And he's really flying fast. So yeah, it's a good one.

**Kaytee Cobb** 31:33

Oh, that sounds so fun.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 31:34

I love it. All right. So that actually leads pretty well into our deep dive today. Because I wanted to have a little conversation mostly out of pure curiosity. Kaytee, I was thinking one day, I was listening to I think this was The Popcast, and you know, they often are talking about when they read a book, they'll often talk about how they've kind of, in their mind cast characters from like actors and actresses to play the

characters in their minds just as they're reading. And I thought to myself, I don't ever do that. I never ever think about actors and actresses, as it has to do with a book that I'm reading. And furthermore, as I started really thinking about it, I realized, I'm not sure that I actually even really picture the people in my mind. I'm so not visual as a person. I'm I'm not, I'm an I'm an auditory learner almost completely. I am completely not visual, I have a really hard time. In fact, like, imagine a point in space. Like when you're taking geometry. I was like, I don't I'm sorry, I can't do that. I can't imagine a point in space.

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:48

Any point in space?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:51

Yeah, it's impossible for me. I also I get lost super easily. I can't follow a map and I get lost very, very easily. If I obviously I can picture characters in my mind. Um, you know, I have the ability to do that. But I just realized, as I'm reading, I'm not sure that I'm forming that fully, in my mind. So what about you? How do you visualize when you're reading a book?

**Kaytee Cobb** 33:12

Okay, I have a lot of thoughts about those. But first, I want to go back for a second and pick on you a little longer. So. So you're saying you can picture a character in your mind? So does that mean like when we had our Still Life chat, if people said, Who do you picture playing Armand Gamache, you can look at whatever you have in your head, and you can say, okay, for an actor, I would pick this.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 33:35

Okay, there's a few problems with me answering that question. First of all, in my mind he matches my uncle Paul. Okay. And so just for whatever reason, he is the absolute perfect match. So I there's so many games that get played and all the Louise Penny forums that I follow where they're casting the characters. No, I was like, No, no, it's my Uncle Paul. But I realized when I've read a series, especially like the Three Pines series, when you read book after book after book with the same characters, you're much more likely to begin to create that picture in my mind of a character. But if I'm just reading a one off, like Relic, yeah, so Agent Pendergast, who I was just discussing, I loved that character. I could talk for 10 minutes about what I loved about that character. I couldn't write now, finger gun to my head, I could not tell you what that character looked like. Okay. I don't even know if I certainly don't remember how he was described. And as I was reading it, I obviously read the description. But as I was reading it, I just don't carry that in my mind, because for whatever reason, it has very little impact on me. So do you cast characters when you're reading a book? And is it different when you're reading a book versus an audiobook?

**Kaytee Cobb** 34:48

I didn't even think about that differentiation. But the first part of this question, do I cast characters while I'm reading a book, I usually do start to form a mental picture of somebody in my head. However, my lack of TV and movie knowledge means that it's almost never an actor. It's like a hazy image of someone of a certain body type and shade. You know, and like certain features, but not crystal clear. This is Patrick Dempsey, because I can only name Patrick Dempsey, because I used to watch Grey's Anatomy, you know, like, I don't have enough actors and actresses slotted into names in my head to be

able to do that to pull like one person's face and say, Oh, my gosh, this person exactly matches who I was picturing while I read this book. So that's its own. Like, the only TV I've been watching is British reality competition shows. And none of those people are in any of the books I read, sadly. Right.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 35:49

Right. So when you so then you don't cast an actor or an actress, but you, you have kind of a hazy idea. Do you? Is that that image in your mind clear as you go on? Or is it something that means a lot to you? or How much do you focus on that part of it?

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:05

So I wouldn't say it's super clear as I go along. Unless it's somebody that I'm crushing on. Like Jamie from Outlander, I had a very clear image of what Jamie was gonna look like and it wasn't Sam Heughan.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:17

It's funny that you say that, because probably the only character that I would say I had a very clear idea about was Jamie from Outlander.

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:26

So there you go. There you go. Yeah. So I just like I don't, I don't tend to draw a very clear image of them in my mind, which is why when, when people have very strong opinions about movie casting, Oh, my gosh, I can't believe they put such and such in for this person. I'm like, okay, I don't.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:45

Right, exactly.

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:46

It works well enough with whatever I pictured, you know, what I have been thinking on and creating more in my head lately. And this is because of my own social justice racism journey that I've been on over the past few years, is, and I'm not going to get preachy about this, is that I tried to start from the very beginning of a book, when I first made a character, I try and paint them, not like me. So I'm trying to un-whitewash my own visual representation of whichever character until I'm proven otherwise. So that means I could be thinking of this person with any number of hues of skin, not like mine, until they say, oh, but she also had brown hair and green eyes. And actually, Kaytee, she looked a lot like here with her with her creamy skin, or whatever. And that's when I start to like, pull it back towards my own viewpoint, and my own lens of what I'm seeing these things through. But I have been really consciously trying to kind of undo that bias in my own head. Because of conversations, a lot of times that we've had in the bookish friends group as well, where people are like, when you first picture a character in a book, who do you see when they give you that very first outline of a person? And her name is Rebecca, like, who do you see? And, and I think it's important for us to try and even if it's not an author of color, or whatever, to try and open our eyes a little more to the fact that there are plenty of times that you cannot picture a person of color in a character because of how blatantly white so many people are in books. So that's my own little like, side tangent on this picturing of characters thing where I'm trying to really consciously say, Okay, let's pretend not everybody, in every book is white. Let's just try that every once.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:40

Well. Yeah. And I think that's, I think that's a great exercise. Yeah. Now, do you find that you're more apt to fully visualize a setting as opposed to a character?

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:53

I do feel like I visualize settings more frequently, which is part of why I love maps and books so much, because it gives me the, the gray outlines of whatever we're looking at. And I can kind of picture where things are in relation to other people. But I also really love maps in general, I'm not a person who gets lost very often. I really know my space in the world. Like I'm spatially aware, I guess. So maps and setting and being able to say, Oh, well, you walked out of the cafe in Three Pines and across the street is the schoolhouse or whatever. Knowing that is really vital to my reading experience, I would say so but you don't have that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 39:36

No, I do and I like maps in books for that same reason. It does help kind of ground me on exactly, you know, the the proximity of certain things. I am much more likely to visualize this the setting and I especially realized that I tend to spend a lot of time visualizing, especially if it's like a home being described for whatever reason. really can't explain it, I tend to really, really concentrate on that, like, what did what color were the walls? What was the? Was it tidy or cluttered? Was it What was the decor, like those kinds of things in homes are something that my brain fixates upon. I'm not, I really really can't explain that. But I will oftentimes come away from the book, and remember much more about a particular either the world itself, or a particular site within the world that we were reading about, as opposed to a character or a specific character. So it's kind of interesting, the way that our the way that our brains work, and I'm really hoping that our listeners will let us know, when we had this conversation, what were you because I'm sure there are people who are talking back to the, to their their car radios right now, like, what were you? What do you think about? Does it change? If you read a book in print versus on audio? Do you like to cast characters, you know, actors and actresses? Or does that kind of ruin it for you? I mean, I actually don't watch a lot of things that are based on books, especially if I've read the book, because I don't want to have that actor or actress in my mind. I want to have the story the way that I kind of designed it in my own mind. So I'm interested to see what other people say about this, too.

**Kaytee Cobb** 41:16

Yeah, I do have one final thought about what you were saying is, I wonder if that's why both of us really love that strong sense of place idea where we're, if the author is really good at really transporting us to whatever location, whether it's like 17th century Scotland, or 20th century France, or whatever it is that being able to see, and smell and feel everything around, you really makes a book feel more vibrant to both of us, because because both of us mentioned, like transportive strong sense of place like this is often part of our reviews, you know.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:54

No, I think absolutely. And that, of course, makes me think about nevermore, and the world in all three of the books of Nevermoor, where they are very highly sensory experiences, not just the world. But



even in that book, many of the characters look different than it normally, right. This is like a fantasy novel. So the characters and the animals look really different than normal. And the way that they're described creates a picture, even in my mind, that has stuck with me. So it's a very sensory and the name, there's rooms that smells certain ways, and it's just a very sensory laden book. And so yes, I do think maybe because those things don't come to me as naturally when it's done really, really well and done strongly, then it sticks with me a lot more.

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:37

Yeah. Yeah, I like that. I'm excited to hear from our listeners about this one, because I know there are going to be people who have very strong opinions.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:46

Right? Let us know how your brain processes these visuals. Okay. Now, let's press some books into readers hands. Kaytee, what do you want to press this week?

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:55

Okay. So, of course, as I was thinking about this book, I started thinking about books that I've read that I want to see that I want to have a visual of because of the deep dive right? So there's a lot of these already on the press list. Like What Alice Forgot, I would really like to see that. Even as like a miniseries on TV and see how other people picture Alice because I don't know what she looks like in my head. I don't think this one is on the press list. But I would really, really love to see the movie, The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead. This book, oh, man, I love this book. So I read this way back in 2016. I still think about it. I still physically press it into people's hands. So I don't know why it's not on the press list. But it's sticking with me. So this would be what I would call Whitehead's breakout hit he had written before this. He's written since then. But this book is the one that really put him on the literary map. So our main character is Cora. She is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia, and her life is terrible. Colson Whitehead does not sugarcoat slavery, if that's what you are looking for here, Gone with the Wind. That's not what you're gonna get. But she meets a new slave on the plantation. His name is Cesar. He has just arrived from Virginia. And through him she learns about the Underground Railroad. This is not the Underground Railroad of your fifth grade history class. You guys this is a literal train and tracks running underground with engineers and conductors that runs beneath the plantations that keep black Americans enslaved. They are tracked by a dogged slave catcher who will not let up in his in his searching for this to these two slaves. The tension does not stop and the journey is all sorts of dangerous in every way. This book is gold is gold and a very visual, very strong sense of place. And these characters are fantastic. There is a movie playing in your head while you read it. And I'd love to see it brought to life on the big screen. It's The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 44:57

Well, I knew as I went into My prep for this episode that I wanted to put another Michael Crichton novel on the press list, because we already have Jurassic Park, I actually pressed Jurassic Park in Episode Two of Season One. So literally in our second episode of the podcast, that's how much I love Jurassic Park. And I love all of Michael Crichton's novels. It's so sad to me that we lost him so early because I feel like we would have gotten any number of other fantastic novels. More than we did. So I went back



and forth. And I really, really went back and forth about which one I wanted to press. I'll probably press some of the others in the future. But the one I went with is my, literally my second favorite Michael Crichton, and that is Timeline. Here's our setup. In an Arizona desert, a man is wandering around in a daze and he's wearing like a brown fabric sort of monk like outfit. And he's speaking words that make absolutely no sense. And within 24 hours, he's dead. And his body is swiftly cremated by his only known associates. halfway around the world, archeologists make a shocking discovery at a medieval site. And then suddenly, they are swept off to the headquarters of a secret multinational corporation that has developed an astounding technology. Now, this group that has been swept off to the corporation is about to get the chance not to just study the past, but to interpret, they can study things and way in ways that they've never been able to study the past before. And industries can spring up that have never existed before because of this technology. But before long, things are about to go very, very wrong.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:49

Oh, I love this book so much. This book has the fun science, it is action packed, and it's got time travel. And it's done really, really well. But I do have to say this is one of those books where you can get a little bit tripped up under the hole. Okay, but wait if you did this and about that, you know, the whole like Star Wars thing or you know, the Terminator thing. So there's a little bit of that you just have to kind of let that piece go just let the story happen. The the scenes that happen in the medieval times are so so interesting. I I love this story. It's got the whole the corporation discovers something amazing and then immediately begins to only think of profit, not safety thing going that Jurassic Park had and I really like that as a as a plotline. So this is great on audio. By the way, I happen to listen to this on a really long drive like to and from a particular destination. And it just made those miles go by like crazy. So I highly recommend it. It's Timeline by Michael Crichton.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:55

That sounds good.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:56

Alright, 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** 48:04

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 48:07

Full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in the episode and timestamps, so you can zoom right to where we talked about it can be found at [currentlyreadingpodcast.com](https://currentlyreadingpodcast.com).

**Kaytee Cobb** 48:17

You can contact us directly at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram, or via email at [currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com).

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 48:24

And if you really want to help us rate and review us on Apple podcasts, but even more importantly, shout us out on social media. That is the very best way for us to find our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 48:36

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 48:44

All right. Until next week, happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 48:46

Happy reading Meredith