



# Season 3, Episode 41: Book Buying and Book Reading Are Two Different Hobbies

Mon, 5/24 • 47:41

**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. We'll discuss our current reads, a bookish deep dive, and then we'll press books into your hands.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:33

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And summer reading is my favorite.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:41

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I will buy all the books I want to, thank you very much. This is episode number 41 of season three. And we're so glad you're here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:52

You know, I just bought myself a new t-shirt that says, "If it's books, it's not hoarding".

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:59

Perfect.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:00

And it's a given like my predilection for tidiness. It's absolutely true. I just went to Homegoods and bought another one of those rolling carts. Johnny was like, Really? Really, because when you bought the last rolling cart that was supposed to be for the overflow books. I'm like, Well, my overflow, overflow, overflow. Alright, so before we get into our episode, we are going to tell you a couple of things. We're going to tell you that later on in the show, our deep dive is going to be about the fact that I think it is true, Kaytee, and I think you agree with me, reading books, and buying books slash organizing your books and your reading, those are two separate hobbies. Oh, this is this. This is the deep dive we're going to get into later on today. Those things are not the same. And they are in some ways, equally enjoyable. Oh, yeah. So we're gonna get in? Yes. That's our deep dive later on today. But before that,

we want to get into just a little bit of podcast business here. Kaytee, what have you got for us today? In business corner

**Kaytee Cobb 02:03**

Special announcement for you guys today. And that is that the the "dark week" is coming up as one of our bookish friends said, which is my favorite thing today. So we do take a summer break. And part of the way that we make that happen, we only take one week off from the show dropping, but we have multiple weeks that we do not have to record the show, we make that happen. Because we have two special episodes at the end of the season that we really want you guys's help with. We have our listener press episode, which is always one of the favorites of the year. And that's when we ask you to make a voice memo on your phone and press a book into our hands. So we need you to put in the title, the author, a spoiler free description, and why you love it in three minutes or less. If you mess up, it's okay, we can edit the audio. Just keep on cruising through and send it to us. And we'll compile those into one of our favorite episodes of the year also, right Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:57**

Yep, absolutely. Oh, absolutely. One of my favorite episodes of the year.

**Kaytee Cobb 03:01**

It's so fun to hear your guys's voices for this. So really, we want those as voice memos, and you can just email them to us at [currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com). The other thing that we need emailed to us is questions for our Ask Us Anything episode. This year, we are going to have all four of us participating in the episode, it'll be our first time trying this with four people. We'll see how it goes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:22**

Thank God though, thank God because who the heck wants to know anything more about us?

**Kaytee Cobb 03:26**

I know, I know. I'm so excited to hear more from Mary and Mindy on that episode. So you can send questions to all four of us, you can you can direct them specifically toward Mary and Mindy. And again, just send those by email. And we need all those goodies by June 1. So if you're listening to this in real time, you have about a week to get that stuff to us. And we're so excited to get it from you.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:48**

We do though give bonus points to people who get sort of get their stuff in early. So if you're a person who likes those mental bonus points, we will give you all the gold stars to get it in early.

**Kaytee Cobb 03:59**

Yes little bookish gold ribbons for you.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:02**

I'm looking forward to those special episodes, we do a lot of the recording kind of back to back. So normally we just record one episode in a day to keep us fresh. But when the episodes are different, like listener press or ask us anything, we can do more than one in a day. And that's how the magic

happens. That gives us like four weeks off from doing the show, but only one dark week. So you manage all that madness. All that magic and I'm so appreciative Kaytee,

**Kaytee Cobb 04:29**

And then we get a summer break just like the rest of you. It's so exciting.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:33**

Okay, good. So, let's go ahead and proceed the way we always do and talk about our bookish moments of the week. What is it for you this week, Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb 04:42**

Okay, my bookish moment this week is I had a whole bunch of people reach out to me this week on Thursday because Amari and the Night Brothers was the Audible Deal of the Day this week. Yeah, and I already owned two copies of Amari and the Night Brothers. I have the US version, The UK version. They're both beautiful. One has sprayed edges, I really needed it in my life. And then I went ahead and bought the audio version. So now I have three copies of it. And of course that's bookish enough. But then my children, Micah, and Levi, my two older ones, have binged it. They have already listened to it through once with their copy of the book, because I let them have my US version. And they started over again, because they loved it so much. So I just, I love that that audio is such a gateway for them that they can then be totally in love with a book the way that I am as well. So three copies. That's exactly what I needed is absolutely my bookish moment of week.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:38**

Yes, I was so happy when I saw that become the audible deal the other day. So okay, so my bookish moment of the week is another well, a special episode of another podcast. You guys have heard us say many times how much we love Sarah's Bookshelves Live Sarah's podcast. I think that if you like Currently Reading the closest podcast to us and our format and the way that we handle things, and our general sort of the kinds of books that we read, and we like, the closest match is Sarah's Bookshelves Live. I happen to also be a really big fan of Sarah personally. I think she's really awesome. She's a great reader, fantastic interviewer bringing this up this week, because into my podcast feed this earlier this week, came one of my favorite shows that she does all year, which is her Summer Reading guide. And so she does an episode. And then she does a really, really nicely done PDF, where she walks you through all different kinds of summer reading from light and frothy, to sort of heavy, gritty, and everything in between. and she organizes it really well. And the thing that I love about it most is that she doesn't just do new books, she does backlist, too. So she does a combination that I think is really, really nice. She just does a great job. The episode is all kinds of fun. So again, this is my plug. If you love Currently Reading and you're like, I'm all caught up with all of your shows. I even went back and listen to the first 50 that you guys released a couple weeks ago, check out Sarah's Bookshelves Live and start with her Summer Reading Guide, which just came out on the 12th of May.

**Kaytee Cobb 07:19**

Yes, we are so grateful for people like Sarah who are willing to do that work and put together a summer reading guide so that we don't have to.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:27

We do not do that. Because you know what? We don't do it because there're already multiple people who are doing it really well like Sarah. And so I just feel like why would we even spend our time trying to get to approach that greatness?

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:40

Exactly.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:42

We have other things. We have other greatness to approach Kaytee. Alright,

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:45

let's do that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:46

Nobody talks about current reads better than we do. Absolutely no one.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:50

Okay, my first read this week is *Here Comes the Sun* by Nicole Dennis-Benn. This novel takes you straight to the island of Jamaica. So if you have been wishing you could travel somewhere, and Jamaica is on your list, pick this one up. Plopped right into the Caribbean Sea. We have two main characters Margot and Thandi; sisters who are far apart in age but care deeply for each other. And I love a sister storyline. I just want to say that right now. Margot works at a swanky resort. Because it's Jamaica, there's lots of people that come there to go to all inclusive and that kind of thing, right? You can picture this resort in your head. We know from the very beginning of the book that she is not only hiding her sexuality and love of women from everyone, but she's also working to bring in money after hours by selling herself so that she can send Thandi to school, because her school is very expensive. So this is like she's stuck in that tension between her own desire plus her desire to make sure her sister does not have the same future that Margot ended up with. It is dark and gritty. But it's this incredible story about sisters and their mom, and what we're willing to do to make a better life for the people that we love. It's a novel so of course we know that secrets will out. And the way that this family tries to make it through the tumult is really touching. It's pretty character driven. But the narration is excellent on audio. So if you're looking for a reading challenge pick, it makes quite a few categories. You've got LGBT characters, you've got an own voices author, you've got Caribbean lit, it's excellent. I wanted to be sure to bring it to our listeners attention, especially for that reason. And since Jamaica is often viewed as a paradise for many people traveling abroad, I really loved this book because we got to look into the other side of the island, the inhabitants and the people who keep it running and keep it luxurious and paradisaical for the rest of us right. To me it felt a little bit like *The Girl with the Louding Voice* which you know, I loved by Abi Dare, but these characters were not quite as endearing as Adunni was in that story, and it was a bit rougher around the edges overall. So, if that one felt a little too wrapped up tidily in a bow, or sweetly saccharin to any of our listeners, this might be a good alternative for them. It's *Here Comes the Sun* by Nicole Dennis-Benn.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:13

All right, Kaytee, I am so excited to talk about this book with you. I have been just absolutely looking forward to talking about this book with you in particular, but I think so many of our listeners are going to be excited about it, then maybe you've heard of it. I had never heard of this book. And it was one of those where I was like, Where has this been in my life. It's a book called When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead. It's middle grade. Do you know this book,

**Kaytee Cobb** 10:38

Tell me all about it. I'm so excited to hear about it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:39

This is middle grade. All right. And I'm going to be very, very careful with how I set this book up. Because you can easily kind of give away more. And this is the kind of book that you just need to start reading. You just you barely even need that you just need to trust me and start reading. If you love great middle grade, just grab this, but I'm going to give you a little bit of setup. Alright, shortly after having a fallout with her best friend or lead character, sixth grader Miranda, starts receiving mysterious notes. The notes tell her that she must write a letter, and that she can't share the details of the writing of this letter with absolutely anyone. So she's sort of given this mission to do the specific thing and told you absolutely can't tell anyone what I'm having you do. Now, it would be easy to ignore messages that are this strange, except for the fact that whoever is leaving, or these messages and sort of giving her this thing to do, has the uncanny ability to predict the future. And if that's the case, then Miranda has a really big problem. Because the notes tell her that someone is going to die, and that she might be too late to stop it. Oh, my gosh, you guys. Alright, this book... Yes, it but it's not dark, but just that just trust me. All right. This book has a sweet, true to life friendship dynamic, with enough drama to make me really cringe about what it felt like to be a sixth grader. It has a puzzle that was so interesting. I was literally muttering out loud trying to figure it out. And it has a structure that is going to make you want to read this book with a friend. You don't want to read this book alone. This is a fantastic buddy read, you are going to want to have someone to talk about it with. Alright. The reason this book got on my radar most recently is that Roxanna had written to who do I do my buddy reading with, She had read it. And she kept saying, Meredith, I'm reading this book, I can't really tell you very much about it because anything I say sounds so weird. But I need you to read it. It's like, it's totally amazing. We once we both read it, and she's right, it defies description. Once we both read it, we realized that the most apt description is to say it is Harriet the Spy, meets 11/22/63. without all the graphic elements,

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:16

I need it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 13:17

This book was so interesting in a puzzly way that it scratched the itch that The Westing Game, I always wanted to scratch the itch, and it never has. This book really, really did it for me. It's It's interesting the entire way. And yes, the puzzle part of it is very, very interesting. But even more so it is a fantastic work of truly great middle grade literature. So I'm talking about 6 7 8, that period of time, those grades, like that period of time, it holds up a mirror to the experience of being 12 years old in a way that is just so perfectly descriptive of what it actually feels like to live that period of your life. Roxanna commented that

it's a book that really honors the experience of being 12 years old, that it shows rather than tells what it feels like to be at that stage of life. And the author doesn't take time over explaining anything or making everything too sweet. She gives her characters and their actions, the ability to breathe on the page. And I think that's such a great description. Roxanna is so good at talking about books. So this book definitely has an interesting mystery. But don't go into it thinking that that's the only reason to read it. If you do, I think you'll be distracted by how slowly the mystery unfurls and you might miss what's really, really great about the story. Now this one won a Newbery award, which makes total sense to me. When I was a kid. I never wanted to read the Newbery award winners because I always felt like they were going to be really slow and boring, but as an adult, this one was a winner on every level, and I can totally see why it was given that amazing prize of children's literature. I have been thinking about this one for the month and a half since I read it. I absolutely love it. And Kaytee, I really, really want you to read it. This is *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:24

I'm already going through my list of friends trying to decide who I'm going to get to buddy read with me. I'm excited. I'm excited to pick it up. Perfect. Okay, my next read is a little bit strange, a little bit weird, but I'm excited to talk about it. So it's *Everything Sad is Untrue* by Daniel Nayeri. This book is unexpected. It's kind of like how *The House in the Cerulean Sea* we felt like it was middle grade, but it's really not.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 15:46

Sure

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:47

This one feels kind of like that, even though it's totally different in the same like, who do you give this book to? I don't understand. So we're dropped into an Oklahoma middle school classroom, where Daniel, whose full name is Khosrou, is trying to tell a story to his classmates. It's his story. But it's more than that. And it doesn't matter because nobody believes him anyway. He doesn't like them. He's brown skinned, his lunch smells funny. And into the story he's weaving the stories of his childhood. He and his mom and his sister come from Iran. And he's telling that story, as well as the ones from the decades and the centuries before that. This book gets like into a modernized version of Scheherazade the One Thousand and One Nights. And it's that taking place at the front of a classroom. It has a middle grade protagonist, and a heck of a lot of talk about poop in it. And that makes you feel like, Okay, this is for middle graders. But then it's beautiful and layered and complex in a way that that I don't think a middle grader would appreciate. So then it's like, well, who do I give this to? I don't, I don't know what to do with this book. I don't know where to shelve it in my house. It feels familiar, while also feeling entirely new. And it's more like a journey than a story anyway. So you have to be in the right mood, the right frame of mind to pick this one up. But if you time it right, it could become your favorite book of all time, which is what happened to the 55 year old pastor who pressed it into my hands and was like, Kaytee, you have to read this. And I was like, Justin, why am I reading so much about poop? What is happening and that's so it's just, it's unexpected in a lot of different ways. But again, like nuanced and layered and complex, and gorgeous. And, and shocking, so so I don't even know what else to say about it. Except if any of those are little like catnip words for you, reader, this book is probably perfect for you and I want you to pick it up. So it's *Everything Sad is Untrue* by Daniel Nayeri.



**Meredith Monday Schwartz 17:47**

Well, Kaytee our reading, our books are just tracking really, really well on the on the show, because I also am going to talk about a book that I just loved. I'm not sure I liked, right. And I am absolutely not sure who I want to hand it to. So I'm finally going to bring to the show *The Eighth Life* by Nino Haratischwili. Now *The Eighth Life* you may have seen on bookstagram. Certainly, if you followed me, you saw that *The Eighth Life* is a brick, right? It's 960 pages. It is a whopper of a book. So it's huge. It's a commitment. This is a book that Roxanna and I did together. We started it the first day of January, we finished it April 2. So when we do our buddy reads we do them slow but steady. And we read our goal is to read at least a little bit every single day. And it took us three full months to read this book. And we were reading a little bit every single day. So it is a commitment. I just want to say right from the start. Let me give you some setup. Okay, our story of *The Eighth Life* starts at the beginning of the 20th century, on the edge of the Russian Empire. And we're following the Jashi family, a family who as we start our story is prospering. It owes its success to a delicious chocolate recipe passed down generation to generation with great sort of care and great caution, a caution that is justified because the chocolate, which they consume as a beverage though calling it hot chocolate feels a little thin. This chocolate is addictive and amazing and brings with it horrible consequences. So the book follows the Jashi family through seven generations of people who never seem to be able to grasp the dream that they have for their lives. We have a ballet dancer who never makes it to Paris. We have a singer who dreams of a career singing what and where she wants with the man she loves. We have a loyal member of the Communist Party who can never reach the heights he thinks he deserves in his career. We have doomed romances and babies born in heartbreaking circumstances. We follow this family through what's called the Red Century, the 100 years after the Russian Revolution. What this book does so well is to help you understand a country, or really two countries because we follow both Russia and the Republic of Georgia. And a period of time where entire systems of government come and go, the Jashi family story really stands just as a way to help us understand an entire people during an incredibly tumultuous period of time. So this book has magical or really cursed hot chocolate that as a story arc doesn't fully live up to its potential. It has a deep understanding of human strife and struggle, and grief. And it has characters that I feel like I know. And that I will be thinking about, for a really, really long time I finished this book on April 2, it's been six weeks, I continue to think every single day about how do I actually want to talk about this book on the show.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 21:05**

It is 960 pages of hard. It's long, and hard. And not in a good way. Roxanna and I, we really, really, were talking about how, how we felt about it afterwards, right? Because I know that I loved this book. I feel like I gobbled it up and it became a part of me, but I'm not sure that I liked it. Or maybe it's just that I experienced it. And so because it feels so much like my life. Now, I don't have the ability to stand back and be unbiased about its quality. So the story absolutely moves from start to finish. It's long, but it but it, it doesn't lag. But for a really small 10% in the middle. So it's not like it's boring. Because there are things happening to this family all the way through. There were some things about it that I loved a lot. And there were some things about it that I felt like the hot chocolate or the chocolate element, had a lot of potential and didn't quite live up to that potential. I learned so much from reading this book about communism and Russia, and everything that happened in the country, that country and countries around it during that period of time that I had zero education on beforehand. And we did a lot of

research in order to kind of put more context around those things. We brought a lot of research to the buddy read that really deepened the experience. So I learned a lot. And what I know for sure is that I was bereft when it was over. When I turned the final page, I was sad in a way that I hadn't been for a really long time. And not just because what happens in the story is sad. I was sad to leave these people. So this book is an experience that I'm not at all sure that I'm saying that I think that anyone should go out and get it and read it because like the book you were just discussing, Kaytee, I think that there's a lot of times where this would absolutely not be the right book. And yet, for some people at some times, it's going to become their favorite book they've ever read. Roxanna said something that has stuck with me. She said, I'm glad that we read it together so that we can be bereft together. Because this is a story that's too big for just one person. That's absolutely true. I'm so glad I read it. It has earned a place on my forever shelf. But I'm not at all suggesting that all of you should go out and grab it. So this is *The Eighth Life* by Nino Haratischwili.

**Kaytee Cobb** 23:44

So my third book is not nearly that long. It's *A Thousand Ships* by Natalie Haynes. This book...

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 23:52

Good, good, good, good. I want to hear about this.

**Kaytee Cobb** 23:55

So this book started making its way through the Bookish Friends group. And I can't credit a single person for getting me to read it because it felt like all of a sudden, they were just buzzing and buzzing about things. And then I started seeing it on bookstagram. And then I started hearing about it on podcasts. So it's like the internet made me do it on this one. This is the story of the Trojan War, as told by the women. It's almost like a series of interconnected short stories because of the way that we pull from so many different viewpoints. But then we circle back around as well. So it's also a complete narrative. For example, we hear from Penelope as she writes to Odysseus on his *Odyssey*. These letters are my favorite. I love them so much. We hear from the citizens of Troy, we hear from the goddesses whose feud started the conflict. It's a recentering of this classic narrative around the women on the edges. And it's a trend I can totally get behind. I feel like I've seen this in World War Two fiction quite a bit, but we don't get to see it go way back centuries and centuries, right. So I loved the way that she brought delight, and a feminine touch to the story that has been told over and over and over again by the men instead of the women. It has, of course, been blurbed by Madeline Miller, the author of *Circe* and *Song of Achilles*, both of which are great pairings for this one. And it's a gorgeous book, that's totally worth reading. I do think it's worth having at least passing familiarity with the Trojan War, the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, at least like the major players in that, and some Greek mythology is useful here. But you don't need to be a classic scholar to feel like you can sit down and enjoy this book for the work that it is like it's not serious, it doesn't take itself seriously, you can sit and enjoy it as a reader who loves good literature, which is totally different than, you know, having to dive deep into like the history of Russia in order to really get a good handle on *The Eighth Life*, right. So it's not that kind of depth that you need in order to absorb this story. This book puts the women, the girls and the goddesses at the center of the Western world's greatest tale ever told. And I love that about it. I want I want all the stories. I want every story ever told to get retold by the women on the edges, because I loved it so much. I listened to this one on audio. And there are a few Greek goddesses who have very similar



names. And sometimes that was hard to keep track of on audio, because they sound so similar. So I do think it's useful to pick it up in paper in order to get a handle on each of the characters. Because otherwise you're like, wait, why is Chryseis and Briseis and and Sisyphus all talking to each other like it, it gets too "issee" at the end of each word. So I think paper is the way to go on this. And then you can have those letters from Penelope to Odysseus sitting in front of you and you can laugh out loud at them like I did. So this one's just a gem. I absolutely loved it. It's A Thousand Ships by Natalie Haynes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 26:58

I am so glad that you brought this book to the show that you liked it because this is on my bookshelf. I am so looking forward to reading it. I was gonna be really really bummed if it wasn't good. So you're right, a trend. We are here for stories that that are being retold, history that has been or stories or history that's been brought forward from the perspective of the women who were there. And I just I agree that's a trend that we're here for in a major way. Yeah. Okay, my third book is one also that we've been seeing absolutely everywhere on bookstagram. I want to talk about The Good Sister by Sally Hepworth. Okay, all right,

**Kaytee Cobb** 27:38

I have to say I almost I was like, I'm sure Meredith said she was going to talk about this with Jamie. I almost put this in today. And I was like, No, I'm gonna put it to the side. This would have been the first time that ever happened.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 27:49

As you were getting ready to bring your third book. I had a flash that you might like, which almost never happens. So I you know, maybe I sensed that, but it was like,

**Kaytee Cobb** 27:59

It was bookish serendipity that we didn't collide right there.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 28:03

I know although it is, I'm so glad that we both read it because I really do want to talk about it. Okay, so you guys know that I absolutely love Sally Hepworth, The Mother-In-Law, which was one of my top 10 books of 2019 at or 2020 I never can remember. Anyway, it's been on my list of Top 10 books recently. I absolutely love it. And also, I started following her on Instagram. Kaytee, do you follow Sally Hepworth on Instagram? Did I say this?

**Kaytee Cobb** 28:33

I do. And I love her.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 28:36

She is so good on Instagram. She cracks me the flip up all the time. I almost never take the time to actually watch people's but you know, because we're all just moving quickly on social media. I will save her videos because she cracks me up so much. So I'm a really big fan of Sally Hepworth. So I really, you know, wanted to read this one and I grabbed it as soon as it was available. So here is the setup, just a little bit of setup because again, we don't want to go crazy on it with this kind of book. So our lead

characters are Rose and Fern. They're twin sisters. Fern works at a library. She uses routine to keep her life in order. Rose is very successful, organized. She's a super well put together interior designer who also has been trying unsuccessfully to get pregnant. And Fern comes up with a plan to try to help Rose and this plan leads them down a path that disrupts their lives. It unearths old secrets, so many loads and loads of secrets. And so that's really all we need to know just jump in from there. This book was really interesting. And my reaction to it was one that I was very very aware of. The first half of the book doesn't crack along as nicely as cohesively as I felt the Mother-In-Law did. Okay, so I as I was experiencing it, I was like, Oh, come on, Sally, I'm What's going on? It's slow. Um, okay. But then the second half of the book when you get it, I mean it, I couldn't turn the pages fast enough, right? And I ended up absolutely flying through it and being and being like, wow, that was a really, really wild ride in a good way. I really quite enjoyed this book. The ending was pretty tidy. And I can see some people having an issue with the ending. The ending didn't bother me. I thought that it wrapped up perfectly nicely. The characters were a bit flatter than what I thought we were given in The Mother-In-Law. And, and I think that that comparison is really what made me feel a little bit more disappointed in this book than I wanted to feel about it. Because I kept thinking if I had just read this book in and of itself, and I wasn't comparing it to The Mother-In-Law, I really believe that I would be coming to you saying, this is a great little thriller that took an afternoon of my time. It was enjoyable, it was clever in parts. It's a good time. Right. But that comparison had me just feeling a little bit like oh, I just wanted a little bit more from this. So again, I want to be super clear. I really enjoyed this book. I just didn't love it as much as I loved The Mother-In-Law, which is a really big outlier of an experience for a domestic thriller right? You don't know I don't normally have that much affection for a domestic thriller. So this is a really good book that I thought was completely diverting, and worth my time. So this is The Good Sister by Sally Hepworth.

**Kaytee Cobb** 31:44

I completely agree. I'm 100% tracking with you the whole way through. I don't know how Sally Hepworth is gonna feel about all the horse analogies in the way that you said. Come on, Sally.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:00

I didn't say giddyup!

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:01

But in my head you did. Okay. It was the way you were moving.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:06

Oh, oh, I was moving in a giddy up manner.

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:09

Okay, yes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:11

The first half was just not what I wanted it to be. But again, the second half it really really it giddy upped to all the way to finish line.

**Kaytee Cobb 32:19**

It did indeed, it did. And she is like she's a delightful follow. She does write great books and I 100% agree with you on this one.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:28**

Let me say I will absolutely continue to have her as an auto-buy author with without a second thought. I mean, I really did enjoy The Good Sister. Okay. All right. That's a great bunch of current reads. And sweet Kaytee, I'm really really happy with them. A bunch of bunch of interesting, weirdly put together reads and that's exactly what we want to bring. Okay. So let's talk about our deep dive, which alright, the idea for this deep dive came from one of our Bookish Friends, Katie Sikkes. And she said, you guys, I would love for you to talk about the fact that I feel like reading and all the other ancillary parts of reading, buying your books, organizing your reading, decide doing your buddy read, organize all of that. Those are two separate hobbies. You know, sort of what she said was agree or disagree? And I think it's a brilliant idea for a deep dive because I think we've all experienced this. We can be in a reading slump. And realize, well, crap, I haven't actually picked up a book and read it in, you know, longer. Yeah. But I've been filling a lot of my time doing bookish sort of ancillary things. Kaytee, this happens to you.

**Kaytee Cobb 33:44**

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And, yeah, it happens on a lot of levels, not just all the ones you mentioned. But I mean, y'all know how much I love me my spreadsheet and making my little graphic at the end of the month. Totally. It's reading adjacent, but it's a totally different hobby, where I get to completely nerd out. And over the course of last year, I've actually seen this play out in a number of ways because of the pandemic, right. So we had bookstores closed. We had libraries closed. I was buying books. Meredith, I bought so many books this year.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:16**

Yeah. Yep, Me too. Me too. Therefore the new book cart right? The overflow overflow. And no, no sign of stopping.

**Kaytee Cobb 34:26**

And, and, and for me, oftentimes, when I buy books, and this is usually true, I don't always read them in paper anyway, I end up getting them in other formats. So if I buy a book that I haven't read, it's very likely that I'll end up picking it up on audio, or watching the page while I listen to it on audio. That is my favorite way to read. I love that so much. I like being read to but nobody wants to sit and read me a 500 page book so I have to pay for somebody to do that. It's very annoying, but normally in my regular life outside of the pandemic, when I buy a book It's because I read it probably from the library, maybe in a different format. And now I want to keep it, and I want it to go on my precious shelf. And that's a total... Like, it's not about reading that book. For me. It's about the comfort I get from standing in front of that shelf and feeling like all my friends are here. And sometimes when I'm preparing for the show, and I'm like, What am I going to press next? I even if the book I end up pressing is not on that shelf, standing in front of that shelf, and letting the books speak to me, is what gives me the idea for what I'm going to press that day. And it sounds totally woowoo and insane. But that's what buying books is about for me, is making sure my friends are around when I need them.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:43**

I was thinking we wouldn't really call that collecting books, I think what it is, is it's gathering books right onto what you call your precious shelf I call my forever shelf. I actually own very, very few, very few books, you know, I keep very few books. The vast majority of books in my house are books that I plan to read. But I get a similar kind of rush from having hundreds of books around me within my line of sight all day long as I go about my day that I haven't read yet. And that gives that gives me that continuous kind of, Oh, I can't wait to get to that one rush like A Thousand Ships. That's a book that I have on, on my read really soon list and I walk past it and look at it and think fondly of it multiple times a day, even though I haven't actually read it yet. So it's sort of like we can gather books, we can keep books that we've read and loved. And we can also gather books that we really have reason to think we will love in the future, that kind of anticipatory feeling. But that organizing of all of that, I think also a big part of that for me and for a lot of us has become scrolling bookstagram or possibly also Storygraph, or Goodreads I guess, for some people, but the act of I'm not actually like... someone shared a meme the other day like I have, you know, a couple of hours of quiet. I have my cup of coffee, I sit in my comfy chair, I gather my book, and then I open my phone. And how many times have we all done that, right? Because when we open our phone for an bookstagram we're scrolling this again, that feeling of anticipation of finding out what other people thought about the books that we already read and loved. So it really is a separate hobby. Reading and reading adjacent are really two separate hobbies. They just go together really well.

**Kaytee Cobb 37:43**

Yeah, I think of it like the needlepoint arts, like there's cross stitch and embroidery, and no cross stitcher says they embroider. And well, I mean unless they do embroider, but it's it's very much a different thing, even though you're using very similar materials. So that's exactly what we're doing here. We're talking about like, physically sitting down and reading the words on the page in front of you is not the same thing as going to the bookstore, and letting the shelves speak to you and tell you who needs to come to your house. Which is what happens when I go to the bookstore.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:16**

Here's the other activity that in fact I do so often. We talked about it on the show, but my family will tease me about it like oh, mom's doing another book flight. Jackson had the gall to say to me the other day, Mom, I think you do book flights almost as much as you actually read books that you finish. Oh, and I was like, Come closer, because I'm gonna slap you full on the f-. I'm just kidding. I didn't actually do that. But he's not wrong. If I'm really being honest, he's not wrong. Because that kind of reading adjacent part of the hobby, the book flight where I will go I just this morning went and picked up 11 books from the library that I had had on my hold list. And I'm going to bring those home. They're on my they're in the book flight place on my coffee table. And I am so looking forward to reading the first chapter of every one of those books. And Kaytee, I probably odd sell us I probably will only read start to finish three of those books out of the 11 that I got. And yet it will bring me so much joy to do that book flight. You know? So yes, there's, there's so much to reading that is really I think for a lot of us will say well, I'm into books and reading. And that's really kind of what it is right? That's the way we can describe it. We're not just readers, we're into books and reading. We're in the entire process of it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 39:43

It's a lifestyle. If anybody wants to tell us about your own book buying and book reading habits, of course, we're gonna have our regular Thursday post on Instagram. Come over there and chat to us about the difference between reading books and buying books and spreadsheeting books and book fighting books and all the things that are reading adjacent that lead to your lifestyle of reading.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:04

One of the things that all of this reading adjacent stuff does for us is it gives us more and more books that we find that we want to read and press into readers hands. So Kaytee, what is your press this week?

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:16

The book I want to press this week is YA. It's Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli. This book came out in 2015. So a lot of people have already read it. And it's been made into a major motion picture. So a lot of people have already seen it. But if you haven't, let me tell you about it. Simon is a junior at Creekwood High. This book starts out with a fellow classmate reading his email, figuring out that he is gay, and threatened to tell everyone if he doesn't follow through on a blackmail proposition. This is reminiscent of Tell Me Three Things which I loved and pressed, gosh, at least two years ago now, because I loved that book so much in the email format, that shows up between chapters, and the falling for someone you've never met aspect. But it also feels fresh and new. Simon has to navigate his high school world, decide when and if to come out to his family and friends. And he questions the entire idea that anyone should have to come out at all. And why not everyone? If we're going to have coming out? Why don't, why don't gay kids and straight kids all have to come out? Right? So this is a fun, YA novel with some really great deeper questions embedded in it. It feels a little like Rainbow Rowell if she's your jam. And again, you can watch the movie, which I haven't watched. But I've been told that it's exceptional. It has great music embedded into the story into the novel. So if you're in the middle decades of your life, which is the nice way to say 30s through 50s, you're probably going to hear and think about some artists that you really loved in your own high school career. And the author has a big fat stack of novels to dig into if you've already read this one, and fallen in love with her. So I just I loved it. And I want other people to love it too. It's Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:03

That's a good press. That's a good good one to add to our list. All right, well, I'm bringing a book that is very, very different. But I was thinking about it because it's a book that was recommended by Bookish Friend Kristina Reid. And I talked about it all the way back in Episode 27 of the show back in February of 2019. But the reason I thought about it today is because it was a book that Kristina had wanted to press into our hands. But then I got it as a part of a book flight to the library. And when I got it, I was sort of like, I don't know, the covers a little more, I just am not that, you know, I'm just not sure. But because I did a book flight and read the first chapter, I got completely sucked into it, and it's become one of my favorites of all time. This is Burial Rites by Hannah Kent. Okay, this is historical fiction. It's so fantastic. We have the story of Agnes, she's our lead character, and she is charged with the brutal murder, brutal murder of her former master. She was convicted and sent to a local family's farmhouse to await her execution. So again, she's convicted of murder. And back in this time, in Iceland, she had to go, there

were families who had to like sort of take custody of these people who've been convicted of murder and are just waiting to die. Can you imagine the dynamic that is involved in this situation in this period of time,

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:35

I bet you would love that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:37

No, that's horrible! That would be horrible.

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:40

You would totally love it. You'd be like stay in that chair over there and I'm gonna ask you all the questions.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:44

Okay, I would definitely be asking a lot of questions there for sure. Especially about that because this the murder here is horrible. Okay. So Agnes is is convicted. She's living at this local family's farmhouse and horrified at the prospect of housing a convicted murderer, of course the family at first avoids Agnes, which is super awkward and super sad. But as Agnes's death looms, the farmer's wife and their daughters begin to get to know her and they begin to learn a completely different side of this very sensational story that everyone in their town thinks they know the truth about. You guys... This book is so flippin good. This is historical fiction at its best because it takes us to a country and a period of time that we none of us know the first thing about. It's absolutely so interesting, the setting, the history, the characters are incredibly well drawn. This in my notes, I have the word transportive three times. And that's what this book is. When I was reading it, I kept almost forgetting what was going on around me, like you think so deeply into this particular setting, and what this woman and what this family is going through as they await her execution, you are completely transported. Agnes, our lead character has no chance at all. The system was rigged against her, as at this period of time in this country, women were basically property first of their father, and then of their husbands, I will say, as an enneagram One, that the sense of unfairness and injustice is palpable all the way through this book, it was part of why I loved the book so much, but it was also part of what was really hard about this book, because you just want to murder somebody, by the time you're at the end of this. I have thought about this book so often, and I've pressed it into the hands of several readers in my real life. And I'm happy to report that every single one of them, even those that are not ones who normally read historical fiction, have absolutely loved it as much as I did. So this is Burial Rites by Hannah Kent.

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:07

Great press Meredith. I feel like that's, that's the kind of book that I like to read in the summer, where it's like cold and dark. While while you're sitting outside in the sunshine, and everything's warm, and you can be like, this is not really happening. It's fine. The book is cold and dark, and I'm out here in the sun.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:23

For sure. That would be that that would be a good kind of contrast. But yeah, yeah, if you're, if you like a contrast read, this would be the time to, to read it for sure. Alright, that is it for this week. As a



reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me on Meredith at @Meredith.reads on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:41

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:44

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

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:55

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:02

And if you really want to help us, become a patron. It's just \$5 a month and you get so much more content than you're getting just if you listen to the Big Show. You can also rate and review us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. Those things make a huge difference toward us finding our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:21

This week, we also want your help with listener presses and ask us anything questions. So be sure to send those to our email as well. Thanks for doing that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:28

All right. Until next week. Happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:31

Happy reading Meredith.