



# Season 4, Episode 16: Listener Homework + Cinematic Books

Mon, 11/15 • 52:37

**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 those strong opinions. So get ready.

**Kaytee Cobb 00:24**

We are light on 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 00:34**

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And I love when I can find ways to add to my reading experience.

**Kaytee Cobb 00:44**

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico and I love to be thrilled on the page and on the screen. This is episode number 16 of season four. And we're so glad you're here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:54**

Whoo. Yes, we do love to be thrilled in both of those places, especially when there's overlap between those two things. That's really fun. All right, yes, we are going to talk more about related topics a little bit later. But before we get into anything, we want to let you guys know about a very special episode that we are planning right now. And we need you guys to know about it right now, because we need you to help us with it right now. You guys know that it is the love of Kaytee and I's heart to make sure that we are throwing all kinds of focus on and business toward independent bookstores all year round. And it is never more important than at the holiday season. So we came up with the idea that we wanted to do an episode featuring your voices. These episodes always are so amazing and everyone loves them so much. This time, we want you to focus on telling us about some books that have been hand sold to you by your local independent bookstore or a bookstore that you visited while you were traveling or on vacation. We want to hear about those that they had sold to you. We want to hear about a great book that maybe you got from a shelf talker. This is what we want to throw focus on right now. And I'm so looking forward to this episode. Kaytee, can you tell them a little bit about how we're actually going to make this happen?

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:14

Yes. We are delighted to include your voices in here. So here's what we need from you guys. Your homework is, we need you to record a voice memo on your phone. And it should include and Megan will put all of this in show notes for you. So you can go down a little checklist. As you record, it should include your name and location, the name of the indie bookstore that you're excited about and where it's at a book that was hand sold to you at the store title and author please, or that you picked up because of a great shelf talker, and why you loved it. What made that book perfect for you? What made that indie so great at selling to you? We really want to know about the indies that really shine, whether they have great shelving or wonderful lighting, or whatever it is that makes you want to go back there again and again, spend your cash dollars at their store, and really lift up that independent bookstore. So we're excited to share your indies, your voices, and the books you love from them. And we need all of that in a voice memo emailed to us by December 1. So we can get that episode put together for you guys.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 03:16

Right and Kaytee, should we just in case anybody doesn't know what a shelf talker is, let's just remind everybody that a shelf talker is that great feature when you go into a really good independent bookstore, they're the cards or the signs or, you know right next to the actual book. On the shelf, you'll see something either handwritten or typed up that tell you about a staff member who really really loved that particular title and why. That's a shelf talker, just in case anybody was wondering what we were talking about there.

**Kaytee Cobb** 03:48

Yeah, shelf talkers are really fun. I don't know if this has ever happened to you, Meredith but I'll walk around and I'll find shelf talkers for books that I've loved. And just like finding a book, when you then go find that exact staff member on other shelf talkers to see if they've read something that maybe you should put on your TBR. That's my favorite way to use them.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:04

That is a pro level tip. And I have done that many times to great success. So I cannot wait. In fact right now I am I am reading a book that was recommended on a previous listener press episode. So I cannot wait to do this episode with the focus on independent bookstores and the gold that they have put into our hands. Thank you guys for helping us with these projects. I think it's gonna be really fun.

**Kaytee Cobb** 04:28

It will be fun. I'm excited to blow up our TBR and I'm excited to blow up our travel plan lists because we all need somewhere else to visit right? All right, guys. That is our homework for this episode. Let me tell you a little bit about our deep dive today. We are talking about, we're gonna call it "bring it to the screen", books we would like to see adapted to the large screen or the small screen so we're excited to see what kind of cinematic literature we've been reading lately. But we're gonna get started the way we always do, which is with our bookish moments the week. Meredith what have you got for us?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:01**

Alright, so you guys know that I have talked multiple times about the fact that when I do my reading, I do those ASMR rooms, or they're also called ambience rooms, right? So I go to YouTube. And I have created a library, where I put all of these, and I have them I'm even now doing like an autumn library, Halloween library. I'm splitting them up so that I can just very quickly go to the one that I wanted. This has become an addiction for me to the point where I can barely even read without first I automatically go in choosing my kind of matching ASMR. And I like to choose it to match the season and the weather outside. But I also really like to choose it to match the book that I'm reading. My bookish moment of the week this week was when I realized that my last five really big hit ASMR rooms have come from the ones that we're sharing with each other on our bookish friends group on Facebook. So our patrons subscribers for \$5 a month, you know, they get all the extra content, but we're also a part of this bookish friends group on Facebook. So many times a week someone will pop in, and I do this too, when I find a really, really good one, I will pop it in there. And then we share with each other. And so every time that happens, I'll get four or five new ones to add to my rotation. It makes me so happy. And now that I have the AirPods Pro, now I'm putting that in my ears even just when I'm you know, just through my phone, not even when I'm playing the ASMR on my TV, in my living room or in my bedroom. So it's just like a full fledged addiction and I could not be any happier about it.

**Kaytee Cobb 06:40**

Oh, I love that. And I love that it's like a free addiction too. This is something anyone can do. You can use your library, you can put on ASMR room, you've spent no money making a perfect reading experience. Love it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:52**

Well and also I do have to say Jackson has benefited hugely from this because he has some he doesn't have ADHD, but he has some real focus challenges. And I have found that he just does homework or reading literally 100% better if there is something like an ambience room playing in the background. So it doesn't even have to be music. It just can't be silence. So that's been another way it's really added to my life. It's added to his life.

**Kaytee Cobb 07:20**

Oh great. So great. Love it. Okay, my bookish moment this week kind of ties in with the homework that we just gave our friends here. So, and with the indie press list, it ties in with all the indie bookstores that we love. I traveled to Sedona last weekend on a work trip with husband. Since he was busy at conferences every morning, I was really happy to see that the only remaining bookstore in Sedona was within walking distance of our Airbnb. Strangely, actually, it was strange on a lot of levels Meredith, let me tell you. Strangely, there are two things that are strange about it. First, it was a combination bookstore and UHAUL rental location.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 07:58**

That was a pairing I wasn't expecting.

**Kaytee Cobb 08:02**

That was weird, right? It was not a bookstore coffee shop. It was not a bookstore bar. It was a bookstore UHAUL. Okay, right. Second, the owner chose the really unfortunate name for his store of The Worm. Not "the bookworm", not "the book trailer", not "hauling books", like "book haul" so many great titles for the store. No, he went with The Worm

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:25**

"The book locker. I mean, there's just a lot of directions you could go.

**Kaytee Cobb 08:28**

Right? I was just so confused. I was like, I don't? What, why? Why? Okay, so the bookstore section of this situation I was in was very small. And the selection was not great. I did pick up two books, because I like to support bookstores. But the thing that I wanted to share about this which like "Land the plane Kaytee" right? Like Meredith, you are always talking to yourself in All Things Murderful. I can land this plane, okay. I was chatting with the owner as I paid for my books. And I said, "This is quite an interesting business crossover you have here." And he said, "Every bookstore has to diversify or have another income opportunity because otherwise they will go under." And I don't know if that's completely true. But I do know that we see a lot of bookstores with tchotchkes. We see a lot of bookstores with cafes, and bars, and etc. Right? Here's why it's my bookish moment. Your indies need you friends. Book profit margins are so small that this guy had to make a UHAUL bookstore, like what in the world, right? And I took that to heart and I really was thinking about how, you know Amazon sells books as a loss leader, because they know they can get you in the store, in the online store and sell you books that they're losing money on and your local bookstores cannot do that. So we talked about libraries just a couple weeks ago. Use your library, save up your pennies, and then buy books from an indie bookstore because this is what they're operating with: this tiny profit margin that only allows them to make the smallest pennies on the dollar for every book. And that means you find stuff like The Worm that has a UHAUL store mixed with a bookstore. Because otherwise you have stuff like The Literate Lizard in Arizona, which was a beautiful indie bookstore, and has since gone out of business since the last time I was there. So really, like spend out. And I get that not everybody can spend out all the time. Use your library, and then spend out and get a really great book from your indie bookstore, because they need you. And we love it when you spend and when you find an indie bookstore, so we're going to find you a whole bunch of them with your homework. So you can help keep the lights on.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:43**

Exactly. No, I mean, I think it's a really great soapbox to be on because I was reading something on the The Shelf Awareness newsletter that was talking, they were having like a consortium of bookstores, and one of the people speaking was saying, "Basically, if you decide to start a bookstore, you are saying you are committing to a life of poverty." And that absolutely should break every one of our readerly hearts. Not like we caused, like readers didn't cause this problem. That's not the issue. But we can definitely be part of the solution in the Indie Press List, which is part of the content that we do for our Patreon subscribers is a is a part of that. Every single time you guys come out and buy hundreds of books on that Indie Press List drop date from an independent bookstore, it makes it so that the next several months they have some margin. So yes, Kaytee, I'm so glad that you brought that up, because

that is something that you and I care so much about and we have decided to use a tremendous amount of our time and talents surrounding this show, to really, really support indies as much as possible.

**Kaytee Cobb** 11:48

It's important to us. Absolutely. All right, let's talk about some current reads shall we? What have you got on your currently reading shelf this week, Meredith?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:57

Okay. I want to talk about a book that I absolutely loved. And I found it when I was shopping at Fabled a little bit ago, but it was actually online at Fabled, so I found it just on their website. Again, you can shop from any independent bookstore that you want because their website enables you to do that. I want to talk about LA Weather by Maria Amparo Escandon. Have you read this one, Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb** 12:23

No, I don't think I know anything about it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 12:25

Okay, it's very, very good. I loved this book. Alright, here is the setup. When we meet the Alvarado family, there is a ton happening in this family. We are meeting them at a real moment in the life of this family. Their hometown of Los Angeles is in the middle of a horrible, horrible drought. And Oscar, the dad of the family, the dad in our story is fully obsessed with the weather. It's the only thing he can think about, talk about, all he does is talk about the drought. He is super distracted. He's constantly watching the weather channel. I mean, it is odd how obsessed he is with the weather. His wife Keila is so consternated by this weird obsession. And she's so done with the fact that he basically pays no attention to her at all, mentally or physically, that she makes the really, really hard decision that she's going to end their very long marriage. There are three grown daughters: Claudia, who's a television chef, Olivia, who's a successful architect and Patricia, who's a social media wizard, are completely blindsided by the this impending divorce and their dad's weird behavior. And they're left questioning, the five of them, really everything that they thought that they had built their life upon. Okay, this book is it was a Reese's Book Club choice, which normally I have to say her choices don't necessarily, they aren't necessarily my choices. But in this case, I loved it for a variety of reasons. This book is a very interesting combination. It's a family drama, to be sure. It's got a lot of soap opera in it. And it's also a climate change novel. And it's a mash up that I just didn't know I needed. But it works really, really well. I loved it. So a lot of writeups, a lot of press that you see about this book is concentrated on the family drama element, and really trying to draw comparisons to other big family drama books that have come out recently. But I really want to underscore the soap opera elements of it, which I loved. The issues that we're dealing with here are big and sort of extra and to a certain extent over the top, especially when they're taken all together. And I think that that's an important thing for you to know when you're going into this. I think you need to be in the mood for a very soapy family drama. Those things contributed, though to the good for me. But if you're looking for something really nuanced, like, say, a Dutch House kind of situation, that's not what you're going to find here. There is nuance, but it's not the same. That said, I loved the strange setup, the beginning where you really kind of can't figure out at all where the story is going. And I love that for a goodly part of the book, you really have no idea what is

causing the family patriarch to act as strangely as he is. But over the course of Los Angeles, here we come to know these characters really well. We know the parents as a couple, we get to know them as individuals and the children as individuals and as a part of their own couples and their own families. We really, really get to know them intimately. My favorite part was this mixture of this soapy high level family drama with tiny day to day minutia. It was kind of a ping pong back and forth. And it made me think that that's exactly how real life is, you can be grappling with this really big issue in your life, but then also your washing machine is broken, right? So you're constantly ping ponging back and forth. I will say about these characters, as in real life, there are times when you love them. And there are times when you totally don't understand what is driving them and motivating them and you want to smack them. And then there are times that you want to root for them. And all of this is very much set in a super specific time and place. That being climate change affected Los Angeles. It's definitely a very California novel and for me, it was a perfect fall read. If you love family dramas, especially one like Maggie O'Farrell's Instructions for a Heatwave. You will absolutely love this one. It's well written and really worth your time. It's the book equivalent of sitting in a restaurant and finding yourself overhearing the juiciest conversation at the next table, the one where you're like texting your BFF saying "You're not going to believe what I'm overhearing right now." That's how this book feels like you're a fly on the wall of this family's life in a really eventful year, and I absolutely loved it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 17:12

My first one this month is probably my womp for the week. It's Portrait of a Scotsman by Evie Dunmore. This is the third book in The League of Extraordinary Women series, which is set against the the fight for women's suffrage in England in 1800s. I really enjoyed the first two in the series, including the fact that I pressed the first one into our listeners' hands on episode 33 of season three of the show. Unfortunately, it has gone downhill to the point that I think this is the last one I'll be reading that's set in this world. So our protagonist, our couple that we're rooting for are Hattie and Lucien. Hattie is an Oxford scholar, a Bluestocking, part of the suffrage movement like the ladies in our previous novels in this series. Lucien is a ruthless businessman from a less than stellar background. And he's churlish Scott, and I love the words churlish Scott together. Churlish Scots are high on my list of likeable characters. They these two are essentially cajoled into a marriage and Lucien wants an heir. So how do you find out that there are political machinations behind their marriage, and she threatens to leave before it's even consummated. But an impromptu trip to Scotland takes the wind out of those sails because she's dragged along because Lucien is like, "No, we had a deal," basically. Right? So this is like, enemies to lovers, kind of a one bed trope, which I didn't know was a thing until our dear friend Jessica Howard told me about it, but it's basically where people are forced to share a bed because of like lodging situations.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 18:49

Yes, of course. Yes. Right.

**Kaytee Cobb** 18:51

So, right. It's a thing. It's a trope. So here's the good stuff. This book has a great main dude. This churlish Scot, Lucien, he's amazing. Fans of Outlander will not be surprised at all when I say that the first time Hattie is referred to as Sassenach, I was giddy. Lucien's bootstrap backstory is really

endearing and wonderful, as is the exploration of working conditions in 18th century Scottish countryside, and what feminism and suffrage might look like for the less moneyed women in that Scottish countryside. Like, what does it mean to be a feminist when you're struggling to put food on the table? Right? It's a hard line to walk. Here's what I did not enjoy. This book was entirely too long. It was nearly 16 hours on audio. 450 pages. Why?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:43

Yeah, no. 10 hours tops. 10 hours tops.

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:46

What in the world? Right? I know that seems counterintuitive for me to say when I just talked about *Outlander*. And those are like friggin 26 hour books. But *Outlander* has a big sweeping storyline. And this was like just stuffed full of facts, like she spent a lot of time researching and really wanted to shove those facts in here. It was long winded, right? The amount of entitled prissiness we get from Hattie, who was raised in a very nice like upper crust family, along with long winded speeches about British politics, means I could have easily cut 30% from this book, and it would have been so much better. It would have been so much better. And I would have been a much happier reader. Overall, I gave it three stars, two and a half. And I will tell you that the open door, open door, bedroom moments were sparkling and sparking and lovely. But the rest of this one made me want to abandon it. And so I have decided to discontinue reading the series, it is *Portrait of a Scotsman* by Evie Dunmore.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:49

So just so I'm clear, if it had been 30% shorter, do you think you would be reading on in the series? Or is it like it was too long, and I was bored, or?

**Kaytee Cobb** 20:59

It was too long. And I was bored, because it was too long. But I do think that if she had written tighter, it would have been a better book. And I would have been more interested. I went back and looked. I gave five stars to the first one, four stars to the second one. This one, again, two and a half to three stars. So if we continue on this trajectory, it's not going to go well for my reading life. So I just need to walk away.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 21:20

Right? God, Kaytee, how many times are we going to review these books that we're like, "It would have been great if it had been 30% shorter"? I don't understand what happened to all the editors. Where have all the editors been? Like a rapture of editors for authors who have you know, who are not first time authors. Like as soon as you have a few books under your belt, you apparently don't have any editors. You just get to publish whatever you want. It's a real problem. It's a real problem.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 21:52

All right. I'm going to bring a book that I think was edited perfectly and done really, really well. And I actually in this case, I actually think the edit probably made a really, really big difference. I want to talk about *Notes From A Young Black Chef* by Kwame Onwuachi. This was from the Indie Press List from the August stack, which was from *Novel Neighbor*. And this was one of those books as it often happens

with any press list where there'll be one that I know we should be including on the stack, but it's not necessarily a Meredith book. And then I start reading it, and I'm like, "Oh, wait, hang on. This, I think is a Meredith book." And this definitely was. So Notes From A Young Black Chef is a story of Kwame Onwuachi. He's a James Beard award winning chef. And he was on one of my favorite shows, Top Chef. I absolutely love Top Chef. I'm a huge fan. By the time that he was 27 years old, he had opened and closed one of the most anticipated restaurants in America after only 11 weeks. Notes From A Young Black Chef tells the story of his life and Top Chef and what happened with this restaurant. It is fascinating. I absolutely love the straightforwardness of his writing. This book is exactly the opposite of what you're just talking about Kaytee. I felt like everything and you've read this one and this is one that you really liked too. Everything in this book felt like it should be there. There was no, I didn't feel like I was taken down rabbit holes. I was every story had a purpose in this. It's not a short story. But every story that he told about his life had a purpose in this book. Yes, he is 27 years old. And I know when we talk about a memoir, where and this was when you and I talked about it when we recorded that in the press list episode, when we talk about someone who wrote a memoir of of their life at 27. It immediately makes us give some side eye because we're like, "I don't know if you get to do that, like live a little longer." Right? And I think that that makes a lot of sense. But in this case, I make the case that he really is intending this to tell really a moment in time in his life or to a point in his life. I think given the kind of chef that he is, given the kind of businessman that he is and given how he feels about representing his African American heritage through his cooking and his food business. I think we will hear from him again. And I really hope that we do. So the case I'm making here is don't give him side eye because he was so young to write a memoir. He just wrote it about a certain part of his life. Right. I was absolutely fascinated of course by the stories of its food and the feelings and the memories behind that food. That's what makes a really good food memoir. I was fascinated by the chapters on his appearance on Top Chef, but even more so those chapters on the planning, the execution and the very quick folding closing of his incredibly high end, Washington DC restaurant, brought out the businesswoman in me those chapters and the tea that he spills about exactly how it all went down. Were very, very fascinating. And of course, there's a lot to be said, and he has a lot to say, about what it's like to be Black in the kitchen, in the great restaurants of the United States. And I thought that that was absolutely fascinating. I'm so glad I read this book. I loved it. It's Notes From A Young Black Chef by Kwame Onwuachi.

### **Kaytee Cobb 25:31**

All right, my second book this week is one from an author that I've loved before but this one was a hit. It's Fast Pitch by Nic Stone. Nic Stone, hooray! I love her. Total author crush on her. I've pressed her books. I've brought others to the show. This is her newest middle grade title and it's a delight. I'm going to tell you about it. Shenice Lockwood is our main character. She's a middle grader. She's 12, she's Black, and she's playing to win. She's the captain of the Firebirds, which is an all Black softball team, an all Black girl softball team, and has its eyes set on the Fast Pitch World Series, and she wants to prove herself to her teammates, herself, and her family. As she gets closer to those playoff games, her Uncle Jack reveals a family mystery that has never been solved. One that kept her great grandpa from making it big, kept him from breaking into the major leagues from the Negro Leagues, right? So they have baseball and softball in their family. Her grandpa was really up and coming and something prevented him from making that leap that Jackie Robinson made at the same time. This means that



Shenice has her attention divided right at a pivotal time in her life between solving a mystery and helping her team make history. For readers who read Nic Stone's previous middle grade novel which is called Clean Getaway, this is a great book that takes place in the same world. So there are some Easter eggs in Clean Getaway. Scoob talks about his friend Shenice and in Fast Pitch Shenice talks about the boy she has a crush on named Scoob and I love it. Middle graders that love sports or history or team building or gentle mystery and I mean gentle there's no death in this one. There's no murder, there's no nothing like that, will love this. But what Nic Stone does really well here is give us a contemporary setting and a character but ties it back to the past in a way that's really palatable to a middle grade reader. But maybe a reader that wouldn't reach for history on their very own right? It's only 240 pages. It's tightly edited and I finished it in a single day. I loved it. I loved it and I hope you do too. It's Fast Pitch by Nic Stone

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:44**

I'm so glad that you loved it. Again, anytime there's an author where I just know that you care so much I'm so glad when that book ends up being great and I wonder if we should start reading books on the "Is this edited correctly?" scale. Because now we've talked about two that really fit that bill. Alright, well you talked a little bit about gentle mystery and I'm going to basically turn you around and smack in the face with some murder here because we're going to go a completely opposite direction. This book, this book is not gentle mystery my friends at all. This is hardcore, gory murder so get ready. Okay, this is Jar of Hearts by Jennifer Hillier. Did this one on audio and January LaVoy does it. Your girlfriend. Your special girlfriend. She was so good. I loved this on audio. So I think this would be just as good on print. But I just happened to really love this on audio. Here's the setup. When she was 16, Angela Wong, she's popular super popular pretty cheerleader, she disappeared without a trace, as in all good books, right? That's exactly how they all start. Nobody ever suspected that her best friend Georgina, who is now in the present day in our book, an executive and a quickly rising star at a pharmaceutical company, had any involvement in any way. But again in our present timeline Angela Wong's remains are finally discovered in the woods near Geo, Georgina is called Geo, near her home, her childhood home, and Kaiser Brody catches the case, which makes it awkward because Kaiser knew both Angela and Geo when they were kids. The three of them were kind of besties who hung out together. Kaiser is now a detective with the Seattle PD and he finally learns the truth. Angela was a victim of Calvin James, the same Calvin James who's a serial killer who has murdered at least three other women. to the authorities. Calvin James is a serial killer, but to Geo he was something else entirely. Back in high school, Calvin James was Geo's first love and they had that kind of really volatile first love that super wonderful until it is absolutely not. And that first love exploded the night that Angela was killed. Because for 14 years, Geo has known exactly what happened to her best friend. And she told no one for 14 years, she carried around the secret of her death. And then finally she is arrested, and she is sent to prison for her involvement. And now, not only is the past been dug up, along with all the messy secrets that are still there, but new bodies are piling up. And Kaiser needs to find out who wants to cover up the past so much that they're willing to kill in the present. Holy Hannah, this book, this book, like I couldn't get my eyes open any wider. As I was listening to this, like I know you, I mean, this author is willing to go there in a way that I was not expecting. Again, great on audio, January LeVoy, just hits it perfectly all the way through. It is it's not a short book. It's not a super long book, but it flew by. This was one of those where I was finding excuses to go out for my runs for sure. It is extraordinarily gory, though, to the

point where there are some scenes that I got physically sick to my stomach, I really want to say this. And you guys know, my murderful tolerance level is really high. So I want to be super clear about what we're dealing with here. I just I don't want anyone to be, you know, unpleasantly surprised by what they find here. There was, there was one random detail about a football injury that I honestly still have nightmares about. Because I have a child who plays football. That's just one of the things that will be in my head forever. And there was a scene toward the end that had me sitting in my car saying out loud, "No, she's not No, she's not going to do this" about the author. This book is intense, you guys. One element of the story that is really interesting, and I think will be part of the reason why this book is so memorable, is that there's an entire section, it's not all the book, there's a section of the book where Geo is in prison as is mentioned in the setup. Those scenes are really interesting, really graphic, so hold on to your hat. But also very interesting as it comes to the way that relationships are formed in just friend relationships are formed in a women's prison setting. I felt like Jennifer Hillier did a very interesting job exploring that because we don't get a lot of that in mainstream you know, fiction that's out right now. As I've said, and I don't think I need to say this trigger warnings of all kinds of bound. My God, abuse, child murder, rape, the list goes on. If you're afraid that it might be in this book, it probably is. So proceed with caution for sure. The crime was fascinating. The clues were there all the way through and the end was extraordinarily satisfying. It was a wild ride. very memorable. And I'm really I was entertained the entire time. This is definitely one I would put on your list if you loved No Bad Deed, or The Whisper Man. This is Jar of Hearts by Jennifer Hillier.

### **Kaytee Cobb 33:27**

Okay, my third book is also memorable, but not like that. I'm going to talk about Wordslut: A Feminist Guide to Taking Back the English Language by Amanda Montell. Y'all get out your "Eff the Patriarchy" shirt, and your power fist pumps, and all your coffee mugs that say like "Girl Power" on them, because this is a feminist manifesto of the linguistic variety. And it's amazing. Wordslut was sent to me as part of my Feminist Book Club subscription. And it's amazing. It's kind of amazing, but it'll make you really mad for a long time. And then it'll be amazing. Right? I realized I said amazing, a lot. Just go with me here. Amanda Montell is a linguist and it has been addressed in some of our Ask Us Anything episodes that I have a Master's in Spanish linguistics. Word nerdery is totally my jam. Right? I love getting into language and why words are the way they are, why we speak the way we do. Why we use accents, all of it. I love that stuff. So this book was perfect for me. Amanda takes us through insults, sex and gender. She gives us insight into vocal fry and hedging, and other verbal cues that are typically considered female speaking traits, right? She talks about the gay voice and how there's not a corresponding lesbian voice. She talks about cat calling and people who correct the grammar of others which raising my hand guilty, right? She gets into cursing and the ways we are refer to our intimate body parts. You guys, she it's like a romp through the English language, all the different ways that it can A, piss us off and B, be useful and see, really, like, make other people mad, which I will right now you can probably tell from the title and from the way that I describe this book that this is not a book that you can, you know, bring to your church book club, right? Although please do and then tell me about it, or do like an Instagram story and tag me because I want to see that happen. If you are sensitive to cursing, and quote unquote "bad words", you are going to be clutching your pearls the entire way through this book. Because it is she doesn't like pull punches. Like there's every word you could possibly imagine is in this book. But if you're interested in how English got the way that it did, and how

even innocuous statements show the patriarchy embedded in our language, this book will totally blow your mind. First, like or finally, finally, finally, let me tell you my biggest and most universally applicable takeaway from this book. English as it stands does not have a gender neutral term for you. That communicates the plural, we just say you, right? We can say you guys, but that's not gender neutral. That's dudes. That's guys, right. So she talks about using the term, y'all, and how it's really the only term that we have in English that communicates a neutral term for a group of people. And so I've been using it, and I'm okay with using it. But now, totally embracing it, y'all is the way of the future. That's what I'm going to say here. Like I'm very passionate about this. And I'm going to use it even more after reading this book. Because you guys and you girls is not going to cut it for me and my girlfriends. So we're normalizing y'all, all y'all. And we're going to take back the language. And if you want to get on this feminist crazy train with me, and you want to be excited and empowered, and get out your fist pumps with me, you're going to pick up *Wordslut: A Feminist Guide to Taking Back the English Language* by Amanda Montell.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:10

That sounds very interesting.

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:13

It's so good. There's like comics. And then there's like charts of like, bodily anatomy words that we've used throughout history. Like it's so fun. It's so fun.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:22

That would just be an interesting one to have on yourself and just sort of leaf through it every email like not necessarily that you're gonna read all the way through, but just you can kind of read through it as find stuff as you find stuff that's interesting. Cool.

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:33

Totally love it. Okay, those were our six current reads. That was fun. And now we're going to get into our deep dive. So we want to talk about cinematic books that we would like to see on the big screen and small screen. And I did divide these up into categories, Meredith, but I have one category. That's literally just called "Cinematic Books that Meredith talked about" that I want to see on the screen. Because you are so good at these. So I want you to start.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:58

Well that's interesting. Do you think I bring especially cinematic books?

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:01

I do. Because I filled it up so fast.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:04

Yeah, maybe my reading does lend that way, because I am not very visual. Maybe it's in my reading that I kind of scratch that itch, which is that's an interesting thing to think about. I certainly didn't have any trouble thinking. I mean, the biggest thing I was thinking about initially when I thought about this

topic was you know, I'm just so tired of the movie business model. And even the now just be on movies, the streamer business model that is like the rehash of the rehash of the rehash the sequel of the sequel, The rehash of the thing we've seen three different times, the remake that you know, where it's all like, let's do a prequel to the prequel, all of that, because somehow, it's been decided in Hollywood that we only can have like, IP that we already know about. Like we all everything has to rip off of IP that we're already familiar with, instead of all of these books that we can talk about here today, that really should be being made into movies. And I know again, it's all because of the business model. It's easier in a weird way to make the 900th Marvel movie than it is to make the so the number one movie that I want to see made and you guys know that this is true, but let's just get it out from the beginning, I want to see Into the Drowning Deep be made by James Cameron right? Into the Drowning Deep is the mermaid horror, right? It's set up absolutely perfectly to be made into a screenplay. Like literally it would not be difficult to make it into a screenplay. And then you just put James Cameron in one of his little bubble mobiles which he loves to be in any way and send him under the water and film some amazingly horrific mermaid horror scenes. This just seems like a no brainer to me, right?

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:01

Yeah, I think that one could be filmed as a mockumentary like Werner Herzog almost right mockumentary? Yeah, where it's like, "And here's the crew and they know nothing will ever go wrong." Right? I just, I love everything about that idea. Yeah. All right. Well, when I started thinking about it, the first thing that I came up with was, it was a lot of YA fantasy to start with, like, I really want to see Scythe by Neal Shusterman on the big screen. Wouldn't that be amazing?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:28

Why do we not have HBO making the Scythe miniseries, not miniseries, but the series, the full series?

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:36

It needs at least three seasons. And it would keep going. And it would get crazier and crazier. I think it would be so fun to see casting for Goddard. I mean, and the robes, the scythe robes. It's just perfectly visual. It's such a great set of books. So that one. I want to see Lobizona like I'm not getting of that soapbox anytime soon. I want to see Black Sun by Rebecca Roanhorse. And one that I've talked about a couple times, but it kind of flies under the radar is The Extraordinaries by TJ Klune. This is like superhero movie, but like queer, and maybe a little bit mixed with The Boys, that like really terrible Amazon Prime show. I mean, terrible in a great way. Right? It was horrible superheroes that were like, using their power not for good. And I just I think that that kind of a spin off with teenage superheroes that are not perfect would be a really great, really great small screen adaptation as well.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:35

Well, yeah. And right along there. I mean, I think we are all asking ourselves why we're not getting A Court of Thorns and Roses. You know, the Sarah J. Maas series, right? Because talk about a long Game of Thrones-esque kind of, you know, there's so many books. They're all big and fat. There's so many characters, there's amazing costuming, there's amazing creatures. There's, I mean, it just you can see it in your mind. And I just don't understand why we have to dip into the Star Wars well, again,

when we could be doing ACOMAF. You know what I mean? We could be doing the Night Court. And recently,

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:15

Well it would have to be on like Cinemax, though.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:19

Well, I mean, have you seen Game of Thrones?

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:22

Oh, yeah. No, I mean, HBO could do it too. For sure.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:25

I mean, I'm not saying make a clean version of it. I'm saying let's do it. Let's actually put Rhysand and his wings and Feyre up in the air and let him go at it. Like let's, let's film that.

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:39

Perfect. And then for the teenagers, we're also going to adapt A Curse so Dark and Lonely because yes, we need the the somewhat simmered down version of A Court of Thorns and Roses, right. Brigid Kemmerer writes a great world and and great heroes and anti heroes that you love to root for. We need that on the screen, too. And I would love to see Rhen as all his different beastly incarnations in that adaptation on the screen.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:07

Right and Grey, especially in the second book, I mean, just Grey's entire arc. Yeah, there's, there's no question that that would be fantastic. Well, speaking of fantastic, I have to talk about a trio of horror novels that I continue to ask myself, Why is this not on the screen when there's you know, again, here we go with another we needed another Halloween movie. We needed like Halloween 19 but we can't get The Troop, which is you know about that boy scout troop that goes on this trip. And then it's like, Lord of the Flies meets a horror movie. And I mean, that would be fantastic. Fantasticland. Where's the Fantasticland movie? Fantasticland is the theme park that is hit by a hurricane and then a bunch of teenagers are left behind. And again, Lord of the Flies meets a horror movie. That would be incredibly cinematic. And that actually I think they could film with the kids film it with a bunch of unknowns. And the the backdrop wouldn't be overly like that I think could be filmed without it being like a multi million dollar budget. But you know, it'd be like an indie film. And then I have to ask for Devolution, the Bigfoot horror that you didn't know you need it. Like, you know, small group of people stuck in their homes and there are a family of Bigfeet. And they smell and they're really violent. And it's really, really horrible. And it's would be amazing on screen. You put M. Night Shamalan on Devolution. That would be big screen gold.

**Kaytee Cobb** 44:49

Yes, definitely. Definitely. Okay, I'm gonna lighten it up slightly. I would really love to see Finlay Donovan is Killing It. I want that like snarky silly mystery. I think we could put like a Jennifer Aniston in there. She

would be excellent as Finlay, I would love to see that cast because it's that kind of lightness and funniness that offsets some of the killing and strangling and burying of dead bodies that you find in some of those darker movies. I also, like the adaptation of *The One* by John Marrs was a travesty. I know we don't need to rehash. But let's go pick up *The Passengers* by John Mars, that near future sci fi people eat that up. Why is that not all over our screens? We need that yesterday. Right? And then I would also really love to see *One Two Three* by Laurie Frankel, which is her newer release. I thought about putting *This Is How It Always Is* on there, but I don't think that one would come to the screen as well as *One Two Three*, which has first of all, some really great opportunities to pick up some disabled actors and actresses to put in main roles, which I think we desperately need on the screen. But then also to talk a little bit about climate change and corporate responsibility and all of that. And I think it's just it's, it ends up being a really fun book. By the end, even though it sounds heavy when you set it up. I think it would be great on the movie screen as well.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:14

Absolutely. Well, I'll round up my picks with the fact that I just really, really hope I'm crossing my fingers, I feel like a lot of these thrillers especially like Reese Witherspoon, like she's optioned a lot of these, *The Last Thing He Told Me* and you know, she's bringing several of these to the to the screen, and they're bringing *Falling* to the screen too, aren't they?

**Kaytee Cobb** 46:35

I think so. I did hear that it had the rights were purchased. Like at publication, right.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 46:40

And *Project Hail Mary* is coming to the screen, which is great with Ryan Gosling. So I'm really, really hoping I'm just absolutely crossing my fingers that we're going to be able to get *Nevermoor* to the screen. Because *Harry Potter* did so well. And I feel like the *Nevermoor* books could translate in an equally great way to the screen.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:01

Yes, that was absolutely on my list as well. And on that same vein, I really want to see *Amari and the Night Brothers*, especially once he's put out a few more books in the series. And we can start to see a character arc for Amari. I would love that. All right, let's press some books into people's hands. Meredith, what are you going to press this week?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:19

All right, I do want to press one more book that I think would be absolutely fantastic on the screen, and I think could be Oscar gold. Not only would it be really, really interesting, but I think kind of like with *Parasite*, two years ago, the movie *Parasite*, I feel like this movie could be Oscar gold, I would love to see *The Devotion of Suspect X* by Keigo Higashino come to the screen. This is a fantastic mystery that I think would translate really, really well to the screen. But it's a great book. And again, I listened to this on audio. And that's the way I highly recommend it. Because of the the fact that the Japanese names are easier for at least they work for me on audio. So that's a great way to listen to this. Here's the setup. Now, as I said, when I talked about it before, I actually didn't know much about this book when I went

into it. And I think that that's the very best thing. So I'm going to just give you a very, very little bit of setup. And I'm going to tell you that this book is a police procedural, kind of, and it's set in Japan. And it starts with a murder. And you know exactly who commits that murder and you know exactly why they're committing that murder. That's it. That's all I'm going to tell you. Because that's all that you need to know. You just need to get yourself into it. This one is so excellent. Absolute five star book for me. The construction of this book is so interesting, and it's like nothing I've ever read before. It's a really, really smart mystery. It's super twisty all the way through and all the way till the end. I had no idea what was going to happen. There was a moment where I gasped out loud. I so didn't see pieces of this coming but then it made perfect sense when it happened. And I absolutely love that. If you are looking for something smart and refreshing in your mystery reading life, definitely pick up *The Devotion of Suspect X* by Keigo Higashino.

**Kaytee Cobb** 49:19

I almost went down the same track. I was like, you know, I could easily put such and such books that I'm going to save for another press in here. But the one I ended up landing on is a continuation of Nonfiction November. This one's a short one so you can fit it in before the end of the month. If you're still like, "Ah, I should probably read some nonfiction this month." It's *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* by Neil deGrasse Tyson. I know you're probably thinking like "What Kaytee, what's happening right now. This is not my normal jam." But that's why it's perfect press. We're in the middle of Nonfiction November. You've been wanting to fit in your nonfiction reading, but you don't want something dry and you do want to feel like you learned something. This is the perfect pick. Neil narrates the audiobook so that's a great way to take it in. But if you're like me, you'll also want the printed copy in front of you as well. Hint Hint, I was able to find the young people's version of this audio book on my library's hoopla. So that could be a great way to buddy read it with your own kiddos as well. Neil deGrasse Tyson has been explaining astrophysics to science dum dums like me for decades now. And he's really freaking good at it. He makes it understandable, approachable, while also giving you facts and figures that will totally blow your mind. Even though I already told you about the main book and the young people's version. I'll also add that there's a picture book called *Starstruck*. And it's about Neil deGrasse Tyson and his incredible journey to become one of the well most well known scientists of our time. It's beautifully illustrated perfect for your youngest learners. May we all find this November a chilly evening this month to look up at the stars and be gobsmacked, amazed and starstruck. I want you to pick up a copy of *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* by Neil deGrasse Tyson and let it blow your mind.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:06

That is not one that I expected you to bring, but it sounds I really I love Neil deGrasse Tyson, I think he's so smart. I think he's so sexy. He's so listenable. I think that's a great press.

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:19

It's great on audio. He's so listenable. His voice is fabulous.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:24

I love it. 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](https://www.instagram.com/Meredith.reads) on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:34

And you can find me, I'm Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks on Instagram.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:38

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](http://currentlyreadingpodcast.com).

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:48

You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram, or email your homework to us at [currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com).

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:57

And if you really want to help us become a Patron subscriber for \$5 a month and get all of our great content and get to be in the bookish friends Facebook group. You can also help us by rating and reviewing us on Apple podcasts and shouting us out on social media. All of those things make a huge difference toward us finding our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 52:17

Yes, bookish friends are the best friends. Thanks for helping us grow and get closer to our goals.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 52:23

Alright, until next week. Happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 52:25

Happy reading Meredith.