



# Season 4, Episode 26: Finding Readers for Authors + Bookish Bucket Lists

Mon, 2/7 • 57:06

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:10

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

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:23

We are light on the chit chat, heavy on the book talk and our descriptions will always be spoiler free, and our episodes are always ad free thanks to our Patreon supporters.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:31

Those supporters who we call bookish friends make the podcast happen when they spend \$5 a month on Patreon and they get tons of bonus content in return.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:40

Today, we'll discuss our current reads, a bookish deep dive, and then we'll press books into your hand.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:44

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And I think a key to reading success is knowing yourself as a reader.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:53

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico, and helping authors find their readers makes my heart sing. This is episode number 26 of season four and we're so glad you're here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:05

Oh, Kaytee, that is one of the most favorite things that we do when we hear from an author that makes us so happy.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:13

Yes, it's been, it's been an unexpected delight about being on this podcast for sure. All right, friends. So just so you know, before we get started today, our deep dive today is about our bookish bucket lists, which we talked about baskets recently. And now buckets. We're just doing all the B's lately, all the Bs,

but we want to talk about what kind of things do we want to accomplish in our bookish lives before we kick the bucket, which is what a bucket bucket list would be. But before we do that we're going to talk about, we're going to do the ad we do for ourselves once a month, first Monday of the month, and talk about our Patreon a little bit.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:47

That's right. This is the one time that we do commercial so that the whole rest of the month we don't have them. So this month, we wanted to give you guys a little bit of an update. A couple weeks ago, we did an episode talking about our goals. One of our goals is of course to grow our podcast Patreon numbers. And our goal is 2022 in 2022. That's obvious, right? And we were in the 1600s when we started the year right when we did that episode, so yeah. And we are now at what number Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:19

1857

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 02:23

Which I can't believe how fast that's that's gone. And we are only 165 patrons away from reaching that first goal. I would be so excited if we reach that first goal in the first quarter. More importantly, though, that doesn't matter at all. Because what's more important is that as that number grows, the bookish community in our Facebook group, which is just for our Patreon subscribers, continues to grow. And there's a part of me, Kaytee, and I know we've talked about this that we're like, "Mmm, is that group, I mean, beyond our expectations going to get too big?" But the reality is, the conversations are really, really high quality. There are more and more people involved in those conversations. And more and more posts being started every day by the bookish friends. But I feel like more than ever, we are seeing people finding connections amongst the books that they love. Finding those key elements of you know, those points of connection, and then realizing that they can be really good bookish friends over the internet, and sometimes in real life. So more is really more at this point in the bookish friends group on Facebook.

**Kaytee Cobb** 03:31

Yeah, it doesn't seem to dilute at all and become just background noise. It's really bookish focused, high quality conversations, thoughtful critiques, which I really love. And the other good thing is that also means that our Mighty Networks group is growing, which is for the bookish friends that do not want to be on Facebook. We talked about it a couple weeks ago and it has almost doubled in size since then, which means over there as well there's even more quality bookish conversation and people finding friends over on that network as well. So it's just like wins all around. We love it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:05

It is so there's no question that the extra content that you get from being a bookish friend, of course, we've got All Things Murderful, Kaytee Reads Too Much. We've got the Indie Press List. Those are all things that you get for the \$5 a month. But for my money, that bookish community is what really keeps people coming back for sure.

**Kaytee Cobb** 04:27

I would agree. All right, there's our Mischief Managed. Meredith, what is your bookish moment of the week?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:34

Okay, my bookish moment of the week is actually related. Because I have and you have Kaytee, and we as a, you know, on the podcast have gotten so much response to the deep dive that we did, which you mentioned about kind of finding our buckets as readers, the themes in our reading and we each chose three in the episode that we did a couple of weeks ago and we talked about those in the show, and then so many people on our social media threads, and in instant messages have been talking to us and talking to each other about what their reading themes are, or their reading buckets, the the three major themes that kind of explained the book choices that you make, or the books that are a really good fit for you. And so I've been thinking a lot about this, because I feel like it is a part of a larger thing that I'm terming a readerly profile. And here's my dream. Here's my dream, Kaytee, because I think ... exactly. I mean, that's, that's, that's basically what I'm thinking. Because every time I go to Instagram, or someone, you know, is of interest to me on Instagram, or Bookstagram account, and I'll take a look at their account to see if I want to follow them, what I'm looking for is not do they have great pictures, because I think we're all kind of over the whole, like, let's do a styled shoot of our book. And it's really for me much more about, "Do I care about the books that they're talking about? Are we a good fit? And do I like the way that they discuss books?" And a really quick way for me to be able to figure that out would be if everybody would put like a readerly profile together in like a story highlight or something. So that you could quickly say, "Oh, here's a panel that shows me their 10 favorite books of the last like five years," like every year we could just put a text document in stories like just a text block in stories with your 10 favorite books, save that as a highlight. And then a text, the same thing with your three kind of readerly themes. And then every time someone goes to your Instagram account, they can quickly and easily without having to go through hundreds of different posts, they can quickly and easily see. Okay, "Do we mesh as readers? Is this someone that I want to follow? Because I think that we might give each other great recommendations or have great bookish conversation." I just started thinking of this concept of what makes our readerly profile, like how do we quickly identify who our book twins or anti book twins or book cousins or book sisters are? And how can we do that more readily?

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:22

Nice. I love this idea. I think we should make some templates in Canva. And we should just share them out. Megan, that's your job.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:29

Yes, Megan. Megan would be perfect for that. She's very, very good at that.

**Kaytee Cobb** 07:33

She's so good at them.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 07:34

Right? So I mean, don't you think it would be great if you could just be like, what's a shorthand for me to be able to figure out who this is who this person is, as a reader. They don't have to be identical to us, because I actually follow a lot of people on Instagram, who are not my book twins, but I really, really, really love the way they talk about books. And so sometimes, you know, just really quickly being able to figure out who those people are, and what they're interested in, feel like it would give us better quality follows on Instagram. And if we have better quality follows, then we can unfollow anybody who is just background noise. And then maybe with social media starts to not be so noisy and really bringing more quality to our reading life.

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:21

Yes, a more curated experience. I love this plan, I think yeah, I think we should roll it out. I think we should get it started. Alright, I'm sure we can handle it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:30

Yes. Well, Megan can. I'm sure Megan can handle it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:35

Okay, I had something chosen for my bookish moment today. But then we got an email from an author and that's why I changed my bite size intro and my bookish moment. So I'm just going to go ahead and read it to you all. This is from the author. He says "Hi, there. My name is James Gould-Bourn and I'm the author of Bear Necessity. I recently noticed on Instagram that several people had bought my book from Fabled bookshop due to your recommendation. So I just wanted to reach out and say a big thank you. The book was published right in the middle of the pandemic, and it sort of got lost in all the craziness that was happening around the world at that time. So I'm really happy to hear that people are finding it, reading it, and most of all, enjoying it. Thanks again for the mention. I really appreciate it. I hope your listeners have as much fun reading it as I did writing it." This had to be my bookish moment, Meredith.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 09:17

Yes, I know. I just was so thrilled to hear from him. Bear Cecessity was a real kind of sleeper choice. But everyone who's gotten it who's gotten back to us has said that they absolutely loved it. It's just a really particular kind of swing up feel good but plenty of emotion kind of book.

**Kaytee Cobb** 09:39

With a little quirk in there. Good. Yeah, cannot forget to mention the quirkiness. I mean, anybody who's not part of our Patreon community at this point, you've probably guessed that this was one of the January books from the Indie Press List that Fabled put together for us. And that's the thing about indie bookstores and hand selling is that they put books into our hands and put books on the radar of other readers that maybe otherwise would have flown under that radar, or didn't get the attention they deserved because of a pandemic, or COVID, or whatever for this debut author and for Fabled bookshop, the Indie Press List made a real difference in sales and it's just so thrilling to be part of that.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 10:17

Absolutely. Well, you know, this Bear Necessity was the one that I was physically in Fabled shopping, I was there with Elizabeth from Fabled, their book buyer, but I also was shopping for Jeffrey, my soon to be grandson and their bookseller Jessica heard that I was in the store and came up to me with this book in her hand, and she literally pressed it into my hands. And she just was saying, "I don't know if it's going to be an Indie Press pick, but I definitely feel like it could be a great pick for you and I just love this book." And she just was like, she locked eyes with me. And it was just one of those moments exactly what you're talking about Kaytee where I never would have found that book but that bookseller knew to press it into my hands. And so now all of our readers have gotten a chance to read it. And we just love James. What a really, really nice guy.

**Kaytee Cobb** 11:06

What a nice guy. I love it so much. Okay. Let's talk about some current reads. Meredith, what's your first book this week?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:13

Okay, Kaytee, that is an excellent question. Oh, I got it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 11:16

Oh, oh.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:17

I'm remembering now. There are books. All right. Okay. The first book that I want to talk about, I have a wide range of books this week, which I always enjoy when I have you know, stuff that spans my whole readerly spectrum. This one, however, is not one that I would have picked up on my own at all. This is *The Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri. What I've known previously about this collection is probably what you've known about it listeners. It's short stories, which honestly for me, is a strike against it. For better or for worse. My English majorness had me reading too many short stories, and as an adult, I just don't gravitate toward them. Also, it's got a big, huge overarching premise that honestly felt like too much for me to get my arms around. The author Lahiri traces the cross currents set in motion when immigrants expatriates, and their children arrive, quite literally, at a cultural divide. Now, that is just not the kind of reading that I like to sink into at the end of a hard day, for better or for worse, that that's just who I am as a reader. But this is why my buddy reading with Roxana has been so pivotal and so impactful on my reading overall, because she had read this collection years ago, and she still remembered several details very vividly. And so she came alongside me and said, "It's not big and sweeping and hard, Meredith, it's the lives of ordinary people through a much smaller, more focused lens. More importantly, it's just interesting stories. You're going to love this." And I'm so glad that I trusted her. In the first story, which I think is my favorite, but I've really gone back and forth on this, a blackout forces a young Indian American couple to make confessions that threatened to unravel their relationship. In another story, a latchkey kid with a single working mom finds a special affinity for a woman in in Calcutta. And in the title story, an interpreter guides an American family through the India of their ancestors. And that interpreter hears an astonishing confession. That story absolutely threw me for a loop. Now I will tell you that Roxanna and I read this right on the heels of having read *Roar*, so

swing up. This is definitely a completely different ballgame as far as quality of the short story. And I felt it from the beginning. Like I said, that very first story is, like so many of the stories in Interpreter of Maladies, best described as a gut punch, but not in an emotional way more just in a literary gut punch kind of way. And that's a real sweet spot for me. The stories are long enough that you can get into the world but just perfect for one sitting reads. Kaytee, we took your advice. And we insisted on only one a day. And actually we really did one every couple of days because we talked about that story before we moved on to the next one. And I have to say it led to some great conversations because we both came at the story from such different places given our backgrounds. Roxana is Muslim and Canadian, and has immigrant parents and I am not any of those things and completely boring. But that led to great conversation. But even more importantly, it led to a lot of sharing between the two of us and a deepening of our relationship. I learned so much about Indian culture and the immigrant experience from this book. Now Lahiri's writing I think so many of us have read The Namesake, right? It's absolutely beautiful. She is the master of small details that tell you immediately who a character is at their core. She just comes at you with these searing little nuggets. In some ways, you can describe this collection as "slice of life," because the stories certainly give you that. There are moments in time with the specific characters. Like Roxanna, I will remember these for a really long time. But in many ways, there are also stories that span entire generations and lifetimes and this all happens just within the space of paragraphs. Lahiri is such a talent and this collection has my whole heart. This is the Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri.

**Kaytee Cobb** 15:45

Okay, Meredith, I'm going to bring one that you have brought to the show before. I want to talk about Arsenic and Adobo by Mia P Manansala. So like I said, Meredith brought this one to the show on season three episode 44. I went and looked it up. But that means it's definitely been long enough at this point that I can tell you about it again. Funnily enough, it also showed up on our patrons least favorite books of 2021 list. Yes, it did. Thankfully, I didn't have that experience, and neither did Meredith. She really enjoyed it when she talked about it on the show. So it's fun to diverge sometimes from our listeners in that way. Here's our setup. Lila is working in her Tita Rosie's kitchen in a restaurant that has seen better days. When her ex boyfriend and the town's resident food critic shows up again to pan the restaurant, they know they are in for a repeat of his past nastiness. But when he drops dead right after arguing with Lila and eating dessert, she becomes the main suspect in the case. The investigation ramps up, the restaurant is closed and all the while the landlord is trying to kick them off the property. So of course that means Lila needs to do some digging on her own. Especially because the family loan is on the line for her bail. So she can't just skip town. Lila has a barista bestie that works next door, a trustee pup at her heels and what she calls the Nosy Auntie network at her back. This is like a comedic murder mystery and I am here for it. Add in the fact that it's filled with Filipino food references and Tagalog language sprinkled in and we have a winner here on every level. For me this was a little Finlay Donovan esque but without so much mommy drama.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 17:24

Without so much hot mess express.



**Kaytee Cobb** 17:26

Hot mess express right? This book led me to do some internet digging and find out that the Philippines were a Spanish colony for more than 360 years, and have only been independent for a little over a century. That's why there's so much intersection in the language and the food and the cultural crossover. So while that's not necessarily the reason you might pick up this book, it may help to increase your enjoyment of it to see if you're like me, the Spanish culture crossover and the way that Philippine food and culture has distanced itself from that colonial past. Overall, I found it really delightful. I'm excited for another one in the series. This one made me very hungry for Philippine food. And I loved all the main characters. So this was Arsenic and Adobo by Mia P. Manansala.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 18:13

Yeah, you know, I was not surprised to see that on our Patreon patrons least favorite books of the year because I mean, because I did enjoy it, but because it's a cozy mystery. And the reality is that that is not going to be everyone's cup of tea period. And it also is not going to be everyone's cup of tea all the time. Like I've really like cozy mysteries. But there are times in my life or in my reading moods, where it would really annoy me. You know what I mean? So for that reason, I'm not totally surprised. I do think it's quality for what it is. So I feel like if your expectations are aligned, and if that's what your mood is really wanting, you'll have a great experience, but I feel like the mismatch would be really easy to have happen.

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:02

Oh, yeah, absolutely, definitely.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:06

But I like it. And I do. I just I love Filipino food. My two older sons are half Filipino. And so we have a lot of Filipino food in our world. And that whole book made me so hungry.

**Kaytee Cobb** 19:17

I'm hungry now just thinking about that book. And the cover is so great. Like, I just love it. It's great.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 19:24

Okay, well Kaytee with my next book we are going to go much much much darker than Arsenic and Adobo so if you want something like go with Arsenic and Adobo, if you really are craving something dark, you're gonna want to listen up to this pick for sure. Because I want to talk about Never Saw Me Coming by Vera Kurian. So here's the setup. I love the tagline. So I'm going to tell you that the tagline sets up a really good premise. "You should never trust a psychopath, but what if you had no choice? Here we have our lead character, Chloe Sevre. She's a freshman honors student. So we're in college here. She's a legging wearing hot girl. She also happens to be a psychopath. She spends her time going to class and yoga and frat parties. And she also spends a fair amount of time plotting to kill Will Bachman, a childhood friend who massively did her wrong. Now Chloe is one of seven students at her DC based college who are part of an unusual clinical study of psychopaths. Students like herself who lack empathy and can't comprehend emotions like fear or guilt. The study which is led by a renowned psychologist requires them to wear smartwatches that track their moods and their movements. Well,

when one of the students in the study is found murdered in the psych building, a dangerous game of cat and mouse begins and Chloe goes from hunter to prey. And most interestingly, she has to decide which of these psychopaths she can trust." Okay, so it's a great premise, right? It's a it's a really, really, really great premise. This was my Shelf Subscription for from Bookshelf Thomasville. And I love it because the their subscription is one that I really, really, really trust. I almost always get to their books, which is saying something because I have a lot of subscriptions. But when I got this one with the campus setting, along with an unreliable set of narrators, I knew that this book was probably not going to be the biggest hit for me from the very beginning. Right. So reader know thyself, I knew these things going into it. But it had such a great narrative style that it sucked me in from the first paragraph. I could not stop reading. The writing is definitely steps above what you often see in thrillers, especially thrillers, where you have the unreliable narrator trope. So it's very well done for what it is. In the premise is something fresh and new, which has become more and more important to me in my reading. So to be clear, we had an engaging narrator and a fresh premise. These are often the things that will help me override what I know to be true in my own reading. And in the beginning, as we're introduced to the first of our main characters, my spirits were raised because there were a couple that were really interesting to me, including one that reminded me a lot of Tom Ripley from The Talented Mr. Ripley. I liked him and his backstory. And I loved that it was really developed. I really found that character to be the most interesting. And the portions in the beginning where we watch Chloe track her nemesis Will had me dark laughing, which is what I call when I laugh at dark things, because I'm a horrible person. Now, several people had expressed and I had seen that they had issues with the book and its pacing specifically, before it's on, I'd seen that before I started reading it. So I wasn't surprised when, at the halfway point, my attention began to seriously wander. This was my problem with it, the narrative style became overly convoluted, because the author was just introducing more and more characters. And each of these characters had his or her own complicated backstory. I'm usually good with large casts. That's not something that bothers me in my reading at all. But in this case, I found myself constantly trying to remember who was who and that took me out of the story. I continued reading though, because I was very interested to see how everything was going to resolve and it did have a fairly satisfying ending. So I didn't hate this book by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, I quite liked it. But it wasn't the gigantic win for me that I wanted it to be. I still think there's a lot to be found here. That is very, very interesting. So this is Never Saw Me Coming by Vera Kurian.

**Kaytee Cobb** 24:03

Okay, I have spicy mcspicy pants coming to visit here for my second book today Meridith.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 24:09

Oh, good. Excellent.

**Kaytee Cobb** 24:10

I want to talk about Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult. It's been a hot minute since I brought a good spicy opinion to the podcast, so I gotta get warmed up here for a little bit. Jody P. is an auto buy author for me. I've read her whole back catalogue minus one for like the last 20 years. Like, I don't care that she is just like a regular women's fiction author. I don't care. She's my happy place. Right? She's so accessible. She stretches the way we think about things. And yes, I do love it when she makes me cry.



Because that's a catharsis I can usually count on from dear Jodi. But here in this newest release, she betrayed my trust and I don't think that our relationship will ever recover from it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 24:54

Oh, no.

**Kaytee Cobb** 24:55

I know. It's very sad. Here's the setup. Diana has her life perfectly planned out to a tee. The next step in her grand life plan is to go to the Galapagos with her long term boyfriend Finn, so that he can propose to her, because that's the schedule. But right when they're supposed to depart, the first cases of COVID show up in New York City. As a surgical resident, her boyfriend has to stay behind. There's no way he can leave the hospital at this pivotal moment. But he still encourages her to go. So she does. like making stupid faces. That's why to the Galapagos, right as the world starts to shut down. That means that by the time she arrives on the island, all tourism has been canceled, and she's floundering around without cell service, or Wi Fi, or even an actual hotel, because they're all closed. It works out okay, though, as she gets to know the locals and occasionally gets emailed through, like random, non dead spots on the island, and messages come through from Finn, so she can get updates about what's happening in New York City. Without spoiling this book, I can tell you that at about 60% of the way into the story, Jodi completely lost me. It was swimming along great in the equatorial waters of the Galapagos with iguanas and giant tortoises. And then, oh, no, no, Jodi. No. At this point, I have been sharing that I have strong opinions about this book with people, especially in the bookish friends group, and then sending them ranting voice messages to the people who want it spoiled for them. I can talk for 15 minutes about how much I hated what happened from 60% of this book on because I don't think that an author should decide to completely flip the plot on her readers when she has built trust with them. And that's what she did here. This is like if your parents packed you up in the car, told you they were taking you to Disneyland, and then they started driving. When they say "Yay, we're here," you're actually in nowheresville, Nebraska. You have been had. That is what happened here. This author had me and it made me livid. It's not a fun surprise. It's not a fun surprise. And I think it felt witty in the writing of it, and it does not feel witty at all in the reading of it. So I almost threw this book. I did finish it. The author's note did redeem it slightly, but not enough for me to actually enjoy it. It was Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 27:20

Man, I didn't know about that midway through issue that happened. And you know, I don't read her because I refuse to be emotionally manipulated. But except for that one book that she wrote about the Black nurse. Great small things, Small Great Things. I really like that one. So no, I don't read Jodi Picoult. But I have heard so many people say that this book pissed them off. Yeah. So badly. So I feel sure, Kaytee, that you are saving a lot of people from you know, anyone can read what they want to read. But at least fair warning Right?

**Kaytee Cobb** 27:54

Right. Yes, absolutely. Yeah.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 27:56

Let me take us up because I want to talk about a book that I think everyone should read it because I just feel very, very safe talking about this book. And it's the second in a series, which also makes me really happy because I just have become the person who reads on in the series lately, and I'm so happy about it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 28:12

Y'all go back to season one. You'll be just shocked at hearing this come out of Meredith's mouth.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 28:17

Right because I used to, I used to only read one and then never never get but but now I'm reading more. This is The Man Who Died Twice by Richard Osman. Remind me, have you read this one Kaytee, have you?

**Kaytee Cobb** 28:27

I read the first one. I gave a second one to my mom for her birthday, so.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 28:31

Okay, well, I hope Patricia really, really liked it. I'm sure that she did because it is so so good. Okay, so yes, this is the follow up to Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club, which I loved. But you guys, this one is better and I can't understand, I cannot understand how he made the second one better. Okay, here's the setup. As we start the second story, the first of course is Thursday Murder Club, we find our heroes Elizabeth, Joyce, Ron, and Ibrahim, all septuagenarians, still riding high off that recent real life murder case and looking forward to a bit of peace and quiet at Cooper's Chase, which is the upscale very posh retirement village in which these four live. Things are, in short, getting back to blessed normalcy. But because this is a book and we have the good luck to be in Richard Osman's talented hands, things won't be normal for long. In fact, very soon an old pal of Elizabeth arrives desperate for her help. This "pal", I'm using air quotes here, has been accused of stealing diamonds worth millions from the wrong men. And this guy is on the run. Then the first body is found and there's going to be more bodies. And Elizabeth, Joyce, Ron and Ibrahim are up against a ruthless murderer who wouldn't bat an eyelid at knocking off four old people, but they just may get to him or her first. Five star read 100%. Five star read. I really think that Thursday Murder Club and this one The Man Who Died Twice are the kinds of books that you can give to almost anyone, because they just are smart. They're so funny. This second one had me laughing so hard. I literally snort laughed. Johnny was like, "What is happening to you?" The dialogue in this book is so crackling. Richard Osman does dialogue between these characters so well that you feel you're reading it with the same ease as if you were watching it on television. That's how easily you're taking this in. You feel like you're just watching the scene happen. This book, of course, has everything that the first book did. It has this fantastic group of friends. And the friendship element is something that I really, really love about these books. It has that sparkling dialogue. It has laughs on almost every single page because these people are hilarious. And then very, the most interesting thing is that it has a mystery that is even better than the mystery in the first book. I was on my toes the entire time trying to figure out what was happening and knowing full well I was not going to get it completely. And that is my favorite kind of mystery. As with the first book, this book has a

mix of things that do make you laugh, but also things that make you cry, or sigh deeply or feel emotions that you weren't expecting to feel given that you were laughing 10 seconds ago. And that's my favorite kind of crying in books. I don't want to see it coming. I don't want to feel like the author is waiting for me to cry. But if the author is good enough to give me an emotional feeling, because I just know and love these characters, I'm all for that kind of emotion. Richard Osman just has a deft hand. With a flick of the wrist he gives you the most amazing dialogue and he moves from sadness, to sweetness to hilarity and back again, he just makes it look so easy and we all know it is not. I absolutely love this group of cold case solving septuagenarians and I can't wait to see what they do next. It is a series, it's an autobuy series. This is *The Man Who Died Twice* by Richard Osman. And yes, you do need to read *Thursday Murder Club* first definitely before you get to this one, but they're both really really good.

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:39

You don't want to skip it anyway. It's great.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:42

You don't. You definitely don't. But the second one just won't make as much sense to you at all if you haven't read the first one.

**Kaytee Cobb** 32:48

For sure. Oh, I'm so glad it was a hit. I'm very excited to get my hands on it. I'm basically just waiting for my mom to finish it and then say, "Do you want me to send this back to you now?"

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 32:58

Well, and I do love. Yeah, I do have to say Kaytee that this was one that I loved so much that I did something I don't do very often and I had kind of a long car.... I was actually driving to see Elizabeth Barnhill and I had it in print, but then I also got the audio because I just wanted to keep reading. So it's great on audio. It's really really great production on audio if you want to do it that way.

**Kaytee Cobb** 33:21

That's how I did the first one. So I'm guessing it's the same narrator and yeah, yeah, it's a great way to take this one for sure. Okay, yay. Can't wait. Cannot wait. Okay, I also plan to swing up so that no matter what happened after my second book, we would, you know, end on a high note, so I am excited to talk about *The Flight of the Puffin* by Ann Braden. This is a middle grade gem, which you know we love to bring to the podcast and Braden, our author gives us four storylines to follow here. And for that reason, I will tell anyone who's listening to pick this book up on paper. It's more difficult to keep your head on correctly if you're listening to this one on audio. First, we have Libby, who wants to change her family history of bullying, but she just got suspended again right at the beginning of the story. Across the country, we have Vincent. He is a kid who loves Katherine Johnson, the mathematical genius featured in *Hidden Figures*, the Black woman who helped NASA get men to the moon right, but he doesn't fit in anywhere. And his classmates like to remind him of that by stuffing him in lockers. Vincent often passes T on the street, just the letter T. They were unloved at home and decided to run away because they don't fit in as a gender nonconforming child. So now they survive on a rainy sidewalk, begging for scraps. And finally we have Jack whose school is small and private but allows kids to to

learn in their own way. No matter what kind of learning difficulties they're facing, When they might lose their funding because they don't have gender inclusive restrooms Jack is focused on keeping the school open and in the process has to learn about the kids who don't fit in to regular one gender or the other restrooms. While these kids lives are all separate and distant from each other, all four of them are part of a chain reaction started by a single postcard. Through this mailed message, each of them starts to find the place where they fit, and realize that they aren't alone. And I think that's such a great message for kids to get, especially right now, when they're maybe not getting to do all the things they normally get to do and be with the friends they normally get to be with. This book isn't long, but it has a great swing up for each of our characters. And those interweaving storylines are just a chef's kiss of perfection, you can tell from the setup that we've got LGBT representation, bullying, and being different, all packed into the small novel. It's a great one to read with your kid for that reason, or to hand to them, as they start to read or watch TV shows and movies that have this kind of content. If they start to wonder, well, what is a gender inclusive restroom? What does that even mean? Easily digestible, I would absolutely hand it to my eight year old or my 11 year old, but make sure for your own family that you take a peek first, because I don't need anybody coming back to me and being like, "Kaytee, you didn't tell me there was a non binary kid there?" Yes, I did. And you make that decision for your own kids. Right? As LeVar Burton says, "You don't have to take my word for it." This one is *The Flight of the Puffin* by Ann Braden.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:18

Well, that is the next book that I'm putting into Jackson's hands for sure. Because that just sounds like something he would love so much, and would be really important for us to talk about together.

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:27

Definitely any I mean, it's all real life kids, which we know Jackson loves a real life kids storyline. So exactly. It's a great fit for him for sure.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 36:34

And I've said this before, both Jackson and Johnny love crying books. Now I'm not saying that that's a crying book. But they both love that emotional gut punch thing that I don't. They love it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 36:46

This one does have some catharsis. I did not cry and I'm usually pretty good about just leaning into the tears. But I'm not saying that another 10 year old might not cry. So. Alright, perfect. Okay, so those were our six current reads, which means now we get to get into our deep dive, which is like armchair travel mixed with if I were a millionaire mixed with what do I want to do before I die? So Meredith, you actually chose this deep dive for us from the long list of possibilities. Why did you want to talk about bookish bucket list?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:18

Well, I think that this goes along with what I've talked about now a couple times just within this episode, I think taking the time to think about your bookish bucket list is as helpful in putting together your readerly profile as knowing what your bookish baskets are, right? Knowing what your three themes of

your reading are. Because it forces you to really look at your reading and what parts of your reading bring you delight. And I think if we all lean into the pieces of our reading that bring us delight, not only will we read books that are more satisfying to us, but I think we also will find other like minded readers, which multiplies the delight. So that's why I really like this topic. It's also it's just interesting for us to think about ourselves. And it's interesting for us to talk about. It helps us know each other as readers too. So I like it for that reason. I will say that as we prepared for this episode, and I was putting this together, I was like, "Man, now I have an actual list." Like now I've actually put this list together and some of these things I really, really, really want to do.

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:23

Right. Are yours mostly activities and places? I mean, rather than saying, "Oh, for my bookish bucket list, I really want to have read *The Count of Monte Cristo* before I die," which obviously is not on yours, but might be on someone else's.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:36

No, I would say I have a mixture.

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:38

Okay. Interesting. All right. So what came to mind very first?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 38:43

Okay, the first thing that came to my mind is probably the thing that's going to come to a lot of people's mind, which is at some point, I would love to spend some time doing a road trip or a set of trips, not necessarily a road trip driving because Lord, I live in Texas, we could drive for nine hours and see two bookstores. Right? And that's not actually true. There's actually a lot of great bookstores within nine hours of me in Texas, but you get my meaning. But some trips that are especially devoted to you know, like staying at a central location so that I can satellite out to 3,4,5, 10 bookstores that are especially of interest to me, and there's some really big pockets. The number one I really want to go to Wisconsin, not only to see our our dear beloved friend, Mary Heim, but also because there are several bookstores that if you were smart about where you stayed, you could make some great day trips and and you know, so I'd love to take some of those trips.

**Kaytee Cobb** 39:45

That would be great. I love that plan. I also thought of bookstores pretty quickly and the very first thing that I put on my list actually was Parnassus Books and getting to meet Ann Patchett, which is great because that's just one trip and you get to go one place and hopefully you get to knock out both things in one day.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:01

Yes. And see I was thinking about *An Unlikely Story* and getting to meet Jeff Kinney, who owns *An Unlikely Story*. Jeff Kinney, of course, the author of *The Wimpy Kid* books, which are the books that literally made my son the reluctant reader that he is.

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:15

And many of my sons as well, right. I also other bookstores. I have been to Powell's Books, which is a big bucket list item for a lot of people because I lived in the Portland area for three years. But The Strand in New York City is just as big and beautiful and I would really, really like to go there someday. And then, I mean, it might sound silly, but when I went to visit you we spent time in Austin. I really want to go to Waco and I really want to go to Fabled.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:44

Oh, that's right. You've never been to Fabled.

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:47

I've never been to Fabled. And it's a bucket list store.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:51

Yeah, it's totally a bucket list store. You could walk the shelves with Elizabeth and you can do all the Magnolia stuff. There's some great restaurants. Waco is surprisingly becoming a great destination for a day trip, for sure. And then yeah, if you're close to Austin, then you can go to BookPeople, which you could spend all day in BookPeople. I mean, and that is a really, really big store that is incredibly well done. And I mean, you literally have to have hours and hours though, for that store.

**Kaytee Cobb** 41:21

Which is the best kind of bookstore probably. I mean, I love that experience for myself. What about did you have any authors on your bookish bucket list? I can think of one that I'm pretty sure you'd put on there.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:34

Okay, if you're thinking Amor Towles, you're wrong, because I've told you that I'm not, I'm not I cannot, well, I'm either gonna die, or I'm gonna, like jump hug him. And it's gonna, I'm gonna, I'm taller than he is. So I'm gonna knock him down. He's gonna, I'm gonna get arrested. We're not on The Bachelor. Like, there are a lot of reasons why that could go really wrong. So I'm staying away from meeting Amor Towles for a variety of reasons that are mostly legal. But I would like to get over my natural bent against talking to authors, because I do have this thing about meeting authors like at book signings and stuff. I would really, really, really love to meet Louise Penny, but I would you know what I would like to meet Louise Penny, as a reader, for sure. But I would really like to meet her, too, like as a podcaster to interview her because they'd like to have a longer conversation, right?

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:29

Rather than a two minute signing line?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 42:30

Right. So this isn't a great bucket list item because bucket list items should really be something that you can, with some time and saving and attention and intention, you can make happen. Obviously, that's



not something that I can make happen, you know, with ease, but that's the way that I would like to do it. So that's the one author not anymore, I can't do anymore.

**Kaytee Cobb** 42:50

I did put two interviews on my bucket list as well one with David Sedaris, because I have met him. I've stood in the signing line. I've had him make fun of my shirt or whatever he does when when you're standing there getting your book signed by him. But to get to sit down and have a half hour conversation with him would just be really, really great and I would just die of joy. And same with Bahni Turpin. I loved getting to interview January Lavoy in 2020. And getting that audiobook narrator behind the scenes kind of look at things and Bahni is such she's been in my ears, she has told me so many stories at this point. I actually don't even know if I would talk. I would just be like, okay, Bahni, the floor is yours. Go ahead and just tell me whatever you want and I'll listen.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:35

Man, that seems like something that we could make happen though at this point.

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:38

I don't know if I could handle it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:40

I feel like there's so many readers that would love to hear that interview. I just think at this point, we could we could probably convince Bahni Turpin to come on the show.

**Kaytee Cobb** 43:51

Yeah. But then we'd have to take like my jaw and wind it back up from my desk, and have me not Elmer Fudd at her.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 43:59

Right? Well, right, like me meeting Jamie Golden, which I wasn't positive that I could that I could actually get through because she's been in my ears for you know what I mean? When there is something about when you hear somebody talking over time you feel the start to feel like you know them.

**Kaytee Cobb** 44:14

Right. It's so weird. Okay, and then other authors like I, I would do a happy dance of joy. If I ever even got to go to a book signing with Jason Reynolds. I adore him. I might actually die if I got to talk to him. And then I have more bookstores and travel on my bucket list. I didn't put any books on mine though. I feel like when I'm like I desperately want to read that book before I die. I'd either just do it or I don't.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 44:41

Well, okay, so I have some things like this on my list because I tend to be really project oriented, right and so things that I can have full control over and check off are things that I'm that I gravitate toward. So I love the idea of reading all of a certain author's canon. That's right, right. So I just finished reading

all of Catherine Ryan Howard's books, which is not a big deal because A, they turn their own pages. And there's five of them. But I mean, like a big like, and I'm just, I'm gonna say that the one that I've always wanted to do since I was in college, as I've always wanted to read all of Charles Dickens, because I happen to really love Charles Dickens, there's a lot of him that I have not read. And I've always felt like I needed to be more of an adult in order to really appreciate it. And I think my younger self was right, I think I'm closer to being ready to do that. But there's several authors that I can put into that same category. The other thing that I would really love to do at some point, I would really like to get through the Wolf Hall, or the series that starts with Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel, and I've tried a few times. I just recently bought myself a copy so I stopped getting it from the library and I bought this handbook to go with it, which a lot of people have said really helps, because it's a very difficult to follow story. But for some reason that's on my bookish bucket list, too. So that kind of like hard reading is always on my bucket list, like things that I feel are really going to challenge me like reading The Eighth Life felt like one of those, like, a big Russian 1100 page, you know, just mammoth chunky. That was a big checkmark for me that yes, I can do it. And I feel like I grew as a reader because of it.

**Kaytee Cobb 46:35**

Okay, I mean, I did, I had, like Gone With the Wind and Roots on my list in 2020, which I read both of those in 2020 when I challenged myself to read 12 bricks. But yeah, I feel like I don't have any of those anymore. I've read The Count of Monte Cristo, I've read Les Miserables. Not saying that I've read everything ever. Not at all, of course. But I don't. I feel like the ones that I've really been thinking about for a long time and wanting to read now have done it. So I don't, I couldn't think of any titles.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:07**

Well, no, that's totally fine. Right? I think that's totally fine. And again, if that projects kind of thing appeals to you, you know, I've also thought of, I really like to read into genre more deeply into genres. So by the way, at all of Agatha Christie is something that I'm working my way through. Also, like Golden Age mysteries, falls into that kind of category, reading further into the masters of the golden age of mystery, or, you know, Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White, which is considered the first modern mystery, those kinds of things that are like, this is something that I love, how do I deepen my love of it, or all of the Grimms Fairy Tales, or more, taking a class, for example, on the history of the fairy tale, or the history of the modern detective, those kinds of things that helped me learn with my reading very much appealed to me. And those are kind of bucket list items. But the other non project related bucket list items that I really do want to put on my list is I gained so much from when I can, and these last few years have been dicey for a variety of reasons, but taking annual solo reader retreats for just a couple of days. And in some cases, I've just done 24 hours. It doesn't have to be anywhere expensive. It doesn't have to be a long trip. But it does have to be away from your family and friends, like the solo element probably is the most important part of that. And there's lots of different ways that you could make that happen on lots of different budgets. I mean, offered to house it for your friends when they when they go on a trip and you just go stay in their house, even if it's three doors down. But getting that solo time, once a year, knowing that you and a big stack of books can go and you can just read as much as you want during that period. And of course you can riff on this concept a lot. You can make it longer and more expensive and you can do lots of different things with it. A Swiss chalet, you know, for a week is that sounds pretty great to me.

**Kaytee Cobb** 49:11

I would want to go to the UK for my my very long reading retreat and visit I mean, visit some places like Blackwell's. I would love to go to the original. Oh, yeah. Especially I would have gotten so many books from them that I ordered. But then even like the Bodleian Library at Oxford is top of mind and the Trinity College Library in Dublin. I would love to go to the New York Public Library, which I've been to New York City many times. I've never gone into the library, which is a failure on my part, as far as I'm concerned.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 49:44

Well, the next time you go, you'll go.

**Kaytee Cobb** 49:45

Yeah, I mean, it's the whole this library section reminds me of the again the bookish friends posted a Tilda Swinton as libraries thread, which is maybe one of the funniest things I've ever seen on the internet because she's worn so many crazy things you can match her with buildings all over the world. Definitely go find that and take a peek because that could add to your library bucket list friend. Yes, totally be like I want to go to the one where two Tilda Swinton was dressed kind of like a turkey. That would be very fun.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:13

Yes, yes. Well, if you go to England, you can go to that church which JRR Tolkien based, The hobbit houses on. And you can go to 21 to 21 B. Baker Street, you know, for Sherlock Holmes, and so many great things you can do if you go to England.

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:35

You could take a Jack the Ripper tour. Just be murderful and weird.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:40

Oh, why didn't I think about that? That sounds great.

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:43

Oh, well, when my parents did take us to England, and I was maybe 14, they took us to the Museum of Torture. And I've never forgotten that situation. It's been 20 some odd years. So there you go.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:53

Oh, my gosh, I love your parents.

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:55

My parents are delightful. Okay. That was a delicious conversation except that very last part. Let's press some books into people's hands. Meredith, what do you want to press this week?

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:05

All right. Well, speaking of the golden age of mysteries, which is what I was thinking of, as I got to the end of my preparation here, I realized that I have not pressed anything by P.D. James and I've talked about her especially in All Things Murderful a couple of different times. I've talked about the Adam Dalgliesh series, but I've never pressed any of her books. You're going to be surprised to find that I'm pressing a book that's a part of a series but it's not the first one in the series. But in this particular case, I actually think it's a great way to access this series, then you can read both before and after this book. This is the ninth installment in the Adam Dalgliesh series and it's called Original Sin again by PD James. Here's the setup, a murder has taken place in the offices of the Peverel Press, a very famous very old London publishing house that's located in a dramatic mock Venetian Palace on the Thames River. And let me tell you, I read this book back in 2002, 20 years ago, and the descriptions of the Peverel offices still stick with me. It's an amazing location for a mystery. The victim is Gerard Etienne, the brilliant, but horrible new managing director of Peverel Press who had vowed to restore the firm's fortunes. Now Gerard was clearly a man with many enemies, including an ex mistress, who he tossed away, authors who he's refused to publish and co-workers who are now underlings who absolutely despise him. One of this group has killed him rather nastily in fact. Okay, like I said, I'm telling you that it's okay to start here, because this was actually my introduction to P.D. James. And it's part of a long 14 book series featuring commander Adam Dalgliesh, who's just as sexy and smart as you could possibly want your inspector to be in your British mystery. Original Sin was actually a great entry point, because in this book, Adam is really hitting his stride. He's just at full brilliance in this novel. This is an excellent, long, complex story, which has a very satisfying ending. And it's got several really chilling scenes to satisfy the murderful among us. It's also got plenty of rich people behaving badly and nasty, naughty office politics, just all the stuff that I love. It's a police procedural of the highest orders. So if you need your action to be fast and constant, this is not going to be for you. But if you love a well done bit of British mystery, you will love this. I enjoyed it immensely, and I've read most of the series at this point. This is perfect for fans of Louise Penny and Deborah Crombie. P.D. James is the master of the genre that those two authors are writing in now. So yes, I'm giving you permission to jump in with Original Sin or go back and start with the first book in the series, which is called Cover Her Face. Either way, you cannot lose. This book I'm pressing is Original Sin by P. D. James.

#### **Kaytee Cobb 54:24**

I am going to press another middle grade gem that kind of touches on not fitting in and bullying that, just like The Flight of the Puffin that I talked about earlier. Today, I want to press New Kid by Jerry Craft. This is a graphic novel for the press list, which there aren't very many of but I'm fixing that and working on it, folks. This book won the 2020 Newbery Medal, which is a higher honor than being on the Currently Reading press list, but it still belongs here too. My kids and I both adored this middle grade graphic novel about being the new kid at school and trying to fit in, especially when the diversity of the student body in this is lacking. For my children especially just like with El Deafo, an earlier graphic novel press of mine, this was a window book of the best kind. They were able to read the words but also see the images that gave them the feelings behind the words, right? There's now a sequel to New Kid which is called Class Act, also phenomenal. And if you've got kids that you're bringing along with you in an effort to read more diversely and or if you want to add some color to your own shelves, this is a great option for you. Both my eight and 11 year old once again have both read and reread and reread this one and the second one in the series. It's a keeper for your shelves. It's New Kid by Jerry Craft.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 55:45

Well, and I will say both Jackson and I are co-signing on this press. Jackson flew through this book. Absolutely loved it and he liked he really liked Class Act too. So really good addition to the press. Excellent. All right, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me I'm Meredith at @Meredith.reads on Instagram.

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:07

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:11

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

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:21

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:28

And if you really want to help us, become a patron, bookish friend for \$5 a month on Patreon. Also rate and review us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. All three of those things make a huge difference toward our finding our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:44

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:49

Alright, until next week, may your coffee be hot

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:52

and your book be unputdownable.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 56:54

Happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 56:55

Happy reading Meredith.