



# Season 4, Episode 46: The Listener Press!

Mon, 7/4 • 54:12

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:10

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

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:24

We are light on the chitchat, heavy on the book talk and our descriptions will always be spoiler free. Today, we have a very special episode for you.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:32

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas. And no matter how tall my TBR stack gets, I just will keep adding to it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 00:42

And I'm Katie, Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico and listener presses are great at exploding my TBR. This is episode number 46 of season four. And we're so glad you're here.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 00:53

Yes, clearly a theme to the way that we were thinking today as we're recording Kaytee, because right before we sat down, I was thinking there is no other thing that happens in the course of the readerly year, that adds to my TBR more than this episode that we do.

**Kaytee Cobb** 01:13

I agree. And that is despite the fact that you and I are both very active on Bookstagram very connected to a lot of other book podcasters that are putting out really great content and summer reading, this is the thing. This is the explosion.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 01:27

Right. And I think it's because so many of the I love a summer reading guide. I love the spring book preview. I love I participate in all of that. Love it, love it, love it. And I buy books because of it. I think the listener press episode is so persuasive for me because of the fact that they are hidden gems. Very few of the presses that we get are for new or even new ish books. These are books that people have been thinking forever, "Why isn't everyone reading this book? Why did it not get more attention?" So they've been holding it in their little readerly hearts all of this time. That's and then they're so passionate as they

recommend it. And it just sells everybody on it. So we've got and Kaytee, this year, we were blown away by how many, you guys came, you understood the assignment this year, guys.

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:20

Yes. And we only gave you all a week like we've done two, three weeks in the past. No more folks, you know how to do it. You're bringing the heat.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 02:30

Yes. So we got so many it actually took quite a while for us to pare down how we wanted to, to do this. And so I you know, I'm really excited for you guys to get to hear these presses. Me too.

**Kaytee Cobb** 02:42

Let's get to some books. Meredith. We have a whole plan. We're going to try and stick to it. We're going to try and make this episode concise while still giving you all the goodies. So let's get started with press number one, which is from our friend Jenny Florence, and she's going to tell us about Darling Girl by Liz Michalski.

**Jenny Florence** 03:01

This is Jenny Florence from Midlothian, Texas and the book I wanted to bring to you was Darling Girl by Liz Michalski. Here's the setup. This book centers on Holly Darling who is the granddaughter of Wendy Darling. And that is that Wendy Peter Pan's Wendy. Holly has experienced deep family tragedy. But things in her life are starting to finally look up until one day her daughter Eden goes missing. And Holly knows only one person can be responsible. That's right, Peter Pan. He's not the nice guy we've all been led to believe in. And this book has family at its core. And it's not a book I would typically have picked on my own but was in my Fabled Pioneer book subscription. And I have to tell you, this was the perfect book for me. It was a five star read. It has again family at its core and it has left me seeing Peter Pan quotes and Peter Pan statues everywhere. And I find myself saying audibly not today satan because Peter Pan's that guy in this book.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:03

I love everything about Jenny talking about this book. I do realize by the way that we just started the show with a book that is new even though I just said, you know and we do have we do have a mix. But the vast majority of the listener presses that we get are for older books, but yes, I also got this book in my Fabled pioneer box and I was so excited to get it because it's that dark fairy tale retelling or children's story retelling. I'm so interested in it.

**Kaytee Cobb** 04:33

I am also very interested I love a good you know dethrone-ing the hero story and flipping a story on its head. And this sounds right up my alley.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 04:46

This one sounds really really good.

**Kaytee Cobb 04:47**

Okay, our second listener press this year is from Kenzie Madson. She is bringing us American Radical by Tamer Elnoury. I'm excited to get into this one.

**Kenzie Madson 04:58**

Hey, bookish friends. My name is Kenzie and I live in South Carolina. And I just had to press the book American Radical: Inside the World of an Undercover Muslim FBI agent by Tamer Elnoury. And here is the setup. A longtime undercover agent Elnoury joined an elite counterterrorism unit after September 11. Its expressed purpose is to gain the trust of terrorists whose goals are to take out as many Americans and as public and as devastating way as possible. And when I tell you this book read like a thriller, it was page turning and I couldn't put it down. We watch as this undercover FBI agent befriends these terrorists living in US and Canadian borders with the intent that he will lead them to like undercover cells within our country and it is absolutely phenomenal. I couldn't let the moment pass. I'm getting to recommend this to you all because it's a fantastic book. Again, it's American Radical by Tamer Elnoury.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 06:07**

Well, you know, anytime we can have nonfiction that reads like propulsive fiction, I am there for it. This was one that was not on my radar, but it sounds so good.

**Kaytee Cobb 06:19**

And this one is from 2017. I love that it's Own Voices. I love that it's kind of it sounds like a big hit for fans of true crime as well, because you're really getting behind the scenes you're getting that, you know, peek at what's happening with law enforcement in these situations. I think this one sounds really great. Yeah, absolutely. Okay. Third this year is from our first guy that is pressing something into our hands. It's Michael McCarty. He is pressing A Week in Winter by Marcia Willett, which is very backlist. We're very excited about this one.

**Michael McCarty 06:50**

Hi, Currently Reading hosts and friends. This is Michael from Benicia, California. And the book I want to press is A Week in Winter by Marcia Willett, Marcia or Marcia, I've heard it pronounced both ways, is a British novelist who writes in the style of Maeve Binchy, and Rosamund Pilcher, but is not well known here in America. Here's the setup. Maudie Todhunter, a 70 something widow is faced with having to sell Moorgate, a beloved farmhouse that belonged to her deceased husband's family. This news comes as a shock to the family, many of whom never accepted Maudie. Will someone in the family purchase Moorgate? Will someone else buy it? Who could possibly want to move to an isolated farmhouse on the edge of the moor in Cornwall? As the story proceeds, we learn about the history and secrets of Moorgate and its inhabitants, past, present and future. It's a story of love lost and found, of new beginnings and the healing that forgiveness brings. Now the reasons I'm pressing it: Maudie is one of my favorite characters in fiction. I especially love her relationships with her step granddaughter, her best friend and her new unexpected housemate, a large English Mastiff named Polonius. It's the ultimate comfort read and the descriptions of Cornwall not just in winter, but in all seasons are beautiful and lush. And if possible, find the audio book recorded by June Berry. It's not easy to find, but her narration is pure magic.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:23

Oh, Kaytee. I think this one sounds so good. In fact, this was one of the ones that I immediately pressed "buy now" on because it sounds so good. And just Maudie Todhunter, I mean, what a great name.

**Kaytee Cobb** 08:38

and Moorgate. Any house that has a name to itself. I like the atmosphere he's telling us about here. I love the characters. The cover, we both looked at leaves something to be desired.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 08:50

Sure, yes. Some of these real backlist you know, these these real backlist books, the covers do leave a little bit to be desired. But the story that is in there, I think it's going to be absolutely fantastic. So this one is on my TBR for sure.

**Kaytee Cobb** 09:05

I agree. I don't know what I'm going to do like this episode alone, 18 books onto my TBR immediately and I know y'all are gonna be feeling this too. You just wait, you just wait. You're taking notes.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 09:16

But you know what's funny, this is the thing that I love more than anything is someone somewhere is going to be watching numbers. And they're going to be like, "Why the heck is A Week in Winter all of a sudden selling hundreds of copies?" That someone is going to be so confused when these when numbers start to roll in.

**Kaytee Cobb** 09:32

I'm so I'm so excited because we've seen what the bookish friends can do and what the bookish community can do and these backlist gems and then flying off the shelves, that just thrills me I love it. Okay, our next one is one of my favorite ones we got this year because it's a mother son duo. We have Mary Choate and her son pressing Ranger's Apprentice by John Flanagan, which is from 2004. Take a listen.

**Mary Choate** 09:57

Hello, my name is Mary Choate

**Alex C.** 09:59

Mine Name is Alex. I am 10 years old and we live in Utah. The book we want to press is The Ranger's Apprentice: Ruins of Golan by John Flanagan.

**Mary Choate** 10:08

Here's the setup. It starts the way every great middle grade novel should. We meet the orphaned Will the summer he turns 15, when he will be selected as an apprentice to one of the masters of his fief. He desperately wants to be chosen to take part in battle school and one day become a knight. But the local Ranger has other plans. Rangers are mysterious. They collect information and secrets and protect their

people by intercepting problems before they can escalate into something more dangerous. This is a fun adventure story with found family and memorable characters. Two things: First, the first two books have creatures that make this into a fantasy genre, but the rest of fall into the adventure fiction genre. Also, this is shelved in YA but it's perfect for adventure loving middle grade readers.

**Alex C.** 10:53

I want to press this book because it's the perfect mix of fantasy and realistic fiction. Also, the characters are really fun to be around and I liked the spin offs.

**Mary Choate** 11:02

I cosign this press for the same reasons and because it can be challenging to find books in a house of voracious readers. This series and its subsequent spin offs were fun for the whole family. It's perfect for summer reading and family road trips. Happy reading everyone.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:17

Oh, I just can't with these two. Oh, they are so cute.

**Kaytee Cobb** 11:22

Perfection. Perfection. Mary And Alex, gold star to both of you. That was excellent.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 11:28

Oh, the book Ranger's Apprentice sounds so great. The fact that it's a series that you can really dig into and have lots of summer reading. What a great press.

**Kaytee Cobb** 11:37

Definitely a great press. I'm looking forward to putting this into my son's hands all my oldest boys and then maybe having us read them together because it sounds like these two really enjoyed experiencing them as a family. Okay, so many people pressed nonfiction into our hands, which I found really interesting. This one is from bookish friend Michelle. She's pressing *Inferno* by Catherine Chou from 2020

**Michelle** 12:00

Hello, currently readers. My name is Michelle and I live in northern Ontario, Canada. I know a lot of readers love a good memoir, but I feel like this one has flown under the radar. *Inferno: A Memoir of Motherhood and Madness* by Catherine Cho is a must read for any memoir lover, or even someone new to the genre who wants to be totally engrossed with this book. It's definitely stuck with me since it's release in 2020. Saying here's the setup just doesn't feel quite right when describing this one. Catherine shares her story of being in a psych ward after experiencing postpartum depression and psychosis draped with the heavy veil of her Korean American culture. As a psychiatric nurse myself, I felt like I understood psychosis more than ever before, because Cho did such a masterful job of putting me in her disorienting shoes. I felt empathy so deeply for this new mother thanks to her beautiful writing, exploring mental illness and the deep impact that her rich culture had in her life. And I'm a 30 Something childless white lady, I'm pressing this book into everyone's hand to experience it's beautiful

prose and to step in a world you may not have known existed. That was *Inferno: A Memoir of Motherhood and Madness* by Catherine Cho.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 13:08

Oh, Kaytee, I know that one of the things that we've really been wanting to do this year in our reading is read more about mental health and mental health issues. And this book definitely feels like one of those that is a window into a really important element that a lot of people deal with and you know, and done in a really beautiful way.

**Kaytee Cobb** 13:30

Right? And since we know that so much of our audience it like 96% of our listeners are female, or female identifying, having this be from a one woman's point of view, and an Own Voices book and about motherhood, a lot of that is going to tick a lot of boxes for the people that listen to us on a regular basis. So I agree this has flown under the radar. I've never heard of this book before. Right. Okay, our next one is a big twist from that one. It's a fantasy romance from Kimberly Nelson, pressing, *A Marvelous Light* by Freya Marske.

**Kim Nelson** 14:04

Hi guys. I'm Kim Nelson, and I'm from Ada, Ohio. My press today is *A Marvelous Light* by Freya Marske. Here's the setup. So Robert Blyth, who goes by Robin has been assigned to a new job with the home office and is completely confused as to what he's supposed to be doing. When his first appointment Mr. Edwin Courcey, who is a liaison to the minister arrives, he thinks he'll get some clarification. Unfortunately, he gets more than he bargained for. He has been mistakenly appointed to an office to monitor England's secret magical society, which he is completely unaware that magic even exists and has no idea what's happening. Edwin has to demonstrate magic to him to get him to understand and believe they're then thrown into a mystery trying to figure out what happened to Robin's predecessor. This takes place in Edwardian England, which is the early 1900s. It is a mix of genres. It's romance, historical fiction mystery with some magic thrown in. It was really really good and it also has a beautiful cover. I read this in print and listened to it on audio and I'd recommend either form. The audio does have some great British accents. I will say though, it is definitely an open door romance. And if you're one that does not enjoy sexy times in your ears, Meredith, definitely pick this up in print. While it is primarily a romance, there is so much more going on here. So if you like a mystery of family drama, self discovery, I think you'd really like it. The character development that takes place is really great. And it has some beautiful writing. That was my press, *A Marvelous Light* by Freya Marske.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 15:46

Well, this is one that I immediately also pressed buy now on for a couple of reasons. First of all, thank you so much for letting all of us know who don't want sexy time in our ears that we need to get this one in another format. Thank you. I very much appreciate that. But I just finished reading *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*, which I'm going to be talking about next season on the podcast. And this one seems like the perfect next book for me to read, because there's a lot of connection between the stories and the settings. And I just feel like it's going to take it in a really interesting direction. It does have the most beautiful cover.

**Kaytee Cobb 16:23**

It really does. I actually picked this one up from the library based solely on the cover. I had no idea what it was about, and then didn't get to it by the time I returned it. And now I'm just kicking myself because I could have been like, oh, I read it and I loved it. And instead I'm like, well, dang it. Now I have to get another one. Thanks, Kim. Our next one for this year's listener press is The Way of Kings by Brandon Sanderson. This is a 2010 release and we're going to play Andrea Carson's press, but she is not the only one who pressed this one into our hands.

**Kaytee Cobb 16:23**

Right. This is one that I feel like we need to have on our radar because it is popular.

**Andrea Carson 16:59**

My name is Andrea and I live in central Illinois. My press is The Way of Kings by Brandon Sanderson. This is book one in the Stormlight Archive series. It is high fantasy fiction with some incredible story building and character development. Here's the setup. The world of Roshar is built upon a hierarchical society where eye color matters most. Those with light colored eyes are favored at the top of society. They are rich with land and wealth and known as bright lords and bright ladies, but those with dark colored eyes are not as fortunate. They are the lowly servants, soldiers and commoners that carry the burden of work in a world that gives little to no recognition of dark eyed people. And the world is not an easy one. Great storms or high storms as the book refers to them rage throughout the land on such a consistent basis that homes have been built with no windows to one side. Animals have developed hard shells to protect themselves from these storms and even plant life retracts back into the ground when a storm approaches. What I loved most about this book is the journey the author takes you on through multiple main characters and the stark contrast on where they rank in society. We have Dalinar, a light eyed commander with a thirst for battle. He is brother to the recently assassinated King, and out for vengeance. There's Shallan, a bright lady of middle class on a secret mission to steal from the world's most renowned scholar, Jasnah, who is not only Dalinar's niece, but sister to the current king. And we have Kaladin a moody, brooding dark eyed soldier who despises light eyes, and is stuck in servitude to a heartless, Bright Lord, who views dark eyes as disposable. As the reader, I felt pulled into this world where some characters are oppressed, and others are glorified solely based on a birth trait. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking for a new world to get wrapped up in the character development is so good, and the twists at the end felt well thought out with the converging storylines. Even if you do not decide to read the next book in the series. each character's individual plot wraps up well by the end, although I could not wait to pick up the next book. And I hope that's how it is for you too. That's The Way of Kings by Brandon Sanderson.

**Kaytee Cobb 19:42**

I got some interesting feels about this one, Meredith,. It sounds to me like a commentary on race. And I'm really interested to see how that plays out. Especially because it's fantasy. And it's you know, features that we recognize in our world but then he's building this whole new world as well.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:00**

Right. I really loved the way that she did the setup. Now that one was longer, and we let it be longer because the book is over 1000 pages, right. And so we felt like it needs some setup, right. And I think



that that's part of what we all experience when we're talking about high fantasy. We've gotten a lot of listeners saying, I wish you guys brought more high fantasy to the show. And you and I have both said, we're really looking for that high fantasy that we can get into but isn't going to take 7000 page books to really get into it. So this one seems like a great place to start with Brandon Sanderson, which I have always wanted to do. And I really liked the way that she did this setup. It's actually much better than the setup that for example, Amazon or Goodreads or Storygraph gives you. She did it in a way that I really felt I could get a foothold into the story. So kudos to you for that setup, because that is not easy to do on any book, let alone on a book as grand and sweeping as this one is, but I am very interested in this book.

**Kaytee Cobb** 21:00

I'm interested also, which is unfortunate, because that's another 1000 page book to add to my TBR.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 21:07

Exactly. That's a lot of pages. But big payoff if it's as good as several people told us that it is

**Kaytee Cobb** 21:13

Exactly. Okay. The next one is not new, but also not very backlist. It's from Brianna Seidel. She told us about The Binding by Bridget Collins. This is one that I smashed buy now on immediately. It's from 2019. Wait until you hear this setup.

**Brianna Seidel** 21:31

Hi, Meredith and Kaytee. My name is Brianna and I'm from Austin, Texas. And I want to recommend a book called The Binding by Bridget Collins. And here's the setup. In this world, it's pretty similar to our own except one key difference: books are actually forbidden and very superstitious. And that is because they hold people's memories. If there's something that you want to forget, a binder can help you do that. And in this world, we meet a character named Emmett, and he works on his parents farm and one day a letter arrives that is summoning him to become an apprentice to a local bookbinder and his parents are very suspicious and worried about it. But it's an offer that none of them can really refuse. And so Emmett goes and joins this bookbinder until one day, he discovers his own name on a book. And the mystery takes off from there of what memories he could have possibly bound into a book. It is a book that I can only describe as truly, truly beautiful. It is well written and crafted. The writing is, I mean, still to this day takes me aback. It's a book that's meditative and quiet but also thrilling. There's mystery, there is romance, there is beauty. It's just an incredible book. I describe it as one that if you read a lot of literary fiction, and want to dip your toe into magical realism, fantasy, it's a great one. And if you are on the other end and read a lot of fantasy and want to dip your toe into literary fiction, it's a great one as well. I have bought it for so many friends, and really recommend it everywhere I can. And I hope that the currently reading family enjoys it. Again, it is The Binding by Bridget Collins.

**Kaytee Cobb** 23:05

I love this one because she is able to use the word meditative and thrilling about it. Right. And that is a hard line to straddle.



**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 23:12

Absolutely. And if you look at the ratings, there are so many people that are like, Why can't I give this 5 million stars and not just five stars. So it has a real following? I think there's a real sweet spot for a lot of people where fantasy and literary fiction meet. So this is one that is very interesting.

**Kaytee Cobb** 23:32

I think so too. I was also getting some vibes of the movie *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* for this one because of that kind of removal of memories situation. And I love the idea that books have so much power in this world. We do see a lot of worlds where books are power lists because they're all banned, but I like the idea that this one they're kept close and safe because they're so powerful. Right. Okay, our next press number nine, Tara is pressing *The World Gives Way* by Marissa Levien, which is a 2021 sci fi release. I am excited to get some more sci fi into our lives.

**Tara** 24:07

Yep. Hi, I'm Tara, a NICU nurse and mom of three boys living in Wisconsin, and I'm pressing *The World Gives Way* by Marissa Levien. This is a dystopian sci fi book and my favorite book of 2021 and I'm pressing this book because it needs way more love and attention than it got. Here's the setup. Myrra is an indentured servant living on a huge spaceship heading to a new planet to repopulate it. The spaceship is enormous. It has deserts, beaches, resorts, cities, its own weather and an electronic sky. But there is a crack in the hole of this mega ship. The crack may be beyond repair. The new planet is many years travel to get to. How would you live your last days? How would you make your life meaningful? What makes a life well lived? Will the ship survive? This book has gorgeous, effortless world building. The pages just turned themselves. I was a passenger on this ship with all its beautifully crafted biomes This is a debut book by this author and I cannot wait to see what she writes next. That's *The World Gives Way* by Marissa Levien.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 25:23

This one sounds so good.

**Kaytee Cobb** 25:25

It's so good. It's so good. Especially for fans of *Wall-e*.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 25:28

Yes, absolutely. And by the way, I I just have to say all the love for the NICU nurses in the world I this year has has given me a new fresh love for what we went through with my grandson Jeffrey so I just have to say thank you for being a great NICU nurse and a great reader. I love this press so much. So many of you have asked for more sci fi. So we are so excited to have some real sci fi readers recommending some good ones.

**Kaytee Cobb** 25:54

Yes and a debut novelist. Hopefully we're going to end up getting a lot more from this novelist which means you can kind of get in on the ground floor with her 2021 release. Okay, next we are going to hear from one of our fan favorites or one of our favorite people Ashley Arsenal, whose last name we

love especially, yes, she is going to press *The Hunting Wives* by May Cobb which is a 2021 mystery thriller. Let's hear about that one.

**Ashley Arsenal 26:17**

Hi, this is Ashley Arsenal, and I'm calling from Canaan New Hampshire. I have an interesting book to press today. It is called *The Hunting Wives* by May Cobb. Here's the setup and I'm reading this right from the book jacket so there are no spoilers. Sophie O'Neil left behind an envy inspiring career in the stressful competitive life of big city Chicago to settle down with her husband and young son in a small Texas town. It seems like the perfect life with a beautiful home in an idyllic rural community. But Sophie soon realizes that life is now too quiet and she's feeling bored and restless. The book jacket goes on to describe that she meets a very interesting and alluring socialite in her town and gets swept up with this group of we'll call them hunting wives. And when the body of a teenage girl is discovered in the woods where these hunting wives meet, Sophie suddenly finds herself in the middle of this murder investigation and her life spirals out of control. It's a great book. It has mystery, intrigue. It's thrilling. I've recommended it to several friends who've read it and loved it as well. And I think it's a perfect beach read or summer read. So that is *The Hunting Wives* by May Cobb.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:35**

I don't know how this one has escaped me because it seems like exactly something that I would love.

**Kaytee Cobb 27:41**

It does. And you know what last name Cobb. Why isn't this on my radar? What's happening there? No relation.

**Kaytee Cobb 27:53**

Right. This is why we love the listener press because we're like this one definitely needs to get read this summer.

**Kaytee Cobb 27:54**

It does. It does. I like it. Thanks, Ashley. Next, we are going to one of the very few poetry collections that was submitted. It was interesting what kind of submissions we got this year. And so I felt like you know, there was some poetry. I wanted to make sure that we put it in here. So we're going to hear from Abigail about *In the Shelter* by Padraig O Tuama.

**Abby Murrish 28:16**

Hey, currently reading hosts, my name is Abby Murrish. I'm in Cincinnati, Ohio, I'm pressing *In the Shelter* by Padraig O Tuama. Here's the setup. Listeners might know of Padraig from Krista Tippett's work with *The On Being* project. He's a poet and theologian, and he spent his time working with the peacemaking center of Corrymeela in Northern Ireland, seeking to create spaces where people with deep and at times polarizing differences that come together to live with one another and build community. *In the Shelter* is O Tuama's memoir. He draws on a rich Irish language and imagery, and he weaves together a lyrical story that incorporates his personal narrative of growing up in a charismatic Catholic Church in Ireland as a gay young man then talks about his time studying abroad, before laying down roots in Northern Ireland as an Irishman, a poet and a chaplain of sorts. I'm pressing this book

because it's a companion and a candle for spiritual pilgrims. Padraig's story reminds us who are making sense of our faith in a polarized world that we are not alone. He gives powerful language to the experience of deconstruction or disentangling the faith. And he gently encourages, and I mean that literally he puts courage into his readers to name their place of loneliness and move toward a place of wholeness and peace. This book is also a candle or it was for me at least, if you feel like a spiritual Pilgrim, weary, confused, maybe enraged, whether by the broader world or things happening in your personal life. This book will illuminate your way and help you find a path to healing and community to love kindness goodness and maybe even joy. Again that's In the Shelter by Padraig O Tuama.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 30:04

Oh man, a companion and a candle. Companion and a candle. I'm a spiritual pilgrim. I know that was really really beautifully done.

**Kaytee Cobb** 30:13

This sounds to me like it would be a great companion also to The Heart's Invisible Furies by John Boyne, which tackles the Catholic Church and homosexuality in a, you know, gentle but funny way. Whereas this, the lyrical language, the Irish lilt, all of it. I need this book. I want to sit with it. I'm so glad that Abigail brought it to us even though it's very outside of you know, everything else that's being pressed today.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 30:41

Yeah, absolutely. This is a great addition.

**Kaytee Cobb** 30:43

Perfect. So our next one comes from bookish friend Rachel, she is pressing The Mystwick School of Musicraft by Jessica Khoury into our hands.

**Elise Norrid** 30:52

Hi, I'm Rachel Kohlbrenner, living in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and the middle grade book series I want to share with you is called the Mystwick School of Musicraft by Jessica Khoury. I just adored this book full of magic and mystery. So here is the setup. In this world magic is present, but it is through musical instruments. And as a fellow music singer, I absolutely loved this. The main character is Amelia Jones. There is nothing that she wants more than to follow in her mother's footsteps by attending the Mystwick School and becoming a maestro. A Maestro is someone who uses their musicraft to help the world and make an impact and be in one of the major orchestras that helps in fixing different problems in the world. However, when she auditions, she blows her audition and she is deeply upset. But by fate, she ends up getting an acceptance into this school. But when she gets there, she realizes that she actually got the wrong invite into the school. There was another Amelia Jones that was supposed to get in. But she isn't there. And she got hers by mistake. So she has to prove herself to keep her position there. Not only does she have to prove herself, but there is something that is hindering her from being successful. I absolutely loved the series. It was so much fun. It was so magical and had some great side characters. It warmed my heart, there was so much about this that just swept me away into another world that I would love for more people to share the joy of this middle grade fantasy series. I hope you all enjoy.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 33:06

That one sounds so great. I love the idea of the magic piece of it coming through music.

**Kaytee Cobb** 33:13

Me too. I have a very big affinity for books that include music in the storyline. I played cello as most of you know. And that is like a tender part of me. I will say that when I was getting ready for this episode, I pulled this book up and my kids were like, "Mommy, are you finally going to read that book?" because they have listened to it on our Audible account. And they've been dying for me to pick it up. So this Rachel was probably enough for me to actually put it into my ears. Next, we have Elise pressing *When We Lost Our Heads* by Heather O'Neill. This is another brand new release. Again, there's not very many of those today. But I'm really excited to have you guys hear about this one.

**Elise Norrid** 33:53

Hi everyone. My name is Elise Norrid and I am recently located in Raleigh, North Carolina. I'd like to press *When We Lost Our Heads* by Heather O'Neill. Not only does this book have a wonderfully beautiful cover that I need for my shelves. it also has a creative and original plot that still has me thinking. I read this book back in March and knew then that it will be my Book of the Year. Here's the setup. Marie Antoine and Sadie Arnett are best friends in 19th century Montreal, when their lives are changed forever after a mutual violent act. As you can probably tell by the names this book retails many aspects of the history of the French Revolution on the perspective of two girls as their lives separate and intertwine again and again, with themes covering sexuality, gender, class, status, sex and desire. This book is at times funny and other times and deeply unsettling. I couldn't get over how fun it was to read about real elements of the French Revolution woven into a fictional and original story to the point that I actually spent time after closing this book researching more of the true history. My HSP radar is not well exercised. So look into some of these topics before diving in if that is a concern, but if you enjoy historical fiction and retellings, I recommend giving this book a shot. I think that having a character named Mary Robespierre should be incentive enough. This was *When We Lost Our Heads* by Heather O'Neill.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 35:09

Oh, that one sounds so so good. I am so excited for this one.

**Kaytee Cobb** 35:14

Yes, me too. I love a great retelling of historical fiction but from like feminist bent. I'm very excited about this one immediately on my TBR, immediately into my cart.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 35:24

It's really got a great cover and I this is just one of those ones again. Where has it been? Why is this not on our radar?

**Kaytee Cobb** 35:33

Oh I do like that cover. All that hair.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 35:36

It's almost 500 pages.

**Kaytee Cobb** 35:37

It came out in February from Riverhead, and we love Riverhead. Yeah, exactly what is happening? Riverhead please contact us about books like this. Right. Okay, next we are hearing from one of our favorite people. It's our dear friend Lexy. And she is pressing Invisible Child by Andrea Elliott.

**Ashley Arsenal** 35:54

Hi, this is Lexy Largent from Austin, Texas. I want to press a nonfiction book today called Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival and Hope in an American City by Andrea Elliott. I'm a big fan of really good narrative nonfiction and this book is one of the best I've ever read. Invisible Child follows Dasani, who is a bright precocious 11 year old, for eight years, chronicling her family's experience with homelessness in New York City. When we first meet Dasani, she, her eight siblings and her two parents are living in a cramped, crumbling homeless shelter. And over the next eight years investigative journalist Andrea Elliot takes us on a journey with Dasani and she experiences highs and lows with her tight knit family. Her story shines a light on what it's like to live as a child with housing instability, food insecurity, drug abuse, violence, CPS involvement, and the foster system. It was often hard to read, but from the start, I was completely invested in and rooting for Dasani and her family. I listened to this book on audio, which is my preferred way to read nonfiction. And I just absolutely inhaled it. I couldn't tear myself away because I just had to know what would happen to Dasani, and before I even finished it, I pressed it into my daughter's hands, who's a big nonfiction and social justice reader. It was a five star book for her too. So that was Invisible Child by Andrea Elliott, and I hope you'll give it a try.

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:17

This one sounds tough, Meredith.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:18

It does. Now, was this on your radar Kaytee?

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:21

Only because one of my dear friends Erin is reading it as as part of her role as a CASA which is a court appointed special advocate and in the foster system. And she had mentioned it in one of our group chats that we're part of but that it was the only time I had heard of it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:36

Yeah, it sounds absolutely like it's got some really really heavy issues but it sounds really well done. And you know propulsive narrative nonfiction and I Yeah, this one is definitely on my TBR

**Kaytee Cobb** 37:48

I just can we just for a sec, Dasani, her eight siblings and her two parents in a crumbling shelter. Oh, my goodness.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 37:58

I know exactly. I mean, I feel like these are the these are the window books that we need to be reading.

**Kaytee Cobb** 38:03

Yes, absolutely. I completely agree with you. This next one is a little more lighthearted than that I believe. We are going to hear from Lynette who is pressing Rules for Visiting into our hands today.

**Lynette** 38:17

Hi, Kaytee and Meredith. I'm Lynette and I live outside of Dallas, Texas. I'm so excited to press Rules for Visiting by Jessica Francis Kane. This was my first five star book of 2022 and the book that ended my book buying ban for this year on January 3. Yes, I lasted all of three days. But as soon as I finished this book, I knew I needed a signed copy for my bookshelf. I loved it that much. Here's the setup. May Attaway is a gardener at a local university. She's a 40 year old woman who lives alone with her dad after helping to take care of her mom who has recently passed. She's lived a fairly isolated life, working, reading classic works of literature, watching her neighbors and keeping most people at arm's length. She does have a few co workers she's friendly with at work and others around town, but basically May keeps to herself. When the university offers May 30 days of paid leave and recognition for her service to the university and its historical gardens, she realizes that she doesn't know how to spend that time. She knows she doesn't have a lot of friends. She doesn't have any hobbies. She doesn't have a lot of interest. And she hasn't traveled much, but may decide to take a trip to see some friends and to go on her own adventure, her own Odyssey. May decides to visit four friends who she hasn't seen in years to see if they can still be considered friends, or if those relationships should remain in the past. As May continues her journey she learns a lot about people and about herself. She also discovers that when she opens herself up to new adventures and new people, she discovers that what she needed may have been right in front of her all along. She also realizes that some friends are forever and some are for a season and either way that's okay. And as she visits her friends May comes up with her own rules for visiting, such as do not arrive telling stories about the difficulties of your trip, bring a gift, make your bed and open the curtains. And don't sit in your host place just to name a few. Why I loved rules for visiting: This is a story of family, both the family that may have born into, and the family that she finds along the way. It's also a story of female friendship, those made in childhood as well as young adulthood, and the ones you make as a more mature adult. And it's about sustaining friendship and what that means and what it looks like. This is a story of self discovery. May identifies the thing she needs to work on about herself. And she also really looks at where she is in life, how she got there, and what she wants the rest of her life to look like. This book is fun, heartwarming, and it's sometimes it was heartbreaking. I just loved it, and I cannot recommend it enough.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 40:55

Doesn't that sound like so much fun?

**Kaytee Cobb** 40:57

It does. This definitely sounds like a Kaytee book. I will point that out.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:01

Yes, but it sounds good to me too. I definitely get into moods, where this is the exact kind of book that I want to be reading.

**Kaytee Cobb** 41:08

Yeah, and I think a lot of us, especially over these past few years have really taken a hard look at friendship. And I think this book, you know, having come out in 2019, which is pre pandemic, maybe maybe missed its window because now we're all thinking about friendship more and really wanting to dig into it more. And this sounds like the perfect way to do that in like a gentle fiction way.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:31

Yeah, and I love the idea of rule I like they do have rules for anything, but I like the idea of rules for visiting.

**Kaytee Cobb** 41:36

Of course you do Meredith.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 41:38

I do. I love by the way, Lynette is a great reader and she's she's a good friend. And so I really, I like her very much so her her recommendation carries a lot of weight with me.

**Kaytee Cobb** 41:50

Excellent. Okay, next we have another one of our dear bookish friends Holly, who you can always listen to every other week on The Hearts and Daggers podcast. She is pressing The House at the Edge of Night by Katherine banner, which is a 2016 release.

**Holly Farrell** 42:05

Hi fellow Currently Reading listeners. My name is Holly Farrell. I'm at birdbrainbooks on Bookstagram and I currently live in New York City although I am moving to Los Angeles, California as we speak. The book I want to press into everyone's hands today is The House at the Edge of Night by Catherine Banner. Here's the setup. Spanning nearly a century, this book is a sweeping saga following four generations of the Esposito family on the small Italian coastal island of Castellamare and the bougainvillea draped cafe that they run called The House at the Edge of Night. This cafe sits at the heart of the community, and it's where they all gather to gossip and talk. Amedeo Esposito he is a founding from Florence, and he finds his destiny on this island with his beautiful wife Pina through secrets and mysteries, trials and sacrifice. This beautiful novel follows their lives and the lives of their family and the other Islanders who all live in love on Castellamare. There's a cruel count and his bewitching wife. There's a priest who loves scandal, a prisoner of war turned poet, an outcast girl who becomes a pillar of strength and a wounded English soldier who emerges from the sea. As far as why I loved it. I loved being swept into this multi generational family saga. I loved hearing this families' stories. I loved getting attached to Castellammare. This is really a book about storytelling and its power within a family and ultimately within a community. The stories we tell ourselves about our history, about others we know and about ourselves. There is a sprinkling of magical realism, the kind that heightens the characters, feelings and experiences, but it doesn't make you question the story. The island itself feels



alive and like it's a character, and it gives off almost this mythical way of being. This was definitely a hugging book. It's a must read for lovers of Isabel Allende, especially if you liked her book, *The House of the Spirits*. It really is the perfect summer getaway. I hope to see it in more places. It's a bit backlist, so hopefully you can find it readily available. There's a couple different versions of the cover. They're both gorgeous, and I really hope you all give it a try. And please let me know what you think if you read it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 44:24

That description has so many catnip words, for me, it's not even funny. And when she said the wounded British soldier emerging from the ocean, I was like, give me this book. I need this book.

**Kaytee Cobb** 44:38

Did you look at the cover? It's like, like you could have yourself in a gorgeous, big, big hat with just that book in front of your face and it would be the perfect summer read. I definitely caught some Meredith catnip in there. The count, the priest who loves scandal. I mean, basically this is a book just for you, Meredith although also I want too.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 45:00

and this is the kind of book that I love to read especially over the summer. It just has like all of those juicy summer read like I don't want to do anything other than read this book kind of vibes. I just I love it and Holly has really great taste in books. Please do check out her podcast at *Hearts and Daggers*. They do a great, it's very different than *Currently Reading's* format but they do a really really good job doing deeper dives on books. So yes, again another another person who I know that her recommendations are high quality.

**Kaytee Cobb** 45:35

Excellent. Yes. And like comps to Isabel Allende, I get definitely got some Sofia Segovia in there too, with that little touch of magical realism. Yeah, love it. Very excited about that one. Okay, the next one we are going to hear about is from listener Amy, she is pressing *The Biggest Bluff* by Maria Konnikova. This one is nonfiction as well from 2020.

**Amy Ellis** 45:59

Hi, Meredith and Kaytee. This is Amy Ellis, a homeschooling mom of four in Southern California and longtime listener and lover of the show. Today, I wanted to press *The Biggest Bluff: How I Learned to Pay Attention, Master Myself and Win* by Maria Konnikova. Here's the setup. This is a nonfiction about a journalist with a PhD in Psychology who decides to learn about poker and see how she can apply the rules of the game to life. This book is not only hilarious, but it has so much positive psychology in it and you learn so much about the way we react to the things that we can't control in our lives as well as how we express emotion about those things and how we can read other people's emotions. The intersection of chance and skill is talked about in detail here. And it is so fascinating and I have zero interest in poker. Along the way, Maria learned so much about how to apply the elements of poker to how we live our lives. And she also becomes a tournament champion poker player, which is so neat, and she is just so funny. And this book is so insightful. I loved it, and I hope you check it out if you need a break from fiction.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:02

That is a good left turn from some of the big sweeping fiction that we've had. I like this one.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:08

I'm excited about this one too. I do remember hearing an interview with Gretchen Rubin and Maria on her podcast. I listened to that and thought it was delightful. I had no idea there was so much humor in this book, which is what made me want to put it into this list. Because sometimes we just need a little humor.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 47:26

Yep, absolutely. And positive psychology together. I think that that's the the perfect mix.

**Kaytee Cobb** 47:32

Definitely. Okay, here is our last one for this episode of listener press. The last one of this episode only. We are going to hear from Courtney, who is pressing Jennifer Mathieu's book, Moxie, which is from 2017 into our hands.

**Courtney Wise Jenkins** 47:50

Hi, Meredith and Kaytee. My name is Courtney Wise Jenkins and I live outside the St. Louis area right around the corner from The Novel Neighbor. Very lucky. And today, I would love to press Moxie by Jennifer Mathieu. So this book came out in 2015. It was pretty popular, but I wanted to share it. I think it's a great summer read for those of us who maybe aren't traditional summer book readers. Here's the setup. So this is a YA book. It's the story of Vivian Carter. She's a teen girl who gets fed up with all the sexism in her Texas high school. So inspired by her mom's past as a 90s Riot girl, she secretly writes and distributes a feminist zine, calling out all of the sexist BS that's going on in their school. Things spiral from there in good ways and bad. It explores friendships, boyfriends, school politics, all the stuff that comes along with that. I am recommending this, if you are looking for a 90s nostalgia read. It's not set in the 90s, but a lot of there's so many 90s callbacks. If you owned a Delia's catalog, if you had a magazine wall that you put all your pictures on, if you listen to No Doubt or if you just want that wonderful nostalgic feeling of the 90s coupled with some really feel good feminist rage, I highly recommend this book. You can read it in one sitting. I could not put this book down. It's just so incredibly readable. Also do not judge this book by its Netflix counterpart which was no good so again my press is Moxie by Jennifer Mathieu.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 49:52

This hit a little bit of a nerve for you there Kaytee? Did you feel...

**Kaytee Cobb** 49:56

I felt called out by that. The Delia's catalog. The magazine wall. The No Doubt listening and hi, another buzzword for a lot of us right now feminist rage, which I definitely need more of.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:09

Right. And she also said feel good feminist rage,

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:12

Which what does that even mean? I love it.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:14

I love it. It's it's I'm interested.

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:17

I'm interested also, what a marvel this press list is.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:23

I know Kaytee. There are so many good ones. But you know what I really think, Kaytee that we have not given them all that they need.

**Kaytee Cobb** 50:32

I think you're right, Meredith, which means we have more to give friends. We have more to give.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 50:39

Yes, we do. All right. So next week, we are going to have a super fun but different episode for you. All five of the Currently Reading co hosts got together and we played a rousing game of readerly "never have I ever", and we learned some stuff about each other. That was a little unsettling at times. I gotta say.

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:00

Definitely true. definitely true. There was some, there were some big wide open mouths of shock.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 51:06

Exactly right. And we laughed a lot. And we had a really good time. And I think you guys will enjoy getting to know us in a little bit of a different way. So then, that's next week's episode. And then the week after that is our final episode of season four. And we are going to give you guys part two of this listener press goodness. We just have seriously, we got so many great listener presses, we know you guys are gonna want more. So we are going to give you some more so look forward to that in two weeks. And we are just so excited and so grateful that so many of you took the time to think through not only the book that you wanted to press, but the way that you wanted to do it. We know better than anybody that this isn't easy. So thank you to everybody who took the time to do this. We really appreciate it. And I know all of our listeners do too.

**Kaytee Cobb** 51:56

We absolutely do. Like we said we got a glut of presses this year. We have been overcome by abundance. So not only do you have another episode coming, but because this is the first Monday of the month, I do want to mention that we are going to do another bonus episode just for patrons with all the rest of the presses. So if that's something that you're interested in, if these episodes blow your TBR up like they do to us, then maybe this month is the time to join us and you'll give the Indie Press List, All Things Murderful with Meredith, Kaytee Reads Too Much and even more listener presses in your ears.

We hope that you'll jump over and join us for five bucks a month at [patreon.com/currentlyreadingpodcast](https://patreon.com/currentlyreadingpodcast) and look for that in your podcast feeds.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 52:40

Cool. And then if they do that, then they also get to be in the Currently Reading Bookish friends group and have even more community with readers exactly like the ones that we've been hearing from today.

**Kaytee Cobb** 52:53

Fantastic. You can't beat that Meredith,

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 52:55

I know you cannot not for \$5 a month you can't.

**Kaytee Cobb** 52:58

No you cannot like a happy ending.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 53:00

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

**Kaytee Cobb** 53:09

And you can find me Kaytee at [@notesonbookmarks](https://www.instagram.com/notesonbookmarks) on Instagram.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 53:12

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](https://currentlyreadingpodcast.com).

**Kaytee Cobb** 53:22

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

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 53:28

And if you love this kind of content, as we said, become a bookish friend. Hop over to Patreon for \$5 a month and join us we think you will love what you find there. You can also rate and review us on Apple podcasts and shout us out on social media. All of those things make a huge difference toward us finding our perfect audience.

**Kaytee Cobb** 53:47

Yes, bookish friends are the best friends. Thank you all so much for helping us grow and get closer to our goals.

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 53:52

Alright, until next week, may your coffee be hot

**Kaytee Cobb** 53:55

and your book be unputdownable

**Meredith Monday Schwartz** 53:56

Happy reading Kaytee.

**Kaytee Cobb** 53:57

Happy reading Meredith.