



Season 5, Episode 33: Addicted to Reading + Bait & Switch Books

Mon, Mar 27, 2023 • 49:15

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:10

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

Kaytee Cobb 00:23

We are light on the chit chat, heavy on the book talk, and our descriptions will always be spoiler free. Today we'll discuss our current reads a bookish deep dive and then we'll visit the fountain.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:32

I'm Meredith Monday, Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas and backlist books are my jam.

Kaytee Cobb 00:40

And I'm Kaytee Cobb a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico. And I think I might be addicted to books. This is episode number 33 of season five. And we are so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:49

Well, Kaytee, that would not be super shocking. If you were addicted to books.

Kaytee Cobb 00:55

Yeah, it just came up in my life in a different way this past week that I kind of want to process.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:00

Got it. Okay. All right, a little bit of bookish therapy. Okay, so we will let you know right up front that we are going to be talking this week in our deep dive about bait and switch books. Kaytee, those are the books where you start out thinking they're one thing and they end up being something completely different. That can be both good and bad.

Kaytee Cobb 01:20

Yes, that's what I'm most excited about talking about.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:23

Exactly. Okay, well, let's get started the way we always do talking about our bookish moments of the week kaytee. What did you find out about your reading this week?

Kaytee Cobb 01:31

Okay, so this past week, Meredith, as you know, I went down to Mexico to be with family. We were on the beach and a beautiful home and Rocky Point, Mexico and I had a very non bookish week. We didn't go to any bookstores, I wasn't with bookish people. So I wasn't, you know, picking up my books when I was in a social situation. I couldn't even kind of bring up oh, I just read a book about that. Because nobody wanted to have those conversations. Yep, it was so different for me, because I wasn't even on the internet, where we are always having bookish conversations with our bookish friends to think that I really kind of started me feeling a little icky. And maybe like, oh, maybe books are too big of a part of my life or like an addiction almost, is that by the end of the week, I felt so off from the way that I normally feel, I felt like my stomach was not very happy, I felt anxious about a lot of things that normally would not bother me at all. I found myself almost feeling sick and overwhelmed. Not like I needed to be reading but like my internal compass was pointed the wrong direction. And I really think like I love spending time with family, I'm an extrovert. It wasn't that I was tapped out in any way. I just felt like I didn't have this essential part of myself throughout the week. And it really bothered me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:54

So right, those are all good descriptors of the way that I feel when I am tapped out as an introvert if I have too much of that kind of family time. And so usually I'll think about books in terms of, I need some time alone. And what I will do with that time, it's probably going to be read a book, listen to a book, something like that. But you're saying it was even the lack of conversation around books, seeing book covers, being in the book community, which really does start to feel normal like that starts to feel like the hallways that you walk down in your mind all day long.

Kaytee Cobb 03:28

Yeah, like I was put on a different planet from where I normally live, I just had a great conversation with our bookish friends about a great sci fi novel that takes place on a space station, and how that's just so different from our daily lives. And that's kind of what I felt like, like I was on a space station and I the food wasn't right, and the air wasn't right. And everything was kind of wrong, because my world is so bookish normally, that the world felt broken, even though like everything else was fine in my life, you know,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:49

so, yeah, it didn't feel familiar. And that familiarity feels comfortable. So yeah, you were out on an island on another planet for a while and you definitely wanted to get home. So when you came home, what was the first thing you did to kind of reenter was hopping on line with what was your first reentry activity

Kaytee Cobb 04:15

immediately once we got on the other side of the border, and I had more regular service again, I started texting Shad about The Hunger Games, because we're going to be talking about that on Popcorn in the Pages. And I started texting Katie to get an update about what she had been reading over the course of

that week. What had I missed in her reading life and she wanted to know if I had read in anything interesting in the car while we were driving. I finished two books in two days because it was like, you know how like when you go on a diet for a while, and you're like, all I want is popcorn and you finally say whatever I'm having popcorn and you just eat all the popcorn you can find. That's what it felt like I was binge reading in the way that is like unhealthy after you've given something up that you didn't really want to

Kaytee Cobb 04:56

Me, too. What was your bookish moment? I need more bookish moments right now pour into me a little,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:56

Well, I am glad that you're back to your normally scheduled programming, right. And I think that it's perfectly fine to have. I mean, I think for a lot of people, they have similar experiences, even if it's not with books just being away for a long time or with a group people you don't normally spend time with. So I'm glad that you're back and you can feel a little more normal again.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:19

my bookish moment was that I revisited a podcast that was actually one of my very, very, very first book related podcasts that I've listened to back in 2016 ish. When I started kind of listening to what should I read next, and kind of realizing, Oh, wait, there's podcasts about books that I get. I mean, it was really for a lot of us just blew our minds. I started listening to all the books, which is a podcast that's done by the people at Book Riot. And it's hosted and has been hosted for years by Liberty Hardy, who's just one of my favorite bookish people, it basically is about new releases. So every week, she and one of her co hosts gets on, and they talk about their favorite books of that week that came out. And they do a little setup of it. And they give you a sense of what they thought of it. It's like a hot 40 minutes. And they do it every week. But what I do with it, what I've always done with it, is I go back. So I literally haven't listened for a couple of years. I mean, I've been listening to other things. And so I went back to two years ago, exactly to this week, two years ago. And I started listening from there. And so I'm kind of binging when I listen to podcasts. That's my go to right now. And yes, I'm hearing a lot about books that I've already read, or that I already know a lot about. But then there's also these gems that come up. Or they will remind me of a book that I heard about at the time, but it never made to the top of my TBR. And I'll realize you know, when it's time for me to pick that up, I love the format. I always skip the first three minutes because the just like we do, and I'm sure people do it to us, too. We do a little bit of chit chat, I always skip that because I want to get right into the books, not that there's anything wrong with their chit chat at all. They're lovely people, I just get right into it. There's not a lot of ads. And it's just again, I really, really like the balance between liberty. And there's a few different people that she does it with. They bring a great sort of gathering of different kinds of genres and books. And I just have found some of my very, very favorites from that podcast. So the all the books, podcasts either listened to it, the most recent episodes come out, or go way back in their archives, and wherever you land, you will enjoy it.

Kaytee Cobb 07:30

I'm really glad that you circled back on this again, Meredith, every once in a while we'll get an email or a DM asking, Does Meredith still do this with all the books? And I think that's such a great technique to be

like what has risen to the top for me over these past two years that they're not bringing you the new releases. They're bringing you new releases from two years ago, I think we could all benefit from like, Oh, I'm still interested in that book. And I had let it fall by the wayside, which is something I'm definitely guilty of, too Buzzy. gonna set it aside, not interested. And then two years later, oh my gosh, I can't believe I didn't read this book when it came out. I love it so much,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:03

right. And I find that I only have heard of maybe 60% of the books that they talk about. So even with all the bookish things I've been in the middle of over the course of the last two years, there's still so much backlist that I don't know about that is you know, it's new to us. Right. And so I love it. I love their show. And Liberty is a really, really great reader. You know, she's like you she reads hundreds and hundreds of books a year she'll find a book she likes and like reread it three times, and then she'll still read 500 books in a year.

Kaytee Cobb 08:31

I mean, it's that's not like me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:33

She does what she does very singularly and we all benefit from it. Love it. So let's get into what we do here on currently reading and let's talk about our current reads. Kaytee, what's your first book?

Kaytee Cobb 08:44

Let's do we're right at the end of March. So I'm going to squeak in a middle grade or two this week. So heads up to people who don't like that. We talked about middle grade, but I'm excited to tell you about first *Free Water* by Amina Luqman Dawson, this book zoomed to the top of my TBR after it won the Newbery Medal just a month ago in 2023. I had not even heard of this novel beforehand, but it beat out some of the other books that I had read that had been nominated that I really enjoyed. So I was like, Hey, wait a minute. Who are you? And what are you doing with my friends over here? I knew I had to check it out. This is middle grade historical fiction, and we have a 12 year old Homer. He flees a plantation with his younger sister Ada, when all hope seems lost in their flight having left their mother behind. So it's two children fleeing by themselves. They are rescued by another escaped person and take into the secret community of free water hidden deep in the swamp via a series of tunnels, bridges that go from tree to tree fields that are dangerous if you walk through them the wrong way. Vines covering cave entrances, like it's very adventurous the way they have to get to this community of free water. The community is not north as they expected but it's thriving and it's filled with fun formerly enslaved people and some of their children born free. In the swamp free water is based on the maroon communities in the south, an often overlooked piece of the escape plans for people that were trying to find freedom. In fact, the very first words of this book say some escaped the treacheries of enslavement by going north. But there were also those who ran away into the deep swamps and forests of the American South, there in secret, they created free lives. This is a tale of what might have been I loved that epigraph to this book, Homer is a fantastic central character to root for. And the action in this book really ramps up in the final third, but I found it to be pretty slow to get started. And if the idea is to capture a middle grade reader, well, with an unputdownable historical fiction novel, I don't know if this one quite delivers. There's also a really large cast of characters to keep track of once we make it to free

water. There's all kinds of kids that are between Homer and Ada's ages. And they have specific calls that they use to communicate with each other in the swamp and specific skills. They're integral to the story, but it's kind of difficult to keep them separate in your head, it makes a kind of disagreeable jumble, a map and a character list would have done wonders for the way the story comes together, especially with all those elements I talked about at the beginning where you could kind of follow a treasure map. Don't forget to go past the swinging trees and cross the bridge and go through the vines like that kind of fun, is perfect piratey goodness for the kids who really love it. So I think it was missing that on that front. All that being said, there's a lot here to appeal to even a reluctant reader of historical fiction. And I can see why it captured the Newberry judges attention. I'm glad I read it. But I'm also really glad that I've read some of the other nominees who are first in my heart. This was Freewater by Amina Luqman Dawson.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:49

Oh, excellent. You know, we were thinking along the same lines because I also bought a middle grade book to squeeze into the end of March here. And this was one that I really, really loved. I read the grace of wild things by Heather Fawcett. Have you read this one, Kaytee? No, but I'm excited that you're gonna talk about it because I know how they're Fawcett. Of course, right. The Encyclopedia of fairies was another book by Heather Fawcett. It was an indie press choice from fabled from January of this year. So yes, we have been in a Heather Fawcett kind of mood. I picked this one on on Net Galley. And it actually just came out on February 7, so it's not been out very long. Here's the setup. Our lead character is of course, Grace, and I love her so much Grace is pluck incarnate. She is also magic. Although no one believes that part of her to make things worse, she lives in an orphanage and day after day while other children are being adopted. Nobody comes to take Grace, so she decides to make a home for herself by running away and offering herself as an apprentice to the witch in the nearby woods. Grace wonders how bad can she be but the witch is that bad. She steals souls for spells and she gobbles up children's hearts. So Grace offers her a deal if she can learn 100 and a half spells from the riches Grimoire or her spell book, The witch will make Grace her apprentice. But if Grace fails, the witch can take her magic. They agree to this deal. And soon, an unexpected bond develops between grace and the witch. But the spells are much harder than Grace expected. And then a monster from the witches past threatens the home that grace has built with the witch, which is candy covered to see you know, and to grace may have to sacrifice more than her magic to save her found home. All right. This book was so good. I will say incontrovertibly that I liked it even more than encyclopedia fairies. It was just it was just right on every level for me. I liked Encyclopaedia of Faeries, but this one was just right for me. There is no question I have talked a lot about the fact that I do not like crying books. But I am perfectly capable of loving a book so much that when it ends, I am happy to shed some tears. This was the case in this sweet little middle grade confession. I have absolutely loved this gentle retelling of the Anne of Green Gables story. This book is funny as all get out the Grace character is one that will have absolutely be held in your heart forever. She is lovable and likeable in all the best ways. She is a total Enneagram four and has the best vocabulary to express her big huge feelings. She is a joy to love. also well known I am a sucker for an orphan story and this story is definitely that and it's a fairy tale which I love when it's filled with fairies and forests and magic spells and a candy cottage deep in the woods owned by Which, especially a curmudgeonly, which this is a story of found family and new friendship. And it's a story of figuring out what you are truly good at, and coming into your own power. No matter what that power might be. There are very tender moments in the story, especially near the end, and

even me and my cold dead heart loved it. I didn't feel like anyone was trying to make me cry. I felt like I had been given a story that was precious enough for me to really care about it. And so when it ended, I was sad and that felt like the most natural thing in the world to me, I would highly recommend this book to anyone who loves quality middle grade, but I especially think this would be a wonderful read aloud. My kids would have enjoyed this book all the way from four years old to 12 years old. It is just lovely. And the chapters are the perfect length for one chapter a night reading. As I said, this book just came out on February 7, and I was so glad to get an early copy of it so I can tell you about it. This is the Grace of Wild Things by Heather Fawcett also beautiful cover.

Kaytee Cobb 12:30

I love this entire setup. I love the nods to like classic fairy tales. It sounds like a perfect Meredith book of course, but it does sound like a pretty perfect Kaytee book as it is.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 16:18

I would definitely say that it over. It's an overlap in our Venn diagram and again, don't sleep on the fact that if you love Anne of Green Gables, you will love this story because there are a lot of fun parallels there. Oh, I love it.

Kaytee Cobb 16:30

I love it. And the cover is so pretty. I'm obsessed with it. Okay, I have one more kind of middle grade adjacent book to talk about this week. It's the Aquanauts by Dan Santat. Now we're up to three middle grade books in this final Monday of March. This one could easily be finished before the end of the month and probably before the end of the day friends so if you're looking to knock out one more middle grade novel before the month ends, this is the one for you. This is a graphic novel about a group of sea creatures who find an awkward not slash scuba suit after an unfortunate accident at sea. They use this aqua not suit to venture onto land where they meet Sophia who mopes around Aqua land, an amusement park based on loosely SeaWorld it's a marine amusement park that her dad and uncle founded together in order to help fund their research trips. After her dad was lost at sea Aqua land has lost some of its charm for her. But that charm returns in a big way when she meets this strange and brilliant Aqua nut sea creature that is being piloted by sea creatures. There is oh my gosh, I'm obsessed with some of these little creatures. This graphic novel is beautiful. The art is vibrant with a touch of steampunk old timeliness while still feeling current today. You can tell Sofia could be walking around the world today. But there's this awkwardness that has this big round helmet with the face in the front, right that has the chains in front of it. So you're like, well, but that's from what 1920 When they invented scuba diving, where did this even come from what is going on. The pages are really stunning in a way that requires time to pore over the tiny details. This is not a just find the text on each page and zoom through it in 10 minutes. Although you could if you really sink into it, it'll take longer than an hour. However, I did find it pretty lacking and plot. It's beautiful, and you want to look at the pages. But there's not much more to tell you than what I already told you. Which is that there's not we're not piloted by sea creatures. They show up at Aqua land. And Sofia is charmed by them. There's a little more than that. And that's it. And I haven't even spoiled anything yet, which is sad. I feel like this book had a lot of potential to be really exciting and adventurous. But instead it delivered more on art and less on plot. My two kids though that read it before and after I did both enjoyed it. And they're nine and 12. And they both felt the same. They were like, Yeah, that was fine. It was really pretty is what they told me. It

doesn't change the fact that the Dumbo octopus, which is this adorable, tiny little octopus that has little fluffy ears is a heart stealer. And each of the little ocean creatures has a personality that really shines off the page. If that appeals in any way, even if you're planning a family trip to the ocean, this might be the perfect book for you and your middle graders to enjoy. It's the Aquanauts by Dan Santat

Meredith Monday Schwartz 19:36

well isn't dan santat mostly a picture book author and really those are very heavily illustrated. So it seems like that's his sweet spot. I think so. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So he really like he wanted to make a whole book with his illustrations but I think picture book illustrations is where he's really shining.

Kaytee Cobb 19:53

So but I would cut out some of these little frames that he created and I would put them on my wall. They're beautiful.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 19:58

I was gonna say I could see you getting A tattoo of the Dumbo octopus

Kaytee Cobb 20:02

Yeah, this little Dumbo octopus just like right here on my wrist and it would be so cute I would totally get it

Meredith Monday Schwartz 20:07

he had one book one picture book that was about something Adventures of anyway, it's a picture book for like three and four year olds and it's this little boy and he's doing all these like normal things but in his mind there superhero things like eating broccoli and going potty and Jackson loved that book. We read that book hundreds of times. Love it. So my next book was a backlist bucket every once in a while, I just get in a mood for a really particular kind of book from a long like a theory that I read a long time ago. So I had to go dip into it. I read a book called McNally's puzzle by Lawrence Sanders. Here's the setup. Hiram Gottschalk is the owner of the Palm Beach shop parrots unlimited and he Hiram is fearing for his life, and he has good reason. First, he finds a photo of himself and his dead wife slashed to pieces. And then a funeral card with his name on it like like a mask card is taped inside of his closet door and now someone has run the neck of his beloved pet parrot. So in desperation, he turns to McNally and son for a private investigation. Our lead character is Archie McNally, who I love so much Archie meets with Hiram Gottschalk, along with his clients other pet parrot who happens to have a cursing problem. McNally wisely ignores the birds command to go to hell, but he can't ignore the fallout when his client is stabbed in his sleep. And God Chuck's unstable son Peter becomes the prime suspect then more victims turn up and Archie has to figure it out before more proverbial birds are killed with more stones. All right. I hadn't read my last article McNally book in 15 years, I went back and double checked but a couple of months ago, I happened to see a deal on one of the books and I grabbed it with the thought that every once in a while I get in this really specific mood that's perfect for our team McNally book. And I was definitely not too long after that finding myself in that mode. This is the perfect spring and summer series in many ways. You could almost describe it as a cozy mystery series in that it has gentle murder of mostly not so great people and nothing is gory, all the action of the murder is off the page. Also, Archie always ends up getting his man or woman by the end. But this

series has several things that I think make it stand out. The biggest of these is the lead character of Archie he is perfectly described as a mix between Thomas Magnum from Magnum PI, and a slightly goofy James Bond. He is Ray fish and sweet and goofy and also always well intentioned. He's also really rich or his dad is and he has around him a cast of characters that even after 15 years, the second I heard their names, I was delighted to be in their company again. And then there is the setting Palm Beach, Florida in the late 80s. Everything is sunny and beachy and lush and Lux and colorful and it's a wonderful place to spend a few hours. Now every time the plot is interesting and the formula is definitely followed. So it's a good thing to put some space, maybe even 15 years in between your reading of these books. Otherwise, they are going to quickly feel formulaic, but several years apart, I was so happy to be back in their cheesy company. Also, I will say that this is one of those series where if you weren't hungry when you started the book, you will be hungry when you finish. Because Archie loves to detail every meal he eats whether he eats it at his family mansion, or the club that he owns or out and about with his rich Florida friends. These people eat very well. Overall, I giggle through these books and I'm interested the whole time and just in general I'm happy to be able to find a series that makes me smile, I highly recommend you spending a few sunny hours with Archie, he is good for the soul. Now I will also say this is a series kind of like Agatha Christie, where you can kind of jump in where it's convenient for you find it in the library, find it on Kindle Unlimited, find it where you can, you don't have to be too fussy about reading these in order. They don't really roll that way too much. So don't worry about being an animal here. So this is McNally's puzzle by Lauren Sanders.

Kaytee Cobb 24:20

I have to say that since it's March 20 Today when we are recording and it is still snowing at my house in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and I just got back from the beach. So that was a big swing for me. Yeah, the beaches of Florida and the sunshine and the palm trees sound really nice to me.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 24:37

Yes. Yes. He drives in convertibles everywhere and it's just very, like the setting is very, very strong. And Archie is just such a great company.

Kaytee Cobb 24:47

Oh, I love it. That sounds so fun. And that makes me think like what could I pick up from an author that I was reading 15-20 years ago to visit that nostalgia factor? Yeah, maybe it's time for me to finally read another Dean Koontz, but

Meredith Monday Schwartz 25:00

It's been a while I was having all these memories of like, Oh, I remember reading one of these books, but I was on a BART train headed into San Francisco and my very first job and I was like 22 years old.

Kaytee Cobb 25:09

I love it. So fun. Okay, my last one is fun, but it's also complicated. This book is called The world record book of racist stories by Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar. I brought the first book that these two sisters wrote a year or two back and this is their follow up to that one. It's less personal and more wide ranging. It's also funnier and more horrifying. Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar grew up in Omaha, Nebraska smack in the middle of the US and in their first book, which is called you'll never believe what happened

to Lacey. They recount personal experiences with racism mostly centered on Laci who, like kind of has some kind of weird radar like people find her and say horrible things to her. It's really awful. It's just something about her. That's why it's mostly focused on Lacey who still lives in Nebraska. Amber, however, has written for Seth Meyers in New York City and even has her own show the amber Ruffin show So hypothetically, she's more in the thick of a thriving and diverse metropolis, but she experiences her own flavor of Northern racism as well. In this second book, these sisters share more of their own stories, but they also share the stories of their friends and loved ones and give out awards to the perpetrators. Awards. Like most racist car dealership most racist deejay most racist, fourth grade teacher and our parents most racist stories. The blurb for this book calls the stories uproarious, wild and ludicrous. But they're also frustrating, jaw dropping and horrifying, which is to say you could be laughing with your mouth open, like what in God's green earth is happening here at the exact same moment, they'll leave you gasping with laughter and then punch you in the gut with shock and the author's make it clear that the reader will either feel vindicated by stories as they not along or they will feel illuminated that this day and age still includes a United States that hold space for these types of stories to occur. I try to read all black authors every February and I have for years now these books by Amber and Lacey consistently rank at the top for humor and take the record for making me laugh in a month that could otherwise be very heavy reading all around. I'm glad that they exist to lighten that February load a little bit where it's like, Katie, it doesn't have to be stories that are all about slavery or somebody having a rough time coming into their own as a 20 year old or whatever. So I don't want them to exist. I'm really glad they do for that little shot of humor every February. This is the world record book of racist stories by Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:36

It is a tough needle to thread to write a book chock full of racist stories that are also really really funny. So kudos to them for making that work. Exactly. Hard row to hoe for sure. My third book is squarely in my wheelhouse. So all my all things murder for listeners, you're definitely gonna want to listen up because I'm bringing a book that Elizabeth brought to us last month all things murder Fall Of course, this is one of the shows that we offer as a part of our Patreon content. So if you want to join us for \$5 a month if you love mysteries and thrillers, all things murder fault will be for you. Because we talk about books like black summer by M w. Craven. Here's the setup. This is one of those stories as as often true with this kind of book where you just need a very little setup here. We start with a great premise. Jared Keaton is a famous chef chef to the stars. He's charming, he's charismatic, he's hot. He is a true psychopath. He is currently also serving a life sentence for the brutal and I do mean brutal murder of his daughter, Elizabeth, her body was never actually found. And Keaton was convicted largely on the testimony of our lead character in this in the whole series, the fantastic Detective Sergeant Washington Post, so everyone's good, right? murderers in jail, everything's fine. Well, right. What could what could go wrong? But then a young woman staggers into a police station with irrefutable scientific evidence that she is in fact Elizabeth Keaton and poor Washington Poe finds himself on the wrong end of that previous investigation. His career and more is at stake. Luckily, Poe is not alone. He's got his BFF and work partner the brilliant but socially awkward. Tilly Bradshaw on his side together, they race to find the answer to a question we don't often have to ask how can someone be both dead and alive at the same time and then because this is an excellent book, and Craven knows how to keep things moving Elizabeth daughter who has recently come into the police station while she goes missing again, and all lines of inquiry and investigation lead back to poor Washington Post. This is a five star mystery five

stars. Absolutely fantastic. Again recommended by Elizabeth Barnhill from fabled on all things murder false. You will quickly note number two in the series and if memory serves, we couldn't get all of them for a really long time there was some availability issues having to do with the English publisher so this was the one that Elizabeth could get. So this is where she jumped in and it should be said that I've now ordered number one and number three, because I don't want to be an animal. I will withhold judgment as to whether or not it was okay to jump in it book two after I read the other ones. But when Elizabeth tells me to read a good book, I read a good book and I read this so fast. This is a true police procedural This is not a thriller. I want to say that really clearly. And I have a deep and abiding love for police procedurals, especially ones that take place on the Moors in Britain. I absolutely love the Washington Post character and his sidekick Tilly Bradshaw is, as Elizabeth told us worth the price of entry. Tilly is a fully fleshed out character with an incredible intellect and her limitations make her even more lovable. Criminal Minds fans think Spencer Reid here. Their partnership Washington Bo Antilles partnership is wonderful to see it's more than just a relationship of convenience or work partnership. They are truly best friends. And I love seeing the strong platonic friendship amongst police officers in my police procedurals. I'll also say that there is a well used trope in this novel that I don't normally like, but here it is done to great effect. And that is really saying something because it is probably my least liked trope in mysteries. So hat tip to MW Craven for doing that, I was turning the pages so fast by the end to find out not only what was going to happen, but why it was happening. This one had me scratching my head all the way to its heart pounding conclusion, and I absolutely loved it. If you like solving puzzles, this is going to be the perfect book for you. This is Black summer by M w. Craven.

Kaytee Cobb 31:47

That sounds so good. I remember hearing Elizabeth talk about it. And I have to say one of the things that stuck in my head about this is listening to Elizabeth talk about a book where the victim is named Elizabeth. And it turns out Elizabeth is not dead. And now here she is again. And I have never found a book character that dies that's named Katie. So I don't have personal experience with this. And I'm wondering if it feels personal to her. When have you asked her about that?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:12

That's a good question. Although I would imagine that given that there are so many Elizabeth, I would imagine that she probably deals with a lot but did you know that we have a bookish friend Marley James who has granddaughters who are twins who are named Elizabeth and Meredith?

Kaytee Cobb 32:27

Yes, I do. She sends us videos of them. And they're adorable. That makes me so happy.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:33

It makes me so happy. I absolutely love it for all the times that people say Elizabeth and I look like sisters. We're like, look, twins. Here you go. They're so cute. They're so so weird rabbit hole there. All right, Kaytee. So let's talk a little bit about our deep dive, which is bait and switch books. And I feel like there's definitely ongoing conversation around these kinds of books, books that you start them thinking they're one kind of book, and then they're not. They somehow there's many ways that can happen. But at the end of it, you feel baited and switched. And sometimes, as I said, at the top of the show, sometimes that can be a bad thing. And it can really irritate you, and sometimes it ends up being a

really good thing. What did you think about that Jesus happened a lot to you. It does. And I think it happens for a few reasons. One I just recently talked about with Roxana the book someday, maybe, which I thought was rom com when I went into it. And I know I heard about it from Sara's bookshelves. She really loved it our dear friend, Sarah. But when I listened to her talk about it, I did not process what she said about the book. So something about it appealed to me, I put it on my TBR I bought a copy, I picked it up, and it was not at all what I thought it was gonna be. And I don't think I would have read it. If I knew it was actually about grief and widowhood and reclaiming life after the loss of a husband. I don't think I would have picked it up, if I knew that, but I ended up really loving it. So I kind of bait and switch to myself by not paying good attention when Sarah talked about it. And it ended up working out for the best. In that case. It certainly happens other times where it does not though. But that was the first one that rose to top of mind because it was so recent for me. Do you feel like this usually goes well for you or not when something is different than what you expect? Right?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:19

So I would I mean a couple things when I looked back all the way through my book journals and a couple of patterns appeared. First of all, it happened to me more before book talk bookstagram, all of that, right? Because I think now for all of us, we just have a lot more information coming at us through sources we trust that kind of give us a sense it's it's almost difficult to walk into a book especially a newer release and not have a sense of what it is maybe even like I just finished and I'll be bringing to the show. I have some questions for you the new Rebecca Makkai when it first came out. I think people did feel like it was a bait and switch book because they kind of thought it was going to be this true crime mystery. And that ended up being something that was a little bit different than that. Because of that information highway that I was able to be on when I went into it was just a couple of weeks after it was released, I knew more what I was going to get. So I didn't feel baited and switched. For me, the very first book that I thought of was, of course, the book that I physically actually threw against the wall, which was Me Before You by Jojo Moyes. I really thought about it, and I believe that it was a bait and switch feeling that was actually the reason that I was so upset. I think if I had gone into it, knowing more of what I was headed into, I think I wouldn't have had that same feeling. So when No, but when it's sold to me as like a light, fresh romcom I felt bait and switch. And I you know, I was going back, there was a mid level Grisham novel called The confession that I felt really baited and switched about several years ago. But as I went through more recently, there are a few books that I step into. And I actually have a couple coming to the show over the next couple of weeks that Yeah, they did turn out to be maybe a little bit different than what I thought they were going to be. But it ended up being a good thing. One of those, of course, was Aurora by David cap, which I talked about a couple of weeks ago, I went into it thinking it was clarified disaster, kind of that sort of thing. But the reality was that it's very little of what it was. And it was really a story of how of survival and humanity and people helping it and all of that. So that was one that happened to me more recently, but it's happening less often

Kaytee Cobb 36:33

do you feel like it's more likely that you will feel baited and switched by an author you've already read? So you have a presupposition about what you're gonna get with the book? Or I a new author, like had you read David Koepp before? Did you feel like well, I already know what he's gonna bring to the table here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 36:50

No. And I read a book by Minette Walters who wrote some of my very favorite mysteries. And then I read this piece of historical fiction, but it was also really bad. It was just a horrible book. And I think because I had read her before to great effect, I was really more disappointed. And I was like, That is not at all what I thought I was going to be getting when I when I opened up this book. So I think more so if it's completely new to me.

Kaytee Cobb 37:15

I wonder too, if with a big juggernaut book like Babel, for example, I get the impression that there still are people who are going into it and read it or DNF it feeling like I thought it was going into high fantasy. And that's not what this is. And so I wonder if that's even still with a big juggernaut. If that can happen. I think it does, for sure, because a lot of you and I both really love that book. So people will tag us and be like, I want to apologize for not loving this to Meredith and Kaytee. And it's like, well, we didn't read that book. Like you don't have to apologize to us love what you love. But it'll be why are there footnotes? Why is it so literary? Why do we have to spend so much time on language when, for me, those were the pieces that I loved about that book. But I can see if you're not that type of reader, and you don't care about the etymology of a word, how you could go into it and say, This is so cerebral, why are people saying this is unputdownable? I was baited by people raving about this book, and it was switched out for something that I could have read as a textbook in a classroom if it didn't have this one magical element to it.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:20

Right, exactly. So I think it's impossible to keep it from happening entirely. But I do think that it's one of the upsides if you're really plugged in readers plugged into a reading community plugged into TikTok Bookstagram, wherever it is that you get your book information. I think it's this piece of it is let because you can I mean, you can proactively check out go looking for information, not spoilers, but information about a book that you're considering. If it's really important to you that that doesn't happen. Now, I do think that this is really close to books that are mis marketed. And sometimes I feel like they're purposely mis marketed. And sometimes I feel like they're just badly marketed. And one an example of that, of course, is pony by Rg Blasio, which I went into that thinking I was going to be getting a much more simplistic kind of middle grade. And then I got this amazing, very adult intone novel that just blew my doors off. And that was an example of I thought it was going to be getting something different. But I was so happy with what I ended up getting see and

Kaytee Cobb 39:25

I felt that way about another like mutual love a Gentleman in Moscow, which I feel like I was sold as this is a man who is sentenced to house arrest and lives in a hotel. And I fall asleep at that description. And the whole internet described it like that. Right, right, right and then picked it up and found this amazing layered literary story with found family and exceptional side characters and this beautiful setting. And I was like How come none of you told me this? Yep, this was rude. Yeah, I would have read this so much. So sooner if you had put the right bait on the line, right? Instead you fed me worms and I wanted filet mignon, like what is happening here, right books that are not baited properly.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 40:09

I mean, Piranesi is another example of that where we're like, what? Why didn't you beat that hook so much better. So this is the opposite of what we're talking about here. But I think, to a really good example, and then even in the show that they just use from the adaptation under the banner of heaven. I think that I think a lot of people have felt baited and switched by that book, because they go into it thinking it's true crime. And it's in fact, a little bit true crime, but it's a lot history of the Mormon church. Jon Krakauer does a great job with that piece of it. But if you felt like you were really in the mood for some true crime, that's probably not going to have scratch your itch.

Kaytee Cobb 40:46

Yeah. Okay, one for me. One more thing is that sometimes I feel like the the internet even agrees on a book like, for instance, two times, bear town, you don't have to like hockey, oh, my God, just love this. Oh, my God. And tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevon, Fikry, which I loved Of course, he fit great by her. You don't have to like video games. You can just love this book. There are so many flipping video games in that book. Why are people telling you that you don't have to care about video? Right? This is real. Like that is not true.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:22

Or Carrie Soto is back. You don't have to care about tennis. You don't have to like tennis. I'm sorry. There is so much tennis in that book.

Kaytee Cobb 41:29

Yes. It's the same thing. It's like let me put this little piece of bait on the hook. And that is not that is not true. Yeah. There's a hook in there. That's not what you're actually trying to give me.

Kaytee Cobb 41:39

Yeah, it definitely happens even with the Internet. It's like everybody conspires and they all agree, you know what we should say about this book that you don't have to like video games, and then other people will read it. And that's a lie.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:50

Yeah. I mean, it's very dicey. Especially for those of us who are in the business of talking about books publicly, we really want to set the bait properly so that you are getting what it is that you think that you're getting, because we don't want you to be disappointed about a book that we really liked. Or, but it is sometimes it's difficult to do, you can't always avoid it entirely. But sometimes those good surprises where you're like, huh, I thought I was getting this, but I got this. And it was a great surprise, sometimes that can really shoot a rating up into the five star range.

Kaytee Cobb 42:19

For sure. I love a good surprise. And that's what keeps me going back. Right? Where I'm like, Oh my gosh, they were right. I didn't have to love video games. And it was amazing. And so I just keep going back and keep hoping I'm gonna get that good surprise inside the hook instead.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:35

Right doesn't always work out that way now, which is why we can say about all of this is that instead of getting upset about a book, we've been told, for example, like T three, like it's not about video games. Well, once we got a little bit into it, and found out that maybe it was more so than what our taste would really like, then we can set it aside without prejudice and just say, okay, not for me, great for somebody you know, but I don't have to hate read it to the end and then be pissed about it. You know what I mean? I can just be like, great. It just was a little bit more video game ish than what I was looking for. Or a little more hockey ish that I was looking for, but that's okay. Not right for me. But great that it's for other people. As long as we can all hold on to that piece of it McNally's puzzle, like I talked about just earlier in the show, pet books not going to be for everybody. It's absolutely not going to be for everybody. Someone could start it and go, You know what, this is just too goofy for me. I'm not in that kind of goofy mood. It's just set it down. It's alright.

Kaytee Cobb 43:31

But maybe when you do want a parrot with Tourette's in your life, you are you don't know where to turn, you absolutely know where to turn.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 43:39

Alright. kaytee let's talk about our wishes for the fountain. What is your wish this week?

Kaytee Cobb 43:44

Okay, this week, I went back to our roots, Meredith and I wish to press a book into our friends hands, if anybody which I don't even know how this would have happened. But if anybody ignored me when I said one of my favorite books of last few years was all the lonely people by Mike Gayle. I'm here to remind you that I love it and I want to press it into your hands. So this book, this book, just like our deep dive was so much more than what it was sold to me as it firmly seated itself into my heart just like many of the very best books do in a way that surprised me. Hubert bird is our protagonist. He's an elderly gentleman whose daughter bro's lives far away in Australia. They check in regularly and he tells her all about the friends he has on the life he's been living while she's away. So she doesn't worry about him. But now he finds out that she's coming for a visit so he better make some friends and fast because in truth, Hubert Bird is lonely. He rarely leaves his apartment or interacts with anyone. So now he needs his real life to start to look like the one he sold her he needs to give her the bait that he actually pay like and pay it out correctly. This sounds a little like a madcap adventure but with old people and it is that it has a sparkling humor. It has very sweet moments. And it also saw me it exactly where I was peak pandemic and said, Katie, you're lonely. And it doesn't have to be like this. As in many curmudgeonly books, there's an element of found family here that broke me open in the very best way. It squeezed me by the heart and didn't let go. And I know Meredith is like, these are all the worst words for me. But if anyone here is listening, that especially hasn't been around for super long and didn't get to hear me talk about this book, or interview the author, or bring it up over and over again afterward, I am pressing it into your hands. And I'm asking you to pick it up, because I love it so dearly. And I hope I've baited it correctly for you. This is all the lonely people by Mike Gale.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 45:40

Yes, I hope that they will pick that up because if you're in the right mood for it, that is a perfect example of the curmudgeon genre for sure. It really is. All right. Well, I also had just recently I think, Kaytee, it was you and I who somehow the topic of Shogun came up and all of a sudden I was like, Oh, I really want to reread Shogun. I read it about 15 years ago. It was a book that Johnny had read before me Thorn Birds was another one that fell into this category book that he pressed into my hands. And both of those books I absolutely loved, but Shogun especially, I was so shocked to enjoy it as much as I did. I just didn't think it was going to be interesting to me. So this book Shogun was written in 1986. And I absolutely, absolutely love it. Here's the setup. This historical novel is set in the year 1600. And it tells the story of an English captain who ship was blown ashore in Japan. He soon meets two people who change his life forever, he meets a warlord with his own quest for power. That's a really memorable character, and a beautiful woman that he falls in love with. It's got love and loss and war and amazing fight scenes. And the lead character John Blackthorn, just gets into the most amazing, can't get out of this situations and then somehow manages to get out of that trouble. In fact, Johnny and I, in over the course of our marriage, we have a shorthand where we'll say oh, that was a real Shogun situation, like a situation that like seems undoubtable. But then the person gets out of it. It's amazing and visual and fast moving and takes you into a world that you probably have never been in before. It's got adventure and action and intrigue and a huge cast of memorable characters. And like I said, a really, really, really great villain. If you love to choose one classic a year to read. I'm going to recommend that that classic this year, be Shogun by James Clavell,

Kaytee Cobb 47:41

This is a chunker I read because Meredith pressed it into my hands probably almost five years ago now. And I could not agree more. It is just fantastic.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:50

It's so unexpectedly good. written the same year that Shell Secrets was written. So let's not sleep on 1986 We need to go back to some some backlist there was some good books been written back then.

Kaytee Cobb 48:02

Indeed.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 48:03

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 dot reads on Instagram.

Kaytee Cobb 48:10

And you can find me Kaytee at notes on bookmarks on Instagram

Meredith Monday Schwartz 48:13

full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in the episode and timestamps, so you can zoom right to where we talked about it can be found at currently reading podcast.com.

Kaytee Cobb 48:22

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Meredith Monday Schwartz 48:28

And if you really want to help us rate and review us on Apple podcasts, shout us out on social media and if you want more of our content, join us as a bookish friend. It's \$5 a month it keeps the show ad free and you get a ton of fantastic content. All of those things make a huge difference toward us finding our perfect audience.

Kaytee Cobb 48:49

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 48:54

Alright, until next week, May your coffee be hot

Kaytee Cobb 48:57

And your book be unputdownable.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 48:58

Happy reading Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 48:59

Happy reading Meredith