



Season 5, Episode 7: Seasonal Reading Bonanza + A Discussion of "The Sentence"

Mon, 9/12 • 1:08:38

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 and sometimes diverging opinions. So get ready.

Mary Heim 00:25

We are light on the chitchat, 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 will visit the fountain.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:36

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas, and I love it when my kids have teachers who love reading as much as I do.

Mary Heim 00:46

And I'm Mary Heim, a working mom of one, and I love it when my books are both a window and a mirror. This is episode number seven of season five, and we are so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:56

Oh, Mary, I'm so glad that we finally get to be back on the mic together with our rotation schedule. We you and I don't get to do this very often. But it's always so much fun when we do.

Mary Heim 01:08

It's been a while. I'm so excited. Meredith and I am especially, I have been pumped about this particular episode that we are doing today for a very long time. So I'm so ready for it, and I'm so happy to be here with you today.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:13

Yes, so we are going to be deep diving today on a topic that we hear about all the time, Mary and I are going to have a conversation about a couple of books that we each had strong feelings about, and the other person had opposite and also strong feelings about. So the deep dive really is not about those particular books. It's about how do you have a conversation that not only lets you hold on to your strong opinions about a book, but also not only doesn't tear away the bookish friendship, but actually adds to a bookish friendship. And I think it's entirely possible and I know you do to Mary.

Mary Heim 02:01

Wholeheartedly agree. Yes, ma'am.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 02:03

Exactly. So we are going to get into that in our deep dive. But before we do that, let's talk about our bookish moments of the week. Mary, what have you got this week?

Mary Heim 02:12

My bookish moment of the week, Meredith this week is such a fun one. So my aunt, who is also a lifelong reader, she is so much fun to talk about books with, she recently reached out to me because a friend of hers is writing a book, her friend has been kind of looking for real readers, quote, unquote, to give her manuscript a test drive, and just see how it reads from an outside perspective. And my aunt thought of me, I have been lucky enough to read ARCs in the past, like I know many of us have, I am a Net Galley fan girl, but I have never really been privy to this kind of early stage reading of a story when it's still so raw and fresh and new, and it has been so much fun to get to read this book in progress. I noticed that I have been really taking it slow, but steady, whereas most of my books, I tend to kind of zip through and I feel like I am taking very seriously the fact that I am one of the first people ever to have read this book and that my feedback matters. And, you know, to note my experience and pay attention to what it is like to read the book and how I'm connecting with the characters. And so I yes, taking that very, very seriously. And it's a big responsibility. But it has also been a totally novel, pun probably intended for me as a reader, and it's just been really fun and special. And so that is kind of my ongoing bookish moment for the past week or two.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 03:37

So this actually plays into what we're going to be talking about in the deep dive, because what will you do if you don't love the book? I mean, do you like it now? Are you liking it?

Mary Heim 03:49

Yes. So far, I like it. But I definitely have noticed myself like, "Oh, would I be critical of this piece if this were just a book that I had picked up from the library? Or if I were just reading kind of the flavor of the week? Or, you know, do I really like this part of the story? Or is it because I'm being super analytical?" or, like I am questioning more than ever, by experience of reading a story. So what I'm trying to do is to read it and just note my experience, right? Not try to assign like, "Yes, this is great, or No, I don't like this," and I'm going to collect myself at the end and see kind of these notes that I'm taking and the experience of reading what does it all kind of add up to in summation. But it's it's interesting to be a critical reader like this. I haven't been a critical reader in this way, probably since grad school college like I don't read that way as much anymore. So it's a challenge. It's not easy. I wish I had more concise answer for you. But I do think that it perfectly ties into what we're going to talk about today.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:53

Yeah, and I think the way you're doing it is a really, really I think it's probably the smartest way you can possibly do it not assigning good or bad, but just, this is how I was feeling at this moment this or this thought came into my mind with this. But it's exciting and it is a really big responsibility. So I can't wait to

find out how that ends up going. And then please report back if she ends up getting it published so we can all, ya know, read that would be really fun.

Mary Heim 04:53

Yes, absolutely. I will report back. What about you, Meredith? What's your bookish moment this week?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:06

Well, Jackson went back to school and he started middle school, and which is sixth grade here in Texas. And he has a language arts, he has a lot of great teachers, but his language arts teacher is a man. For the first time he's having a male language arts teacher. And he really, really likes this teacher so much from from day one, he's been raving about Mr. Delia. And I like Mr. Delia. Because in that first week, it became clear that he was really prioritizing not only reading outside of the classroom for the kids, but also SSR, sustained silent reading inside the class. This is not groundbreaking. Most classes do this kind of thing, you know, 10-15 minutes at the beginning of class. And so they each always need to have the a book ready for SSR. So instead of just telling the parents that this was the case, this is what their kid needed, he provided a ton of great resources of lists, really up to date lists of great reading within a probably, I would say it's probably within a four year set of levels, right, because they they're all at different places, and a lot of different interests. So it's just really varied. And so there was very much something for everyone. And you know, Jackson's my, right now is a reluctant reader. But I was able to find a couple of really great ones there. And he is right now he is interested in a book called Millionaires for the Month. And it's, I can't remember the last the last name of the woman who wrote it. But it's about these two kids who are close to his age, who through a variety of circumstances end up in, the circumstances make sense, they end up being challenged to spend \$5.3 million, but they have to do it within 30 days. And what's interesting about the book, and Jackson has been talking about it constantly, is that he's like, "Mom, I'm learning that it is not easy to spend that much money in 30 days." He said to me, "Mom, did you know for instance, you can't just buy a house, because you probably can't actually move into that house within 30 days?" And I was like, "You're right. Yeah, exactly." And he's like, "You can't take delivery of a private jet within 30 days." So I was like, right. And so it's the story of these two kids, one of whom is a rule follower, one of who is a rule bender, and those two trying to work out how do you spend \$5.3 million in 30 days, and Jackson who just turned 11, absolutely loves this book. So I'm going to put these resources that Mr. Delia provided into the show notes, or Megan will be gracious enough to do that for us. Because there might be other parents out there who would really benefit from these lists, too. So that was my bookish moment of the week. I love a good language arts teacher.

Mary Heim 08:18

I love that. I was gonna say we just love a teacher. Teachers are the best that is so wonderful and sounds like a great book. Like he's engaged. He's interested but like real life. There's some real life implications of this experience as well. Well done, Mr. Delia.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:34

Yes. Really, really good. Really good. Okay, but all right. So let's get to our current reads. Mary, what are you bringing to us?

Mary Heim 08:43

Meredith, I am so excited to be recording with you today, because I feel like two, at least two thirds of these books are like curated specifically for you. As you know, our tastes don't always converge and we will be talking about that later on today. But I have two books today that I think you're going to love and I cannot wait to tell you about them.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:03

Oh, good.

Mary Heim 09:04

The first one here today is *The Drowned Woods* by Emily Lloyd-Jones. So if you have been around for a minute, you probably know that I love fall reading, maybe even more than summer reading, right? This one is going to be so perfect for so many autumn TBRs. Here's our setup. In this fantastical version of a medieval-ish Wales, we have 18 year old Mer, the last living water diviner running from the prince who has bound her to his service. Mer crosses paths with her old handler, a spymaster who is also on the run from royalty, and he has a proposition for her along with a band of Outcast allies and a magic sniffing corgi. He wants them to take down the prince who abused them both for so many years by destroying the magical wellspring that is keeping him in power. Meredith, I found it so hard to set this one up because no matter how I described it, I just really struggled to nail the vibe because it feels so unique to me. I want to be very clear that while the magic sniffing corgi is maybe one of my favorite characters in this book, I don't want that to mislead anyone. This is a dark fairy tale. This is a heist novel that reads like old mythology. Technically it is YA but if you are YA averse, we don't get much, if any of angst or teenagerness baked into these characters. The world building here is enough to give you a good sense of place, but it's not so drawn out or complicated. So if that is also a barrier or a boon to you just know that going in that the story is really more focused on the characters and how they are engaging in the plot than it is in this world around it. As I was preparing for the show, I actually found that this is a retelling of a Welsh myth, *cantre'r gwaelod*, I don't speak. I am sure I butchered those Celtic words, but that is the Welsh myth, or also known as the Welsh Atlantis, which explains the origin of Cardigan Bay on the west coast of Wales. Some say that physical proof of this tale was found when storms in 2014 and 2019 exposed parts of a submerged forest, found on the shore dating back to 1500 BCE, which I just find so incredibly fantastical, made me love this story. All the more I feel like I'm jumping out of my skin to tell you all about it. Because every piece of this setup is just delicious to me. I will say at some points, I did find the plot a tiny bit meandering, or some of the characters were maybe a little bit less fleshed out than I would have preferred. But even so, I was engaged enough to want to keep going and find out what would happen next. And this misty, magical twisty atmosphere just made me want to do whatever I could to stay in this world a little bit longer and that made it a solid four star read for me. I think it is going to be a hit for some cozy, dark fall evening reading. That is *The Drowned Woods* by Emily Lloyd-Jones.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 11:59

Mary. I mean, catnip is right. This is everything I love in a fantasy novel. And it has the most beautiful cover. Yes. Oh, yes, it does. It's I mean, it is gorgeous. So I've already pre not pre or I've already ordered that it's available now. So I thank you. Thank you for that. I'd never even heard of it. I've never even seen it.

Mary Heim 12:20

Yes, I have found we were on vacation this summer and I found in in this teeny little bookshop had it on display. And I was like, "This sounds great. It is beautiful. I'm taking it home with me." I barely gave the synopsis a full read. And I'm really glad I did I want this one to be on so many radars. And I'm so excited, Meredith, that I sold you on it, because I think you're gonna like it a lot.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 12:40

Yes, absolutely. Well, we are in so many ways on the same wavelength because my first book that I want to talk about today is so perfect for fall TBR that I wanted to bring it to the show before we get too far into September. Because I have actually been saving it since last fall. I have literally not talked. I mean, we've talked about it on the show, but I haven't brought it to the show. Because I was like I need this to be on people's fall TBR it's early enough that they can grab it. This is *The Night Gardener* by Jonathan Auxier. Did you read this one Mary?

Mary Heim 13:12

I think I started it and then it had to go back to the library. But I have it on a freeze hold on my library queue right now so that I can open it back up and you are reminding me I gotta unfreeze that so I can finish it up.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 13:24

Yes, it is. One of my favorites. It's just one of those perfect fall reads. It's middle grade. But I want you to listen carefully to the way I describe it because it's middle grade not to be handed to your young child. I had some creepy creeps my own self. So here's the setup. This book was an Indie Press List choice from last October which came to us from The Novel Neighbor, which has become one of my favorite stores. Y'all must follow The Novel Neighbor on Instagram. They are such a good follow. So here's what they told us about this book. And I think they set it up really well. So this is what they said. They said this book, *The Night Gardener* is a trifecta of our favorite things. Our love for sinister Victorian fairy tales, a slight nod to *The Secret Garden* and a whip smart but can't catch a break young heroine. Don't be confused by this book's middle grade classification. Its menacing tale is as haunting as it is creepy. And that is definitely true. This delightfully disturbing fable features Molly and Kip, two abandoned Irish siblings, who doesn't love abandoned siblings, right, who find themselves working as servants, of course, in what's called The Sour Woods, and they in The Sour Woods is the crumbling Windsor estate. Nothing is as it first appears and the children soon find themselves wrapped up in an ancient curse based around a mysterious specter *The Night Gardener*. While Holland, The Novel Neighbor's owner loved so many things about this magical dark tale, it's probably Molly's struggle to understand the difference between lies and stories that has had the most lasting impact on her. Featuring some of the best atmospheric writing you will find for any age, this perfect macabre mystery is ideal for the fall time of year. Be forewarned they will absolutely have you checking to make sure that *The Night Gardener* is not following you on these upcoming dark nights. This I still think I mean, like I said, I have been saving this book because it raises the hairs on the back of my neck in some parts. When I was doing my reading back for the Indie Press List a year ago, this was one that I had to just go ahead and read all of because I had to find out what was going to happen. I loved every single character. I really love the element of found family that's here. And there is a sweetness even amid all

of this spookiness. I definitely agree there are elements of The Secret Garden in this book. And there's also elements of The Giving Tree, if The Giving Tree went really, really wrong. I as I said, I wouldn't hand this to readers who are too young as there are several scenes that would absolutely freak out many children. And even now at 11 and a real football playing 11 year old I wouldn't hand this book to Jackson because it would have him yelling for me in the middle of the night. It's really pretty scary in a particularly scary way. But for adults who like spooky. And for middle graders who can take a Goosebumps kind of scare. This is a perfectly classic novel that is perfectly read in October. I loved it.

Mary Heim 16:52

I love it. Meredith as you were talking, I went and unfroze my library hold and I am so excited about this one. I love spooky middle grade. It is one of my favorite sub genres. I love it so much.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 17:05

Absolutely. I mean that's a really, really good point because when I think about my fall reading spooky middle grade is always has to be a part of the mix. It really is a great sub genre. I want to put out a recommendation that if you can read this one in print because it has gorgeous woodcut illustrations all the way through that make the story feel like a really old fashioned fairy tale. So that added for me, I like illustrations and that's another thing that you can really get middle grade that I absolutely love. So again, this is The Night Gardener by Jonathan Auxier.

Mary Heim 17:41

I love it. Okay, now Meredith, I'm gonna take that spooky middle grade and flip it on its head a little bit for fellow maybe HSPs a little bit who still want some spookiness who still want some spine tingle leanness, I am bringing to the show today Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone by Benjamin Stevenson. Meredith, you knew this was coming because I shared about this book on my Instagram. We talked about it. I was so excited. I had posted like, I just want to abandon all of my responsibilities to finish this book. Meredith you messaged me and said like, I am dying to read this one.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 18:15

Is it out now? Because I feel like I can't get my hands on it.

Mary Heim 18:18

Okay, so here is the thing. Here was going to be my tip. I was recommended this book by one of our Australian bookish friends, Amy, who recommended this book, I think to both you and I. And I was so excited about it. I went on Book Depository to order it because typically, that's how I like to get, you know, some alternative covers or British versions. And even then she recommended this way back. I didn't get it until just recently. So it was a couple of months that I had to wait, I could not figure out it looks like I was able to snag the British release. I think we have another few weeks until it is here in the States. So but this gives you all a great time to our listeners who are interested in reading this book. This gives you a second to put it on your library holds to be first on the library list, or to make sure that it's stacked up on your autumnal TBR because I think it's going to be a great one. But yes, it is. It's a little bit tricky to try and track it down to anyone who stateside. So know that going in. It is worth tracking down let me say that okay, so here's our setup. This book is described as Agatha Christie meets Knives Out. And I think that is absolutely spot on. This story takes place during a dysfunctional

family reunion on a snow covered mountain in Australia. As we can imagine, someone turns up dead and the story takes off from there. But wait, there's more. Not only as we know from the title has everyone in this family technically killed someone and is potentially a suspect in this murder, but our protagonist, Ernie is a crime writer, and not just any crime writer, but he writes the manuals on how to write crime and murder fiction. So within this story, our fourth wall is not only broken but smashed to absolute smithereens as our narrator tells us things like, a lot has happened so far. So we'll just jump in here with a recap, and then goes on to extol us with all of the key points we either have already noticed or should pay attention to in the future. Even with this plot device, there is so much going on in this story, so many key and important pieces that are so expertly planted within the narrative that I found myself going back and rereading passages just because I got the sense that maybe I had missed something important. And sure enough, on second pass, I picked up these little threads of the story that I didn't fully catch the first go around. Admittedly, while I was in on the premise before I even cracked the first page, it did take me a hot minute to get into the swing of the style of this book. But once I got into it, I could not put it down. For what on its nose seems to be maybe just kind of a clever murder mystery, this book is expertly crafted, really well done, I was shocked at some of the more sensitive topics that I wasn't expecting within the story. And I will say HSPs. Just take note, this is not unmanageable for us by any means. But it's not quite as quirky and light as the premise and the cover make it seem. That said, I think it is safe to say I have never read a murder mystery like this before. After finishing it, all I want is more within this wheelhouse. It was so so good. So much fun. I already shoved it into my husband's hands and told him that he has to read it and he's halfway through in a day or two. So let that be another resounding support of this book. That is Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone by Benjamin Stevenson.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 21:38

I love it. I am so excited to get my hands on this one. Anytime we talk about something that is doing a book that's doing something really different in the genre. It kind of makes me think of The Appeal, where it takes a little bit of time to get into it. Not that they're the same in structure or what they're about, but takes a little bit to get into it. And once you ground yourself, you almost feel like you can play detective within it. And I like a book that requires a close reading to make sure you're not missing the little clues that so I can't wait for that one. That one sounds so good.

Mary Heim 22:12

Yes. I cannot wait to hear what you think when it gets to your hands Meredith.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:16

All right. So the next book that I want to bring was a five star read for me and I was so I was just knocked flat by this book. I read Booth by Karen Joy Fowler. Have you read this one?

Mary Heim 22:29

I haven't, but I've seen it everywhere.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 22:31

Yeah, I really, really love this one. Okay, so here's the setup, which you probably are fairly familiar with. Our novel opens when John Wilkes Booth's parents set up their house on a remote farm in Maryland.

His father Junius Booth is a successful actor and spends much of his time performing Shakespeare and his mother is left at home to attend the farm. She gives birth to 10 children, and we see her lose several of these children when they are really young. This is back in the middle 1800s. This portion of the story I will say is heartbreaking, but it is key to the story, and I think it's something that you definitely should know about before you read it. The narrative of Booth moves between several characters points of view. There's an omniscient narrator, which I really loved giving the story of the family historical context, and then we open each chapter with short vignettes from Abraham Lincoln's life. This was one of my favorite parts of the story, as it gives the sense that the two men, John Wilkes Booth, and Lincoln are moving closer and closer. But interestingly, the story of the Booth family keeps John Wilkes in the margins. We are actually a goodly way into the novel before he's even born. We get the story of several of his more interesting siblings much more in the forefront. But we all know where this story is heading. This novel is grounded in years of exacting research. And Karen Joy Fowler gives us a view of a part of history that few of us know about, and I was enraptured from the first page to the last. So I have made a goal for myself, starting this year that I want to read at least one book that's on the Long List for the Booker Prize. I really wanted to read Booth well before it earned that distinction. So it was lucky for me that it did, and my copy, which I got from Blackwell's is now filled with shiny book darts. This is a book dart book. I was I was just reaching for those book darts over and over again, that's how good the language is here. This is, in my opinion, historical fiction at its best, and at its most objective. There is not a lot of histrionic emotion happening in this book. Although the events that take place and happen to this family are certainly filled with a lot of genre and that difference, that contrast makes the book of very interesting read. You'll have heard, of course, that the distinguishing factor of Booth is that it's not really about John Wilkes Booth. It's about his family. As I said, we do meet John Wilkes as a child and we learn of his early personality. We see him as a teenager, when those strengths and weaknesses that he was born with clarify into what will become his adult personality. But we just as clearly do the same for several of the Booth siblings. In fact, I will remember scenes with Edwin and Asia Booth much more clearly than I will some of those with John Wilkes Booth. This is absolutely the story of a family. It's a story of a charismatic and magnetic father whose children both love him and deeply resent him. It's the story of an elder sister who, because of the time in history that she was born in and the gender of her birth, basically ended up living a life completely shut away in a house, not of her choosing. In fact, John Wilkes Booth himself starts out just as a very small thread. And as the story progresses, that thread becomes thicker and thicker, until by the end, it is a fully formed rope. And we see exactly where that rope is headed. If I had to give a comp as to vibes of Booth, I continuously was put in the mind of Hamilton, more than any other novel that I had read before. Booth is told in a present tense style that makes everything feel like it's happening right now, right in front of us and its immediacy gives it so much impact. I will say that after I read it, I read the author's note. And there were two things that made me appreciate the book even more, and that I wish I had read before I'd read the book itself. Karen Joy Fowler talks about getting the idea to write this book after she was thinking about several of the high profile school shootings, and what families of those shooters must have gone through afterwards. She also mentioned that the time that this book is written about the the Civil War and the assassination of Lincoln is not at all unlike the time of history that we're living through right now. Some of the same issues, many, in fact, are still in play and civil war still looms on the horizon. As she says, the issue of slavery and abolition is the history of America both then and now. And we will do well to learn it so that we don't repeat it. This was a five star book for me, and I think about it constantly. This is Booth by Karen Joy Fowler.

Mary Heim 27:41

Meredith, I'll be honest with you, this one was fairly low on my TBR. And I think you just shot it up to the top. That sounds so incredibly well done.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 27:51

It's Yeah, I absolutely loved it. And again, it's not I think I thought it was going to be more about Lincoln, but it's really about a family and you just you just the way she did it. It's just so beautifully done. I'm really so crossing my fingers for her to at least be in the shortlist for the Booker Prize.

Mary Heim 28:12

Wow. I love it. I love that. All right. Well, Meredith my final book today is This Time Tomorrow by Emma Straub. So this book is one that's kind of been floating around in popularity, but I feel like hasn't gotten quite maybe quite as much chatter as I think it deserves. Here's our setup. On the eve of her 40th birthday, our protagonist, Alice feels like something is missing and she likes her job. She's successful. She's independent, if maybe a little bit stuck. Her life love life is okay. Her friendships are solid. But her dad is sick. He's nearing the end of his life, and she finds herself questioning if things might have been different if she had taken another path. After a few too many drinks, she wakes up back in 1996, reliving her 16th birthday and watching her whole life pan out in front of her. Suddenly Alice is confronted with asking herself, what would she change if she could? I saw this one set up as a reverse 13 going on 30. And to my fellow millennials, you know that that is what drew me in. But what I went into expecting to, you know, perhaps be a reflection on making different choices about you know, who you're going to marry, the partner you choose, or maybe the job you pursue ended up instead really being this beautiful reflection on the relationship between a daughter and her father, simply just kind of getting more time to know your parents as whole adult people. And I don't see that particularly the father daughter relationship explored a lot, at least in the fiction I read. And particularly as I get older as my parents get older, and I see them more now as human adults instead of just my parents, I thought this was a really fascinating reflection on those themes. This one had me thinking about the choices we make and what it means to be so well loved by the people who know you by I just had me thinking about my own life and the paths that have brought me to this point. And as soon as I finished it, I wanted to go hug my parents, hug my husband, hug my best friend. It really got me in that contemplative reflective space, which I love. I love when a book can do that. Well, if you've been around for a little while, you know that I love fiction that makes me feel something about the world. I love to be a feeler. And this one totally did that. I am going to be bringing this theme into our deep dive here in just a little bit. So hold on to that thought in particular. But I think what Emma Straub does here is not just tell a great story, but she holds up a mirror for the reader to look back at themselves without hitting us over the head with it. I thought it was exceptionally well done and worthy of the hype that it's been getting. That is This Time Tomorrow by Emma Straub.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 30:45

That this is one that is definitely on my TBR. In fact, I haven't an advanced copy of it. And I love Emma Straub, I love her writing, I just find her to be so accessible. It just feels like sitting down and talking to a friend. It's just effortless to get into her writing. So this is one that I'm very interested in.

Mary Heim 31:04

I think you're gonna love it. And if you know to those who maybe don't have a physical copy easily accessible, the audio was also really, really well done. It was narrated by Marin Ireland, who I know is another beloved audiobook narrator she did a really great job. It's it's worth your time for sure.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:20

All right, good to know. All right, Mary. Well, I am excited to talk about this book, because I was super excited to read it and I was so relieved that I loved it. I want to talk about *The Bullet that Missed* by Richard Osman. This is the third in the Thursday Murder Club series. And you guys know, that is a series that I absolutely love. I think it's I can't actually think of anyone who like it's not a very controversial series like people who love this book. Love that kind of book. Love that series. So the first two have been great. So when the third one came out, of course, I'm thinking there's no way he can do it again. He did it again. This one is so good. So here's our setup for again, the third in the series. Yes, you need to start with *The Thursday Murder Club*. Do not jump in with this book. So here's the setup. As we start our story, our fearsome foursome of septuagenarian sleuths is once again in their happy place. It's an ordinary Thursday, they are in the jigsaw room at the Cooper's Chase Retirement Home and cold cases are being discussed. After some debate amongst the four of them, they decide to try to crack a decade old cold case, a young journalist was killed, but there was no body and little evidence to work with. Well, in the midst of this, a new enemy pays x spy Elizabeth a visit. All that she holds dear is threatened and she has to make some difficult decisions fast. So Elizabeth wrestles with her conscience and forms a plan. Joyce, Ron and Abraham chase down clues to try to find out who killed journalist Bethany Waites. But as we know, none of this is going to be without risk. And not everyone will make it out of our story alive. Alright, so yes, this one is all the things that we love about the series. We get in this novel, the charming setting, the cracking zippy dialog, the hilarious interactions of our four main characters, it's all there in spades. I was giggling all the way through. We also get not one but two smart mysteries woven together as I'm finding only Richard Osman can do. He manages to keep things complex enough to give us something to chew on, but not complicated enough to be confusing, and that isn't easy to do. And we get to see, our main characters deepen their bonds with each other, while also taking in some new friends and loved ones. Each of these ancillary characters is well written and we love to see them as a part of all the witty rep parte. The resolution is as with the other two books in the series, satisfying but also makes me look so forward to the next time we can be in their company. As to that, by the way word on the street is that Osman is going to continue writing the Thursday Murder Club series, but he's also going to begin another new series. He says he doesn't want to let the Thursday Murder Club series get stale. And for that we say thank you. I for one will read anything Richard Osman writes, and I'm so delighted by this latest which comes out September 20. This is *The Bullet that Missed* by Richard Osman.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 31:23

I love when a third in a series a fifth in a series a tenth in a series hits just as well as the first. I love that so much.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 34:09

Yes. And now all I can think about is that there are going to be readers who because they are not animals get to start with *The Thursday Murder Club* and they have three books boom, boom, boom in a

row that they can read that are all so good. I just love that. No other book series makes me laugh like this series does. The way that they interact with each other just absolutely cracks me up. So I love it. Okay, so those are our current reads, we are going to get into our deep dive. And Mary when we were talking about getting to record together, you were saying we'd been looking forward to this for a long time, because we I'd mentioned to you, probably more than six months ago, when I read *The Sentence* by Louise Erdrich and you had loved it so much. Yeah. And Roxanna and I buddy read it, because there was so much, there were so many people, trusted readers who absolutely loved it. So we jumped into it with pretty high hopes. And as soon as I read it, I knew what I wanted to do more than anything was to talk to you about it, because I had heard you and if memory serves, this was your favorite book of last year.

Mary Heim 35:54

This is my top spot number one favorite book of 2021.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 35:58

Yeah, all right, exactly. So the reason that obviously you and I can hop on a call, anytime we want to have this kind of bookish conversation, the reason I wanted to do it on the mic, and what we had talked about is that we get so many DMS and emails from people saying that they love the idea of buddy reads, or book twins or finding bookish friends or talking books in real life with their friends. But they are so afraid of a situation where maybe they read a book that their friend really loved, and they don't love it. And we've even had people tell us that there have been people friendships that they have, unconsciously, or consciously kind of backed away from, for fear that discussion about that one book is going to come up, and they're worried that it's actually going to taint their friendship. So I wanted to have us discuss this, because I think this comes up for a lot of readers is that you have, you don't have the same experience of a book as someone you truly love did. And that can be complicated. But I think and you think that there are ways that we can have these conversations, and have them really add to not only our bookish friendship, but the point you brought up, Mary was, if we if we can get clear on what it was that worked for the other person, but didn't work for us, then we know ourselves better as readers and we can have a better I think you said internal compass to make the right choices for us. And that's a reason to have these discussions, even when your opinions are really different.

Mary Heim 37:36

Right? It is, you know, bookish, crucial conversations one on one, I think that there's such a way that we can talk about books that worked for me and didn't work for you vice versa, that grow us as readers, and how we read books and how we see the world. And it's not to say, you know, I want to hone this internal compass so that I never pick up a book I'm not going to enjoy, or I never pick up a book that is going to challenge me or what have you. But rather that I know, you know, what works for me, and what is a hard pass versus what is a this might be challenging. So hey, this would be a great book for me to read with someone else to get their perspective. It's also important, if that is a value for you and your reading life, it's to be able to do that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:20

Absolutely. And we and if we want to read into or lean into our bookish friendships, we need to just normalize it being okay if we disagree about a book. Now, Mary, what's interesting about your reading

and my reading, our specific tastes, is that I feel like we almost have a perfectly segmented venn diagram. Yes. Right. Like we have a fairly large overlap of books that we both really enjoy. But equally, we have books where I might love it, and you might be like, not for me, and vice versa. Yeah. So we're gonna start talking about, start out by talking about *The Sentence* and then you have a book that I don't know which one it is yet, and you're going to tell me that I loved that you wasn't quite as much in your wheelhouse. And so let's start with we're gonna have, we're not going to get this is not going to be like a book club discussion. This is not going to be super long. But we want to talk a little bit about *The Sentence*, we will stay spoiler free, so you don't need to be worried we're not going to. We're not going to ruin anything for anyone who hasn't read it yet. But Mary, do you want to just briefly set it up so people can remember what book *The Sentence* is?

Mary Heim 39:32

Yes, let me set it up for everyone. So in *The Sentence*, we have our protagonist Tookie, an Ojibwe woman who begins our story as this convicted felon in her early 20s. And the story progresses all the way to current day 2020 in our current universe, I don't remember exactly but she's in her 40s or 50s. It's quite a chunk of time. The pandemic is raging where George Floyd has been killed in Minneapolis. That is where this story takes place. The backdrop of Tookie's story is a bookshop, a bookshop that is being haunted by their most annoying, deceased customer through this kind of tumultuous year that we all lived. Tookie uncovers the mystery of this haunting, while at the same time trying to understand all that occurs in Minneapolis during this year of grief, astonishment, isolation and furious reckoning. And I should add, another really beautiful piece of this story is the indigenous representation. Louise Erdrich herself is Native American and she does a really beautiful job of making that the foundation on which the story is told. So that is my brief little elevator pitch setup for *The Sentence* if you have or haven't read it to kind of bring that back to the forefront of your mind.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 40:45

Perfect, I think you did a great job setting that up, because you hit all of the high points. And there are definitely several high points for me. And the other thing that I that I want to say overall is there's some very beautiful language and gorgeous writing in this book. So that is not, that was never something that I was struggling with. I mean, we were clearly in extremely experienced skilled hands with Louise Erdrich and in what she was doing here in this book from a writing perspective. So, as I said, it may be and I think that this is a this is a another conversation, but it informs this conversation is that when this book came out, there was so much discussion around it and it seemed to be one of those books, that was that perfect combination of kind of important writing, and a plot that had enough in it that made me really interested. And sometimes those two things are not together for me. So I that's part of the reason that and all of the people who read it and just immediately put it on their top 10 of the year. So I think when Roxanna and I read it, I think possibly part of what was happening is that we went into it with expectations that were outsized. And this past year, that has been something that I have learned about myself is this issue of what expectation am I bringing to the reading of a book, but here was where I struggled. And your setup did a good job of kind of leading into this conversation, that we knew that it was a book about that was based in a bookshop, and that there was a ghost element of the book, and that the pandemic featured. But I felt like, as I was reading it, it felt more to me, like I was reading short stories that featured the same woman, rather than an interconnected novel. I felt like I was constantly trying to grab a linear through line of the book, and I couldn't grab a hold of it, like it was just beyond. I

would keep reading and think like, oh, here, this might be the kind of grounding through line that I needed. And then we would be off doing something different. And it came together for me in the final third, more than in any other portion of the book. But it never came together fully for me. So that that was my struggle is that I felt like, well, is this a book about a bookstore? Is it a book about a woman? Is it a book about these racial issues? Is it a book about her indigenous culture? Is it a book, it all just felt to it like it was a lot of things in one bowl, and I couldn't find the connection.

Mary Heim 43:47

I remember writing in my notes for the first I've brought this book to the show. Now this is my third time, but in my top 10. I brought it to the big show for a full treatment, I think in February, and then now, but I remember writing that the scope is vast, and also it is miniscule. And I think, Meredith, to your point to flip that on its head I think the reason it worked for me so much is because the way that I saw this book when I first started to read *The Sentence*, well first of all, I had incredibly low expectations. I think I caught it right as it was released. I wasn't reading a ton of hype. So I had that I think in my favor is that I wasn't having everybody tell me you're gonna love this so much. This is the best book ever. And I also think that I knew I was not, not knew, I anticipated I was not going to be ready for pandemic literature. I was like, No, thank you. I am still in the trauma of 2020 I don't want to read this. I don't want to experience it outside of myself. But the way that she wove together all of those little pieces of the puzzle for me felt like seeing not my experience as a white woman, but my experience as a human being, living my life through the pandemic through all have kind of this racial injustice happening in our world, all of the trauma of 2020 still was existing while we had to be people, right, like our own personal trauma, things are happening all in our lives. And we had to grapple with this huge global trauma along with the rest of the mundanity of our lives. And I think that that's why I loved this so much. It felt like collective group therapy for me to read her story to see her put together kind of the marrying of these huge, overwhelming overarching issues for which we have no real resolution, right? We're in a different place now than we were two years ago. But it's not like we fixed everything that's wrong with the world. And it was so powerful to me, because I feel like up until that point, me personally, I didn't feel like I had been able to make any meaning of 2020, I am a meaning seeker. I'm like, What am I going to learn from this? What am I going to come out of this experience with and when we are in? I'll be a little therapist here for a second, right, but when we're in a traumatic experience, it is really hard to make meaning and to work on healing from that while you are still experiencing it. So for me, this book was like, the first time that I saw someone lay out in front of me, look at how we can grapple with these, you know, small, small, relatively like heavy loads of our lives, in addition to what is going on in the world around us. And also, it doesn't have to be perfect, it doesn't have to totally make sense to ultimately come together in a hopeful way. So to see her do that in this book was so powerful for me to feel like as a human. I said earlier on in the in the show, I love books that make me feel something about the world, and this one made me feel like, okay, like maybe there is some hope of moving past how we feel right now. Maybe there is some meaning to be made of all of this, because she did it so beautifully in her fiction that felt such such like real life, that I think that's what resonated with me. That's I think, why all those little threads worked so well for me, but I hear what you're saying. I get it because it is. It's a little all over the place, for sure.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 47:17

Well, and when you said it's got a vast scope, but it also is really granular. I think that really was an aha moment for me, because you're absolutely right and describing it that way. And there are some scenes, several scenes from this book that I can remember with a level of granular detail, that I can't name a lot of other books that I remember that well. I mean, she's writing in a way that you really feel like those scenes, some of the some of the COVID related scenes when there's some quarantining happening when her and her husband are quarantining, little things literally about what they're talking about when they're making lunch. I mean, there's some, there's some scenes that there really is a sense of deep humanity there. And they're, you know, some scenes where she's grappling with what it means to be a stepmother, and that and that relationship, and those things were really memorable. And then, you know, like I said, in the last third, some of those ghost related scenes, were, you know, there are a couple of them that were visceral, where I, I was feeling feelings in my body, maybe not great feeling, you know what I mean? There were some it was more than I expected it to be kind of all of a sudden. And I think so here's a theory that I just want to put out there. Because I'm I'm seeing a pattern that I'm just wondering if this would be interesting is that the another book that you really, really loved, *Shadow of the Wind* that I had never read before. But I read last year, I had a very similar experience with because I read it knowing that so many people list that book is one of their favorites of all time, you being chief among them. And it's very beautifully written. It's very evocative, and I could not find a through line. It kept that same feeling. I couldn't figure out where it was going. I kind of thought it was about one thing, but then it wasn't it but then what is it about and it was kind of all the way through the story. But Mary, I will tell you, I was just talking to Roxana about this. I think about that book all the time. And the longer I get from my reading of it a the more I want to reread it because I think it would really benefit from a reread. And the more I think there's never been a book that I've read that has increased more in star rating from the ending of my reading to where I am right now like I have developed. I feel so much different about it in the months since I've read it than I did when I close to the book itself. Yeah. So my theory is that one of the main places that we diverge is that I really need a through line of plot, even if it's something small, I don't need it to be a thriller. I don't need it to be you know what I mean? I don't need a full on mystery. But there needs to be some for me to feel really satisfied in the reading, I need to feel like I'm kind of step step stepping forward in a way that's making sense to me. Where for you, that piece of it is not what is going to make or break your experience. It's much more about the, in the moment, the more immediate aspects of it would be that be the way to describe it.

Mary Heim 50:43

Yeah. Or just like how it made me feel, how it made me feel. I feel like I'm a therapist stereotype right now. But like, this book, made me feel like I was seeing I said earlier, I love a book that is a window and a mirror. And this one was a window and a mirror. To me, it was what our days looked like. And if you told me, did our life have a through line in 2020? Definitely not. Right? Like it felt like, we're all over the place. We're here, and then we're over there. And, and so I think that that really resonated with me. And you're right, Meredith, I think that probably is a piece of where we differ is that I, I enjoy the experience of feeling like I am really in a character shoes not all the time, not every book I read, right, but I am just walking through this path with them. And maybe I don't see where it's going. Because they don't see where it's going. And I'm okay with that. I enjoy that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 51:41

And that makes me really, really uncomfortable. Yeah, so. So that is, I think, a great example of how not being afraid to have a discussion about a book. Because I think as long as we all, I think anytime we read a book, whether we're going to talk about it publicly or not, we need to be thinking, Okay, what pieces of this did work for me. Because in almost every book, I mean, sure, there are some exceptions, but in almost every book, there are going to be things that did work, and maybe more things that don't, but so being able to identify that, but then also being able to say like, Hey, let's have this discussion. And me struggling with this, these issues with the sentence didn't mean that I you know, I absolutely loved how much it worked for you. And so we can have this kind of conversation, because you know that about me, and I know that about you. And so we can automatically just, it doesn't matter what we each thought, because we're not trying to convince the other person to feel differently,

Mary Heim 52:42

right. And I feel like Meredith, you just gave me language for something I really enjoy in a book that I don't know if I would have been able to pick that out. In the same way, if I hadn't had a chance to talk to you about it. There's and there's no love lost in our friendship, because I so appreciate that you write are being a mirror for me right now. And being able to understand my reading better and understand what books I will and won't recommend to you, frankly, like Meredith, I just need you to know that you're not going to know where this one is going. And it's either worth it or it's not or whatever. But like that's helpful information for me for sure.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 53:18

Right. Right, exactly. So what is the book I'm dying to know, what is the book that you heard me talk about with great fervor that you that just didn't work for you?

Mary Heim 53:29

Okay, Meredith. First of all, I feel like I need to preface I'm going to lose so many friends over saying this, but maybe can we challenge the fact that we can diverge on this and that's okay. Please don't abandon me bookish friends. And I don't know that this one is in the same category, but when I think about a book that worked for you, that did not work for me, and that I'm really mad about the fact that it didn't work for me, because I wish I wanted it to work for me... It is A Court of Thorns and Roses, and it is A Court of Mist and Fury. And I read the first book and I was very eh about it. And everybody was like, keep going read the second one, it's going to be worth it. And I read the second one and I was actively mad at how much that book did not work for me. And but you know what is I can see, I understand that it is so beloved by so many. And it was a really good checkpoint moment for me of like, I wanted to enjoy this book and it didn't work for me. And also, here's what I'm going to when I'm seeking a retelling a fairy tale, you know, a fairy tale retelling, or fantasy, or, you know, steamy book or whatever, here's what I'm going to avoid, because what I have learned from those books, but that is an area where I didn't expect to diverge from you, but I totally did.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 54:46

Right? So and you are not alone. I mean, there are so many people who feel the exact same way. So no matter what opinion we have better book we're never going to be alone. But my question is what I'm

totally curious, what are the pieces that you took away from it saying, Okay, now I now know that this piece doesn't work for me. So what were those pieces?

Mary Heim 55:09

Well, okay, so I, I'm going to not answer your question right away, I do want to say what did work for me, I felt the world building really well done, I was very, like, if I could just pluck the characters out, and just put myself in the story or somebody else in that world, I really enjoyed the world. So it teaches me shows me that I'm not off the fantasy train forever, right. But I struggled with the characters. And I know this about myself. And it's why I probably should have listened to my own internal compass, on picking up picking up or not picking up the second book, but is that I had no desire to root for any of these characters, I don't need a likeable character. But I did not want to root for them. A I had no investment in characters. And that is the story right is like you are following these characters. It's not like you are in it with these characters. So that by the time we get to the second book, where there's this, you know, infamous sexy time chapter that the whole world knows. And I was just cringing, I wanted to crawl out of my skin, I because I couldn't, I did not care, one lick about the characters. So I did not want to hear this detailed description of their most intimate times. And like, so that was the realization for me of there are times when I can get behind, you know, or maybe sometimes a character I love to hate. But I didn't even love to hate these characters, I was just incredibly indifferent, and very not invested in how the characterization was written. And that is key for me is I have to have some kind of investment on what is happening with the characters. And it was not there for me. And I should listen to that gut instinct after book one. But now I know now I know myself better.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 56:52

Well, this is a difficult one. Because I mean, first of all, these are big, huge books, right? So it's a really big investment. And a lot of people would like you said, people say, read the first book so that you can get to the second book. So you already had spent all of this time and very frankly, after the first book, I also was sort of meh. And so I was as surprised as anyone when I went into that second book Mist and Fury and absolutely really loved it. But again, we're back to the same discussion of expectations. Yeah, so I went into the second book prepared for more meh. And when that didn't happen, and there that the Rhysand character is a character that I really, really love. So I was very invested in him and how things were going to work out for him. And then Feyre ended up to me changing enough to be more interesting. If that hadn't been the case, early on in that second book, I also would say, yeah, there's just too much book, to spend your time if you don't care about the characters at all. So I understand why you read all the way through the second book with hope that things were going to change for you. But you know, again, you are not alone in how you feel about this at all. I really think this is another one that Roxanna and I read together. It was our first book we ever read together with Mist and Fury. And we both went into it with such low expectations, then it ended up being a really, really great experience for us. And so that issue is just one that I'm very fascinated with. And didn't Sarah J Maas also write the Throne of Glass series?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 58:32

Yes.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 58:33

Was that her? Yeah. And did you read that?

Mary Heim 58:36

No. And I probably won't.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 58:38

Well, maybe you should, because I tried so hard to get into Throne of Glass, and did not care a lick about any of the characters and finally ended up just saying I can't do it. Because I just the lead character graded on me. And so I was disappointed too because I was like, Oh, I really want I wanted more ACOTAR and then I wasn't getting it out of there. So yes, you I mean, what works for us at different times is going to be different. That book may very well have fallen flat for me at a different time in my life. The other thing is, there's no question that by putting long periods of time between books in those fantasy series, I think at least for me, that's been a trick that I've used to keep them fresher. Because I think if I do too long in one world, all of a sudden, I start getting a little more thorny about it. But yeah, I understand. I finally understand I recently read a piece on why someone really really really didn't like Mist and Fury, which we can't get into here because it would be spoilery. But it was a really smart review that made me think some things that I thought ooh, ah, okay, she's making some really good points here some that I didn't see when when I read the book, so that was a little uncomfortable for me because I was like, Oh, this is taking books that I really, really loved and making some really, really strong arguments that it was problematic and maybe some ways. So I need to do a little more thinking about that. But so yeah, sharing our thoughts on all of all of these things, I think only adds to our experience of books, and adds to our ability to know ourselves as readers so that we can choose the books that really do work for us or set down books that are not working for us in that moment.

Mary Heim 1:00:23

Right, right. It's all about that internal compass.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:00:27

Exactly. All right. Okay, so Mary, we are going to visit the fountain. Is this your first visit to the fountain?

Mary Heim 1:00:33

This is my first time at the fountain Meredith, I'm so excited.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:00:36

Okay. So when you think about the garden that your fountain resides in, what kind of garden is it?

Mary Heim 1:00:42

I mean, I feel like we're in an episode of Bridgerton, like my fountain has in an English country garden for sure. Like I think maybe did you say that is where your fountain is, as well? Or am I thinking of in a previous episode? That's where I am today? I'm in an English country garden fountain.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:01:00

Right, exactly, exactly. I like something that's a little wilder than what you're going to find in Bridgeton. But I also really, sometimes really would prefer that very highly manicured, very tidy. You know, borders have everything that we see in those grand estates. So okay, what is your first wish for the fountain?

Mary Heim 1:01:20

All right, Meredith, I'm gonna be a little sneaky. And I'm going to be like one of those people who makes a wish who and asks for three more wishes, I'm going to use my wish at the fountain to wish to share a book series with a particular subset of readers who I think would really enjoy it. This is not a press, but it's also not not a press. Perfect. Here's my wish today. So today, I wish I could speak right to the fans of the Finlay Donovan series, Finlay Donovan is Killing It, et cetera, and tell y'all I think I've got your next great series, and that is The Booking Agents series by Cherie Priest. So here's the thing I loved about Finlay Donovan. I think it's harder than it looks to find a comp for this series. It's not necessarily a cozy mystery, but it is a more gentle one, which you know, is right up my alley. We've got snappy dialogue, interesting characters, some irreverent plot points that just feel really fun. I love that Finlay Donovan is someone who has no interest in becoming a hit woman or a mystery solver. But she steps into that role that fell at her feet and really excels at it while also still being like a mom in her 30s. This particular vibe has just been really hard to replicate in books for me. So when I stumbled on the first in the booking agent series, which is titled Grave Reservations, I was giddy thinking that this might hit some of those same notes for me. Now that I have read the second book in this series Flight risk, I can confidently say that it is a comp it is not exact, but it is definitely a comp. This series gets rolling with a travel agent Lita Foley, who has a psychic vision that the plane she booked for a customer of hers is going to go up in smoke. So she does everything she can to stop him from getting on that plane, She tells him, hey, something's gonna happen to the plane, you can't go on this flight, I have to switch you. It turns out that her vision was correct. The customer is a detective who could maybe use a little bit of psychic help in solving a case that's gone cold for him. And the series takes off from there. I don't necessarily think the writing or the plot was quite as tight as Finlay Donovan for me, but the vibe is absolutely in the same wheelhouse. And these books are just fun, and fast and fresh. And so far, the second book has absolutely lived up to the hype for me, I haven't really seen this series talked about too much, but it's newer, it's actively being written. And I think it's a you know, it's a real shame that I'm not seeing other readers pick this one up because I think it would be a hit with so many of our listeners. So my first wish at the fountain Meredith today is that so many of our bookish friends would maybe find their way over to the Booking Agent series by Cherie Priest. And with that, plink, there's my first wish.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:03:57

Plink I like plink. So and what is the first so is it called the booking agent. What's the first book in the series called?

Mary Heim 1:04:05

Grave Reservations is the first two that's the one with the you know the angle of the plane going up in smoke. And then Flight Risk is number two. And I didn't give any giveaways to that. But we've got same set of characters solving a mystery together with a little bit of a psychic intuition. It's it's just so fun. It would I read it in like three days. Highly recommend it was just a joy.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:04:31

I love it. I love it. Okay, all right. Well, I My first wish is a non book related wish I really? I really wish that Pringles would come out with a variety pack tube.

Mary Heim 1:04:44

Me too. Can I make that my second?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:04:45

That'd be great. Like where every Pringle in the stack? You don't know what the next Pringle is going to be? Yeah,

Mary Heim 1:04:52

it's Trader Joe's does that patio chips or something? Where if the bag is filled with all these different flavors, why is that not happening elsewhere?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:05:00

All right, I need Pringles to hear me on this. So okay, so that's not that's not book related. Yeah, my book related wish is that I wish sometimes this is not going to happen. But sometimes I wish that I could go into books completely without the opinions of everybody else. Yeah. Right. Because of the expectation thing that we've been talking about. I am currently as we speak right now I am reading Daisy Darker by Alice Feeney. And I just posted about this on Instagram today. I'm halfway through. And I have had it for a few weeks now. But I have hesitated to pick it up. Because several people dipped into it when it first came out. And they were sort of like, met and they had like, all these all these issues with it. And I was really disappointed because I loved it's like locked room. And I just loved the setup. And finally I said, Gosh, darn it, I just really want to at least see if this is going to work for me because I love the setup so much. And I really like Alex Feeney. And I like I was in the mood for that kind of writing? And do you know that I am absolutely loving it. And I don't, which doesn't mean that contrary, opinions aren't true or valid. But they were keeping me from picking up a book that was totally, I think, going to work for me, and I'm going to have a lot of thoughts about it. And I'll give it a full treatment on the show. But sometimes I just wish that I could read books in a vacuum that we all could.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:05:04

Yeah, I mean, Meredith, I'll cosign that. Because as we were talking, I thought, Man, I think what I need to be more careful on when I am recommending books to is to not be so vast in my recommendations to get more specific about why a book worked for me, because I think sometimes when we hear hype, like hype is the least helpful. Of all of the avenues you could take for book recommendations. So I hear you I, yeah, this is a great wish,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:06:52

Talking about like, I mean, it's not going to happen, but I think maybe what's better is a wish, more along lines of what you just said, which is I wish that when people talked about books, they would be more specific. And for me to that I would learn to be really specific about what worked for me and what didn't so that other readers could take that and use it to make their own choices as opposed to big sweeping statements like, I loved this book, you've gotta read it. Or this book didn't work for me what a

snore, I figured it out too soon that that, you know, where it's not necessarily quite as helpful. So, all right, well, Mary, that is it for this week. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me on Meredith at Meredith.reads on Instagram. Kaytee is at @notesonbookmarks.

Mary Heim 1:07:35

And you can find me at @Maryreadsandsips on Instagram.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:07:39

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.

Mary Heim 1:07:49

You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram, or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:07:56

And if you really love what we've talked about here today, you might want to become a bookish friend for \$5 a month, you can support us on Patreon and you get a lot of additional content. You can also help us by rating and reviewing us on Apple podcasts and shouting us out on social media. Each of those things makes a huge difference toward us finding our perfect audience.

Mary Heim 1:08:17

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

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:08:23

Alright, until next week, may your coffee be hot

Mary Heim 1:08:26

and your book be unputdownable.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 1:08:28

Happy reading Mary.

Mary Heim 1:08:29

Happy reading Meredith