

Librarians Telling Tales Podcast Transcript- Episode 15

Quick Look Booklist:

- **Section 1: Librarians Remember- Growing up with Young Adult Books**
 - *The Final Friends* series by Christopher Pike
 - *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume
 - *Forever* by Judy Blume
 - *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* by Judy Blume
 - *Blubber* by Judy Blume
 - *Tiger Eyes* by Judy Blume
 - *Tomorrow, When the War Began* by John Marsden
 - *Goosebumps* series by R.L. Stine
 - *Sweet Valley Twins* series by Francine Pascal
 - *Sweet Valley High* series by Francine Pascal
 - *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
 - *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling
- **Section 2: YA Favorites - Fantasy**
 - *The Black Witch Chronicles* series by Laurie Forest
 - *The Children of Blood and Bone* series by Tomi Adeyemi
 - *The House of Salt and Sorrows* by Erin Craig
 - *Beasts of Prey* by Ayana Gray
 - *Song of Wraiths and Ruin* by Roseanne Brown
 - *The Gilded Ones* series by Namina Forna
 - *Strange the Dreamer* duology by Laini Taylor
 - *Daughter of Smoke and Bone* trilogy by Laini Taylor
 - *The Grisha* trilogy by Leigh Bardugo
 - *The Raven Cycle* series by Maggie Stiefvater
 - *The Dreamer* trilogy by Maggie Stiefvater
 - *The Scorpio Races* by Maggie Stiefvater
 - *The Lunar Chronicles* series by Marissa Meyer
 - *Twilight Saga* series by Stephenie Meyer
 - *Witch and Wizard* series by James Patterson
 - *Girls of Paper and Fire* by Natasha Ngan
 - *Letters to the Lost* by Brigid Kemmerer
 - *Cast in Firelight* by Dana Swift
 - *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline
 - *Warcross* by Marie Lu
 - *Walking in Two Worlds* by Wab Kinew
 - *House of Hollow* by Krystal Sutherland
 - *Jackaby* series by William Ritter
 - *Bone Gap* by Laura Ruby
 - *Grave Mercy (His Fair Assassin* trilogy) by Robin LaFevers
 - *Queen of the Tearling* by Erika Johansen - ADULT
 - *The Bear and the Nightingale* by Katherine Arden - ADULT
- **Section 3: Why do we read YA & YA Favorites- Realistic Fiction & More**
 - Jody Hedlund (author)
 - *Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins - ADULT

- *Dead Girls Don't Write Letters* by Gail Giles
- *Charm and Strange* by Stephanie Kuehn
- *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart
- *They Went Left* by Monica Hesse
- Ruta Sepetys (author)
- *I Must Betray You* by Ruta Sepetys
- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- Jennifer Nielsen (author)
- *The False Prince* by Jennifer Nielsen
- *A Heart in a Body in the World* by Deb Calletti
- *On the Hook* by Francisco X Stork
- *If You're Reading This* by Trent Reedy

Transcript:

Musical Intro: "Uplifting 2463" by Twisterium from pixabay.com
(Description) Upbeat, piano and percussion. Music fades and plays under.

Blair: Hey, bookworms! Welcome to Librarians Telling Tales, where we introduce you to all the things we love about libraries, books, people, and making connections. I'm Blair.

Jennifer: I'm Jennifer.

Amy: I'm Amy.

(0:24) Music fades out

Jennifer: In today's episode, we're excited to introduce our special guest and colleague, Sarah Willadsen, who is an Adult Services librarian and an avid young adult (YA) book reader. We'll be chatting with her about why we read YA books and share some of our favorite books for young adults.

Musical Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

(0:40) Section 1: Librarians Remember- Growing up with Young Adult Books

Amy: Welcome, Sarah!

Blair/Jennifer: Woohoo!

Sarah: Hi. Thanks for having me.

Amy: No, thank you for joining us.

Blair: Yes, it's so much fun to chit chat about books with each other. I love it.

Amy: Indeed. All of our nerding-out over books. All right, Sarah, so in your opine, what makes a young adult book?

Sarah: I feel like it has to do with the main character, their age, a little bit of content, but it's more the character arc of being around 13 to 18 and going through life and discovering yourself. Life experiences that you get when you're a teenager.

Amy: Totally agree.

Jennifer: I think it's the relationships, too. It's when that boy-girl relationship goes to the next level. It's that romance trope that starts to kick in. Those teens are looking, I think, for that you don't find here in the children's section.

Amy: And I think the high school drama aspect as well, the true backstabbing friendship situations and that kind of thing that you experience in high school that's kind of more moderated for the tween and middle school audiences.

Blair: I mean, it's like when their hormones take off <laugh>, and it's not just the romance hormones, but like the aggression hormones, all the brain changes and all the things that make kids go a little bit batty when they hit those teenage years. That's what's in those books. It's all the stuff that they can relate to, and is of interest to them, and speaks to them.

Jennifer: Don't you think that's a time too, when the scales, so to speak, fall off their eyes when they realize maybe their mother has a mental health issue, or they realize they don't have a lot of money. Those issues that you hide from your kids start to surface and you start to recognize them as an adolescent?

Sarah: Absolutely. I think you become self-aware and aware of other people and how what you're doing affects other people. Just more awareness of the environment as a whole and not just self-centeredness of youth.

Blair: Some of those formative things about you pop up when you're a young teen, you know? You really start figuring out what your values are and what's important to you, what path you might be interested in taking in life.

Amy: That's true. I think, too, your parents do give you more opportunity and responsibility. You know, you learn to drive and so maybe you have your own car, now you've got some more freedom and experience. And some of those books like that I read when I was younger, I mean, I had dreams about driving cars and going to parties that I learned about in books.

Blair: So, Christopher Pike?

Amy: Totally Christopher Pike! <laugh>, *The Final Friends* series. Yes, yes, for sure. Yes. I thought someone was gonna die at a party. There was gonna be a murder.

Blair: And a ghost would help you solve the mystery.

Amy: Yes. The ghost of the person murdered at the party.

Blair: The ghost of the person who was murdered. Yes, a hundred percent.

Jennifer: And let's not forget Judy Blume.

Amy: Yes, yes. Definitely, coming of age for sure.

Jennifer: I have a keen memory of being in my old library and there was this turnstile paperback rack and the novel *Forever* by Judy Blume. I had just come out of the *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* mindset. So to read *Forever* by Judy Blume...

Amy: <laugh> Whoa.

Jennifer: Yes. My world shifted after I read that book.

Amy: Where in the scheme then was *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret?*

Jennifer: I think right around that same time... *Blubber*, *Tiger Eyes*. All those books that just went from fourth grade to high school <laugh>. And I don't think I ever told my mom I read that book.

Blair: <laugh> Well, now she'll know.

Jennifer: Now, if she listens to this podcast, Mom <laugh>. Yeah. So why don't we talk about when young adult collections actually became a big thing, like a collection or a section in the library. Because I've mentioned to you all that I don't remember that being a designated area in my library as a kid.

Blair: I mean there was, I think there was a wall, I think there was like one shelf that was upper level of kids or upper-level junior. They didn't call it Young Adult. I think it was called junior novels or something like that. And there weren't a ton of books there. But I do remember that's where I picked up *Tomorrow, When the War Began* by John Marsden. And that is a full series. And I read the first three books at that age. He's added a whole bunch of books on later. Set in Australia, where these kids go on this epic camping trip into the middle of nowhere to this place that's really incredibly hard to reach, called Hell. And while they're down in this crazy canyon, their country gets invaded. And when they come home they realize that, oh, the stock show that was this weekend was actually like where they rounded everybody up. And so they're trying to take back their town and survive and become resistance fighters.

Jennifer: That's one of those epic series of books that I've heard about, but I've never read.

Amy: I'm older than Blair by, I don't know, six or seven years. And there was not a teen area, it was just kids, and then the adult part of the library. But we only had turnstiles and they called it OTF— "On the Fly". And I never knew what that meant except I was looking for a book one time and I said the catalog computer, which there was a computer with that weird green font...

Blair: Ooh! You had a computer!

Amy: And that little dot that would like flash the whole way, like *Jumping [Jumpin'] Jack Flash* with Whoopi Goldberg style, you know? And it said OTF. And I had to go ask the librarian, "What does that

mean? What is OTF?" And then I was introduced to the turnstiles, all the paperbacks that were shoved in. I mean, by and large, they were the Christopher Pikes, the R.L. Stines, like the older R.L. Stines, not the *Goosebumps*-y things, stuff like that. *Sweet Valley High*, *Sweet Valley Twins* (Francine Pascal). A whole bunch of those were all shoved into that turnstile.

Blair: Ah, *Sweet Valley*.

Sarah: *Sweet Valley* was my bread and butter for a really long time. I started with the [*Sweet Valley*] *Twins* and then went to *Sweet Valley High*. Like you mentioned earlier about expecting murders at every party, I kind of expected that, you know, you solve mysteries automatically as soon as you turn 17. <affirmative>. It's just, that's when it happens. Murders, mystery, mayhem.

Jennifer: <Laughter> That started way back with Nancy Drew.

Blair: Oh yeah.

Jennifer: So that, what's that, 1930s, 1940s?

Sarah: I don't remember our library having a section at all. I just remember being in the kids section and then all of a sudden being in the adult section and kind of filtering through and finding these that were kind of on the cusp. But I don't remember any sort of actual YA section.

Jennifer: I really think it's publisher driven. The publishing companies really do a lot to drive our collection and create new collections. That's how I felt over the years since I've been a librarian. And I think it's good that we have a teen collection, but I really think the publishers made that decision when they said 13 to 21, actually, I think, in the publishing world are considered the young adults. And they created a young adult collection just like the new adult that was totally publisher driven.

Blair: I still, I still don't think new adult is like really a worthwhile thing.

Jennifer: But they talk about it in the professional journals all the time and they're really pushing it and I'm seeing it more and more. And so, I do think publishing companies have a big hand in creating these sections. But I think the young adult collection is legitimate. I think we really needed to have that. Although I think the young adult book existed long before the designated area was ever around.

Blair: Oh sure. I mean, *Catcher in the Rye* (J. D. Salinger).

Jennifer: Exactly. In the early sixties, the first real, I think, teen protagonist: Holden Caulfield. But I don't think that at that time there was a designated area in the library for books like *Catcher in the Rye*.

Blair: I mean it's definitely true that the things that interest teens and the things that engage teens are very different than the things that interest and engage younger kids. It is a threshold difference as far as what they're willing to tolerate, what they think is scary, what they think is fun, what they think is action. I mean it's definitely different. We can use the *Harry Potter* (J. K. Rowling) example because that series was written to grow with kids. So, because it was written to grow with kids, the first couple of books are definitely at that middle-grade age level. And then the books themselves start aging up and it starts to become really YA content. The level of scary things that are in there, high-level plot points and

violence and all of that stuff, it's more YA. Just because a fourth grader sits down and reads the first one doesn't mean that they're gonna make it all the way to the last book in one year. Cause that's a hard growth rate.

Jennifer: Which as a parent, I appreciate having different sections in the library for content reason alone. And I'm sure I speak for other parents that like having that designation, that different space for those more mature books when their kids are ready for it.

Music Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

(8:36) Section 2: YA Favorites - Fantasy

Jennifer: So why don't we talk about some of our favorite teen or young adult books. Sarah, would you like to start us off?

Sarah: This is one that Amy got me into, is *The Black Witch Chronicles* by Laurie Forest. And that's one that we have been dying for the continuation of the series. I think they are five books in. We're still waiting for the end and there's gonna be at least two more.

Amy: There are?

Blair: Really?

Amy: I thought it was ending with the next one. Oh, I hope it ends. I want to know what happens.

Blair: Yes.

Amy: I don't want her to keep dragging this out. I wanna know.

Jennifer: <laugh> Have we ordered it?

Amy: It's not out yet. Cause her books take like a year and a half or something to publish. She's not fast.

Jennifer: We should just let our listeners know that this is a fantasy book and that Sarah and Amy and Blair, I'm not sure are you big fantasy reader? You're big fantasy YA readers.

Blair: I do read a ton of fantasy YA. But my sweet spot is magical realism. I don't hate fantasy but there is a certain point where it reaches that epic fantasy level and I'm like, "I'm out, that's too much. You're inventing words and my brain hurts."

Amy: <laugh>

Jennifer: I would like to see Sarah and Amy go toe to toe on YA fantasy books. Who's read the most or how long can you go when you're naming your books?

Blair: And I'll help if there's a hole.

Jennifer: And I'll see if I've read any of them.

Sarah: I made a list.

Amy: Good.

Sarah: Um, I have *The Children of Blood and Bone* series by Tomi Adeyemi.

Amy/Blair: Yep.

Sarah: *The House of Salt and Sorrows* by Erin Craig. That's a one off. It's not a series. It's an interesting take on things. It's not something I've read before but would recommend. *Beasts of Prey*, Ayana Gray. Uh, *Song of Wraiths and Ruin* by Roseanne Brown.

Blair: Yes.

Amy: Yep.

Sarah: *The Gilded Ones*, Namina Forna.

Blair: Yes.

Amy: Yes. But just book one so far.

Blair: Book two is really good.

Amy: I've not read book two yet.

Blair: I actually like the book two better.

Sarah: ...this year, was that?

Blair: Yes, it came out in '22.

Sarah: I would recommend doing the follow up.

Amy: One of the ones that Sarah and I bonded over at the very beginning of our term in this library together was Laini Taylor's series.

Blair: Yes.

Sarah: Yeah, she's on my list.

Amy: I bet. Cause that was one we talked about forever. And then the same author, the *Strange the Dreamer* series.

Jennifer: But I actually read the first book in that series...

Sarah: *Daughter of Smoke and Bone*.

Blair: Yeah. I enjoyed that whole first trilogy. I was not about *Strange the Dreamer*. It bothered me a little bit.

Sarah: Did you get to the end?

Blair: I only read the first book.

Sarah: The reason I mention that is if you've read the first series, they're connected slightly and I don't know if she's gonna take that somewhere eventually or not. But it is worth seeing that connection between the two.

Blair: All right. Maybe you've convinced me, maybe.

Jennifer: I'm surprised Leigh Bardugo's books are not on your list, *The Grisha*...

Sarah: I haven't read them yet.

Jennifer: Oh, because Netflix has given it new life and so we've had to double up on our books. Because all of a sudden everybody wants to read that series.

Blair: Mm-hmm.

Sarah: That one. And then there's *Raven Boys*...

Jennifer: Oh...

Amy: By Maggie Stiefvater. Oh, you've gotta read that series.

Blair: Oh, you've gotta read *Raven Boys* series.

Jennifer: I have read that.

Amy: And then the spinoff too. Oh my gosh.

Blair: It's so good.

Amy: The spinoff is actually better than *The Raven Cycle*, I think.

Blair: Um, I'm not convinced that it's better. I'm convinced that it's the same level of awesome.

Amy: I don't know. Bringing things back from your dreams and then finding out that there are others that have that same power is pretty rad.

Jennifer: Maggie Steifvater is pretty amazing.

Amy: Yes, we love her.

Jennifer: But my favorite, *The Scorpio Races*. <laugh> But it's also because there's a really great recipe for...

Amy: Some kind of cake. Don't tell me.

Blair: November cakes.

Jennifer: November cake. It's a delicious book with a delicious recipe.

Blair: So, what do you got, Amy?

Amy: A lot of the same... Marissa Meyer's *The Lunar Chronicles*, which is kind of fantasy and sci-fi. Does...

Jennifer: Fairy tale, too.

Blair: Yeah. Retellings.

Amy: Does Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series count as... <laughs>

Blair: Fantasy Romance.

Jennifer: Some libraries categorize it as horror.

Amy: No way!

Blair: I mean, they're vampires.

Amy: Oh, wow!

Blair: And werewolves.

Jennifer: Vampires and werewolves, oh yeah.

Sarah: I feel like the main plot isn't horror enough to be classified as horror, but...

Blair: Vampires, what can I say?

Amy: James Patterson's *Witch and Wizard*.

Sarah: Speaking of Patterson, he supported Natasha Ngan. She wrote *Girls of Paper and Fire*. The third one just came out, I don't know how much his fingers are in it. But it's a James Patterson Presents and

that one was really good. It's set some undisclosed Asian location. It's about girls overcoming obstacles and they come into their own and get to take down the monarchy, which is fabulous.

Jennifer: What about Brigid Kemmerer series that's really popular right now, kind of a retelling of Beauty and the Beast? It's so popular. But I like her realistic books. *Lost Letters to the Dead* [correction: *Letters to the Lost*]. But her fantasy is on fire right now.

Amy: That other one you introduced me to, I think, the author is Dana Swift.

Jennifer: Oh yeah.

Amy: I think it's *Cast in... Cast in Firelight*. That was fun. I have not read the second book though.

Jennifer: There's street fighting in it!

Amy: Yeah.

Jennifer: And I loved it. <laugh> It's really a fun series. But there is definite magic and fantasy involved in it. I have to have one foot in reality. That's why *Harry Potter* appealed to me. I could wrap my mind around that one. But when there's multiple levels of worlds and lots of characters and different powers, I go to sleep.

Blair: Well, I can add in some things that are magical realism more as opposed to pure fantasy.

Jennifer: Let's hear that.

Blair: Cause that's mostly what I brought. For kids who like *Ready Player One* (Ernest Cline), uh, *Warcross* (Marie Lu), those VR kind of interactive video game worlds. I recently read *Walking in Two Worlds* by Wab Kinew, who is a native Canadian author, and it is super cool. Our main character is native and she is the very tippity top score in this virtual reality world. And we're talking a slightly futuristic future from here where basically we live in and out of a virtual reality world all the time. And while she's in this world, part of the reason she's succeeding is because of the way she views the world and interacts with the world. And that's how she views and interacts inside the game to kind of break how the game works. There's a little bit of romance and betrayal and you're in and out of the game world the whole time and it's so cool. And then *House of Hollow* by Krystal Sutherland is the perfect gothic dark and it is on the cusp of age cause it deals with three sisters who disappeared when they were younger. One of them was 10 and 11 and 13. They can't remember anything from the month that they were gone. They all have matching scars, all kinds of crazy things happen around them all the time. And seven years later, the youngest one is getting ready to graduate high school and one of her sisters disappears and she thinks: Okay, that's weird. And then her other sister also disappears and then she's like: Okay, this is bad. Oh, it's so fun. It's so dark. It is so creepy, Goth-y, dark, underworld-y. It's amazing. And of course British, I have a thing for British. I don't know.

Jennifer: Have you read the *Jackaby* series by William Ritter?

Blair: I have not read that series.

Jennifer: It's set in the 1880s in the United States, in the New England area. There's a little bit of magic how he solves his mysteries. He reminds me of a Doctor Who character, but he solves mysteries.

Amy: I read *Jackaby*.

Jennifer: Did you like it?

Amy: Mm-hmm, I did. That was when you recommended that and *Bone Gap*.

Jennifer: Oh, I love *Bone Gap*!

Blair: Oh, *Bone Gap*! Jennifer and I were just fangirling about *Bone Gap* the other day.

Jennifer: Speaking of magical realism...

Blair: Yes!

Jennifer: *Bone Gap* by Laura Ruby. Oh, love that book.

Blair: Yeah, that's really cool. Time stops. You and I both like the Robin LaFevers...

Jennifer: *Grave Mercy*.

Blair: Yeah, the *Grave Mercy*.

Jennifer: About the assassins.

Blair: Yeah.

Jennifer: Yes, I love it.

Blair: Because it's got a little bit of a historical vein to it, it's set into medieval sort of world and girl assassins who are balance bringers to the world.

Jennifer: Political intrigue.

Blair: Yes.

Jennifer: And fantasy.

Sarah: It kind of makes me think of *Queen of the Tearling* (Erika Johansen), which I don't know if it's technically considered YA cause I think it's classified in the fiction, but as you read it, it really feels YA. It was a very good series, but it kind of has that political intrigue and it starts medieval with a little bit of kind of fantasy going on. And then I don't wanna divulge the twist, but it goes somewhere else. And then *The Bear and the Nightingale* (Katherine Arden) is another one that I feel like is on the cusp of...

Blair: Definitely.

Sarah: ...YA to Fiction. It's classified in fiction, but I really feel like it should be YA other than they're trying to market it for our age group as well, which is not quite YA anymore.

Blair: We're not old. No, not us.

Jennifer: So then that begs the question: why do we read Young Adult? Why are we reading young adult books when we are clearly beyond that age range?

Music Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

(16:51) Section 3: Why do we read YA & YA Favorites- Realistic Fiction & More

Jennifer: Why do you read Young Adult, Sarah?

Sarah: I feel like some of the stories in there aren't as dark. I have two things that I kind of go between and it's either murder and death and all of that or I am in fantasy. And I really find that I enjoy the stories that are in YA Fantasy. The adult fantasies tend to focus a lot more on the relationship and it gets a little racy at parts and I don't always want that. I want more focus on the plot than the two main characters. And I feel like YA is really good at giving a really good fleshed out plot. There might be a relationship in there and some drama and some angst and stuff, but they do a really good job making a really good story. And that's what I like: a good story, a good character.

Blair: I feel like I'm always telling people to not be embarrassed about wanting to read YA because really, truly to me it's finding the book, you know, as opposed to finding the classification. If I'm reading fantasy, I'm usually reading YA Fantasy along similar lines, but also because I don't like high epic fantasy and I feel like a lot of adult books are the high epic fantasy. I want things that are a little bit more, as Jennifer said, grounded in reality. And that's why I'm an equal opportunity magical realism reader. I will read all across that spectrum, Alice Hoffman all day long. But there is a point at which I agree that if I wanna read a romance, sometimes I wanna read the sweet YA romances where it's just like cute and getting into relationships. There's different times for different books, and I feel like there's no reason adults can't read YA and there's no reason kids can't read adult books. It's finding the book. It does also, you know, that question as to Young Adult, New Adult, Adult, where that line finally ends. I don't know.

Jennifer: We have a lot of patrons, older patrons that read Young Adult and some of them have actually driven our collection. For Jody Hedlund, all of our Jody Hedland books that are in the teen zone, it's an older patron cause she likes those sweet romances and they end nice and they're great. So I think that's just been so interesting for me to notice as a librarian, how many adults do enjoy reading the young adult book.

Sarah: Speaking of the nice ending, that is one thing that I really prefer in anything that I read. Even the murder books. I like my main character to be alive and win in the end. And teen books you can mostly guarantee that your main character, even if they go through something really terrible, at the end they're probably going to overcome that in some way or be moving forward, take out the bad person, whatever it is. And I'm gonna have at least some semblance of a happy ending and that is what I want. Our real lives are hard enough as it is. I want my fictional lives to end happy.

Amy: Totally, a hundred percent, agree.

Blair: I'm the monster. I don't mind it when people die. <laugh>

Amy: I think YA was the first to introduce me to the idea of an unreliable narrator.

Sarah: Ooh yeah.

Blair: Yep.

Amy: And that is something that I think is actually maybe even growing in the YA world. But I don't know that I've read too many adult books that have, I mean a couple, *Girl on the Train* (Paula Hawkins), where I was like not exactly sure what was gonna happen at the end until I got to the end of, I didn't really see it coming every time. Sometimes you do, but not always.

Jennifer: I love that you pointed that out because in book club, Teen Books and Bites, when we have an unreliable narrator, it's always fun to point that out to the kids and say you only know as much as the character is letting you know. So you don't have everything, you know, you put stock into this character's gonna give you all the information you need, but if they're withholding it...

Amy: Or if they have had some traumatic thing happen where they've forgotten like *Dead Girls Don't Write Letters* by Gail Giles. I remember reading that with my students when I taught eighth grade. They read it and they were saying it was so good. So I read it, and I was fooled. I followed what the author wanted me to think until I got to the end. And then I said: Mind blown!

Jennifer: *Charm and Strange* (Stephanie Kuehn) is the same way. It's very unreliable. As a reader, you're thinking: What just happened? I don't know what I know anymore. What's going on? And I think that is really a fun trope.

Blair: I have that at home on my shelf to read.

Jennifer: It's a great book. Oh, what's the other one by Lockhart?

Amy: I just finished that, *We Were Liars*.

Jennifer: Were you surprised?

Blair: Yes.

Amy: Yes.

Jennifer: Great book.

Amy: Oh my gosh. That ate me up at the end.

Blair: *We Were Liars* is so good.

Amy: I was so sad at that ending. I did not see that coming. Another one too, though, Monica Hesse. She did *They Went Left* about the whole family that was sent to a concentration camp.

Blair: Oh yeah.

Amy: And her and her brother got separated and then they may or may not have been reunited and you go through this whole saga, but the trauma of the camps and of being in that situation, it's really interesting how that all comes to an end.

Jennifer: I'm so glad you plugged an historical fiction book.

Amy: Oh, it's a perfect tie in...

Jennifer: Yes.

Amy: So that you can, you can talk about your girl! You got...Oh, oh...

Jennifer: I'm not gonna talk about her.

Amy: You've got to say her name.

Jennifer: No, I can't.

Blair: What she's not saying is Ruta Sepetys.

Jennifer: Yay, Ruta.

All: <laugh>

Jennifer: I always talk about her, but there are so many other wonderful historical fiction books up there. But I love historical fiction. I like the slower pace. I also love history, and I love learning from books. And so I get everything I want with historical fiction. A good story. I'm getting some history, some atmosphere, some wonderfully crafted sentences...

Amy: You've turned me on to her, and I think that she does such a great job of writing about historical events and periods that are not so covered by other authors or even in your history class in high school and stuff. What was that one you just recommended and that I read? It was set in Romania.

Jennifer: I betray you?

Amy: Oh, *I Must Betray You*.

Jennifer: *I Must Betray You*.

Blair: *I Must Betray You*, yeah.

Amy: Oh, that was just beautiful. But I grew up in that era and I don't remember any of that stuff happening. So it was really interesting what was happening with communism and coming to an end, but the Romanians were sort of a last holdout as a country. She's amazing.

Jennifer: Mm-hmm, there are others up there, but she's pretty much a go-to because of that very reason you mentioned. She covers unique time periods.

Sarah: That reminds me of *Number the Stars*.

Jennifer: It's more of a children's book, but Lois Lowry wrote that and it's a wonderful book. I, I really enjoyed that book.

Blair: Absolutely.

Sarah: I remember being slightly traumatized by that book as a kid.

Amy: I'm always a little bit surprised that Jennifer Nielsen's books are in the kids' area. I mean they are more tween characters but some of the stuff that happens in those books is pretty heavy. But she's not actually a YA author I guess at this point. Although she does have some fantasy upstairs.

Jennifer: And I was going to mention earlier, speaking of unreliable narrator, *The False Prince* by Jennifer Nielsen.

Blair: Mm-hmm.

Jennifer: That is definitely a great introduction to kids about an unreliable narrator. So she has vacillated between fantasy and historical fiction lately, more historical fiction.

Amy: One that I read that was very intense but also lovely and made me think a whole bunch was Deb Calletti's *A Heart in a Body in the World*. And it's about a girl who suffers something really serious and tragic and decides that to raise awareness for what happened and help people realize that there are serious concerns around teens with guns, she decides to run across country. And it is just her relationship with her grandpa who's driving the little, you know, beat down truck next to her, talking her up between stops and just reliving the event. You don't know what happened until a solid two thirds of the way through the book where you realize, oh my gosh, this is why she's taking this mission on. It was really powerful And I think that it helps maybe some of those books where the bad guy who stalks you ends up being your love interest helps you realize that that's not so healthy. And there are some serious consequences to not paying attention to warning signs.

Blair: I understand what you mean about like those books that have those lessons and those warnings in 'em for the reality. Cause one I have is *On the Hook* by Francisco X Stork, and it is about a young man, he's like the poster child, right? Like he's doing all the things right. He's gonna have a scholarship, he's gonna graduate from school. Things are going well in his life. He makes one really, really bad choice. And that really, really bad choice is one that I think a lot of people might make because in the heat of a moment when you see something happening in front of you and you don't know how to stop it and you, you do what you do and then you have to pay the consequences. And he ends up in juvenile detention in a completely different state serving a sentence for something. And yeah, it's his first time and he had the book thrown at him. And yes, it was probably unjust, but it still doesn't change the choice he made. And so it's kind of like reexamining who he is as a person.

Jennifer: You just reminded me of a book that's really beloved by the juvenile detention students that I go and visit. It's called, *If You're Reading This* by Trent Reedy. It's an older book. Trent Reedy is a vet from the Afghanistan war. And this is a story about a young boy whose father has died serving his country, and he died when the young man was just a small child. When he turns 16, he starts receiving letters in the mail from his dad. And the mystery is: Who's sending these? But these letters are letters of encouragement, letters that are uplifting. And the beauty of the book is finding out who's sending these letters and why these letters are being sent at this point. And the detention kids really, really like it. If I could get Trent Reedy to visit, it would be wonderful. But it's heart rendering, dealing with war, being a young adult, losing your father, but then getting those letters in the mail, hearing his father's voice. It's a sweet story, and it's in our collection.

Amy: All right, Sarah, thank you so much for joining us today on Librarians Telling Tales. It's been awesome to hear about books from you again.

Blair: We hope this episode has introduced you to a new and exciting YA book to try the next time you are at the library.

Music Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

Outro (26:22)

Jennifer: This month, there were no Reader's Raves called into us. But if you want to be a part of Reader's Rave in the future, call us at (928) 777-1490 and leave a message with your first name, your age, a book you love, and what you love about it. We can't wait to hear from you.

Blair: Thank you for joining us today on Librarians Telling Tales. For a full list of the books shared in this episode, check the link in our podcast bio.

Jennifer: Don't forget to subscribe to catch our next episode where we'll talk about books and libraries.

Amy: This podcast is supported by the Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records, a division of the Secretary of State with federal funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We would also like to thank the City of Prescott, Friends of the Prescott Public Library, and all of our fabulous coworkers at Prescott Public Library.

Blair: Be sure to like and subscribe to Librarians Telling Tales. And until next time, we'll see you in the library.

Total Runtime (27:24)