**YGT episode 251**

You're listening to, you've got this episode 251. Welcome to you. You've got this, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder. In this episode, I am so excited to share with you some of my summer reading favorites.

Now, this is one of my favorite episodes to record every year, because summer reading is some of my. Favorite reading. And, um, I was able to get into a ton of novels this summer. So the majority of what I'm going to talk about are, um, fiction books. So if you're looking for something to read in the fall, um, these are all things I can highly recommend.

Now I read a little bit over, I think, 50 books over the summer, and I pulled out the. 10 of the things that I could recommend without reservation that I just thought were incredible. That really kept me turning the pages. So I'm going to link all of these in the show notes. If you want to take a look, you can.

And, um, I would also love to hear, of course what you read over the summer. So please feel free to email or share with. So the first book I'm going to talk about is called the bookish life of Mina hill by Abby Waxman. And this one was a delight. If you are someone who loves reading the main character works in a bookstore.

So you might already see where this is going. Lots of talk about books and literary. And, um, the basic premise of this book is you have a woman who has what the title implies of Booker's life. She's kind of an introvert. Um, so of course, I, I totally connected with that. And, um, throughout the course of the book, her world kind of expands, and I don't think I'm giving anything away to say, um, an early thing that happens in the book is she learns who her birth father is.

And it connects her with a bunch of family members, um, that she did not previously know that. So, um, the book kind of goes on from there. It is a romance, um, but it's also kind of pulling in all these other elements too, because of the family narrative and kind of her figuring out the next steps for herself in terms of connecting with this family.

So the bookish life of Nina hill by Abby wacky. The second book I'm going to recommend, um, is a nonfiction book by David Epstein called range. Now, this is a book that I'm sure many of you have heard of and, or read because it's been around for a little while. And I had heard about it a ton in the different circles that I'm in.

Um, and I finally got around to listening to it on audio and I really loved it. There was a lot of connections in this book to higher education. Topics and themes because the general idea is talking about how there may be benefit to having range in terms of what, you know, instead of niching or specializing in a particular area.

Now, of course, in higher ed, we often nation specialize and that's kind of what we're all about. Um, but having range, um, the author talks about kind of the benefits of having kind of a varied level of experience. Now he gives a lot of exams. The sports of people who started out with different kinds of expertise, in a lot of different sports, and then kind of narrowed into the thing that they were really good at.

But he also gives a ton of other kinds of examples as well. And there were some examples coming out of music and history that I had never heard before that I thought were just really fascinating. So I can recommend this book on audio in particular, I thought it was really well done and, um, definitely was able to pull out a lot of examples that I could apply to my own life as well in terms of my career trajectory and some of the things that I've explored in terms of developing my own range of experts.

The next book I'm going to talk about is, um, also a non-fiction book. So there are only two nonfiction books on my list. And this next one is a memoir called between two kingdoms by Sue Laika, Jawad. And, um, this is a book that is pretty intense. So I'm going to give a couple of warnings for it. It is about the authors, um, kind of journey.

With, um, battling cancer. So if this is an area that is kind of a sensitive topic for you, um, it's an intense book, uh, and she actually goes through a multiple year, um, experience with her treatment cycles that, um, it's intense. I mean, it's just, it's just a really, um, difficult at times book to read. Um, but the, the general idea of this book, I ran across Waco's work on social media and she had taken kind of a road trip.

Um, successfully completed her, her cancer treatments and, um, So I can tell you that the book, uh, does end kind of on a positive note, like this is, this is a memoir, um, from someone who at least, uh, uh, as of right now is in remission. Um, she does have leukemia. And so that's something that is discussed in detail in the beginning of the book.

Um, but this was a really kind of fascinating story about someone who, um, was dealing with like a very difficult situation pretty early on in her life. Early twenties and the disruption of, you know, this news and, and her kind of health situation to her life plans and, and what she did basically to combat that and to continue to live a relatively full life in the midst of some of these other things that she was dealing with.

Um, so I think that this is one of those books that I always love hearing about experiences that are incredibly different from my own. And this one definitely fell into that category of someone who. Um, went through what was just an incredibly difficult time period and wrote about it in such a beautiful way.

Um, so if this is, if you're looking for kind of a, a page turning memoir, I also listened to this one on audio. It is read by the author and I thought it was just incredibly well. Okay back to fiction. So the next book on my list is called girl a by Abigail Dean. And this is one of those books that was a little bit kind of ripped from the headlines.

Um, the general premise is you have a girl who was in a family of multiple children, where the parents were, um, Eventually kind of, um, found out because they were abusing their children and it was, it's kind of one of those, if you've seen in the news, like the house of horrors, kind of, um, stories where, you know, there's something going on behind closed doors in a home and not a lot of people know about it.

And so it doesn't get reported and you have, um, what turned out to be kind of traumatized children who then have to deal with the aftermath. So the general premise of this book is that girl a was, um, The oldest daughter in this family and the mother who, um, was in prison and I'm not giving anything away I'm to share this dies.

And she still has, um, kind of the ownership of the home that the kids were raised in. And so the story kind of goes back and forth where you're learning about the different children in the family and what eventually happens to them. And, um, also what happens to the house that they're all kind of trying to recover.

Again, kind of an intense book. Um, I tend to like darker psychological narratives. I feel like this definitely fell into that category. If you liked, um, like room, um, by Emma Donoghue, this would be kind of a book that probably would, um, fall into category that you would like to see. Um, okay. So the next book on my list is a book called when the stars go dark by Paula McCain.

And this is a book, um, that is about a woman who a detective. Um, you'll see, I'm tending toward mystery novels here cause that's kind of my genre of choice. Um, but it's about a woman. Who's a detective who has had some kind of personal trauma that we don't really understand what it is. Um, and then she goes away.

Basically. She goes. Back to kind of a small town that she grew up in. And when she's there, there's a missing child case that she becomes kind of involved in. What I thought was really interesting about this book is the author pulls in details from actual missing child cases that were happening around the same time.

This book takes place in the eighties and the nineties. So you, you hear about actual real events and how they impacted. The way that policing was, um, kind of, uh, responding to missing children cases and kidnapping cases. And I find that really interesting. So, um, this was a book that I also listened to on audio.

I got into a lot of audio over the summer, um, and I thought it was really well done. And, um, enjoy this one. It does, um, kind of go. Back and forth between the author or not the author, the main characters experience as a younger person, and then kind of her current experience. And I always liked those narratives that jumped out.

Uh, the next book I want to talk about, this is probably my absolute favorite book of the summer. And if you interacted with me in like real time while I was reading it, I totally talked to you about it because I thought it was so great. And that is hail Mary by Andy Weir. Now you might know Andy Ware's work because he wrote the Martian, which was eventually made into a film.

He also wrote Artemis, and this is I think his third book or at least his third book. That's kind of a blockbuster book that a lot of people know about. I loved this book so much. I thought it was so, um, interesting. And, uh, I think Andy we're kind of creates these really interesting scenarios that, that he plays out and they typically do happen in space.

So the premise of this book, and I'm not going to give a ton of detail here, cause I don't want to give anything away, but basically you have a man who wakes up in an environment and he doesn't really know who he is or why he's there. But because, you know, Andy where's work, you're pretty sure he's in space.

And so you're, you're not quite sure like what the mission is or what he's supposed to be doing. And you start to kind of unravel this relatively quickly with the main character and about 80 pages in it takes like this massive turn, right. It's great. Uh, I loved kind of the little plot twist that happens at that point, um, and just found this to be such a kind of fun summer read.

So if you're looking for something that's really fun where you're going to really be turning the pages, I think this one fits that category. I will say that Andy, where also brings it up. Science into his books. So you can skim over some of that. I mean, there's a lot in this book that, um, I didn't have to fully agree to kind of get the gist of what was going on.

So, um, just keep that in mind, if you decide to pick. All right. The next book on my list is we begin at the end by Chris Whitaker. And this is one that I feel like I like stumbled across on, um, like, uh, good reads or something like that. Like, I wasn't really on my radar and I'm so glad I picked it up. It's kind of a, a family drama, but it, it takes place over a period of time where just lots of things are happening to the characters.

So the general premise of this book is that you have a family. Uh, a young girl and her brother and their mother and the mother is, um, kind of struggling with a range of different things, um, addiction and kind of trauma from her background when she was young, her younger sister was killed and, uh, maybe her older sister, I can't remember, but, um, her sister, whether older or younger was killed when she was a child and she's kind of still dealing with the aftermath.

Then we also know that there's a character who was arrested for killing the sister. We don't quite know the details of what happened, but he's getting out of prison and he's coming back to the town where this woman lives. So you have this family of the children and the mother, you have this, um, criminal, um, this man who is coming back into town, and then you have a sheriff character.

Who is like basically, um, childhood best friends with the criminal who's coming back and who has stayed in touch with him over this time. And it's trying to kind of help him reintegrate back into the home. I don't want to go much further than that because there's some things that happened relatively early in the book that really changed the trajectory of what's happening with all of these characters.

Um, but I will say that I just, I really enjoyed it. This was a book that there are definite kind of, um, Plot twist in it that really do kind of break your heart a little bit for the characters and kind of what they're dealing with. Um, it's a bit of a, um, like tug on your heartstrings kind of book, maybe even a tear-jerker for some people, depending on kind of how you would react to what's going on.

Um, it does end in a place though that I think has a nice, um, believable conclusion for what's happening kind of with each of these characters. So that one is we begin at the end by Christmas. The next one on my list. This is number, um, uh, eight that I'm going to be talking about is a roller coaster ride that I really enjoyed.

It's called local woman missing by Mary Kubica. And this one was super fun because you really cannot follow the plot twist. And I, at one point was trying to explain it to my partner of like what happened in this book. And I got all tangled up. Like, I couldn't like figure out what was happening. So the book goes back and forth in time.

So the main thing I can tell you without giving anything away is the book is about a woman who goes missing. Uh, there's a couple different women who go missing throughout the book. And it's also about a person who went missing, who comes back. And, um, there's like a mystery surrounding, like what happened to that person who was missing.

And, and now she is back and, and like trying to figure out where does she fit with. Kind of this history of crime that has happened within this neighborhood. Um, I'm not explaining this very well because it's, it's difficult to go into detail without giving anything away. And I really don't want to do that because I think it's really an interesting read.

Um, but basically this book starts with a woman escaping captivity and you end up learning kind of what the history of that was. It unravels from there. And there's all kinds of twists and things that you really can't see coming. And I think that when you get to the end of the book and it all gets resolved, it is a bit of a surprise about how it all kind of comes together.

Perfect. Summer read, totally recommend it. Um, definitely a page Turner. And this is one that I think would also probably be pretty good on audio as well, just because of the different shifts in personnel. All right. A couple more. Um, I know they got around to reading a man called ulva by Frederick Bachman.

This one's been on my list for a really long time. It does have a movie adaptation that is available for rent on Amazon prime and a few other places. And after I read it, I definitely, um, watched the movie adaptation, which was very true to the book. And I really, really liked it. Um, this is a book about a man who is very kind of curmudgeonly and grumpy, and he lives in this neighborhood.

And sees himself as kind of the neighborhood watch. Like he, he watches over a lot of things that are happening in this neighborhood and he has a family move in next door that basically disrupts his routines. And, um, this is a book that I do want to give a bit of a warning for, um, part of the plot of this book.

And I don't think it's heavy handed about it, but it's just important to know if this is a bit of a trigger warning for you is, um, The main character ulva is basically throughout the book attempting to commit suicide, but this keeps getting disrupted by his neighbors and the people who know him. And not that they know that that's what he's trying to do, but that's part of the narrative of the book.

So I just want to put that out there. I think it's, um, actually in the movie, like my partner kind of laughed about it. Like he felt like it was a more humorous aspect of the book that this, this man kept kind of getting disrupted as he was trying to do. So, I don't think it's a very kind of heavy part of the book, but it definitely is a plot element.

So I'm not giving anything away to tell you that because it comes up pretty early. Um, but just wanted to let you know, in case you avoid those kinds of, uh, plot issues. All right. And then the, uh, the final book I'm going to talk about is also one that I just thought was super fun. And it's called Eddie Drake starts over by Linda Holmes.

And the premise of this book is that you have a main character at ease. Um, is basically getting ready to leave her partner. Um, she she's had a husband for many, many years and she's ready to leave him. And literally she's like packed her car is ready to go. And the day that she goes to actually leave, um, he dies, uh, not giving anything away to tell you this has happened very early in the book.

And so, um, nobody really knows that she was planning to do this. Um, and so she now has to. Play a bit of a grieving widow when she's not really grieving, uh, the loss of her partner in the way that maybe other people think that she should be, or that she is. And, uh, so this is a book basically about her restart and she ends up taking on, um, uh, a tenant in her house who like lives in an apartment that's attached to her house.

And, um, that kind of brings this extra person into her life. That person who rents the apartment is a former baseball. A pro baseball player who has, um, been kind of challenged. He's a pitcher and he can no longer pitch. And so he's kind of going through a transition as well in his professional life. And you see them kind of come together and learn from each other as they're working through these challenges.

So, um, this one I thought was great. It's a good example of a book, kind of similar to the bookish life of being a hill of, um, a book where you start to bring other people into someone's life. And it, you kind of see the impacts and the ripple effects of bringing new people into your experiences. And, um, I listened to this one on audio as well.

Thought it was really wonderful. So I will just mention all the books that I'm listening to on audio. I am getting from my local library. So if you've never done an audio book or you're not sure how to access them, I would certainly encourage you to look at your local library. You can typically use an app to download a book for free, and then you can listen to it.

It will automatically get returned to your library when you're done. I also read a lot of these books as e-books. And so I also get those from my library. So I would encourage you to look into those resources if you're trying to find a way to get kind of really recent books, because the majority of the things I've mentioned here were published.

I would say within the last year or two, they're all pretty recent novels that I picked up from my local library. So that is my top 10. I'm going to list them off one more time. In case there was something that you were interested in. So this was the bookish life of Nina hill by Abby Waxman range by David Epstein between two kingdoms by Sue lake.

Girl a by Abigail Dean. When the stars go dark by Paula McCain, hail Mary by Andy Weir. We begin at the end by Chris Whitaker, local woman missing by Mary Kubica. A man called ulva by Frederick Bachman and Evie Drake starts over by Luna. I hope you found something on the list that you might enjoy reading or listening to.

And of course, please feel free to reach out if you want to tell me what you read over the summer or connect with me on good reads. I'll drop a link to that in the show notes as well. And I also wanted to say a quick, thank you for those of you who have reached out with well wishes for my move and my new job.

I am going to be sharing a lot more about that soon. Um, things are going very well. So I just want to put that out there and, uh, look forward to sharing more on the podcast with you all soon. Thanks for that.

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