



YA Café Podcast
Episode 35: The Resolutions
29 November 2018

Danielle: 00:00 Welcome to the YA Cafe where we share conversations about books for teachers, readers, and caffeine addicts Everywhere. On today's episode, we'll be talking about The Resolutions by Mia Garcia. Grab a mug of your favorite beverage, friends, and let's talk books.

Ad: 00:21 Have you tried the RadioPublic app? It's a great app where you can find all of your favorite podcasts like this one. You'll experience the same great content for free and we'll receive a small kickback every time you listen there. This is a great way to support any podcasts you enjoy. Come find us over on radio public.

Music: 00:40 [Music]

Amanda: 00:43 Welcome y'all. As always, our first segment will be spoiler free and you can stick around even if you haven't checked out the new novel yet. I'm Amanda Thrasher 'all

Danielle: 00:50 and I'm Danielle Hall an 8th and 9th grade English teacher and I blog at teachnouvelle.com. We're joined today by Samantha Leidig and author and bookstagrammar, an awesome person who was with us for episode 20 Zen And Gone. Hi Samantha.

Samantha: 01:05 Hi. How are you?

Danielle: 01:07 I'm good. How are you?

Samantha: 01:09 Fantastic! It's been a great Tuesday slash Monday.

Danielle: 01:11 Yeah, and you have a thing for Mondays, do you just want to like shout out your Monday thing again?

Samantha: 01:16 Absolutely. So for those of you who may not have tuned into my last episode, I recently wrote a children's book called Poor Mr. Monday which just highlights the plight of Monday and kind of like if you had a personality who you would be or who we kind of perceive him to be? Additionally, I'm starting a new segment that I'll be sharing on my Instagram story called "How to Monday", giving everyone some tips how to navigate through those difficult times.

Danielle: 01:43 That is so exciting. We will definitely stay tuned. Mia Garcia's new book is called The Resolutions. This new year, Jess has a new plan to keep her four best friends together. The four of them will make New Year's resolutions for each other. She, Nora, Ryan and Lee all have each other's best interest at heart and give resolutions to help them embrace life or get over old relationships. But, those good intentions don't always go as they planned. So Amanda, what did you think of this book?

Amanda: 02:12 I loved this book. I started reading it and was just immediately captivated. I love split perspective books and I think this one did it really well. I thought that I knew who these characters were immediately. I had a really good idea about what all they wanted and hoped for. I thought this book was just done really, really well and I loved it the whole time I was reading it. What about you, Sam? What did you think?

Samantha: 02:37 I think initially I was just like hmm, hmm, and then once I got like everyone's perspective, I was like all in. Because, how cool is it to kind of go back to like that time in our lives and think about like what kind of talks that we're having with our own friends, like all the different just issues they had with scholarships. How dedicated or not to be to your family business or just your family in general? Right. Because it's a transformative time and so I enjoy just kind of going backwards in thinking about that time for myself.

Danielle: 03:08 Yeah. I really loved this novel too. It really reminded me of the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants in like the best way. I love this split perspective. I love how each of these characters is kind of tackling their own struggles and triumphs and things like that, but they also have this core group of friends that is absolutely amazing.

- Amanda: 03:30 I really liked their little friend group and one of the things I liked a lot in their friend group was their text messages. I thought that their group texts were really realistic. I love them.
- Samantha: 03:41 It was really cute, especially how everyone kept calling Jess the mom or I think it might've been just Ryan, but that was really good.
- Danielle: 03:48 Thanks mom!
- Amanda: 03:49 But she was always herding them, you know, she's like, this is our party, this is what we're going to do this year.
- Danielle: 03:54 This is our schedule.
- Amanda: 03:56 She'd be great to go to Disney world with.
- Danielle: 03:57 She would be. But you were pretty great to go to Disney world with. So these four teenagers are united by this Latinx community center in Denver and one of the things that kind of comes out early on is their different levels of like speaking Spanish and their different relationships to the Latinx culture and how that plays out in their lives. How did that work for y'all?
- Samantha: 04:24 So I think one of the main ways that it played out for me, which I thought was really, really interesting and just like transformative for the entire novel was the relationship that Nora had with her mother and how she just kept feeling restraints to have to be very traditional with her role in the family business. And then also the alienation that Lee felt because she didn't speak Spanish as fluently as her peers. That stuck out for me, especially because my entire family is from Jamaica and when I grew up, like I would have cousins that would come over to the US and they'd be like, "Oh, you're not Jamaican." Because I was born here, or like before I learned how to speak Patois, which I taught myself to do. It was like, "Oh, you're American." And it was like a big joke, right, and I don't think I ever took it personally, but it's something that I feel like people who come from immigrant families all deal with.
- Amanda: 05:13 Yeah. I think that's a really good point. And like for Lee, it was so magnified too because she had this loss of her mother who was her connection to her Latina heritage. And so not only not

speaking the language, but also losing this like ancestral link. It really made it clear that she related to it in a different way than the other people in the group.

- Danielle: 05:34 Yeah. I really liked the different family dynamics present in this book too. You know, Nora has a single mom and they're running the restaurant together and so Nora just kind of has to give so much of herself to the restaurant. Lee is being raised now by a single dad and has this component of loss in there, you know, they're planning to celebrate her mother's birthday that's coming up soon. Jess has a twin! I thought that was a really cool thing. I feel like I don't read a ton of stories with twins.
- Samantha: 06:08 Yeah, I know it's a couple pages for me to figure that out. When you first got introduced and I was like, oh, that's so cool.
- Danielle: 06:15 Like, what is this boy doing in your house Jess?
- Amanda: 06:17 It's funny, when I was a kid, like books were just lousy with twins. Like I feel like every book I read had a twin now that you mentioned that, I guess that's true, I haven't read many twins lately.
- Danielle: 06:26 You mean like lousy in the lice sense?
- Amanda: 06:30 I don't know. I've always heard lousy is like a lot of.
- Danielle: 06:33 Yeah, because louse is lice.
- Amanda: 06:34 Oh my God. Is that where it comes from?
- Danielle: 06:36 Yes!
- Amanda: 06:37 Gross!

Samantha: 06:38 That's disgusting.

Amanda: 06:40 Thanks for that Danielle.

Samantha: 06:42 I haven't had dinner yet.

Amanda: 06:44 And now you never will.

Danielle: 06:46 And I'm missing someone, Ryan! You know, we don't see his parents a ton, but he's got an awesome Ama who's a world traveler and sending him art supplies from Italy and stuff like that. So, I thought the families were really well done.

Amanda: 07:00 I also really liked with the Ama that you know, clearly she knew that Ryan was gay and like just had a heartbreak and didn't care like was just loving him to pieces anyway, and I just love that. I love supportive grandparents.

Danielle: 07:13 One thing I liked about the way it was in the novel, thank goodness! Hallelujah! Being gay was not the plot point.

Samantha: 07:21 Oh, I know.

Danielle: 07:22 So, Ryan was gay and the plot point was like his heartbreak and getting over it and Nora was dating a girl and they were like steady the whole time.

Samantha: 07:36 Yup.

Danielle: 07:36 No drama rama.

Amanda: 07:38 They had a really sweet little relationship.

Samantha: 07:41 They did! I love it!

Danielle: 07:43 Do we want to shout out any of the resolutions?

Samantha: 07:46 I am particularly fond of Nora's resolution to choose her own adventure. That was kind of cool. I mean even though it's a little generic, right.

Danielle: 07:54 But, it wasn't a generic like, I mean her friends chose that specifically for her because she needed to hear that.

Samantha: 08:02 Yeah. I just mean generic in the way of like, it wasn't as specific as like "learn Spanish" or "kiss someone who is wrong for you" or "get back into painting." It was just like choose your own adventure. Like it was like a, like a little writing prompt or something.

Danielle: 08:20 Yeah, definitely.

Amanda: 08:22 I think that, uh, from the beginning I looked at Jess's resolution of "say yes to everything" and I was like, this is going to go real poorly y'all.

Danielle: 08:31 Yeah, I don't know. I don't know why they would have given her that resolution. Like she already at the beginning of the novel seem to be somebody who did a lot of things. Like why would you tell her to do more things?

Amanda: 08:44 They needed some more rules on that one.

Danielle: 08:45 It needed to be say no to things.

Samantha: 08:48 Yeah, because clearly with everybody like ranking on her about her calendar she was in too deep, but I think it was an interesting point because, have you guys read Shonda Rhimes book the Year of Yes?

Danielle: 09:01 Oh, I have heard of that. I haven't read it.

Amanda: 09:04 I've read part of it.

Samantha: 09:06 I liked it when I got like halfway through. Um, and so that's what I thought about when I saw that resolution. I was like, oh, okay.

Amanda: 09:14 That's probably the inspiration for it too.

Danielle: 09:16 Yeah, I like it. And with that friends, we'll take our first break. When we come back we'll share about Things We Like a Latte! Then we'll return to our discussion of The Resolutions and dig a little deeper.

Ad: 09:39 Hello listeners, we hope you're enjoying this week show. If you want to support this podcast and our authors, order our book choices through our Amazon affiliate link in our show notes. Your support will help us keep bringing you great content. Up next week we're going to read A Land of Permanent Goodbyes by Atia Abawi. This poignant novel about the Syrian refugee crisis is a great fit for your classroom library. Check it out in our Lincoln show notes. Happy reading!

Amanda: 10:18 Welcome back ya'll. It's time for things We Like a Latte. Danielle, what's your choice this week?

Danielle: 10:23 So, I just wanted to give a shout out here. Mia Garcia is from San Juan and so one of the things she does in her author's note is just give like a charity that she is strongly supporting and advocates supporting for continued efforts in hurricane recovery and that organization is Hispanic Federation

Unidos and they have a lot of different efforts to help the island towards recovery. So, hispanicfederationunidos.org. How about you, Sam? What's your brew of choice this week?

- Samantha: 10:58 So, brew of my choice, I went to a bakery this morning and I want to call it place Patty's now that may or may not be correct. However, I had a delicious drink called a Horchataccino, which as the name indicates is at drink hot beverage. That's part Cappuccino, part Horchata complete awesome! Its totally delicious.
- Amanda: 11:24 I love that you're shouting out like something you got in a cafe on the YA Cafe! It sounds delightful.
- Samantha: 11:31 It was.
- Danielle: 11:32 How about you Amanda? What's your brew of choice? Is it a literal brew of choice?
- Amanda: 11:38 It is not in fact ah... So my day today started terrible. I, uh, exploded my oatmeal all over the microwave. It wasn't the best thing and I was like, well this day is unsalvageable, and then somebody gave me a call and was like, "Hey, the Canadian Coast Guard is here and we can go up in their helicopter and fly it around a little bit. Do you want to?" And I said sure! So I got to go fly in this massive like five blade triple engine Canadian helicopter today, and it was just not how I expected my day to go and it was really nice. So that's my thing I like today.
- Samantha: 12:12 Nice. I like that you just use the word massive because I don't hear a lot of people use it, but I like it.
- Amanda: 12:17 I feel like if you had seen [this helicopter](#), it's the word you would have chosen as well.
- Break: 12:22 We're going to take a quick break and when we come back we'll return to our discussion on The Resolutions. The rest of the show will contain spoilers, so if you're leaving us here, keep it touch on Instagram and Twitter [@yacafepodcast](#). We'll be back!

Amanda: 12:52 Welcome back ya'll to the YA Cafe. We're continuing our discussion on The Resolutions by Mia Garcia. If you haven't read this yet, we want to warn you again that this section will contain spoilers.

Danielle: 13:03 Spoilers!

Samantha: 13:05 Spoilers!

Amanda: 13:07 Yes.

Danielle: 13:07 And kind of a pirate because Ryan's little sister is totally into pirates.

Amanda: 13:13 That's a reach.

Danielle: 13:15 No! She likes pirates and he was like, I'm going to paint her a galaxy on her ceiling because pirates need stars to sail by. I've been thinking about it all day.

Amanda: 13:26 Okay. I'm just here to support you I guess. Your pirate obsession.

Danielle: 13:32 Alright, let's get into some heartbreaking things about this book. So one of the resolutions that we weren't able to talk about in the spoiler free section because it's kind of ambiguous and it ends up being like a major plot point is that, her friends decide that Lee needs to decide. That's the whole thing. Like Lee, you need to make a decision and it takes us a few chapters to understand that she needs to decide whether or not she's going to get tested for Huntington's Disease, which is the genetic disease that her mother had and died from. That broke my heart.

Samantha: 14:15 Same.

Amanda: 14:15 That's difficult, like that's a choice I cannot imagine making as a 30 year old, much less as a teenager.

Danielle: 14:23 Yeah.

Samantha: 14:24 I don't think I would've done it honestly.

Amanda: 14:26 You don't think you would?

Samantha: 14:26 No, I don't, I don't think I would have taken the test. I think I would have just waited for my body to like break down. Especially because. I mean, and I know that sounds silly, right? But I don't know, I just feel like moms are so special and for her mother to have died in that way and like for her to have to confront the fact that okay, this might happen to me too. And then my dad's going to be all by himself. I just, yeah, I think I have just left it alone. Especially because she healthy, there was nothing going on to make her think that okay. Like I have it to, aside from the statistics.

Danielle: 14:56 Right. And one thing, because you know, we are full on in spoilers here, like the results are not a part of this book.

Amanda: 15:05 I think that works really well because I think that the point of it was not necessarily does she have Huntington's or does she not? It's the is she going to choose to live her life, like Sam said, just living her life and waiting to see if something happens which is a totally valid choice for her to make and one that her parents left for her or is she going to take the test to actually find out what her future is going to be. And I think that the novel makes it really clear that either answer would be okay and like it's totally her choice because it's her body and her future and I really liked that the emphasis was not on whether she had the disease or not. For the point of this book, the emphasis was on whether or not she decided to take the test.

Danielle: 15:49 Yes. I loved that too. And one of the moments that I really related to was when they found the video that Lee's mom had made for her, like basically telling her this is your choice. And like as soon as her mom came on screen, she was like crying big, ugly tears. Like I really related to that.

Amanda: 16:14 Yeah.

Danielle: 16:14 Samantha, we talked about the character of Jess before we started recording.

Samantha: 16:19 Yes we did, and I thought of immediately the episode on saved by the bell when Jesse Spano had an exam to take. Do you guys remember? And then she took those caffeine pills and went nuts and she was singing. I don't, I'm not, I don't want to say it on here for people to laugh, but she just basically passes out, right.

Danielle: 16:41 I mean it was very mild.

Amanda: 16:44 Like caffeine pills are the 90's version of Adderall?

Danielle: 16:46 Yes, but you know, the point as we were trying to explain to Amanda who has never seen *Saved by the Bell* is like Jesse in *Saved by the Bell* is this like organizer, like get it done sort of person who is like hyper involved in and like doing a bunch of things. And that is definitely also who just is in the book. So when you know, we're watching Jess, we get before, it's like a plot point. We get that she has anxiety.

Amanda: 17:22 Yeah.

Samantha: 17:22 Definitely some dramatic irony there.

Amanda: 17:25 I found her, her chapters were the only things that really started to drag a little bit for me towards the end because it was like I felt like we had reached all of the character development that we needed for just to like know where she was going. Like I feel like we reached a point where yes, Jess is very stressed out, Jess is doing too much and I feel like we saw that and then it was like probably four or five chapters of just like just freaking out. It may not have been that many, but it felt long especially because like I was very invested in everyone's story lines at this point and it felt like Jess is like, had reached its most tense point and then kind of stayed there.

Danielle: 18:06 I thought that that was completely intentional because, I thought the point was that it's not, you know, all of a sudden an Aha moment like, oh!, I have an anxiety disorder. It's like something that

you can ignore for a long time and try to make go away. Like I thought that was the drive for the content following the form there, or form following the content.

Amanda: 18:33 Yeah, I think you're right, but I don't think it's very interesting to read

Danielle: 18:37 like Bran chapters?

Amanda: 18:38 Like Bran chapters.

Samantha: 18:41 Good point. I do understand what she's saying because like with the, you know, when she fell down when she was out running with this and then we saw her rolling out her yoga mat and like going over a few closes and then going to sleep on the couch at 4:30 and then wake back up or it was too much. Agreed.

Amanda: 19:01 I really loved Nora's whole plot. I loved her struggle against like her mother's traditionalism and

New Speaker: 19:11 I didn't think her mother was like super traditional. So it like makes me nervous that we're saying that. But you mean like her mother wouldn't let her add to the menu?

Amanda: 19:19 Yeah, that's what I'm talking about specifically. Like should like. I feel like her mother was definitely traditionalist because she wouldn't let her dye her hair because it didn't fit the image of the restaurant. Like she wouldn't let her put French inspired desserts or flavors on the menu, like she had a very traditional hold on the restaurant, which was the biggest part of Nora's life.

Samantha: 19:37 Yes, but isn't it funny how like, she wouldn't let her change that if she didn't want her to change her hair, but she was okay with her being bisexual or being in a relationship with this woman. Did anyone else find that strange? Or like not strange, but just like...

Amanda: 19:51 I did note it and I really liked it because I liked that there was this tension between a queer character and their parents without it being around the queerness.

Danielle: 20:00 Yes!

Samantha: 20:00 Yes, yes.

Danielle: 20:02 We already talked about, but we could just shout it out again and again.

Samantha: 20:05 Yes and again and again and again. Yeah, but I thought that was really, I mean I guess, and that was a really smart move from the author, but then it was also just a little peculiar as far as the story went. But maybe the mom is just like, Hey, this is my business, you know, this isn't how I'm gonna handle it, but you can kind of do whatever you want in your personal life. Maybe. Maybe that was the thinking.

Amanda: 20:26 I think that kind of isn't like, I think that she felt very strongly that it was her job to preserve Puerto Rican cuisine and traditions and her little Denver restaurant, you know, and was just afraid of getting too far away from that.

Danielle: 20:41 Yeah.

Samantha: 20:41 I think so too.

Danielle: 20:42 Like Sam really put her finger on like what I was feeling when you say traditional cause I guess I'm imagining like, you know, some sort of like machismo and like I don't know, strongly Catholic background or whatever. And so when you're saying traditional, I'm thinking like, you know, doesn't want their kid to be gay, but what you mean is like preserving like to the letter, like we're not going to make this recipe with anything other than cinnamon because cinnamon is the thing.

Amanda: 21:14 Yeah, exactly that. And I just really liked how Nora tried so hard to like squash down her dream for a really long time because she knew how much it would crush her mother. I think that's a, a kind of connection that is really very important to a lot of like single parents, single child families.

- Danielle: 21:35 I was going to say that too. Like there's definitely a lot more pressure when it's a two person family.
- Samantha: 21:41 Yeah. Especially with something like that because she, I mean from the sounds of it, the mother didn't have anything else. Like there was not a partner involved on her end. It was just like, this is my restaurant, this is my thing and it's my only daughter. And, and not only her only child, but she was so talented and baking those deserts and like, you know, her mom needed her for lack of a better term because when they mentioned the other people taking part in the baking, like they didn't do a good job.
- Amanda: 22:09 Right.
- Samantha: 22:10 She knew, okay, Nora is here, Nora knows how to do it and why not? Because it's just us two. Right, so yeah, but I'm glad that she did kind of break away and do her own thing. That was cool.
- Amanda: 22:20 Definitely because you can see how much she loves baking and loves creating things. Like I, I really enjoy reading a character's passions and Nora's passions really came through. She really, even though she was frustrated with not being able to branch out, she's still really loved baking.
- Danielle: 22:35 I really liked the character of Lee. Um.
- Amanda: 22:40 Oh we haven't talked about Lee hardly at all.
- Danielle: 22:42 I know. yeah, we talked about Lee's mom, which is the thing you're not supposed to do is like couch the whole character in their relationship to their dead parent.
- Amanda: 22:50 You're just like taking us to task. We're sorry Okay!
- Danielle: 22:58 But Lee is like a nerd and I love it and she loves films and she's just, she gets a few moments in the book where she just gets to geek out and her like key relationship outside of like her friends in this book is with Jess's twin David and David ends up being the one to tutor her in Spanish and you

know, they have that whole sort of romance thing that builds. But I think that David is like crucial in this other big way, which is to like validate her awesome interests that her friends don't relate to.

- Samantha: 23:38 Yes, I was really rooting for David and Lee and I was so happy that after the accident happened they didn't breakup because I thought, oh no!, they're going to be ruined now. But they stayed together and that was cool.
- Danielle: 23:49 Yeah.
- Amanda: 23:50 It was a sweet book.
- Danielle: 23:51 It was.
- Amanda: 23:52 I just, gosh I just really enjoyed this book. I think it tied up a little neat at the end. Like everybody's plot lines happened to end at the exact same time. But I think that's just a split perspective, but that's just what's going to happen.
- Danielle: 24:05 Yeah, I mean and like the reasons that I smile for this book are the same as the things that make me smile in the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, like they all have some heartbreak or you know, some issues to overcome and then they all just get a happy ending, It's nice! It is nice.
- Samantha: 24:23 I agree. Oh, how do you guys feel about what happened with Ryan and Jason at the party?
- Amanda: 24:30 I don't care about Jason, that's for sure.
- Samantha: 24:33 I know. I was not expecting that. I'm like, whoa. Like I know he was kind of being very distant, you know, when Ryan was like texting him and saying, Hey, let's hang out. And every time there wasn't excuse I just thought okay, like he doesn't like him anymore. I had no clue that he was going to invite this kid to the party and then have his new boyfriend there that was so crummy.

Amanda: 24:55 I don't think he thought that it was crummy. Like I just think that he had a wildly different perception of what was happening in their friendship slash relationship.

Danielle: 25:05 Yeah. He didn't know how badly he had hurt Ryan.

Samantha: 25:09 Yeah, I guess.

Samantha: 25:10 That's true.

Danielle: 25:11 I'm glad that that happened. I'm glad it wasn't any more dramatic or like any less present like because the point was Ryan like self actualizing without Jason.

Amanda: 25:25 Yeah, I think that did really well, especially like talking to his grandmother and like their conversation of after you're broken, you don't get put back together the same way. I thought it was really sweet.

Danielle: 25:37 I have a Ryan quote.

Amanda: 25:39 Well share! Well share!

Danielle: 25:41 So this is kind of the one of the like I guess Ryan central themes, but it was "how do you move past an obstacle you put in your own path?" Like he realizes that he's his own problem. He was the problem all along! [laughter]

Amanda: 26:02 So Sam, you were not super sold on the book to start with, but at the end of it, do you like it? Would you recommend it?

Samantha: 26:09 Absolutely! I had it, I was walking around with it at school today and everyone kept asking you about it and I think that this would be a great book for the students that I work with to read

because most of those students share similar backgrounds. And I think that they can identify with the themes present in the book. Additionally, um, you know, they have friend groups too and who doesn't want to read about like making changes, especially at such a pivotal time in their lives where it's like kinda, all right, which, which way are we going? Maybe it will give them some help. Maybe it'll inspire them to do the same thing and kind of choose what solutions for their friends. I thought that was really cool. I'm like, wow, I would love to know what my friends would think that I should do for the new year right.

Amanda: 26:48 Yeah, I had that thought too. I think I'm scared to know though, because when I read the description at first I was like, oh, that could go a real dark way but, they were great. They were very kind to each other. I thought

Danielle: 27:03 That's our show for today. Friends. Thank you so much Samantha, for joining us.

Samantha: 27:08 Of course, I love it! All was do.

Danielle: 27:10 You can find Sam, @samleidigwriter on Instagram or Samleidigwriter.com. You can find us on Instagram and Twitter @yacafepodcast. We'd love to hear from you and if you're enjoying the show, it's time to leave us a review. Happy reading ! [Music]