

YA Café Podcast
Episode 40: *In An Absent Dream*
10 January 2019

- 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 *In An Absent Dream* by Seanan McGuire. Grab a mug of your favorite beverage, friends, and let's talk books.
- Ad: 00:19 Have you tried the Radio Public 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*
- Amanda: 00:41 Welcome y'all. As always, our first segment will be spoiler free and so you can stick around even if you haven't checked out the new novel yet. I'm Amanda Thrasher...
- Danielle: 00:48 I'm Danielle Hall, an 8th and 9th grade English teacher, and I blog at teachnouvelle.com. And our guest today is YA fantasy writer, Betsy Cornwell. Hi, Betsy!
- Betsy: 00:58 Hi, I'm so happy to be here.
- Danielle: 01:00 I am so happy to have you here. It's so good to talk to you again. When last we spoke 2015, I think, my students had just read *Mechanica* and *Ventures* was a mere glimpse on the horizon and we chatted about your newest book, *The Forest Queen* here on the podcast. How has the release of that gone for you?
- Betsy: 01:20 Uh, it's been great! I'm living in Ireland now, uh, and since I'm with an American press, I always feel a little bit distant from my release process, but *The Forest Queen* was great because I was finally feel like I have enough of a community here in Ireland that I was able to do a launch party at my favorite bookstore in Galway, which is called Charlie Byrnes. I had a big cake shaped like the book and my friends came and it was really lovely. So, uh, that was the first time I had a real launch party since the one I did in America for *Mechanica*, I didn't really get to do one for *Ventures* because I was a couple months postpartum then and not really sure what was going on with myself. So the forest queen and comparison has been really great and it's been well received, which is always a suspenseful thing. You never know what's gonna happen with the new book. And so that was a big relief. *Laugh*

- Danielle: 02:03 Yeah, we really liked The Forest Queen and one of the like insider industry things I thought was super fascinating was you told me that there was a reason that they changed between the cover of the ARC and the publication cover.
- Betsy: 02:19 Yeah! That was my first experience with having a cover change. But I heard that there was one big chain bookstore that told my publisher that if they changed the cover to something that was more sort of explicitly Robin Hood-y that said Robin Hood and retelling more clearly that they would order five times as many books to stock in their bookstores. And that was sort of an offer that my publishers couldn't refuse.
- Danielle: 02:43 Right.
- Betsy: 02:43 And it was weird because I get very emotionally attached to the cover images of all my books and I really loved the first one for The Forest Queen and was planning to get a tattoo of part of it on my body. And I still kind of am because I, one of the things I liked about that cover was that it looked kind of understated and sophisticated and they said, you know, just so you know, the new cover is going to be a lot more commercial. And I was picturing this sort of like bodice ripper. Fabio, *Laughter* I didn't really care, I said, well, okay, I mean if it sells five times more books, like I'm a single parent now bring it on. *Laughter* But I actually liked the new cover too. I think the boot is a boot that I would wear and so that's cool. *Laughter* So, I just kind of lucky that like getting to see a new book cover is genuinely one of my very favorite parts of the publishing process. So basically I just got to have that twice over for the same book and that's really cool. Although one thing that I did think about, um, the boot cover as much as I like it is, it does imply a kind of more action based narrative. Um, I or I sort of feel like someone who comes to the forest queen expecting it to be like safe throne of glass or something like that might be disappointed because there isn't as much kind of swashbuckling and if that's, I mean in a way that's what someone who's looking for a Robin Hood retelling might be hoping to find and then they find, you know, pages and pages of Silvie contemplating her own privilege *Laughter* But, and like, you know, *Laughter* this very slow burn romance and like an explicit birth scene that might not be what you know *Laughter*
- Amanda: 04:13 This is not what the boot promised us *Laughter*
- Betsy: 04:14 But I still, I still like it. And so, and maybe you know, maybe someone read the book by its cover and then was pleasantly surprised. I don't know. I liked the idea that the different kinds of covers appealed to different kinds of readers.

Danielle: 04:26 Yeah, absolutely. So, one of the things that we talked about kind of privately after The Forest Queen episode, Betsy was, I think we said something in the episode that accused you, like not accused, but like, you know, maybe said that you pulled some punches and I have to confess that at that point I truly thought I had read Venturess but it turns out I had not read Venturess *Laughter* and I read Venturess, you know, after that. And there is some like horror in there?

Betsy: 05:02 Yeah, for sure. *Laughter*

Danielle: 05:04 And one of the reasons why I thought, oh, my gosh!, like I got to get Betsy on the, In An Absent Dream episode is because there are some horror in this book too, even though it's kind of a sweeping, like fairytale feel like.

Betsy: 05:20 Yes.

Danielle: 05:20 You and Seanan McGuire both do some horror wrapped in the magic of fairy tales.

Betsy: 05:27 Oh, I'm happy to be in the same sentence with her in general. *Laughter* Well, and I actually was thinking The Forest Queen is, was in the same universe as Mechanica and Venturess even though it's set 200 years beforehand. And I was thinking a lot about, um, how ambiguous both Mechanica and Venturess are in terms of, uh, the idea of a happy ending and, or without spoiling those books, too much Venturess, maybe even more so. And that there are some genuinely dark and scary things that happen in Venturess and I, that I wanted The Forest Queen to be my first book I had written with like a straight up happy ending. *Laughter* I wanted it to *Laughter* just have a happy ending because I hadn't really done that before and I was starting to feel like maybe it was a bit weird as me that I hadn't, you know. Um, but I, I think I said this to you after I listened to that episode. I loved your ideas about how The Forest Queens should have ended so much that I actually *Laughter* asked you to help me edit my next book. *Laughter* So, um, when I was a literature student I learned to be very cautious about kind of inferring things about literature from what's going on in the author's life that you don't necessarily want to conflate those things. But uh, definitely the sort of emotional forces in my own life shapes what I was or wasn't willing to make happen to those characters in a different way than maybe previous books I've written. Certainly Venturess where I did lots of terrible things to character. *Laughter*

Amanda: 06:56 I'm sure there's a lot of people reading The Forest Queen who like need that happy ending, like get really invested in these characters. Like need this possibility to be there.

- Betsy: 07:05 Yeah! I think one of my goals with *The Forest Queen* was I wanted the Forest family to be this kind of safe space for the reader as well as for the characters in the book that it was this kind of imaginary place where the reader could go to and feel like they would be welcome and safe there too. And so if that got pulled away at the end of the book, that would be kind of problematic because it is a story about a group of people creating a better life and a better community in the face of all this horror and injustice. And so I wouldn't have wanted that to be destroyed. And I think something like a major character death, like I don't know who I would have killed off because they all sort of represent parts of the community that were really important to me.
- Danielle: 07:42 Right.
- Betsy: 07:42 Some of my favorite books are kind of books that I reread because they're comforting, you know? And that's different than a book that I reread because it's fascinating or compelling or scary, which also I do. But, um, I think once in awhile I want to read a book that's just like a warm cup of tea or something like that.
- Danielle: 07:56 Yeah.
- Amanda: 07:56 Yes.
- Betsy: 07:56 So, I think *The Forest Queen* with my warm tea book, in a way. *Laughter*
- Danielle: 08:00 I love that you say warm cup of tea because I do feel, and this is why the kind of horror that was present, the scary moments that were present in *Venturess* surprised me because I really do feel like your books are a warm cup of tea. Like, I love it.
- Danielle: 08:15 Our book this week is *In An Absent Dream* by Seanan McGuire. Katherine Lundy is quiet, serious, and studious. She'd rather be reading a book than playing with her friends, and expects that a wholly ordinary life awaits her in a distant Adulthood. But all that changes when a door appears before her and invites her in to the Goblin Market, where Fairness is the driving force and rules are never made to be broken. It's the perfect world for Lundy to thrive, but Lundy has to choose between growing old and ordinary with her family, or staying in the Goblin Market forever. Amanda, what did you think of this book? Don't, don't like gush too much.

Amanda: 08:52 I will gush as I see fit. *Laughter* So, there is this great moment in the beginning of Stardust where we jumped over the wall and the camera pans over the hill and the music swells up and you just see this beautiful magical market spread out before our main character and this whole book felt like that moment, like the whole way through. You're just walking through mysteries and adventures and I just, I, I loved it so much *Laughter* and I can gush if I want to gush, Dani.

Danielle: 09:20 Okay. I just said before we recorded that if we only gush, we could gush for three days.

Amanda: 09:27 You're right. Okay, fine. What did you think?

Danielle: 09:29 I loved it! *Laughter*

Amanda: 09:33 Don't gush to much, Dani. *Laughter*

Danielle: 09:33 So, we set this in our end of year roundup, but just to give listeners who may not have caught that some context, the reason why we chose this book was because we found the Filk song which you recommended and said you had never mentioned on the podcast. Again, we'll hear. We are mentioning it, the Filk song, Wicked Girls Saving Ourselves by Seanan McGuire and then we're like, what is Seanan up to these days? And it turns out she's written 100 books. *Laughter*

Amanda: 10:04 Surprise. *Laughter*

Danielle: 10:05 So that is a song that actually also makes me think of Betsy because it is all about, you know, the Susan's of the literary world and the girls that were not willing to go back to their lives once they were changed by the stories that they lived. Betsy, have you heard that song?

Betsy: 10:24 I have not heard that that's on, but I'm going to go dig it up for myself the second we're done with this podcast because it sounds fantastic. *Laughter* So, full disclosure for me, this book was actually my first Seanan McGuire book, so I think it was really cool for me to come into this with a fresh eye and I know that there are, uh, there's a previous book in the series and that kind of thing, but I was really glad that I could go into this book without so much context from the universe and the Goblin Market. The Christina Rossetti poem is a poem that I've loved for years and years and years.

Danielle: 10:52 Me too.

Betsy: 10:52 It was an influence on a small scene in one of my books where they go to the Night Market and Mechanica. So it's something that has existed in my imagination for a long time. Um, and I felt almost like I was having a conversation with the writer as I was reading a book about interpretations of that poem

Danielle: 11:09 Yes!

Betsy: 11:12 ...and sort of interpretation like hidden door fantasy world storytelling. And that was really enjoyable to me. So, I think this is a great book to read as a writer because it explicitly discusses storytelling tropes and pulls back all the time to say, okay, this is what this kind of story does or you know, this is what this kind of character is like and so on. Which sometimes I will say did take me out of the moment a little too much. I felt like there was a lot of that, especially at the beginning that made me kind of impatient to go back to the moment by moment narrative. But I think as a kind of stylistic choice, it was really, really cool and it worked so well and especially the parts of Lundy's story that Seanan McGuire focused on and the parts that she kind of glossed over. I think that was structured in such a clever way that I really appreciated as both a reader and a writer.

Danielle: 11:54 Yeah, absolutely. So, I did just want to say like this is a novella in a world that she has created in her Wayward Children series. But all three of us read this book before we read any of the Wayward Children. And since then, Amanda and I have read Every Heart a Doorway, so you don't need to have the rest of the world to enjoy this one. And they are very different books. Okay. So, Amanda, you wrote the summary that I read and you mentioned The Market. Do you want to talk about The Market?

New Speaker: 12:24 I don't love Goblin Market as much as y'all do like the poem I read it and I'm like, okay, whatever. Don't have sex. That's not the funnest thing I've ever read. *Laughter* So, I didn't have like all that love for it going into it. Uh, but I did have enough history with the fairy world that as soon as Lundy comes in and she eats his leg, very innocuous meat pie. I was like, no Lundy don't eat the food!

Danielle: 12:46 Don't eat the food! *Laughter* don't ask for anything.

Amanda: 12:49 But then of course it was fun. Uh, so the market has like these overarching rules of fairness, which I found very interesting and a great little indictment of capitalism.

Danielle: 12:59 Yes!

Betsy: 12:59 Definitely.

Danielle: 13:00 So, there's this concept of Fair Value. And so if you ask for a cup of coffee, like what are you willing to give for it? And The Market with a capital m assesses Fair Value, so if you have offered up the right amount of something, if you haven't like weird things happen, weird things happened, *Laughter* we could talk more about it in the spoiler section, but it's like...

Betsy: 13:24 I think it's fair to say you're punished, right? Like The Market punches you for not giving fair value and that's where it's starts to be a really good allegory for The Market in our world. *Laughter*

Danielle: 13:33 Yeah. We were talking before this podcast, Amanda and I were talking, I may have had this conversation in my head because you said that thing about not being able to summarize books that you wrote yourself. And so I was kind of thinking about the things that get left out of a summary or out of a book blurb. And one of those things for this is that we have a motherly figure, who is the Archivist. What'd you think of the Archivist, Betsy?

Betsy: 13:59 I like characters who are women who are caretakers without being sort of stereotypical maternal, uh, or being sort of woe begone about not having their own children or whatever. I think that's, that's an overdone trope, so I really liked that she was this loving, caring woman who kind of wasn't upset about not having biological children.

Danielle: 14:16 Yeah, that's really interesting. Like this idea of how you care for someone and the ways that you show that and I think that maybe I read her as a maternal figure because I wanted her to be a maternal figure in the same way that maybe Lundy read her as a maternal figure and then you know later had her feelings on that matter evolve.

Danielle: 14:39 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 In An Absent Dream and dig a little deeper.

Music: 14:49 *Music*

Ad: 15:01 Hey, friends! Are you sitting there thinking 'this podcast is awwwwweeeesome'? ! I know me too right. Well, here's how to support us and our authors. Order our book choices through our affiliate links. We'll get a small kickback and of course you'll be supporting the author. Everybody wins! Next week we're going to do a throwback episode and discuss Meredith Russo's If I Was Your Girl. This was a Stonewall Book Award winner in 2016 and Meredith Russo has a new book, Birthday coming out on May 21st, so we just wanted to ,sure that we were all caught up. If you'd like to help us keep bringing you great content, order this book through the link in our show notes. Happy reading! *Music*

Amanda: 15:49 Welcome back, y'all. It's time for Things We Like a Latte! Danielle, what's your brew of choice this week?

Danielle: 15:49 Well, Amanda.

Amanda: 15:50 Well Danielle.

Danielle: 15:51 Over the holidays, I saw Mary Poppins Returns twice with your mom *Laughter* and it was great! I didn't love the original Mary Poppins like, I dunno, I guess I was reading it wrong or something, but this movie, Mary Poppins Returns, which is not a Redo. It's a sequel. I really loved this movie and having just read In An Absent Dream and Every Heart a Doorway, I realized that Mary Poppins like came from somewhere. *Laughter* She came from a door and in Mary Poppins returns she actually references a door and she says like, "I will go back when the door opens" and I'm like, oh my God Mary Poppins, what's your door?

Amanda: 16:43 Nonsense.

Danielle: 16:45 Nonsense. Yeah, and Emily Blunt had something about the way that she was playing the character that made me feel that she was like at the same time, mischievous and a little bit sad and I

just got so much from this movie and had all these feelings about, you know, worlds with doorways and woods between worlds and strongly recommend checking out Mary Poppins returns whether or not you're obsessed with doors. How about you Betsy? What's your Thing You Like a Latte?

- Betsy: 17:19 I will be really honest with you. My favorite thing about this time of year in Ireland, meaning the couple of weeks after Christmas is all the cheese that's on sale for ridiculously low prices *Laughter* are, but my life has been everyday I go to "The Market" if you will, and I get myself some fantastic cheese. I got a pound of Stilton for two euros yesterday and I've been eating all of it. I'm so happy.
- Danielle: 17:44 How about you, Amanda? What's your brew of choice?
- Amanda: 17:46 Last week a friend of mine sent me a twitter thread, started by the author, Sarah Gaily, where she just says, "tell me your favorite, cool, but kind of useless fact", and a lot of them are really fun and I really enjoyed them, but the one that I love the most with somebody posted, most worker ants are lazy and they just sit around and I was like, what? So I'm looking this up and apparently about 40 percent of worker ants just sit around and don't do anything all day. They'll just like pretend to work and take walks and stuff. About three percent of worker ants work all the time and like whatever's left, I don't know, it's something like 70 percent less than half the time they spend working *Laughter*
- Danielle: 18:20 We're all ants.
- Amanda: 18:23 Yeah, I know we're all just like taking walks instead of doing our jobs.
- Betsy: 18:26 Also totally medically relevant to the book, right? Like what are these guys doing to get fair value for their ant lives? *Laughter*
- Amanda: 18:36 And that's how ants turn into birds. *Laughter*
- Danielle: 18:40 We're going to take a quick break and when we come back we'll return to our discussion of In An Absent Dream. The rest of the show will contain spoilers, so if you're leaving here, keep in touch on Instagram and Twitter @yacafepodcast. We'll be back! *Music*

Amanda: 19:21 Welcome back, y'all, to the YA Café. We're continuing our discussion on *In An Absent Dream* by Seanan McGuire. If you haven't read this yet, we want to warn you again that this segment will contain spoilers.

Danielle: 19:21 Spoilers!

Amanda: 19:22 And also just so you know, we're going to have some very light spoilers for *Every Heart A Doorway*, but nothing that would go in the spoiler section of *Every Heart of doorway*, if that makes sense.

Danielle: 19:30 All right, so I want to talk about the whatever incident can you lead us in.

Amanda: 19:41 So the noodle incident is a trope, where there is a major event that occurs off-screen, it never happens onscreen is only referenced by the other characters and it comes from through Calvin and Hobbes. There are constant references to "the noodle incident". That is something terrible the Calvin has done, but it's never onscreen.

Danielle: 19:53 And this book is a whole book about "the noodle incident". *Laughter*

Betsy: 19:58 A plate of spaghetti of incidents. Yeah. *Laughter*

Danielle: 20:02 A spaghetti plate of incidents. Yes. So, I thought that this structure was, I don't know, like I thought it was interesting. I haven't read a lot of things like this structure where most of the core events happen off-screen and then all we get is Lundy's reaction to them. So it was interesting in that case, but like I also was sad that we didn't see them.

Betsy: 20:27 I actually was really into that. That was one of my favorite things about the book and I will tell you why. I tried to avoid reading, you know, too many good read reviews of my own work. But of course I do. And one of the most common criticisms of my books is that they're too slow, that they're not kind of action oriented enough. And I find as a writer that this sort of big epic battle scenes or the hyper choreographed fight scenes, while I enjoy reading them, I struggled to write them. I don't

connect with them as much as I do the kind of introspective character based relationship he scenes and I thought it was so liberating to see this book where they were just like, oh yeah, we had this epic fight with the Wasp Queen, but no one cares. We're not to talk about it. And I was like, WHAT!! *Laughter* I loved that. She just sort of straight up skipped all these things. That would be the climax of most way novels and that was so refreshing to me and kind of emboldening as a writer to do what I want in my next book and not feel like I have to spend time on the parts of my story that aren't the most compelling to me.

Danielle: 21:29 Right.

Betsy: 21:29 So that was really cool.

Amanda: 21:31 I think that it really speaks to why this story is told as a book to instead of like a movie or a TV show, like this is a story that could not have been told that another medium. And I really love that. Like I love the specificity of the choice to make this a short novel instead of, well instead of 300 pages instead of a movie instead of a TV show like this is clearly a work of fiction that was destined to be a book. Like it needed to be a book.

Danielle: 21:57 I agree. And when I said that it made me sad like I do not really have a word for how it made me feel because it's like a little sad that we missed out on the opportunity particularly of getting to know Mockery and instead we learn mostly about Mockery through Lundy's grief. That Mockery is dead. I'm so sad in that sense, but also like liberated from kind of a longer story where I really also want to focus on characters. And one of the things that this creates an opportunity for is what I call "creative reading". Which means that if you bring this book into a classroom and students are like, wait, what happened with the Wasp Queen? Who was Mockery? What are they like? Well, I mean, students can write too, so just like let them write those scenes.

Amanda: 22:52 That's a really cool good.

Betsy: 22:53 It kind of invites fanfiction, which is lovely.

Danielle: 22:57 Yes! I love fanfiction and I think students should be encouraged to write more of it.

- Betsy: 23:01 Absolutely. I as a writer love fan fiction and fan art and it is the dream of my life to get more of it, of my own staff. So please write all the fan fiction you can. *Laughter*
- Amanda: 23:09 What did y'all think about Lundy's relationship with her father and the choice to have the father be someone who went through the door as a child?
- Betsy: 23:18 I never kind of felt like I had the father's number. Um, I didn't really feel like I connected with him as a character. I thought it was interesting to have this idea of each generation subsequently going through the doors. And I think that was really important at the end of the book, obviously. So, when we learned that at the end of the book that Lundy's nephew has gone through the doors in The Market, I really liked that aspect of the ending and it felt like that the father and the whole kind of inter-generational setup for these people going to the market was kind of there so that that ending would be resonant. I never really believed in the father's journeys to The Market or felt like it was like out enough if that makes sense.
- Danielle: 23:56 Right. There's this point in the book where the narrator asserts that everyone likes to believe that they would not settle for coming back to the mundane after they had seen the fantastic and I believe that the father was there to show that most people would choose to come back to the mundane.
- Betsy: 24:16 And most stories like that I've read like, The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe or, um, even The Phantom Toll Booth or something like that. There's this sense of a, you're always supposed to come home at the end of it, you know. And so that was something new and different that I liked about this book, that it was really ambiguous. What was the choice that Lundy was quote unquote supposed to make for the narrative?
- Amanda: 24:39 And I think that's something that. Well, when I read this, I thought the ending felt very rushed. I don't know. I was just expecting the choice to be longer. I wasn't quite sure what had happened. But after reading Every Heart A Doorway, I think I would have enjoyed the speed of the ending more. Because when you read Every Heart A Doorway, Lundy's a character, you know what her fate is, you know what she chose, but we didn't have that going in. So it felt very sudden for me when she chose to try to cheat the rules.
- Danielle: 25:06 Yeah, it did. And I loved this ending because she looked for a third option and it was not there.

- Amanda: 25:14 Nope.
- Danielle: 25:14 No third option. In Seanan McGuire song, "Wicked Girl, Saving Ourselves", she refers to going back to the mundane as going back on the shelf, like your story has been told. And that's the whole thing In Every Heart a Doorway, we learn that there is not one door that is The Goblin Market. We learn that there are many doors and the different doors choose different kids and it's amazing and like to further that concept In Every Heart A Doorway, you know, we're in a school of like survivors is not the right word, returners, people who are like stuck back in our world after having been in other worlds and Lundy's like a mentor to help them through their loss and their pain and all these things. But there's this classification...
- Amanda: 26:08 So, the world's are defined as like good or evil or high nonsense or high, what is it?
- Danielle: 26:15 High or high logic
- Amanda: 26:16 High logic! That was it. And so The Goblin Market is described as a wicked high logic world. And I thought it was very interesting because I would not have classified The Goblin Market as wicked reading this. I would have just described it as, I don't know...
- Betsy: 26:32 I think i would would kind of go neutral, If you're going to go d and d on it, you know.
- Amanda: 26:37 Yes. I definitely saw it as like a high neutral world. But then it was classified as wicked in Every Heart a Doorway. What did you think of that?
- Danielle: 26:43 I definitely didn't take it as wicked because I thought that the ultimate goal was fairness, but it's really interesting to have this new interpretation that fairness could be wicked.
- Betsy: 26:52 Bring up a question, which is what the book asks of, sort of who is the arbiter of fairness, you know, who decides what's fair and doles it out, which is a question the book asks explicitly. And I think that's where it leads into these kinds of economic allegories as well. Like humans do have this idea of fairness, but it's evolving all the time and it has become wicked, I think a lot of the time.

- Danielle: 27:16 Right, and Lundy's father says to her like hearing her quote, the rules of The Market, which of course he knew because he had been there before. "Your still rigid, you went to a place the elevates rules to the status of holy law. And you quote those rules back to me now as if they have all of the answers." And I think that that could be one of the components that makes it wicked too, is just like, you know, not being able to negotiate.
- Amanda: 27:42 I was surprised that Lundy made that choice to like go back and try to force her way through the roles, try for the third option. It just, it felt abrupt and out of character for me.
- Danielle: 27:51 It felt out of character for me to Betsy, what did you think about that?
- Betsy: 28:25 From the beginning of the book? Lindy seems like such a, future lawyer child to me *Laughter* that she both loved rules and was always trying to find her way around them. Like she reminded me so much of one of my friends in Ireland who is a lawyer of all this is exactly what Joan was like when you're a child. *Laughter* And so it made sense to me that she would kind of try to legalese her way around it. Like, oh, well if I stop aging that I can't turn 18. And then the rules don't apply. I found the ending unpredictable in a way that was kind of rushed, but it's in a Velez so. But it didn't feel out of character because she had been so established as someone who both likes rules and like loop holes.
- Amanda: 28:32 Oh, that's fair.
- Danielle: 28:33 That's so interesting. And especially because she is growing like, you know, we meet her as a child, but then somewhere along the way, like she's got to test her boundaries. So even though she was more rule abiding as a child doesn't mean that as a teenager she wouldn't rebel. So that's really interesting.
- Amanda: 28:51 That's, you want to talk a little more about like mothering and nurturing in this book?
- Betsy: 28:55 Yeah. Um, that was mean. I'm a relatively new parents and maybe it's just on my mind anyway, but that was really interesting to me. There's a line early in the book that made me a little hyper aware of the parenting themes that were going on and it's talking about Lundy's mother who is pregnant with her sister at the beginning of the book and it talks about how she was impatient to be done with pregnancy so that she could experience the sweet simplicity of caring for an infant and raising an infant. And that threw me for a loop because to me there was no sweet simplicity *Laughter* about the postpartum period. I just thought that's not what it's like at all. And so that had

my hackles up a little bit because there's colic and there's waking up 10 times a night and you know, it's not sweet *Laughter* and um, so I was a little that kind of distance from the narrative a little bit, but then as the book was actually really nuanced exploration of the way that family works and the way that we both want you to care for each other and feel obligated to take care of each other and that Lundy did end up with debts in both worlds, which is what it kind of feels like as a parent to be figuring out where you spend yourself, um, where you spend yourself, where you spend your life. That was a good line in the book I thought and uh, was dealt with in a kind of gentle and nuanced way that I thought was really lovely.

Danielle: 30:16 Me too.

Amanda: 30:17 Overall, I think we all really loved this book, loved the gaps in it and the world that was painted and send us all of your fan fiction.

Danielle: 30:25 And art.

Danielle: 30:27 That's our show for today friends. Thank you so much for joining us, Betsy.

Betsy: 30:31 Thank you so much for having me. It was really great.

Danielle: 30:32 Where can readers find you?

Betsy: 30:34 Well, you can always find me, betsycornwell.com and I'm on Facebook, twitter, Instagram, and Tumbler all essentially [@betsycornwell](https://www.instagram.com/betsycornwell)

Danielle: 30:42 And you can find us on Instagram and Twitter [@yacafepodcast](https://www.instagram.com/yacafepodcast). We'd love to hear from you! And if you're enjoying this show, leave us a review Happy reading! *Music*