

YA Café Podcast
Episode 61: *The Revolution of Birdie Randolph*
22 August 2019

Danielle Hall: 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 Revolution of Birdie Randolph* by Brandy Colbert. Grab a mug of your favorite beverage friends and let's talk books.

Danielle Hall: 00:20 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 Hall: 00:27 I'm Danielle Hall, an 8th and 9th grade English teacher and I blog at teachnouvelle.com. And our guest today is Nikea JaLynn, a teacher and co-host of the YouTube book review series #BlackGirlLit. Hi Nikea!

Nikea JaLynn: 00:40 Hello. How are y'all doing?

Danielle Hall: 00:43 Good.

Danielle Hall: 00:44 So good.

Danielle Hall: 00:44 Thank you for joining us in your first week back to school.

Nikea JaLynn: 00:48 Thank you. I'm excited to be here. I took a little nap before, so I think I'm ready to go.

Danielle Hall: 00:53 It's like required after a day of teaching, right?

Nikea JaLynn: 00:55 Yes. Absolutely.

Danielle Hall: 00:56 Yeah, those back to school naps, very important.

Danielle Hall: 00:59 So, I want to know all the things. So I know that you have a minor in children's lit and I know you have a ton of literature experience. We talked before the podcast and I know you're teaching this class on African American lit and you've been a reader for a long time ...

Nikea JaLynn: 01:14 Yes.

Danielle Hall: 01:15 But specifically can you tell us about your YouTube series?

Nikea JaLynn: 01:19 So the YouTube series started with Jasmine and myself. We decided that we wanted to form a book club and it was just us two. Jasmine actually came up with the idea to do the reviews and we came up with the name #BlackGirlLit, and it's kind of a play on words, because whenever we do the book reviews, we are drinking adult libations. *laughter* So, depending on how much we consume, the videos can get very interesting and we actually plan on shifting our video series into a podcast since I'm in a different state. So, she's in North Carolina, I'm in Virginia. So, you all are getting the exclusive on that. So, Black Girl Lit will be coming to a podcast near you very soon.

Danielle Hall: 02:04 That is so exciting. And you have a rating system ...

Amanda Thrasher: 02:09 Which is the best.

Nikea JaLynn: 02:11 Yeah, it goes from "sober" to "buzzed" to "tipsy" and then our top rating is "lit". *laughter* We've been reading books mostly by women of color, so not just black women but women from all colors, backgrounds, races, you know, just trying to talk about the diversity in literature

Danielle Hall: 02:30 And it's super fun and everybody should check that out. You and Jasmine have reviewed two of Brandy's books already. You've reviewed Pointe, which was her debut, and more recently her middle-grade Little & Lion. So coming into her newest book, which we're talking about today, the Revolution of Birdie Randolph, what were you hoping for?

Nikea JaLynn: 02:51 I was first of all excited to read this book and I was just hoping, I guess to see growth in Brandy's writing because in our review of the first one we were like, we could tell, you know, this was

kind of her first book and just to see how she has progressed as a writer. And I was just excited to see a main character, of course, that is African-American and to see what kind of stories she was going to tell because Brandy doesn't tell what I would call just the "typical" or standard African American story. She always brings in something that's going to get a conversation started.

Danielle Hall: 03:25 Cool. So let's start our conversation.

Amanda Thrasher: 03:29 Dove "Birdie" Randolph has tried hard to live up to her parents' expectations. She's at the top of her class. She works hard and she even quit playing soccer to make more time for schoolwork. She seems to be the perfect daughter. But Birdie has a secret. She's seeing a boy named Booker, a boy who's been in juvie and Birdie's sure her parents won't approve. When her estranged aunt Carlene comes to town, Birdie's life gets even more complicated. Carlene's in recovery. But Birdie's mother's still braces herself for the moment when it will all come crashing down. Can Birdie her mother and her aunt come back together? Can she find a way to make her parents understand Booker? And can she cope with the truths she uncovers along the way?

Danielle Hall: 04:04 So Amanda, what did you think of this book?

Danielle Hall: 04:10 I really enjoyed this book. I was very captivated from the beginning and I was even warned off of it because Danielle hands this to me and she's like, "Just so you know, it's kind of boring at the beginning." I started reading it, I was like, "What is she talking about? So much is happening." It was great.

Danielle Hall: 04:23 Way to out me!

Amanda Thrasher: 04:24 I am absolutely outing you.

Amanda Thrasher: 04:27 Nikea what did you think of this book?

Nikea JaLynn: 04:29 I enjoyed this book. I feel like one reason I enjoyed it is because it just built up. It just kept piling on and getting better. It was like, "I have to keep reading. I could not put it down. I want to know what happens next." I enjoyed it.

Amanda Thrasher: 04:45 How about you Danielle?

Nikea JaLynn: 04:46 Danielle? *laughter*

Danielle Hall: 04:50 I thought it was fine, just fine. I think that it will find a home in any classroom library. Not all books are for all people, y'all.

Nikea JaLynn: 05:00 This is true.

Danielle Hall: 05:02 I loved the Chicago setting, , place I've always wanted to live.

Amanda Thrasher: 05:07 Really?

Danielle Hall: 05:08 Yeah.

Amanda Thrasher: 05:08 I didn't know that.

Danielle Hall: 05:10 I almost went to grad school there.

Danielle Hall: 05:12 And I thought it was a super cool detail to mention her dad's job in sports medicine for the Chicago Bulls. I was like, yeah, so great.

Danielle Hall: 05:24 What a cool detail.

Amanda Thrasher: 05:25 Yeah, I thought that was really fun and interesting too, and being able to have that, like, front row seats to the Bulls.

Danielle Hall: 05:31 Yeah.

Nikea JaLynn: 05:31 And to highlight his intelligence, you know, he's a doctor and he works for the Bulls. Like that's just like a double blessing.

Amanda Thrasher: 05:40 *laughter* That's like the best of the doctors.

Nikea JaLynn: 05:43 Yeah.

Danielle Hall: 05:44 And I had never thought much about sports medicine and the life of someone whose loved one is in sports medicine and how he's gone all the time.

Nikea JaLynn: 05:53 Right.

Danielle Hall: 05:54 I also liked the salon setting.

Nikea JaLynn: 05:57 Yeah. The salon, especially in the African American community, it's just like a place of bonding. It's almost like therapy sometimes too when you're getting your hair done. You know, people confess to their hair stylist. People socialize in the salon. So it was a really good part of it and especially the fact that it was right under their house. I thought that was cool.

Amanda Thrasher: 06:19 Yeah, it was interesting reading this in comparison to another book that was around a salon that I had read pretty recently. Americanah. Have either of y'all read that one?

Nikea JaLynn: 06:28 I haven't.

Danielle Hall: 06:30 Am reading.

Amanda Thrasher: 06:31 So a lot of it takes place in a salon, but it's, reading it, it feels like it's a more low rent salon than this one is . Like this one, you read it and you feel like, "Oh, this is a really like nice establishment". Her mother puts a lot of effort into it and, like, they've built this whole community in there.

Nikea JaLynn: 06:48 I think the reason why the salon in this novel feels a little more, I guess to you, I haven't read the book, but you say like kind of "high class" is because Birdie's mom, like, polices the conversations.

Amanda Thrasher: 07:02 Oh yeah *laughter*

Nikea JaLynn: 07:02 I mean one rule is, they can't talk about politics whatsoever. And they can't curse and whenever Birdie is there, she's cutting her eyes at the customers to make sure that they're not saying anything off the wall.

Amanda Thrasher: 07:13 Which let's just talk about, "Don't curse in front of my 16 year old daughter" *laughter* like come on.

Danielle Hall: 07:20 But I think that goes to illustrate her mother's controlling tendencies.

Amanda Thrasher: 07:26 Oh absolutely. It was a great character detail.

Nikea JaLynn: 07:29 Yeah. Her mom is like the uber perfectionist to the point where I'm just, I was literally, like I said before in the book, my first thought was, "I hate her mom." Like, let Birdie go, oh my goodness. It was like Birdie was an actual bird and her mom was trying to clip her wings instead of letting her fly.

Amanda Thrasher: 07:51 That's it exactly.

Danielle Hall: 07:52 It's so good. *laughter*

Amanda Thrasher: 07:56 Yeah. So Birdie's mom is hyper-controlling. Like, the reason that she quit soccer is because her mother demanded her quit soccer after she got a B on a test.

Danielle Hall: 08:06 Also more than that, her mom demanded she quit soccer because she didn't have any real aptitude for it. So there was no hope of her getting a scholarship from it. Like it wasn't--

Nikea JaLynn: 08:17 The worst.

Danielle Hall: 08:19 Like, can't she just enjoy soccer?

Nikea JaLynn: 08:22 Yeah.

Amanda Thrasher: 08:22 I think it also, it was interesting to read it because I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, "But every college admissions person wants well-rounded kids. Why would you pull her out of this extracurricular? They love extracurriculars."

Nikea JaLynn: 08:36 Exactly. They will take a B average student with extra curriculums over an A student who's done nothing outside of school.

Amanda Thrasher: 08:44 Yeah, exactly!

Danielle Hall: 08:44 Yep. Louder for the students in the back.

Amanda Thrasher: 08:49 For the parents in the back. I don't think the students need convincing.

Nikea JaLynn: 08:52 Right. *laughter*

Amanda Thrasher: 08:54 So you hated her mom, you said?

Nikea JaLynn: 08:57 Yes.

Amanda Thrasher: 08:57 How did you feel about the role of her father in fostering this controlling environment but not being the enforcer?

Nikea JaLynn: 09:05 For me, he was very passive, but he was also a warrior for Birdie to kind of smooth out her mom's edges. Like when she got on punishment one time, her mom wanted to take her phone and her dad was able to convince her mom, "Okay, don't take her phone. You know, that's a little bit extreme." So he tried to insert where he could, but ... Ok, I'm not gonna say anymore. Spoilers. *laughter*

Danielle Hall: 09:31 Right. Yeah.

Amanda Thrasher: 09:32 So that's a hint of what's to come. *laughter*.

Danielle Hall: 09:36 So this book is called The Revolution of Birdie Randolph. It's right in the title. So we don't consider this a spoiler. And we said in the summary that she is seeing this boy named Booker. There's this weird, like they're not really dating at the beginning of the book, but like they are. Come on, you're dating, it's fine.

Nikea JaLynn: 09:58 They're courting. *laughter*

Danielle Hall: 09:59 They're pre-dating. And Birdie starts sneaking out.

Amanda Thrasher: 10:03 Scandalous.

Danielle Hall: 10:04 Ohh, scandalous. She sneaks out. My primary issue with Birdie sneaking out was that I felt like the act of her sneaking out and how she was going to accomplish that and all of these things took more time and focus than actually talking about who Booker was and the things that he had gone through in his life, which I found to be more interesting but took up less narrative time. So I would've liked to see more devoted to him.

Nikea JaLynn: 10:37 Yeah, I agree. It was kind of like a buildup to him finally telling Birdie what was going on with him.

Amanda Thrasher: 10:44 So I want to push back against like it's a common ground to retread and it's not like worthwhile to spend the time on this. I think it's hugely worthwhile because this character arc is about Birdie and how she learns to respond to pushing against her mother's restraints. You know, when you begin reading this book that this is an untenable situation and you know that she's going to find a way outside of it somehow. Like, she's got to start somewhere, you know? And I think that it's an important part of her character to go from this section of like, "How can I still keep the status quo and get what I want" versus "How can I change the way that my life is structured to be a more complete person." So I think that this is an important first step in Birdie becoming more autonomous and in control of her own life.

Nikea JaLynn: 11:34 I can see that. I do think that her sneaking out is the necessary part of it. Because you know, I felt like when the novel starts off, you just had this picture painted of this perfect girl who's getting good grades, who does everything that her mom says. And then it goes along with the title, "the revolution", with her going against the grain and coming into herself in having some more agency over her life is necessary to the story.

Amanda Thrasher: 12:03 So another big part of the story that we talked about in the description is that Birdie's aunt, Carlene, comes to stay with them after coming out of rehab. And Birdie is kind of like piecing together the history of all of this. And I thought that this was very difficult to read as an adult who has seen addiction in the way that it relates to loved ones. Seeing how Birdie doesn't understand, like, "Why don't they give Carlene a break? Why are they always waiting for the worst thing to happen?" Because she doesn't have this history of two steps forward and one step back, like for decades. And I thought that it was very different to read that as an adult who has this baggage of what addiction is, what it does to people. And I thought it was refreshing to read it from Birdie's perspective because she just doesn't know why people don't just trust Carlene.

Nikea JaLynn: 13:01 Right.

- Danielle Hall: 13:02 I really liked this part. I think Brandy really infused Birdie with a lot of optimism that like you said, it's harder to have as an adult. We've talked before on the podcast about kids who have experience with addiction in their family from loved ones and things like that and maybe needing an escape from that or optimism about that or just a lot of different roles that books play in helping kids deal with their loved ones who are facing addiction.
- Nikea JaLynn: 13:32 Yeah, and I like the fact that Birdie, she's more embracing of her aunt than anybody else. I think there was a line where she said she felt like she was the only one that wanted her here. You can see that Birdie just embraces her and is like, "Oh, this is my family. She's here. She's trying to do her best." So, you know, that's the optimism that you were talking about and I can really appreciate that from Birdie. I see myself in that way, you know. I'm that optimistic person and so sometimes people can say it comes off as you know, naivete, but you know, if you're putting forth that effort then, you know, why not embrace you?
- Danielle Hall: 14:07 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 Revolution of Birdie Randolph* and dig a little deeper.
- Danielle Hall: 14:27 Hey friends, are you looking for an easy way to support this podcast? Order our book choices through the affiliate link in our show notes. You'll be supporting our authors and making sure we get a small kickback to keep our show going. Next up, we'll be discussing *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi. If you'd like to help us keep bringing you great content, order through the link in our show notes. Happy reading.
- Amanda Thrasher: 15:00 Welcome back y'all. It's time for Things We Like a Latte. Danielle, what's your brew of choice this week?
- Danielle Hall: 15:05 So one day I'm going to stop doing Lattes that Amanda introduces me to. But really she's my link to the world. *laughter* But it's okay because I evolved my thoughts on this beyond just liking it. So my brew of choice this week is the video that came out in February of the dog watching the post-stampede scene of *The Lion King*. I don't want to spoil the Lion--
- Amanda Thrasher: 15:31 I think you can spoil *The Lion King*. *laughter* I feel like we're in a safe window for *Lion King* spoilers.

Nikea JaLynn: 15:37 25 years.

Amanda Thrasher: 15:38 Yeah.

Nikea JaLynn: 15:39 Okay, fine, fine, fine. Spoilers ahead. So the dog is watching Mufasa die and Simba react to that and realize what's happened and the dog is having just this really empathetic, visceral reaction. And I've been thinking all day about how much it took for that dog to have that reaction because dogs are extremely empathetic, but they're usually the most empathetic to their owners. And this dog's owner was laughing the whole time. So definitely not that. Screens are not made for dogs eyes, like many dogs can't even process what's on a screen. And it actually has to do with snout size, and I'm not going to dive all the way in.

Amanda Thrasher: 16:25 But you went in.

Nikea JaLynn: 16:26 You did, you went there. You're here now.

Danielle Hall: 16:30 Yeah. Well okay. But like our dog can't really process things that are on a screen. So the dog in the video had to be able to process the things on the screen, have a different empathetic response than his owner, and that scene is a bunch of yellows and oranges that are not high contrast. And so he also had to interpret those and it's amazing. And I think that every animal psychologist in training needs to watch this video. And all of our listeners too. It's a great video.

Amanda Thrasher: 17:04 Wow. That is so much more than I expected when I saw you write "dog watching Mufasa die" for your personal notes. *laughter*

Nikea JaLynn: 17:12 I love it.

Danielle Hall: 17:12 How about you Nikea? What's your brew of choice?

Nikea JaLynn: 17:16 So I have this app, actually one of my Facebook friends introduced it to me. It's called Libby. So you can download it on your phone and you can get digital downloads of books and audio books and magazines, and all you need is a library card. Whaaaaat?

Amanda Thrasher: 17:31 Whaaaaat?

Nikea JaLynn: 17:31 So when I found this out, I was just a total, "I have to have the book in my hand" type person, but the quick access to books and being able to listen to books, sometimes while I'm driving, it's awesome. So download the app Libby on your phone, get a library card and you have access to thousands of books and audio books and magazines.

Danielle Hall: 17:58 Awesome, thank you. How about you Amanda? What do you like a latte?

Amanda Thrasher: 18:04 So I just finished this brick of a book that I've been chewing through for about a month and a half, two months. It's called Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi, and it is fantastic. It is super in depth. It goes all the way back to the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade, particularly the rise of the Portuguese empire doing it. And just the ways in which so many great American thinkers and ideas have come from these very old concepts of racism and white supremacy and how that has shaped like American policy throughout the centuries and all the places that we could have fixed things and didn't. Just chose absolutely wrong to continue white supremacy and this whole mindset of the racist structure that we have established today and it's a little dense in the beginning, but it is really, really good. It took me a long time to read, but I am so glad that I did. Cannot recommend it enough. It was Stamped from the Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi.

Danielle Hall: 19:10 We're going to take a quick break and when we come back we'll return to our discussion on The Revolution of Birdie Randolph. The rest of the show will contain spoilers, so if you're leaving us here, keep in touch on Instagram and Twitter @yacafepodcast. We'll be back after this quick break.

New Speaker: 19:24 *musical interlude*

Amanda Thrasher: 19:41 Welcome back y'all to the YA Cafe. We're continuing our discussion on The Revolution of Birdie Randolph by Brandy Colbert. If you haven't read this yet, we want to warn you again that this segment will contain spoilers.

Danielle Hall: 19:51 Spoilers! And plot twists.

Amanda Thrasher: 19:54 And plot twists! So, in our spoiler section we had a list of a few things that we want to talk about. One of which was that this is a book full of queer, which is great.

Danielle Hall: 20:03 We are the gay podcast.

Amanda Thrasher: 20:05 See, you're owning it now.

Danielle Hall: 20:06 No, I'm teasing you. It's like a self fulfilling prophecy. So Brandy Colbert is a Stonewall book award winner and of course queerness is very important to her. So she represented in this book. Birdie had the gay best friend. His name is Laz. He's cool. He is her main connection to Booker and how she organizes all of her sneaking out. Carlene is bi, that's awesome. And her ex-boyfriend, Mitchell, ends up maybe being ace.

Amanda Thrasher: 20:39 All that's great. I want to go back to Laz. One thing I really appreciated as the queer child of a queer parent is that that was here. Laz's father was gay, or trans, I'm not sure. It just said, after Laz's father came out and then left and we don't know anything else about, but either way I really appreciated that and the complexity that adds to his non-queer parent. And I really liked that. And I also really loved, tied in with that, that Birdie was like, "You should come out to your mom", like, "Your mom's going to love you, blah, blah, blah". And Laz's boyfriend more or less tells her, like, "Maybe this isn't your business. Maybe you should be quiet." And I liked all of that. I thought it was really well done.

Nikea JaLynn: 21:20 Yeah. Because I don't think Birdie realized the layers that it had for Laz because his dad leaving hurt his mother so much and he also felt abandoned. And at first I couldn't understand. I was like, "Laz is gay too. His dad is gay. Why doesn't he understand?" But I feel like Laz has so much love for his mother and he saw the hurt that she went through, that he didn't want her to have to go through that again because of him.

Amanda Thrasher: 21:47 Yeah.

Danielle Hall: 21:48 Absolutely. And his mother works with Birdie's mother, so Birdie's very close to his mother too.

Nikea JaLynn: 21:56 Right.

Danielle Hall: 21:57 It was an excellently complex side character.

Nikea JaLynn: 22:01 Yeah.

Danielle Hall: 22:02 Secondary characters, we call them in the biz.

Amanda Thrasher: 22:04 In the biz. *laughter*

Nikea JaLynn: 22:07 I don't think we mentioned Dove's sister identifies as a lesbian.

Amanda Thrasher: 22:12 Oh, yep, that's true too.

Danielle Hall: 22:13 How did I forget that?

Nikea JaLynn: 22:16 Yeah, so we have a, a lot of queer characters in here, which I can appreciate. I'm all about all types of diversity in literature and Brandy, she's just been consistent with keeping queer characters in the forefront of the novel. They've all been well developed and you know, I appreciate her writing those characters so well.

Amanda Thrasher: 22:34 So her sister, Mimi, who left for college and Birdie feels very close to, that was a nice dynamic to have when Birdie went to talk to her sister about Booker being like, "I like this boy, but I don't think mom's gonna like him", and her sister gets super judge-y.

Nikea JaLynn: 22:51 Yeah, I was shocked at that. I thought she was just going to be embracing of Birdie and Booker's relationship, but her sister kind of turned into the role of a mother.

Amanda Thrasher: 23:01 I really liked it. I thought that it made her a much richer character rather than being just your hashtag good sister, like, "best older sister" supportive, etc. It made her much more real, I think, when she had this visceral reaction to like, "Oh I don't want you to date trouble."

Danielle Hall: 23:17 But she was still supportive in other ways. She gave Birdie the opportunity to be with Booker. She just disapproved. So I mean I thought that she was very well balanced. I also generally like when disapproval doesn't just come from one controlling parent that we don't like, but comes from a character that we sympathize with or empathize with, like it makes our protagonist more receptive to that disapproval. So we do get Booker's truth in this book. And I thought it was so interesting to read about his journey from juvie out into the world again and recovering his relationship with his father and, you know, his mother was so sick when he was away. It was such a small part of the book, but it was so impactful and I would love for there to be a companion novel about him and his life.

Nikea JaLynn: 24:14 I really appreciate the fact that they told his story in such depth and it wasn't really glazed over. Like in that scene, he was really taking his time, giving Birdie all the details. It didn't seem like he left anything out.

Danielle Hall: 24:29 Yeah. And it didn't come across like he was making excuses or come across like it was completely a corrupt system that put him in juvie. There was a middle ground there. He did something bad because he assaulted someone. But it's more than anybody looked at him and gave him room to explain. It was very rich.

Amanda Thrasher: 24:55 I thought it was good like you said because it said that he did something bad, but he was tried and treated like a child instead of an adult because his brain was not developed yet because kids don't have all the reasoning faculties that adults do. And that's the whole reason that kids get tried as kids. And clearly Booker was capable of growing and learning and changing, and so it was really good to see that.

Danielle Hall: 25:18 That is really an interesting point because there is like a version of this where he wouldn't be tried as a kid.

Amanda Thrasher: 25:26 Oh definitely 13 could definitely be tried as an adult.

Danielle Hall: 25:29 And that's a scary alternate reality.

Amanda Thrasher: 25:32 Especially like a big Black kid, they could easily have gone a different way for him

Nikea JaLynn: 25:37 In reference to Booker's past, knowing his story and then listening, like I was actually there, *laughter*. But watching or reading his interactions with Birdie there were some times where I was just a little nervous where he would react negatively. Because there was talk about CTE and his dad making him quit the football team and not even watch football. So there were some moments in the novel where I thought, "Oh, is that going to come back up again and be another issue for Birdie?", Like when she was talking about her ex-boyfriend with him or even when Booker saw her ex boyfriend at that party. In the back of my mind I was like, "Is he gonna fight him? Is he going to have another blackout moment?" So I feel like that kind of added to the drama of the story for me personally as I was reading.

Amanda Thrasher: 26:24 You saying that reminds me, there was something that I noticed too as I was reading, where every time Birdie would step outside of her mother's expectations and the rules--because I have read so many books where that came crashing down--I kept waiting for that to go bad for her. I kept waiting for them to get caught, or waiting for the thing.

Danielle Hall: 26:44 They got taken into--

Amanda Thrasher: 26:46 Well yeah, but then it got eclipsed by the whole "Carlene's your mother" thing. So what I'm saying is--

Danielle Hall: 26:50 So much just happened here.

Amanda Thrasher: 26:51 Yeah. Yeah. We're going to go back to that. *laughter* But I really appreciate that this book had these moments of not great choices, but more or less healthy rebellion that didn't come crashing down. But yeah, Carlene's her mom, by the way. *laughter*

Nikea JaLynn: 27:05 Surprise! That part was a true shocker for me. I went back today and was rereading some parts of the book and I was like, "How did I miss this?" It didn't come to me until she was eavesdropping on a conversation that Carlene was having with her friend. I forget his name, but she was listening to them having a conversation and she kept saying, she and I can't, "I'm getting closer to her and she'll always be mine." I was like, "ah, Carlene might be your mom." But of course there's only like 20 pages left in the novel. And I didn't realize it until then. But even still when I read it, I was shocked that her parents confessed it. But I think the most shocking part was that her dad is her biological dad.

Amanda Thrasher: 27:49 That I did not see coming. Did you see that coming?

Danielle Hall: 27:52 Okay, so here's the deal y'all. You should never read the back of a book because it's not the author that writes the blurbs and sometimes stuff gets spoiled. So the last line of the blurb on the book is, "but when long buried secrets rise to the surface, everything she's known to be true is turned upside down". I'm the only one of the three of us that read the blurb and I was just waiting for that long buried secret and I figured it out pretty quickly.

Amanda Thrasher: 28:27 Yeah, I mean I figured out the Carlene was her mom pretty quickly, but I didn't think that her father was her biological father.

Nikea JaLynn: 28:33 Yeah.

Danielle Hall: 28:34 Yeah. I mean I guess that was just sprinkles on the situation.

Nikea JaLynn: 28:38 Yeah.

Amanda Thrasher: 28:40 *laughter* Just sprinkles on your family trauma

Nikea JaLynn: 28:44 And her father being her dad goes back to what we were discussing in the non spoiler section when we were saying how he's more passive and I think that's why he was. I think he was still kind of like paying penance for this mistake that he made.

Danielle Hall: 28:59 Ohhhhhh!

Nikea JaLynn: 28:59 You know. So the mom was just, she was trying to control everything cause she lost control for this section of her life where her husband cheated on her with her sister and had a baby. And his wife took that baby in and forgave him and stayed married to him. So I think that plays into his characterization of him being more passive and just trying to save Birdie a little bit and not trying to overstep her mom and step on her toes in any way because he feels like he maybe he still has to pay penance even though his wife may have forgiven him. You know, there's probably still some guilt on his heart.

Danielle Hall: 29:34 Yeah. He can never ever win a fight.

Amanda Thrasher: 29:37 Nope, that always comes back.

Danielle Hall: 29:38 Wow, so good. Okay, well y'all convinced me, I like this book a lot more now

Danielle Hall: 29:44 Yeah, we did it.

Nikea JaLynn: 29:47 With this book I feel like you have to read it and then you have to go back and reread some sections to kind of get everything and put all the pieces together. And it's kind of like how Booker mentions to Birdie that her life is like a puzzle. And now Birdie's like, yeah, it's a puzzle, but now she has all the pieces and they're hers, you know?

Together: 30:04 Awwwwwwww!

Nikea JaLynn: 30:04 So this book is, you know, something that you have to really, you have to put it together.

Danielle Hall: 30:10 That is so good. And y'all, if we were keeping score, this would be for y'all. But--

Amanda Thrasher: 30:15 Yes!

Danielle Hall: 30:16 I think *The Revolution of Birdie Randolph* is definitely a book that belongs in every classroom library. Grab it in the link in our show notes, or you know, via Libby, the cool app.

Amanda Thrasher: 30:27 Or your friend Libby if she's got a lot of books. *laughter*

Danielle Hall: 30:34 That's our show for today friends. Thank you so much for joining us Nikea.

Amanda Thrasher: 30:38 Yeah.

Nikea JaLynn: 30:39 You're welcome. Thank you for having me.

Danielle Hall: 30:42 You can find Nikea on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube @nikeajalynn. You can find us @yacafepodcast. We'd love to hear from you. And if you're enjoying the show, leave us a review on iTunes. Happy reading!