



**WSIRN Episode 191: When a great book wrecks your reading life**  
*Hosted by Anne Bogel, with guest Andy Serrato*

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ANDY: I started reading it back in high school and I remember getting halfway through and then I just couldn't finish and I flunked all the tests after that. [BOTH LAUGH]

[CHEERFUL INTRO MUSIC]

ANNE: Hey, readers. I'm Anne Bogel, and this is What Should I Read Next? Episode 191.

Welcome to the show that's dedicated to answering the question that plagues every reader:  
What should I read next?

We don't get bossy on this show: What we WILL do here is give you the information you need to choose your next read. Every week we'll talk all things books and reading and do a little literary matchmaking with one guest.

Readers, have you ever finished a GREAT book, then realized it left behind a hole no other book will ever be able to fill? Well, today's guest is Andy Serrato, a reader who fell into the arms of a mega-popular series with a welcoming fandom and enough pages to smother yourself in... and ever since, she's struggled to break her obsession and pick up new books in different genres. Now, I'm all here for knowing what you love and reveling in it, but Andy truly wants to expand her reading life ... so I'm doing my best to get to the core of what delights her about this series, and open a portal to other reading worlds that will be just as satisfying in new and exciting ways.

Let's get to it! Andy, welcome to the show.

ANDY: Hi.

ANNE: When we got your guest submission form that you filled out at [whatshouldireadnextpodcast.com/guest](http://whatshouldireadnextpodcast.com/guest), it really got our attention because you have a serious bookish dilemma going on here. And I imagine that you are not the only one experiencing it. Would you tell me about that?

[00:01:40]

ANDY: So I love *Outlander* and after I started reading it, I had a very hard time picking out new books to read. And I know I'm not the only one because I'm on many *Outlander*, like, fan groups. It's a question that pops up very often. People are like, oh my God, I finished all the *Outlander* books, what do I read next? And it's hard finding something after having such a big obsession for a series.

ANNE: When did you start reading *Outlander*? When did you find the first one?

ANDY: I'd say maybe about a year and a half or two ago. I actually just finished the fifth book a few days ago.

ANNE: Are you reading it for the first time or have you already been through the series and you're doing it again?

ANDY: No, this is the first time. I feel like I get such a bad book hangover after I finish one, takes me a good few weeks to pick up the next and then takes me forever to finish it 'cause it's so intense.

ANNE: That's interesting. Okay. When some people find a series they love, they speed through all the books as quickly as possible because they just want to see where the characters end up. But that's not your style. Are you more a saver when it comes to reading a book you really enjoy?

ANDY: I want to enjoy it. I want to savor it, every moment of it. And then I don't want it to be over when I'm close to the end, so.

ANNE: So you're on book five, *The Fiery Cross*. How many are in the series now?

ANDY: We're waiting for the ninth installment to be released by Diana, so eight that are out right now and we're just waiting for the ninth one.

ANNE: I love that you're on a first name basis with Diana.

ANDY: Oh. [LAUGHS] Yes. Diana.

ANNE: We'll just call her that. It's fine. She's written all kinds of *Outlander* accessories. She's written books about Lord John and she's written some extra stories and I know I have a big yellow book on my shelf that's like an extra, canonical work. How do you feel about those? Are you going to read those?

[00:03:26]

ANDY: I really, really want to. I haven't purchased the next book over. I don't know. I feel like I want to pick up other books other than *Outlander*. I think I'm ready and I'm ready to take a break before I read the next one. But once I'm done with all of them, I really want to read all the novellas, everything. It's just so good.

ANNE: So it's interesting. You found a series that you really love, but it sounds like it's ironically not doing great things for your reading life.

ANDY: Yeah, it's just keeping me from amazing other books. Before I picked up *Outlander*, I was reading many books a month. I'd say maybe five, six a month. Now I'm just reading *Outlander*. [LAUGHS] And the last book I read in between was probably *Every Day* by David Levithan. And that's it. All I've read has been *Outlander*. [LAUGHS]

ANNE: Are you able to capture what it is about these books that have so thoroughly sucked you in?

ANDY: I want to say it's her writing style. It's just so ... What's the word? It like hooks you in. It's so captivating and the characters are just so likeable and the villains are so bad. [BOTH LAUGH] You just want to know what's going to happen.

ANNE: Okay, well that is seriously high praise. Will and I have been joking at home about how the key to happiness seems to be low expectations. And it sounds like your experience with *Outlander* has really raised your expectations for your reading life.

ANDY: Yes. Definitely. Probably couldn't have put it better.

ANNE: For readers to find a book that they really love, I mean, we talk to readers about book hangovers all the time. Both on What Should I Read Next and then in the real world of readers. [ANDY LAUGHS] The thing about a great book is that readers, you say, it feels like it ruins them for everything else out there. So there are some strategies when we can explore. Hopefully we'll be able to restore some sense of balance and control to your reading life.

ANDY: Yes, that would be amazing.

ANNE: Although I've got to say, it's pretty great that you found a book that was so right for you that it's thrown everything off kilter.

ANDY: Yeah, that too. [BOTH LAUGH]

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*ANNE: Readers, summer is a great time to hit the farmers' market or grab fresh veggies from our garden. Whether we're grilling vegetable kabobs, making salad, or just snacking on them*

*raw, we eat a lot of vegetables at home. But then I go on summer vacation and it feels like it's all brown foods, all the time.*

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ANNE: Andy, you know how this works. You are going to tell me three books you love, one book you don't, and what you've been reading lately although like you said, there's not a lot to choose from and we will talk about how to broaden your literary horizons with something not by Diana Gabaldon.

[00:08:51]

ANDY: That sounds great.

ANNE: I think I can guess your first book. Do you have anything to add about *Outlander*?

ANDY: I want to say *Outlander* and all the books I've read from that series, but my favorite out of all of them I'm going to say is the first one. That's what hooked me in, and that's what captivated me and that's what kept me want to read everything else. It happened. It's just been a wild ride. And I always tell people when I talk about *Outlander*, *Outlander* kinda breaks your soul apart and then they put it back together and then they break it up again. [BOTH LAUGH]

ANNE: When I first heard about the *Outlander* phenomenon, this was at least ... I'm thinking houses. This was two houses ago, so it was at least five years. But I had heard about the series, and I thought, wait, the books are about what? That sounds dumb. [ANDY LAUGHS] But then I was at a friend's house, and she had the first three books in the series checked out from the library and silly me, I thought oh, it's a trilogy. It looked like a manageable number of pages at the time. I had no idea there were so many more books. I picked it up and you know, I was curious. I wondered what the writing style was like. I started reading her introduction to the 20th anniversary edition. And she told the story of how she came to write these books with a really unexpected concept, which is: 1940s woman is standing in the wrong place at the wrong time

and gets sucked through the standing stones back to the 18th century Highlands. And then she falls in love while being pursued by her husband's dastardly ancestor.

[00:10:15]

ANDY: Yes, one of the greatest villains I've ever read. [BOTH LAUGH]

ANNE: Oh, he's so horrible.

ANDY: Yeah.

ANNE: So, Diana Gabaldon is an academic, isn't she?

ANDY: I believe she has a PhD. She's just awesome all around.

ANNE: So Diana Gabaldon set out to write her first historical novel. She'd been told that first novels were almost universally terrible, so she just wanted to hurry up and write it and get it over with. So she said that she was writing and it was supposed to be historical and she'd research the time period and this was her area of expertise, and she knew what she was doing, and it was fine. Except this contemporary woman kept butting her way into the pages, and she thought, ugh, what are you doing here? And finally went fine, I'll edit you out later. You can stay. But the more she wrote, the more she thought, oh, this is actually kind of fun. And that is the story behind *Outlander*. So, one, I thought, oh, Diana Gabaldon thought this sounded like a dumb idea at first, too., so I'm listening. And also you are really funny. Like she ... I just liked her sense of humor and it made me want to read the book, and then I got hooked.

ANDY: I have heard interviews from Diana where she says this story kinda just wrote itself. It was just this woman who was very independent and she wrote her story herself, so I think that's fascinating.

ANNE: Was *Outlander* off the beaten path you typically read?

ANDY: Yes. Very much. I had probably never picked up historical novel on my own that wasn't for school.

ANNE: Oh, interesting. So historical isn't usually your jam.

ANDY: Yeah, it's mostly like sci-fi, fantasy, post-apocalyptic. Those type of books that would catch my eye, and then *Outlander* is like romantic and a historical novel, which is something I never go towards.

ANNE: Either one? Not historical, nor romance?

[00:11:55]

ANDY: I don't lean toward the romance and romantic comedies or stuff like that. Or historical YA. I used to think they were boring, but now I'm all obsessed with Scotland. [BOTH LAUGH] After reading this.

ANNE: Well personally, I love it when a good storyteller can make me care about a subject I didn't think I cared about at all. Whether it's men in kilts in the 18th century Highlands or you know, nonfiction stuff like jellyfish.

ANDY: Yeah.

ANNE: Either way if you can hook me in with the strength of your storytelling, I love it. Do you resonate with that?

ANDY: Yes. I think she's amazing for doing them. I'm sure there's more people out there that didn't have a love for history or Scotland or you know, highlanders or history from that time period, that after reading *Outlander* and now hooked, there's people that are booking vacations. They want to learn about the history.

ANNE: I was in Edinburgh last December and I did not take a Highlands tour. We didn't make it to that part of the country. But just walking on the rather touristy royal mile, I should have anticipated but did not and was quite surprised by all the full-size cardboard Jamie Frasers, advertising kilts and other official *Outlander* merchandise for sale.

ANDY: I really want to go. It's on my bucket list. I need to go up there.

ANNE: Are you going to do the full Highlander tour? I mean, is this the ideal?

ANDY: Yes. I want to see all the filming locations. I want to see everything.

ANNE: You mentioned that you were listening to *Outlander*. Have you listened to all the books?

ANDY: Yes. I listened to the last ones. *Voyager*, *Fiery Cross*, and *Drums of Autumn*. And I've read them so far apart that times have changed for me. I think it's been like two jobs I've had throughout the time since I started reading *Outlander*.

ANNE: So while you've had change in your personal life, *Outlander* has been there for you the whole time.

ANDY: Right.

ANNE: I also listened to some of the series and for all you audiophiles out there, these books are narrated by Daveena Porter, who is an excellent narrator all the way around.

[00:13:48]

ANDY: She is awesome.

ANNE: I'm always inclined to listen if I see that she's the narrator. And I can maybe count on one, maybe two hands the number of narrators I feel that way about. But oh, she's good.

ANDY: I love her accents and how you can just tell which character she's narrating. It's just ... It's just so easy to follow with her.

ANNE: She's a real pro and a pleasure to listen to. Okay, Andy, this might be tough, but we're going to leave *Outlander* behind just for a minute.

ANDY: Oh, no. [LAUGHS]

ANNE: Tell me about another book you love.

ANDY: So another book I really love is *Red Queen*, which I'm pretty sure I read first time before I even knew about *Outlander*. And this is a post-apocalyptic one. So this is the type of style that I gravitate towards. So it's a society where people have silver or red blood. The silver people have powers, and the red blooded people don't. So she has red blood and finds out she has powers. So it was really good. I loved the plot twists on this one.

ANNE: So it sounds like that one is more in your usual wheelhouse of what you choose to read.

ANDY: Yes.

ANNE: Okay. Have you read the whole series?

ANDY: No, I actually have the very ... Uh, I think it's called *King Cross* ... *King's Cross*? Or *King's Sword* or something like that, which is the next one I have to read. But I've been so busy with *Outlander* [BOTH LAUGH] that I haven't picked it up.

ANNE: Well reading one *Outlander* book is like reading two or three other books 'cause some of those are over a thousand pages.

ANDY: Yeah. *Fiery Cross* was 50 hours, I think, or 48 hours on my audiobook.

ANNE: Oh. Wow. Do you listen at regular speed?

ANDY: No, I listen at 1.5.

[00:15:20]

ANNE: So, if a 300 page novel is eight or nine hours, and a big historical novel is like 15, yeah, yeah, that's three and a half books.

ANDY: Yeah, so I need to pick up the rest of the *Red Queen* so I can know what happened ... I probably should read them from the beginning 'cause I haven't read them in so long.

ANNE: Andy, what did you choose for your third favorite?

ANDY: My third one was *Every Day*. I actually picked this one up ... Maybe I was done with the third *Outlander* book, and it was so fast. I read it one day. And it's a romantic book! And it's something I wouldn't have picked up before. But for some reason, I did, and it intrigued me. And it's about this person who every day wakes up in a different body. Eventually he falls in love and every time he wakes up in someone else's body, he finds this girl because he's fallen in love with her. And I thought that was fascinating. It was just ... The concept of it was crazy on its own and then the love story was great. I thought a book I wouldn't have picked up if it weren't for *Outlander*. I think *Outlander* showed me romance and it showed me historical novels and all of those genres that I wouldn't have chosen before or picked up on my own.

ANNE: Andy, tell me about a book that was not right for you.

ANDY: So the only one I can think of is *Wuthering Heights*. That ... Well, I started reading it back in high school, and I remember getting halfway through and then I just couldn't finish and I flunked all the tests after that. [BOTH LAUGH]

ANNE: I'm just taking a stab in the dark here. Slow, melodramatic, over the top. Is that fair?

ANDY: Yeah, I feel like the pace is probably a good way to describe that. 'Cause it was so slow from what I can remember ... I don't remember much of the story, but I remember it being so slow and I was so bored. And I was just like, I'm done. [LAUGHS] That's one of the few books that I can remember that I just didn't like.

ANNE: Do you think that's because you're easy to please as a reader? Or do you think that's because of what you choose to actually read?

ANDY: I think it's because of what I personally choose. I feel like if it looks like I'm not going to like it, I don't read it. If it looks like I'm going to like it, I usually like it. [LAUGHS]

ANNE: What are some warning signs that make you think ehh, maybe I should keep moving?

ANDY: Probably the romantic comedies that I stay away from.

[00:17:32]

ANNE: Wait, what is romantic comedy mean to you?

ANDY: *The Notebook*, or well, that's not a romantic comedy. Like-

ANNE: [LAUGHS] Nicholas Sparks doesn't write comedy. Period. The end.

ANDY: Nicholas Sparks ... No, I've seen Nicholas Sparks, and I know this is probably going to make a lot of people mad, but I just stay away. Yeah, I think I mostly gravitate towards like sci-fi, fantasy. I like crime, mysteries too, and that's usually what I read. If it doesn't look interesting, I just leave it alone. [LAUGHS]

ANNE: Andy, so you want to branch out a little and yet it sounds like you're very happy with your sci-fi, fantasy, homebase. Is it fair to say that you want to branch out a little?

ANDY: Yes.

ANNE: Okay.

ANDY: I feel like *Outlander* has opened up that door for me where it'll be easier to pick up books that I wouldn't have picked up before.

ANNE: Okay. I'm really happy to hear that you took a chance on something that you weren't sure about, and that it's really changed the way you think about what you might read next.

ANDY: Yes, it paid off. Definitely.

ANNE: A lot of times when people have an experience in their reading lives, they assume that's how everyone would react to, for example, finding a great series. Some people would find the first *Outlander* and they'd snatch up the rest immediately and not read anything else until they were done, which is pretty much what I did. I remember when I did like a wrap up newsletter for Modern Mrs. Darcy, I tabulated the number of pages I read, and I think it was precisely 8972.

ANDY: Oh, my gosh.

ANNE: And I just read them back to back, but that is not the only way to enjoy a good series. And I love that you're highlighting that for us.

ANDY: Yeah. I want to savor them all and I know I still have a few books to go, but I want to make sure that I savor them. They're just so good. They can't end so fast.

ANNE: And yet you want to enjoy what you're reading in between.

[00:19:09]

ANDY: Yes.

ANNE: Are you ready to talk about what you may enjoy reading next?

ANDY: Yeah, I'm excited. [BOTH LAUGH]

ANNE: You're excited and I'm nervous.

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ANNE: So, Andy, you loved *Outlander*. You loved the *Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard and *Every Day* by David Levithan. *Wuthering Heights* was not for you. Now, definitely not all science fiction or fantasy books are fast paced, well, the same is true for crime novels, but is it fair to say about your reading preferences that you do prefer books with a brisker pace?

[00:21:24]

ANDY: I think so, yes.

ANNE: Okay, that's helpful. What I'm seeing here is that you like books with interesting concepts, faster pace, strong on plot, but what is really jumping out at me is that you're looking for a book that really has emotional resonance.

ANDY: Yes. Yeah.

ANNE: Good worldbuilding that can suck you right in and make you feel like you know the people in front of you and make you feel like you're there.

ANDY: Yes! Oh, my God, you're amazing.

ANNE: [BOTH LAUGH] Oh, you could have told me that too.

ANDY: It's just hard to explain my reading life, so hearing it from someone else, I'm like yes, yes, that's extremely right.

ANNE: I think it's much easier to be articulate about someone else's reading life than your own. 'Cause you're way too close to it to see it yourself and you understand every little single nuance, but it's easier for someone else to see the big picture.

ANDY: Yeah, that's true.

ANNE: Okay, so, the question is, what do we do next with that information? Now I would imagine that the *Outlander* message boards are full of recommendations for what readers who loved *Outlander* might enjoy reading next. Have you gone looking in those places for that information?

ANDY: I've seen a few titles. I've noticed there's a pattern. A lot of them like *Harry Potter*, the whole series, or-

ANNE: Oh! I hadn't thought about that, but that seems like a good one. Have you read *Harry Potter*?

ANDY: It's sitting on my shelf. I've had it maybe for 10 years and I've only read one book.  
[LAUGHS]

[00:22:41]

ANNE: How old were you 10 years ago?

ANDY: Well, I'm 25, so 15. I really liked the first book. You know, now that I think about it, I'd probably could pick them up and read all the *Harry Potter* series and be good. But I think the movies were out and I knew the story, maybe that's why I didn't pick them up.

ANNE: Anything else from the *Outlander* message boards?

ANDY: *Game of Thrones*.

ANNE: Mm-hmm. I've not read those.

ANDY: I'm contemplating reading those, too, but then there's a lot of mixed emotions because it's so different from *Outlander*. So it's either you love it or you don't I've noticed. And then after that's a bunch of time traveling books they recommend.

ANNE: And I can see why they would recommend time traveling books and I can see why they'd recommend fantasy. And yet, you could go to many different genres and still get that strong character, strong sense of place, strong emotional resonance that I think is really what's underlying your interest. Ooh, and also strong concept. That's important too. Andy, I think it's interesting as you said that some of those books don't sound exactly like *Outlander* because I think when readers are suffering a serious book hangover, or when they feel like they're in serious reading rut, what they need is not more of what they loved, but something different so that they're not as naturally inclined to compare the two. I kinda hate this expression, but it's like a palate cleanser. You need something different, especially when you've just read something that has meant a lot to you as a reader. Is that a direction you're willing to go in?

ANDY: Yeah, and that actually sounds good. I never ... and my mindset was, like, we need to find something similar. I need to find something that's going to give me just as much satisfaction I think and I never thought, hey, why don't I pick up something different? Completely on the other side of the spectrum and maybe I'll be good too.

ANNE: I think we'll do some of each. We'll do a little bit along the lines of *Outlander* and some not so much.

ANDY: Okay. That sounds good.

ANNE: Okay. Let's start with a series with a direct and clear Jamie connection. How does that sound?

ANDY: That sounds good.

[00:24:40]

ANNE: There is a series by Sara Donati, whose real name is actually Rosina Lippi, Donati is a pen name. It's called *Into The Wilderness*. Just to start with, like, a two paragraph, tiny, tiny detail, Rosina Lippi and Diana Gabaldon are pals. They actually met during the time that Lippi was working on her first book *Into The Wilderness* and she said that Diana Gabaldon actually introduced her to the agent that she worked with subsequently. In her book, there was a flashback to the battle of Saratoga and that was a big battle in the Revolutionary War and she said Diana said my characters are in the battle of Saratoga. Lippi said, in her book, she needed a doctor. Could she borrow Claire? And she says she was completely joking, but Diana said, I'll send her right over.

ANDY: Oh!

ANNE: So very briefly, in this book, there's a mention of the Doctor Claire and Murray gets a mention, and later one of the protagonists is stuck by the Scot named Jamie Fraser, who made quite an impression on him and who he's thought about often since. They said that it was mostly meant to be an inside joke, and they weren't sure if any readers would pick up on it at all, but I mean, of course, *Outlander* fans totally picked up on it.

ANDY: I would imagine. I'm-I'm intrigued just listening to this.

ANNE: She also is an academic and historian who is very interested in where history meets excellent storytelling. Her book is not set in the Scottish Highlands and I think that's an advantage for you because I don't know that trying to replicate that experience directly is going to end happily. And if you wanted to do that, I mean, search Highlander on Goodreads and now *Outlander* has really fueled a boom of all kinds of fiction. So you could find that if you wanted it, but I don't think that's what really going to make you happy as a reader.

The first book in the series is called *Into The Wilderness*. They're historical, and they are set in the United States, in upstate New York, from about the 1790s to about 1825. And I think what is so great with these is they combine history, great storytelling, strong women, and you get to stick with this family over many years and you see how they grow and change and relationships develop and are broken. Because they're so richly detailed, they really sink you into the world you're reading about. So the strong women in question, her name is Elizabeth, and she leaves Britain to join her family in this tiny part of upstate New York. So the strong women in question is named Elizabeth and she was raised on a very comfortable estate in England, but she comes to America and she moves to the middle of nowhere with her family, and she's never been here like this before, and it's entirely new to her. And that's where she encounters Nathaniel, the man who is later struck by Jamie Fraser. You have history. You have romance, and you have a nice, long time span that you can really sink into. And if you love this, there are six books. And I do think they get better as the series goes on.

This was blurb-ed by Diana Gabaldon, who says that her favorite kind of book is the sort you live in rather than read. And I think those words would speak to you.

[00:27:50]

ANDY: That really sounds so good. I know it's something I would have said no to in a heartbeat before I read *Outlander*, but it sounds so good right now.

ANNE: I'm wondering about some YA fantasy, time travel fantasy. What do you think? Maybe?

ANDY: Yes.

ANNE: The second book I'm wondering about for you is by Alexandra Bracken. It's called *Passenger*. Is this a book you know?

ANDY: The name sounds familiar. The author's name sounds familiar, but I can't place her.

ANNE: She's been writing for a good, long time, even though she's not terribly old. She's the author of *The Darkest Minds* series.

ANDY: [GASPS] Oh, okay.

ANNE: So I like *Passenger* for you because like *Outlander*, it is part historical romance and part time travel adventure. This one is more firmly grounded in contemporary reality though. Our protagonist is a 17-year-old who is a talented violinist from a family of musicians, and she's about to make her debut, in a high pressure, New York City setting but her future changes in a hot minute because her mentor is killed as she watches and she weirdly, suddenly finds herself aboard a ship in 1776. As the story unfolds, it turns out this time traveling ability is a secret that her family has well known about for eons, and they've just kept it from her for their own reasons.

There's definitely a love interest here. A man who has his own complicated relationship with time and staying in one time. If you do love this book, it ends on a major cliffhanger, which was a bummer for me because I do like to read my books all in a row. I read this shortly after it was published and I had to wait a very long time for the next book in the series, which I did not particularly enjoy. I'm not sure how you handle cliffhangers. Now the second book is out. It's called *Wayfarer*, and it's readily available. I think it's perhaps even better than the first.

ANDY: Ooh.

ANNE: You wouldn't have to wait to find out what happens next. But how do you handle those cliffhangers when you tend to space out the books in your series? Do they bother you? Do you just think oh, I'll just wait a few months. It's fine.

[00:29:49]

ANDY: I handle them fairly well. For the first time I read the *Red Queen*, none of the books had come out after it yet. Gave me something to look forward to. So I feel like I handle them very well.

ANNE: I admire your patience.

ANDY: It can be a good and a bad. {BOTH LAUGH}

ANNE: So, for readers who read 500 pages of *Passenger* and think, I have to know what happens next, you can get your instant gratification with the slightly longer *Wayfarer*. If readers are more your style, then they can just have something to look forward to.

ANDY: Yeah.

ANNE: For your third book, I'm thinking about taking a serious left turn.

ANDY: Ooh. That sounds intriguing..

ANNE: How do you feel about the theatre?

ANDY: Theatre? When I think of the theatre, I think of Shakespeare.

ANNE: In a good way?

ANDY: Yeah, I think so. I mean, after *The Cursed Child* came out, I thought about reading the *Harry Potter*, but I know *The Cursed Child* is a script.

ANNE: I think so. [BOTH LAUGH] *The Cursed Child*, I forgot, we should really come back to *Harry Potter*. Earlier in this conversation, you mentioned that you like crime novels and I thought, uh, the Robert Galbraith books about Cormoran Strike, J.K. Rowling's current mystery series that she's writing. And because I don't have your patience, I wish she'd write faster because I really want to find out what happens next after *Lethal White* ended, and it came out back in September, I think, so I've been waiting all this time and she can only write these giant books so fast. [ANDY LAUGHS] But I was thinking you may really enjoy the *Cormoran Strike* mystery series. They're procedurals. They have an element of romance. They have a strong sense of place. They're set in London. These are mysteries where of course you care about the detective solving the crime, but just as important in these books are the personal relationships of the people and the story.

So you read to find out who committed the crime, but you also read to find out what will happen next in the lives of these characters. And I imagine that the crime novels you enjoy share that dual storyline element. Does that sound familiar to you?

[00:31:49]

ANDY: Yeah, that sounds really good.

ANNE: You should read these order. *The Cuckoo's Calling* is the first and it's where you meet Detective Cormoran Strike and his soon to be new assistant Robin. They're called in by a family member to investigate when a supermodel falls to her death in London. It's so interesting to read these as an American because we don't have CCTV everywhere and I haven't read a British crime novel in the last 20 years that hasn't prominently featured CCTV. So that's always interesting. CCTV and Tesco, that's how you know you're reading a British crime novel. But for a reader with your preferences, I think it could be an excellent series.

Also the fact that you read *Outlander* shows that you have a stomach for some steamy content and also some really horrific scenes of violence and torture and ugh. I think some of those scenes in *Outlander*, especially the first book, I actually read very few of the words in some of the final chapters. Because it was so difficult to read and I thought, oh, tell me what happens, so I can get on with it, but oh, this is painful because she really puts her characters through some tough stuff.

ANDY: Yeah. She's intense and ugh, you got to read and watch them suffer pretty much.

ANNE: Pretty much. Well *The Cuckoo's Calling* is not that intense, but books two and books three in the series, *The Silkworm* and *Career of Evil*, there was some serious skimming involved for me because they were a little gruesome in places. So there's a warning for all listeners, but I think you'll be fine, Andy.

ANDY: I think I can handle it, yeah.

ANNE: With your loves, strong character, strong sense of place, excellent worldbuilding, emotional pull, characters you can root for, I think you will find it worth your time to go back to *Harry Potter*.

ANDY: Yeah, I might just have to. They're sitting on my shelf, so it's easy.

ANNE: So the books we talked about today, we have the *Into The Wilderness* series by Sara Donati. We talked about *Passenger* by Alexsandra Bracken and *The Cormoran Strike* series beginning with *Cuckoo's Calling* by J.K. Rowling aka Robert Galbraith. And also definitely *Harry Potter*. Of those books, what do you think you'll read next?

ANDY: The *Passenger* is pretty much sticking out for me and I feel like that's the one that's completely different from everything else because it's YA science fiction, but I think that's the one I want to pick up.

[00:34:07]

ANNE: I think that sounds great for you, and I think it sounds like a great palate cleanser coming off *Outlander*.

ANDY: It would do me good to read something completely different. I need to go on my kindle and look for it now.

ANNE: Well I can't wait to hear what you think. Andy, thanks so much for talking books with me today.

ANDY: Oh, no, thank you! This was so much fun.

[CHEERFUL OUTRO MUSIC]

ANNE: Hey readers, I hope you enjoyed my discussion with Andy, and I'd love to hear what YOU think she should read next. That page is at [whatshouldireadnextpodcast.com/191](http://whatshouldireadnextpodcast.com/191) and it's where you'll find the full list of titles we talked about today. You can also find Andy on instagram; check out her account [@Andyserratom](https://www.instagram.com/Andyserratom). That is Andy, A-N-D-Y, Serrato, S-E-R-R-A-T-O, M. As in Massive *Outlander* reading hangover, but hopefully we can all help.

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Readers, that's it for this episode. Thanks so much for listening. And as Rainer Maria Rilke said, "ah, how good it is to be among people who are reading." Happy reading, everyone.