

## The Library Coven

### Episode 42 (posted December 1, 2020)

#### *Wayward Witch* by Zoraida Córdova

**transition** [00:00:03] jaunty string and harpsichord music plays.

**jessie** [00:00:03] Hello! And welcome to the Library Coven, a bi-weekly podcast in which two bookish besties discuss mostly YA fantasy through the lens of intersectional feminist criticism. Why? Because critique is our fangirl love language. And because talking about books is pretty magical. I'm Jessie.

**kelly** [00:00:18] And I'm Kelly. And in this episode we're discussing *Wayward Witch*. We're back in the Brooklyn Brujas series. This is a third book in the series by Zoraida Córdova. The novel follows the youngest Mortiz sister Rose's story, finding herself, discovering the extent of her powers and learning more about her family. After her and her dad are transported through a portal to the magical kingdom of Adas, Rose teams up with several magical beings to rid us of the rot, a mysterious pestilence that is overtaking the land.

**jessie** [00:00:48] If you're not already, be sure to follow us on Twitter and Instagram @TheLibraryCoven. We love chatting with you, magical coven, and we'd love to do it more. Let us know if you have any ideas for things you'd like to add to our feed. Any pictures you'd like us to take or anything you want to know about us.

**transition** [00:01:04] [jaunty string music plays]

**kelly** [00:01:08] Initial reactions.

**jessie** [00:01:10] OK, I'm not gonna to lie because I wouldn't lie to y'all, but I was a little disappointed with this book. I really love *Labyrinth Lost* and *Bruja Born*. And I really love Rose that we get to see in those stories. So I was really excited for *Wayward Witch*. But it was kind of a travel story, which isn't my thing. I can see why people would like this story and being in Adas, but it wasn't my favorite in the trilogy. And I was, I was disappointed. [chuckles]

**kelly** [00:01:40] Aww, thanks for being honest.

**jessie** [00:01:43] I know I feel bad saying it because I love the other two books, but I just didn't love this one.

**kelly** [00:01:48] I agree that it wasn't my favorite in the trilogy, and at the same time, I did really enjoy being in Adas and meeting more magical people and seeing more magical powers. And I'm also a fan of those like *Let's Work Together* narratives, what it was like "The Guardians of Adas!!" I thought that was cool. I was into that, um. I like the folklore. And at the same time, I don't even know. I don't know, it's just it's I don't know what to say. I don't know.

**jessie** [00:02:21] It's fine. Every book can't be our favorite. So, like, that's also fine.

**kelly** [00:02:25] Yeah.

**jessie** [00:02:25] But there's also still lots of great things to talk about- about this book. And like, you can still not love something, but like see the good parts of it.

**kelly** [00:02:33] Yeah, exactly. And it was, I thought it was a fast read.

**jessie** [00:02:36] Mm hmm. I will say that I did I should just like mention I listen to the audio book and read the book because I have like an advanced listener copy of the audio book. And the person that did the reading for the audio book was fantastic. So, um, I don't remember their name. I can just check real quick because I'm editing this anyway. [laughs] Um, but I would probably listen to something that they narrated. Again, it's Almarie Guerra. Um, the narration was fantastic, so I would recommend the narrator a whole bunch.

**transition** [00:03:10] [jaunty string music plays]

**jessie** [00:03:13] Time to talk about world building and through the wardrobe. Pretty much this whole story takes place in Adas, where in Queens for a very short amount of time, um, mostly just for like maybe the first three or four chapters and in the epilogue.

**kelly** [00:03:31] Right. Everything else is in the magical place.

**jessie** [00:03:34] Yeah. So I guess it kind of mirrors Labyrinth Lost in that way, which is kind of cool to see those two like bookended. Um, but I think because I really liked how Bruja Born took place in our real world, I was like, oh, that's cool. And then we're going to go to a new place and it'll be fine. But I just I like I don't think maybe I just wasn't mentally prepared for this for some reason.

**kelly** [00:03:57] I really liked the urban fantasy take of Bruja Born. Um, yeah.

**jessie** [00:04:01] Yeah.

**kelly** [00:04:01] And this was, like you said, a return to what we saw at the end with Alex's story so that there was like a lot more world building once again, which there wasn't- didn't have to be in Bruja Born as much, I don't think. Um. And I thought it was...Very I'm not sure what the adjective is I'm looking for, but I really liked how it was modeled after a Caribbean island or it's like was originally a Caribbean island, and then they sank it or took it to the magical realm or whatever, um, and how it's like supposed to be this paradise. But then, you know, when you like asterisk, like we're all realizing that paradise, you know what a person's paradise is another person's like,.

**jessie** [00:04:43] Hell [both laugh]

**kelly** [00:04:45] Yeah. That's the that's the opposite I was looking for.

**jessie** [00:04:49] And maybe that's why I felt like a little off kilter for this story, because I think it was like the world is very similar to what we saw in Labyrinth Lost. um where the land is dying and like something has taken over. So it just very similar. And maybe I just wasn't expecting that, I guess, you know?

**kelly** [00:05:09] Yeah, there were a very big structural similarities now that you're that I wasn't really putting together until you're talking about them to me, so.

**jessie** [00:05:18] Yeah, and I didn't put together until you just mentioned about, like, it being Paradise, and that's kind of what we get in Labyrinth. Loss is like a paradise that is like crumbling because of like bad magic.

**kelly** [00:05:30] And that is once more what we have here.

**jessie** [00:05:33] Yeah, yeah.

**kelly** [00:05:35] We also moved from Brooklyn to Queens, and I don't know very much about like I've been to New York like a few times in my life. So I think that this is a lot more meaningful for folks who are from those areas. And I really like that they can connect to that. Um, I thought it was funny, the beef between the different high circles and we saw, like, the Aunties getting into it at Rosa's death day. I thought I really like those, like, little snippets. And then, yeah, those were the like the most alive feeling parts to me, I guess. Maybe because they were easier for me to imagine, but I don't know.

**jessie** [00:06:12] I also thought it's like interesting because I think in real life you do kind of see, like, the different boroughs kind of arguing about which borough is the best borough. So it's kind of funny to see like Rose is like I don't want to live in Queens. And like when I think of Queens, I think of like the TV show King of Queens. And I'm like, oh, it's like white people and like maybe upper middle class like that, like that kind of stuff. I always think of Brooklyn is like being super hipster-y, but I think that's like gentrification and like more recent anyways.

**kelly** [00:06:42] Right. Right.

**jessie** [00:06:43] I wonder if Zoraida lives in New York, I am not sure.

**kelly** [00:06:48] I don't know,.

**jessie** [00:06:50] But that probably informs her opinion a little bit if she does [kelly laughs] about the different boroughs and like Brooklyn being better than Queens. We also see Rose learning the truth about the myths she had read about Adas, so she has like this book that she's reading constantly because she's like, fascinated with those creatures, but mostly that King Cyril. It said that he did a bunch of stuff that he definitely didn't do. And he's like a huge liar and [kelly laughs] the worst.

**kelly** [00:07:23] He's just like out here peacocking and taking credit for things that he didn't do. And blaming what's wrong, which is actually his fault on other people, so, yeah, you know, like classic.

**jessie** [00:07:34] Yeah. So like all these myths about him just turn out to be like lies. Like they're kind of true. Like those things did happen. But he did not make them happen.

**kelly** [00:07:43] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

**jessie** [00:07:45] I really like this because I do think sometimes, like I think as people we forget that sometimes storytelling is also kind of like especially with oral histories is can be kind of like playing telephone where like things might change over time. Or that like the people in power, especially because I'm not really sure how like Rose and her family get these myths written down. Oh. From that storyteller in Adas.

**kelly** [00:08:09] Yeah.

**jessie** [00:08:09] Because what they're supposed to be from but like I think it points out the fact that, like, the person in power can have a lot of effect on the way the stories about them are told, especially if they're still alive at the time of the writing.

**kelly** [00:08:21] Exactly. Exactly like we are— there's a. How the past in history is narrated, like we have a stake in the present.

**transition** [00:08:29] [jaunty string music plays]

**jessie & kelly** [00:08:34] Wands out!

**kelly** [00:08:34] Let's discuss all things magic. I was excited to see a wide array of magical characters from mermaids, actually like river mates, so not from the ocean, from the rivers, these she crab things would sprites or fairies, I'm not sure like what you call all these different if like there's the star power person, Calliope. Is that her name?

**jessie** [00:08:58] Mm hmm. Yeah, I think so.

**kelly** [00:09:00] Arco and Iris, Lin. There's flying horses, Pegasus or Pegasi, I guess. Would that be the plural? I like magical beings, so this was fun.

**jessie** [00:09:12] Yeah, it was really cool to like I think kind of similar to Labyrinth Lost, like we get to see a lot more magical characters instead of just like magic being brought into the real world. Although we do kind of see them through Holborn because we're meeting like the people who are part of that, like group of magical people,.

**kelly** [00:09:30] Thornhill Alliance.

**jessie** [00:09:31] The Alliance, yeah, yeah.

**kelly** [00:09:33] Which I'm still not clear about how that all works, but it's OK.

**jessie** [00:09:38] No, I'm going to guess we might find out more if we get a Nova book, so...

**kelly** [00:09:41] Yeah!! Maybe. Fingers crossed, fingers crossed. There's, um, death day animal sacrifice. Again, we we saw... Did we attend all of the death days? We did not attend Lula's.

**jessie** [00:09:56] No, we do not see Lula's and we actually we get like a recap that they try to do it that day for Nova, we don't actually see it. It's kind of like in the exposition. Um, but yeah, there was also an attempt to death day for Nova that did not work.

**kelly** [00:10:10] I just love all the different brujeria that we see, all the potions. Their mom's a healer. Then we also get even. I think you get to see even more. Um, like visceral, magical descriptions, because the protagonist is the person who can, like, experience all these different kinds of magic, um, which kind of gets to your point about how Rose is called the siphon. You want to talk about that?

**jessie** [00:10:33] Yeah. So she's like we've I guess we're kind of finding out that Rose might be much more similar to the Devourer from the from Labyrinth Lost, where she can take power from people. They call her the siphon. And at the end they call her the leech. [kelly laughs] Um, which I thought was really funny, because she's like obviously seems like a little sister to everyone because she's so young. Um, but yeah, Rose is kind of figuring out, like, what her powers are that she didn't realize and kind of learning to control that because she I think part of her power is that she has like this craving to take power from people and kind of trying to overcome that.

**kelly** [00:11:12] Mm hmm. That was when Nova, like the refrain from Nova kept coming back to her like the remember yourself sort of thing. So remembering— like learning who you are in the context of these new powers and at the same time not letting yourself be irrevocably changed by the things that you do with the new powers.

**jessie** [00:11:31] Right. And also, like even more important as she's in Adas because, like, the world makes her forget. Like Adas makes her forget her home and her siblings. And she has like the bracelet from Nova that's supposed to help her remember, and then she loses that bracelet. So, like, remembering who she is becomes like more and more important the longer we're in the story. Um. Which kind of goes to the point like about the faeries. Like I think we see this on like a lot of faerie stories, maybe not so much in like ACOTAR [A Court of Thorns and Roses series by Sarah J Maas], but like the importance of faeries and their promises and their, like, inability to lie. kind of more like The Cruel Prince [by Holly Black], but all I could think was like Rose should have asked the king for human food as part of her promise. Like at the beginning, she's like, I want to see my dad. And he's like, sure, you can see him from like 500 feet away.

**kelly** [00:12:18] [laughs] That's the problem is if you're not, like, grown up and versed in how to make fairy deals, then we see lots of people getting into trouble.

**jessie** [00:12:26] Yeah, yeah, I would have asked for human food so that I wouldn't have to forget everything,.

**kelly** [00:12:30] Protip protip I'm keeping that in mind if I get trapped in a fairy realm.

**jessie** [00:12:35] Ask for human food. Food meant for humans, because I'm going to guess they give you human food would be like human that people like they would give you cut up bodies or something.

**kelly** [00:12:45] You might not be more specific.

**jessie** [00:12:47] Yeah, very specific. Think think like a lawyer. [both laugh]

**kelly** [00:12:53] Lula's— there's this funny part at the beginning in the death day scenes where Rose comments that Lula's sinmago power is bargain hunting. And I'm curious what you're sin mago powers are.

**jessie** [00:13:10] That's a really hard one. OK. Uh. Um, I want to make two things because I'm extra special. Um, I think I'm really good at cat care, caring for cats. Mostly my cat, but I also have, like, read a lot of books about cats and watch a lot of [the tv show] My Cat from Hell. So I feel like I'm really like I feel like I could become like a cat behaviorist and that would be my thing.

**kelly** [00:13:35] 100 percent. I, I love that for you.

**jessie** [00:13:39] I also feel like I'm pretty good at baking, but like maybe not enough to be like a superpower, but I'm on my way to learning. What would your superpower be? Your sin mago power.

**kelly** [00:13:54] I think I'm very good at making friends,.

**jessie** [00:13:57] Hmm. that's a good one.

**kelly** [00:14:00] Yeah. And, uh. Being with change, I really like change, and when things are different and unexpected and spontaneous and stuff, I like thrive. So maybe that's what it would be. They all have their dark side. But don't don't all powers, right?

**jessie** [00:14:19] I think so. I mean, I don't know that I can use my cat behaviorist abilities for evil, but I don't know.

**kelly** [00:14:29] Any of you people out there want to tell us what you're seeing sin mago powers are? We'd love to hear them.

**jessie & kelly** [00:14:35] Wands away!

**transition** [00:14:36] [jaunty string music plays]

**jessie** [00:14:40] Now we're going to talk about conflict villains and good versus evil in our segment, "Get me Kylo Ren!" so we have like King Cirro, who is the I mean, he's the villain, he's just like, what? Just the worst.

**kelly** [00:14:56] The bastard king of us, he even likes that title.

**jessie** [00:15:01] Yeah, although I'm not a huge fan of that that title. Because like it implies that there's like a right way to have a family, like because like Bastard normally implies that you are like we're born out of wedlock. So I'm not a huge fan of the title, but he likes it in that he thinks he's like my kind of like badass and like shitty or whatever,.

**kelly** [00:15:24] Like that he's not the rightful person on the throne and he's flaunting that with the title that he uses.

**jessie** [00:15:31] Yes.

**kelly** [00:15:32] Um, yeah, the fucking dads. Arco and Iris have a terrible dad. Um, I'm a bit confused about the whole Cirro thing. Like we got the story in bits and pieces throughout the novel. Right? And I don't think I fully put it together that like what he did. So like he killed his dad and made his dad into a chair that he sits on. And then he banished his older brother into the other magical realm, not this one.

**jessie** [00:15:57] Well into the one that's in Labyrinth Lost.

**kelly** [00:15:59] Right, exactly into Los Largos. which I'm curious if they're like on an astral plane or they like next to each other. Is this like a multiverse? Anyway, I digress. And then Cirro. There was like an uprising against him, but the like, what did he do for the rot to happen? Like, can you help me?

**jessie** [00:16:22] Yes. So it was a little confusing because they're just like I think maybe one of my problems with this book was that there are a shit ton of characters. So it's kind of hard to keep everything in check in my head for me. And that made it kind of difficult. So I think what, if I'm remembering correctly, is that he made some kind of promise to erase and Arco's mom and then murdered her. And just like because he murdered her and broke his promise to her, she is creating the rot because she needs to get him back. And like, once they kill him, that's why the rot goes away, because, like Cirro is then reunited with his, like, murdered wife. Like the wife that he murdered because she still loves him. But she's also like, you owe me or whatever.

**kelly** [00:17:16] That is what we call a dysfunctional relationship.

**jessie** [00:17:19] Yeah. If someone murders you like, you don't just, like, be like I still love you, bro.

**kelly** [00:17:26] You can change your mind.

**jessie** [00:17:29] Yeah...

**kelly** [00:17:29] didn't Toni Morrison say like it when people show you who they are, believe them.

**jessie** [00:17:34] I think so, yeah, I think so.

**kelly** [00:17:37] This is a good example.

**jessie** [00:17:40] Murderers gonna to murder.

**kelly** [00:17:41] Apparently.

**jessie** [00:17:44] Yeah.

**kelly** [00:17:46] Rose, at one point when she sees the devastation of the Shuri Forest, is that what it's called?

**jessie** [00:17:53] Mm hmm.

**kelly** [00:17:53] And then like the fairy sprites or the wood sprites or whatever that inhabited, um, she says I'm like I'm not accustomed to this type of suffering and compares it to working with her mother in the infirmary. Um. So, like the difference between being in what is essentially like a war zone and then like an E.R., you know, so there is like. I just wanted to point out that I think Rose is eventually going to have to deal with some secondary trauma stuff. Like how do you be with that and around it, you know, and stay integrated and then your power. So that's just what that's stuck out to me.

**jessie** [00:18:32] Yeah, and I think we probably see a little bit of that in the epilogue where she's kind of talking about like the ups and downs of her family. As you know, we see, like everyone kind of dealing with like all the things that they've been through because like everyone in this family has been through something. And she kind of like, Rose kind of describes that in the epilogue, talking about like having good days and bad days. And I think that's good because, like, they do seem like a really, like, wholesome, kind family.

But like, that doesn't mean that there's like no suffering going on below the surface that, like, the outside world probably doesn't see.

**kelly** [00:19:03] Yeah, exactly. And we do see Rose kind of being this barometer for the whole family's emotional state, you know, throughout being like, yeah, we don't talk about our feelings, but things aren't OK.

**jessie** [00:19:14] Yeah, and maybe it's time to talk about our feelings?

**kelly** [00:19:17] Right, exactly, that's the tweet.

**transition** [00:19:20] [jaunty string music plays]

**kelly** [00:19:23] Onward magical friends! Just as one does not simply walk into Mordor. One does not simply read fantasy without talking about representations of race, class, gender and ability. This is our segment about power and bodies and how they relate. Race.

**jessie** [00:19:40] So I think we see this in a lot of books and. I don't really know how to like, you know create space for this to change, but everything that's everything that's evil is described as dark and black and we see that like with the rot and I know it's not like directly correlated to race, but I think it's like directly correlated to like colorism, which is correlated to race. So I think this is just like kind of something that we see with a lot of fantasy novels and novels in general that I would like to see change.

**kelly** [00:20:15] I couldn't agree more. This stuck out to me to where like, um. Because there were a lot of insist, there was a lot of description of the rot and also of the creatures that came out of it who are also black in color, correct?

**jessie** [00:20:31] Yeah,.

**kelly** [00:20:31] Yeah, yeah, it's just this was one of the trope-iest, I guess, parts of this, um. Yeah, and I agree with you that I. I'm I wonder how we can open this up and make other....Make room for different ways of describing the things that are like causing suffering. Because they're not dark and black. Let's be honest. [both laugh] Maybe I'm getting a little bit outside of the book, but anyway.

**jessie** [00:21:09] Yeah. Um, for class, we see that there are a lot of issues in Adas as a result of the King Cirro not taking any real responsibility for the throne that he stole. People are like kind of pretending to be on board with what he's doing. And, um, as the farther away you get away from, like, the castle, what is it called? Something of salt?

**kelly** [00:21:31] "castillo de sal" Castillo means castle.

**jessie** [00:21:35] And so the farther we get away from that, the more and more we see, like the suffering of the people. And like Cirro is having all these parties as opposed to, like, taking care of his people and making sure they're fed. Um, so I think this was like our biggest class distinction we see in the in the novel.

**kelly** [00:21:52] And then we have a lot of people around him who just capitulate and capitulate and capitulate.



**jessie** [00:21:57] Mm hmm.

**kelly** [00:21:58] Um, yeah, he's kind of doing this trick like don't look over there like don't look at the thing behind the curtain that's actually creeping towards us and then the castle is actually crumbling. So eventually you do have to look at it. But it is this like unwillingness to consider what's going on and how it's affecting the vast majority of people in the realm and how the few are hoarding resources and then just keep taking from the land. I think that was another aspect of the rot, right, where you're just like keep consuming, which is related to class in the way that, like all of these parties, that the King Cirro is throwing.

**jessie** [00:22:33] Yeah, and in that vein, we see him like having this like what do they call it in and in Thor Ragnarok like, uh, the tournament of Champions, basically.

**kelly** [00:22:43] That's right. That's right.

**jessie** [00:22:44] Like making these people fight to the death almost.

**kelly** [00:22:49] Oh, I completely forgot that that happened at the beginning. Wow. Yeah. Yeah, right.

**jessie** [00:22:55] I really liked that scene. I thought it was really cool, but it 100 percent reminded me of Thor Ragnarok, which is like one of my favorite of the Marvel MCU movies.

**kelly** [00:23:03] I love Taika Waititi.

**jessie** [00:23:06] Mm hmm. Just fantastic. So good.

**kelly** [00:23:09] Yeah, I like those, I like the I thought the scenes towards the beginning were a little bit better than the scenes towards the end, I don't know. I think I liked the initial part of the book and the wind up better than the like dénouement.

**jessie** [00:23:22] Yeah, and I think I mean, for me, part of that was that there was like a lot of traveling and going places, which is cool because I guess people want to see the world that they're set in, but because there's not that much happening from place to place. Um, I was just like, okay. And I actually have a reason that I think that might be the case for this book, but I'll try and remember to talk about it later.

**kelly** [00:23:43] alright sounds good. Let's talk about gender!

**jessie** [00:23:49] On page 194, Lin says, when there isn't a place for you in the world, you simply have to carve it out for yourself or carve it out yourself. I'm a brujex." With the help of their dad, who turns out is Rose's dad. Lin has such a supportive family and Lin is part brujex and part ada, which we haven't seen like any, um, like not biracial, like bi-species, characters yet . So that was really interesting and. I think, um. It's very.... So, Zoraida, Cordova writes some, um, Star Wars fiction, and now, like, obviously this wasn't like a Luke/Leia situation because Lin and Rose didn't seem to have feelings for each other, but it was like very Star Wars-y in that like, they share a dad and it's like a surprise sibling. And I was just like, oh, so Star Wars,.

**kelly** [00:24:48] We just started watching...We finished the Mandalorian season one and started season two. So, yes, it is very Star Wars. I agree. Being back in that universe a

little bit. Totally. And also with like the portal magic too. And Rose being called like the siphon of galaxies, there is like a little star stuff going on.

**jessie** [00:25:06] Yeah. Like kind of a lot. But I really like the character of when they were a good addition, I think to have like a friend for Rose to have that she felt a connection with and, you know, later realized was a sibling. But I think also that stands to show kind of like that people can kind of choose their own family. Like you make... It's like a it's a a choice to be part of a family, even if you're like whether or not you're related, like people don't have that, like, form these connections and be in relationship with each other. And that's something that Rose and Lin decided to do. And I really like that aspect of the book.

**kelly** [00:25:48] Completely agree. Yes. Yes, yes.

**jessie** [00:25:52] Want to talk about ability, body, minds, et cetera.

**kelly** [00:25:56] Sure, um. In the scene at the oasis of two thirds at the towards the end of the novel, where everyone's like hanging out in their victory or their pre their pre-war feast or whatever, pre battle feast, um, there's a scene where everyone's hanging out and diving into the pond and they're all swimming naked. And I just liked the little moments of, like, body love and acceptance that were woven throughout Rose's exposition, you know, talking about her soft belly and things like that. I just thought that was really lovely. Um, for to that for that to be in the narrative voice of an like a teen girl. So I just like that part a lot.

**jessie** [00:26:39] Yeah, it was sweet.

**kelly** [00:26:43] Papa Mortiz, when he's... Rose describes him as like vacant and kind of like looking far away or, you know, not really being able to engage with his family, even though he's right there, right there when he's in like Brooklyn or Queens. But then when he is in Adas, Rose describes him as awake. And this is reminding me of some of the stuff that I'm reading about PTSD and PTSD or complex PTSD, about how, um, when we get back into those... Like trauma re-wires us so much that. When we go back there, that can be when we feel alive. Or when you're like even if you're just like describing it in your mind, like, then you feel more activated again. Whereas, you know, if you're... When you're out of that, then you just don't feel like you can access, you know, your family or your connections or anything like that, so this just reminded me a lot about, um. yeah how... I mean, the famous saying is like the body keeps the score, basically.

**jessie** [00:27:43] Yeah, and I think part of this also has to do a lot with, um, uh. Is his name Octavio?

**kelly** [00:27:53] Um, he went by Octavio in Adas, I think, and that's why its name is Lin Octavio.

**jessie** [00:28:02] Either way, I guess so. Rose's dad, because I don't remember his like I don't know what name he prefers or goes by, um. He also like a part of this, I think probably comes from knowing that he has a family in two places, like he doesn't know what happened to Lin's mom and or what happened to Lin or what's going on with them. And I think that makes it difficult to for when he's in either place, because when he's in Adas, it's super like he forgets about his Mortiz family that's in Queens/ Brooklyn. And then when he is in Queens/Brooklyn, like he cannot forget about his family that he's left back in Adas. So I think it's like very hard for him to be in in the human realm,.

**kelly** [00:28:50] Yeah, it's a very hard situation.

**jessie** [00:28:53] Yeah, and because he can remember when he's there.

**kelly** [00:28:56] Oh, yeah, good point. Because in adas you forget that is helpful. Well, not helpful. That causes a lot of problems also.

**jessie** [00:29:05] Yeah, but also helpful because then you don't have to think about, like, the bad stuff that happened somewhere else or like the fact that you're not with a different family, you know, in in his case.

**kelly** [00:29:15] Another thing that made me think of, um a...ability in particular, is that this the king collects all these like superheroes, basically with a bunch of powerful magical abilities and they're kept in they're imprisoned and made to fight like you were talking about earlier. Um, this is just like the like a powerful a person wanting to collect a lot of other powerful beings in order to then like use them for their own plans. That reminded me of very like kind of like X-Men or, you know, Justice League, things like that, um, where how this is. But I like that the actual Guardians or whatever decided that they are going to do things their own way instead of just being used.

**jessie** [00:30:03] Yeah, it's very like superhero trope-y to like. Make your your army of superheroes,.

**kelly** [00:30:12] The Guardians of the Galaxy.

**transition** [00:30:14] [jaunty string music plays]

**jessie** [00:30:18] Finally, it's time for Shipwrecked, a segment about sexuality, asexuality, sex, romance and relationships. and sometimes we take liberties and do some shipping of our own. I think we're seeing Rose explore her sexuality a little bit. She obviously has feelings for Arco. She has her first kiss in Adas. But I also get the impression that she like Iris as well and she talks about having a crush on a bunch of people at her deathday party. Um, so I don't really know what that means for Rose. But it was fun to see that and see, like, her just kind of being like that person's cute in that person's cute in that.

**kelly** [00:30:55] [laughs] Yeah. Very 15, which is great.

**jessie** [00:30:59] super adorable. Yeah.

**kelly** [00:31:01] I think one of the most important relationships that we see explored in this novel is Rose and her dad and how, um like trust is broken and then rebuilt and how it's not an easy process, it's very painful and it takes a while. Um, but I'm glad that I liked how in the exposition it shows Rose working through all her different emotions, like I'm mad at him because of this and this and this and then feeling and then understanding a little bit more and then finding compassion and being able to, um. Yeah, just get a little bit of perspective, I guess. And I like that they showed the trajectory of this and how the relationship changes over time. And it's OK to set different boundaries at different moments with people.

**jessie** [00:31:44] Yeah, and it also kind of shows that, like relationships, even with your family, require work, like they don't have to be automatic. And like I think in this novel, in this family, like family is very important to them. But I think we also see and maybe Nova is

kind of like a good example of this, is that, like, you don't have to make the decision. Like you don't have to decide to choose, like your, um, family, like the family that's by blood. Um, so I kind of like I appreciated seeing Rose work through this, but also that we have like this other... Like that we also have the depiction of Nova saying, like, I don't really choose that family I like. I've chosen another family. So it's good to see, like, both sides of this.

**kelly** [00:32:29] Yeah. And then that means it's no longer the Mortiz sisters, it's now the Mortiz siblings, basically. Because it's a gendered, diverse, a diverse gender array of folks. So, yay!

**jessie** [00:32:43] Yeah, I'm excited and hopeful to see more Nova in the future [laughs] because I think he's my fave.

**kelly** [00:32:50] Yeah.

**jessie** [00:32:50] Well, actually Lula is my fave, but I really like Nova and I think I really like we get some of Nova in every book except for this one is like no Nova at all, almost. And so I was like, oh, I actually really miss those interactions with him.

**kelly** [00:33:03] Yeah. I think that that's one of the best developed characters and that how it's like the chemistry. Córdova has really developed the chemistry between the family and the siblings and that's like really cool to see.

**transition** [00:33:15] [jaunty string music plays].

**kelly** [00:33:15] A good segue to "kill your darlings," because that's we're going to do now. Now we're going to talk about writing style, narration, characterization, plot structure and basically whatever else comes to mind.

**jessie** [00:33:26] Rose is only 15, and I think that changes a lot about how we get this story in the first two books are Pelias with Alex and Lula, who are older. Lula is like in her senior year of high school. And I think that Alex is just like a year behind her. And part of the reason I may have like this book less is that we're following around a younger character, which doesn't really fit the vibe of the first two books for me. I also don't read a lot of books with like younger, like characters. This young. Like 15 is pretty young. Um, I do think Córdova did a good job like describing Rose and getting into her mindset. But I also think that for me that's like not really what I enjoy reading, which is fine. Um, but yeah, it was interesting to have like this trilogy that has like these two older characters and then to go to someone so young, like she's about like she's in her freshman year of high school, like, that's really young.

**kelly** [00:34:18] Yeah. And it's in the hero's journey, so to speak. Like we're kind of we're a little bit earlier on with Rose, you know, also, I think because she's a younger sibling, that changes the dynamic of the book to right. Where you're seeing the pressure of the of the siblings that came before. Um, well, now she isn't the youngest, isn't Lin younger than her? But anyway,.

**jessie** [00:34:40] Yes, yes.

**kelly** [00:34:41] We're very she's very much in this like finding your voice and power. Like she says at one point at the beginning, no one taught me to speak a truth that is uncomfortable. And and that's kind of the journey that we see here taking.

**jessie** [00:34:54] I think she reminds me a lot of Kitty from, um, to all the boys and like, am I like when I think about that, I'm like, Oh, I don't really want a book from Kitty's perspective, but I enjoy having her in the books. [laughs]

**kelly** [00:35:05] Right. Right.

**jessie** [00:35:06] You know what I mean? So it was just like a weird. Voice to go to For me.

**kelly** [00:35:14] I want to say thank you to Zoraida Córdova for actually addressing having to pee while on a magical adventure, I thought that was funny. I like those little candid moments in Rose's exposition where she's like, I regret not asking Alex about this.

**jessie** [00:35:27] Or she was like, I regret not asking Alex like, oh, my God, did she get her period while she was in Los Lagos? Like, what am I going to do?

**kelly** [00:35:34] Exactly. Yeah. Be rough. Yeah. I mean, like those sorts of hygiene products aren't available to everyone. So to all the people who menstruate, something that. Like, I haven't had to worry about, for example, you know,.

**jessie** [00:35:50] Yeah.

**kelly** [00:35:53] I'm not sure where to put this, but I think we might get a Nova book. He's going to the Dominican Republic to try and rid himself of an inherited blood curse. And that sounds like an excellent premise for a book. So we can hope..

**jessie** [00:36:05] I really hope we do, um, because I miss Nova and I would like to see more of him. I just want to add this thing that I was thinking of earlier, so I mentioned earlier that Zoraida Cordova writes Star Wars fiction and actually I think that might be part of why I did not enjoy this book as much, because in Star Wars, a lot, especially like if you watch the Mandalorian, like you don't get that much story from week to week. You get a lot of like these like little side adventures. And that don't really you know, that they're going to add to the plot eventually. But like in the moment, you're kind of like, why are we doing like, why are we here? And I think that's how I kind of felt with this book and maybe why I didn't enjoy it as much. Like I'm watching the Mandalorian, but not because, like, I guess just because it's part of the Star Wars universe and I don't want to miss out, you know? So I kind of like— I think that's what I didn't enjoy about this book, was that we were like all these little mini side quests instead of, like, the whole big quest.

**kelly** [00:37:04] Yeah, pretty episodic,.

**jessie** [00:37:05] That's just like not my thing. Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

**kelly** [00:37:08] Yeah, totally. I only watch the Mandalorian for baby yoda. [Jessie laughs] I love that little thing. I love it. There's crystals, tarot, I have some Tourmaline and the tower card because those both come up in the book and I thought that, oh, I'll bring them out while I'm recording. So, yeah, I love that shit. I'm pretty basic that way.

**jessie** [00:37:32] It happens to the best of us. [both laugh].

**transition** [00:37:33] [jaunty string music plays]

**kelly** [00:37:37] Recommend, if you like.

**jessie** [00:37:39] Probably all kinds of fairy stories. I think, um, I read that Cruel Prince, I think because of the fairy lore, both of them kind of stick close to it. Um, ACOTAR, because I don't think I could ever think of fairy stories without thinking of it. And and Enola Holmes on Netflix, stars Millie Bobby Brown, but I think they're kind of like young characters. They're like really smart and clever and just like dealing with being the youngest sibling. Um, so I think if you like this book, you'll probably also like Enola Homes. It was a sweet movie. It was really cute.

**transition** [00:38:14] [jaunty string music plays]

**kelly** [00:38:16] Before we end, it's time for real talk. Did reading this book make your perspective change in any way, or did it make you interrogate a concept system or trend that you hadn't before?

**kelly** [00:38:26] I have something. Um, we talked about it a little bit earlier, but being honest about our feelings is just so crucial. And Rose is um. In Iran, she seems like an empath in the way that maybe that's like an analogous to her, like, life and abilities, I don't know, but she just, like, can feel around for the what's going on emotionally and like what people aren't saying. I like the disconnect between their words and their and like the vibe they're actually putting off. And I just think that that in and of itself is should be recognized as like the power that it is, and then also that everyone should be responsible for their own emotions and that we should be honest about them.

**transition** [00:39:09] [jaunty string music plays]

**jessie** [00:39:12] Thanks for listening to the library coven. We'll be back in two weeks for a discussion of The Dragon Republic by R.F. Kuang. As always, we'd love to be in conversation with you magical folks. Let us know what you think of the episode. Anything we missed or just say hi by dropping a line in the comments or by reaching out to us on Twitter or Instagram @thelibrarycoven. You can post or tweet about the show using the #CriticallyReading and #TheLibraryCoven. And you can contact us via email at the library coven at Gmail dot com.

**kelly** [00:39:40] You can subscribe to the library coven wherever you listen to your podcasts. And we would appreciate it if you rate and review the show and also spread the word, recommend it to someone else that you think will enjoy it. If you're able to support our labor financially, you can make a one-time donation on Ko-fi. You can support us monthly on Patreon. We're doing a pay what you can from one dollar and above. So you set whatever you want to for our Patreon. And we have Minnesota bonus ups, early episodes, and we're going to make some swag and shit probably someday. So that's cool. If you're on Patreon, you'll be the first to know about it. And you can also support the show by shopping at our bookshop dog affiliate page opinion page until next time say magical. Kelly is recording on Cheyenne and Arapaho Land, Jessie is recording on Peoria, Kaskaskia, Peankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Iowa, Sauk, Mesquaki Kickapoo, Pottawatomie, Ojibwe and Chickasaw Land.

**transition** [00:40:51] [jaunty harpsichord and string music plays]