

The Library Coven {fka JK, It's Magic}

Episode 34: Children of Virtue and Vengeance by Tomi Adeyemi

transition [00:00:15] [bright, whimsical music plays].

kelly [00:00:15] Hello! And welcome to JK, It's Magic, 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.

jessie [00:00:31] I'm Jessie.

kelly [00:00:32] And I'm Kelly.

jessie [00:00:34] And this week we're discussing CHILDREN OF VIRTUE AND VENGEANCE by Tomi Adeyemi, the second book in The Legacy of Orisha series. This book picks up pretty much exactly where the chaos of CHILDREN OF BLOOD AND BONE left off. Now the monarchs have powers. They're called to Titans. Zelig is dealing with the emotional burden of her father's death. Amari is taking a real "by any means necessary" approach to getting on the throne. And spoiler alert, Inan is not dead.

kelly [00:01:00] That was such a good summary!

jessie [00:01:03] Thank you. Thank you.

kelly [00:01:05] Since this story deals heavily with systems of oppression, we're asking you to take some time this week to learn about how systemic racism is a huge part of this country's legacy. Learn what you can do to make— to help make changes. And check in on yourself and the ways you benefit from those systems. And also check out our Twitter and Instagram. Jessie is always posting really good resources on those platforms.

jessie [00:01:27] Additionally, if you get a chance and you're able please consider becoming a patron of Patreon to get episodes early, access to our discord and more. Or you can make a one-time donation on Ko-fi. And now we have a bookshop on bookshop dot org. So you can check out our website and twitter for more information.

kelly [00:01:44] Will you explain what bookshop is for people who don't know?

jessie [00:01:47] Yeah, for sure. So bookshop dot org is a place where you can buy books that help support indie bookstores. Proceeds from the sales go directly to independent bookshops. The proceeds are split up between independent bookstores and lets you pick a specific one. So, for example, when I set up my account, I chose to support Semicolon in Chicago, which is a Black-owned bookstore, which is another way you can help support Black businesses. And now we have an affiliate store, so 10 percent of the proceeds will go to us. The rest will go to the bookstore of your choice or independent bookstores in general. So it's a little better than Amazon I would say because the bookshops are getting the money. Additionally, the prices are pretty competitive, I would say, with Amazon. So if you're gonna to shop anyways, might as well help support locally.

kelly [00:02:39] Absolutely. Thanks for explaining that.

jessie [00:02:42] Yeah, of course.

transition [00:02:43] [jaunty, stacatto string music plays]

kelly [00:02:47] Initial reactions.

jessie [00:02:48] This was a quarantine read for me and actually maybe one of the first books I started reading while in quarantine. And I have to say reading quarantine is not the same as reading other times.

kelly [00:02:57] Why would you say that? I wanna– I wanna hear more.

jessie [00:03:01] Yeah. I don't understand as an introvert. I'm like I don't understand why I have kind of a lot of trouble reading during this time. Maybe just because I get my headspace is just really full with other things: trying to make sure I don't get sick, worrying about having to go to the doctor's office, those sorts of things. We're coffee– we're spoonies here, so, you know, things are a little more difficult.

kelly [00:03:27] definitely.

jessie [00:03:28] But it took me a minute to get to this book. Quarantine feelings aside, I really enjoyed this book and I was surprised at some of the choices we see the characters make in the direction the book might be going. But I really did enjoy it after I could kind of get my head in the right space.

kelly [00:03:45] I had a similar reading experience and I do think that if we weren't in quarantine and slash pandemic, it would have been different. I was– I'm really looking forward to the release of this book. And then we ended up having to wait a few months for– to be able to read it because I was finishing my dissertation and all. And, you know, school is rough for you and stuff. So I was really glad to pick up the series again, to be back with the characters. And once I switch to audiobook, for some reason, that was– worked better for my brain in the headspace I'm in right now. And also, Bahni Turpin, the narrator, is excellent. She does children of blood and bone, too. And she's like, so good. Anyway. I enjoyed all of the action and especially like the new cast of characters, the magi of the iyika that we get introduced when Zelig, Zane and Amari meet up with the rebel group. So I.... And it's all about like down with monarchy and stuff. So I'm into it.

transition [00:04:40] [jaunty, stacatto string music plays]

kelly [00:04:44] Time to talk about world building in through the wardrobe. So we're back in a Orisha in this book. And that's not what I was expecting because I remember when we were talking about after we read Children of Blood and Bone, we were kind of expecting slash, hoping to see like beyond Orisha and what was going on there. The fictional world like beyond Zéile's home. And I think that might be what we're in for in book three. And we'll we'll talk about the end a little bit later. But.... I guess that was just a little bit surprising to me that we were in Orisha still. But I thought it was cool to go back to some of the other sites that we'd seen before, like Chandoble and then also to see the new rebel headquarters. I forget what it's called. It was the big like temple. I don't remember, anyway,.

jessie [00:05:31] I don't remember either. Like in the mountains?

kelly [00:05:32] Yeah.

jessie [00:05:33] That was really cool. It actually kind of reminded me of when we're reading the Marrow Thieves, you know, how they were in a place that was like between these mountains and they were down in, like, the valley of it?

kelly [00:05:43] Yeah. MmmHmm.

jessie [00:05:45] It kind of reminded me of that in a way, but like more,.... I don't know, like that Plus, like Star Wars-y like they'e in these mountains, but there's like all these little places dug out in the mountains. It was it was very. It just seemed really cool.

kelly [00:06:01] I love the descriptions. We didn't get as many like setting descriptions, I think, because it was the second book and there wasn't quite as much of like the geographical worldbuilding in this book. But when they did do that, I think Adeyemi does a really nice job setting the scene for things. I could really imagine it.

jessie [00:06:18] Yeah. she did a really good job.

transition [00:06:20] [spellcasting sound]

jessie [00:06:23] Inan has the right idea about just getting rid of the monarchy. I did not see that coming. And this is one of those ways I think we see like a character shift in many of the characters. I think Inan is coming to the realization that the monarchy is the problem in this whole thing, which is definitely true. And we'll talk about later when we talk about villains and we see, you know, the lyika, which is coming together and it's really about overthrowing the system of oppression. So I think we get a lot of different things going on here that we didn't get to see in the last book. And. It didn't go in a direction I thought it was going to go and which was very surprising.

kelly [00:07:05] Yeah, and I think that one of the reasons we get that is because the. We're seeing all the different characters responding to the big thing that happened at the end of Book one, which was the return of magic. And so it seemed more like the world building was more about like relationships and character development than it was necessarily about like geographic place.

jessie [00:07:28] We also got a lot less of Zane in this book, which I kind of forgot about getting more from his perspective in the last book. And he just you just wasn't as involved as in Children of Blood and Bone, which was totally fine. Like, I didn't miss it. It's just now thinking about it. I'm like, "oh, I forgot that. We got a lot more Tzain in the last book than we did in this one."

kelly [00:07:47] Yeah, he did have more of a supporting role.

jessie [00:07:49] I guess part of it might be we're mostly seeing through the eyes of characters who have magic at this point. And Tzain is like the only kosidan [nonmagical person] that we really interact with in the books at this point.

kelly [00:08:02] That's a good point. I guess I just hope that there are more kosidan characters. I mean, Roen is one, right?

jessie [00:08:08] Oh, yeah. And Roen. He's not even from Orisha. So that's a whole different.

kelly [00:08:14] It's like a whole other thing. He maybe he's not like wouldn't be considered kosidan or whatever, but.

jessie [00:08:18] Right.

kelly [00:08:18] I— that is an interesting choice. Right. To own— to be focusing on the people who have magic. I mean, but they're in theory, the like the oppressed group in this situation. So, I mean, I guess I understand.

kelly [00:08:33] Yeah, yeah, definitely.

kelly [00:08:35] And... But I do wanna say, I 100 percent agree with you: going on and getting rid of the monarchy. I'm all for it.

jessie [00:08:44] [laughs] I say that as someone who loves the crowd, knows all about Harry and Meghan.

kelly [00:08:50] We are full of contradictions, OK? We contain multitudes!

jessie [00:08:53] yeah, Apparently. [both laugh] I can love it. I can love the idea of it without actually loving it in practice. [laughs].

kelly [00:09:01] yeah! Exactly.

transition [00:09:02] [jaunty, stacatto string music plays]

j & k [00:09:08] Wands out!

jessie [00:09:08] Let's discuss all things magic! In the sequel, there are a lot more people with magical powers. Which is a strange dynamic because many of the titâns want to kill the magic. This was kind of strange to me and I didn't really know what to make of it because the titâns hate the magi for their magic, but also want to like... But also at this point have magic. So I didn't really know what to make of this. What do you think?

kelly [00:09:37] I think it is... The dynamics were— so these people who were kosidan, some of them got changed into titâns when they brought magic back, in addition to the diviners and the Magi who were bereft of magic before also getting their magic back. So, like, one of the reasons why I think this is a little tricky is because the magic status or whatever is visibly marked. Right? With the white hair or the white streak in your hair. So you can kind of tell, like, which type of magic you have. Like whether you're a— like it's a visible difference between titâns and magi, I guess.

jessie [00:10:19] Mm hmm.

kelly [00:10:19] So there's that aspect of it. Yeah, it showed I like how full of contradictions I think the systems of power are and about like how self-loathing comes into the game, especially if we see that with um, what was his name? Inan's bestie?

jessie [00:10:37] Oh, his like friend?

kelly [00:10:38] Yeah. His cousin, his cousin.

jessie [00:10:40] Yeah. I can't remember his name.

kelly [00:10:43] Oh, it's gonna bug me. I'm gonna look it up.

jessie [00:10:45] OK. I don't have the book in front of me. [laughs]

kelly [00:10:48] Let me see if I can find it...if there were a cast of characters that would be great, but there is not. [pauses] It starts with an "O"

jessie [00:11:00] I know. All I can think of was Okoye. But that's like from Black Panther.

kelly [00:11:03] That's definitely not it.

jessie [00:11:05] No, but that's for some reason. That's all I can think of right now. Maybe it's on the website. Let me just check.

kelly [00:11:13] Ojore.

jessie [00:11:14] There we go. You know what, that's pretty close to Okoye.

kelly [00:11:16] That is pretty close, actually. Ojore. And so we see the reveal about he's been really struggling with self-loathing his entire life, similarly to Inan about the magical powers, except that he's a magi and not a ton. Correct.

jessie [00:11:35] I think that might be right? I'm not...

kelly [00:11:38] I don't know.

jessie [00:11:39] Yeah. Does he die at the end?

kelly [00:11:41] Yeah, I think so.

jessie [00:11:43] OK. Well i thought Inan was dead last book, so who knows. [chuckles]

kelly [00:11:46] And then we had like an almost death again at the end of this book. So that's kind of funny.

jessie [00:11:50] Yeah. Yeah.

kelly [00:11:52] Anyway, I don't know, I kind of like rambled off of the topic, but... [trails off]

jessie [00:11:58] No, it's OK. I just don't really know what to make of it. And I don't know how to set this in our reality, which we often talk about, like how things correlate to, you know, current times. I'm struggling with this one. So, that's all.

kelly [00:12:14] i have a few thoughts about it all. We can talk about later in the race section.

jessie [00:12:18] OK.

kelly [00:12:18] we'll get to it.

transition [00:12:19] [spellcasting sound]

kelly [00:12:21] I really liked the combining different types of magic powers. I didn't see that coming. And I thought that that was a way to not, like, create new weapons like we see the monarchy doing. But like using like the power of their connections to each other in order to be stronger. ugh, Just so good!

jessie [00:12:43] Yeah, it was really like a very teamwork aspect that I guess we didn't see in the last book, because mostly we just see Zélie with her powers and no one else.

kelly [00:12:53] And it reminded me of one of those... Have you ever seen those, like alchemy-type games where you, like, combine the different elements and you make new things or whatever? That's what it kind of reminds me of, right? so you have, like, the winder and the...I don't know...like the burners, like the burners working together for like. Yeah. So I thought that was cool, how they were using their ingenuity to, like, work together rather than to try and, like, drain people of their magic. You know, just kind of shows like these two different ways of getting power.

jessie [00:13:23] Well, I guess this could have gone into worldbuilding, but I guess this is the first time we see Zélie as well with people who are like her. That she's aware— that she knows are like her. And so we tend to see her building a community as she becomes in charge of the, what do they call...

kelly [00:13:43] Reapers.

jessie [00:13:44] The Reapers. That's it. Yeah. All I can think of is jogun jogun!

kelly [00:13:49] Jogun, jogun!! Yes. The Soldier of death.

jessie [00:13:54] Yeah, I think that's a pretty cool title.

kelly [00:13:57] that's a really cool title!

transition [00:13:57] [spellcasting sound]

kelly [00:14:00] I also really enjoy the descriptions of magic that were in this book and then also the prequel. I thought that... It's like describing how it worked and the toll it takes. Like, I thought that that was really well done and just the magical system is really nicely fleshed out. And I think that that makes for like an a more immersive reading experience for me.

jessie [00:14:21] Yeah, and I think part of that is that we're getting to see so many different peoples' power. Like I remember in the last book, when they find the other diviners, they get to see how some of those interactions happen, but they're not with them for very long. So getting to see them for so long, Zélie and Amari, she's trying to, like, find her place within, you know, this magical system. We're really going to see so many different aspects of powers. And as they work together, I really like that.

kelly [00:14:50] Speaking of Amari, were they called "centers" like the new types of titâns?

jessie [00:14:56] Yes. The sensors.

kelly [00:14:58] sensors. OK, yeah. So they like can attract, like they sense the different kinds of power around them, And if it's the same kind that they have, then they can like drain it or use it. Right?

jessie [00:15:09] Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

kelly [00:15:10] And it seems like Nehanda and Amari are the two most powerful. And I was a little confused about how these people showed up. Like maybe they're just like random. You know, they just happen. I'm not sure. But we see that this is that this power isn't bad in and of itself. Instead, it depends on how the sensor uses their power. So that that was like a very clear juxtaposition, you know, of how do we use this for good or not. Yeah.

jessie [00:15:39] Yeah. And also very interesting, because I guess I kind of forgot that at the B more towards the beginning of the book, we see Zélie trying to teach Amari how to use her power. And that's very difficult because she's not a magi. So we also kind of see Amari coming into herself and into her power, both figuratively and literally. [both laugh]

j & k [00:16:02] Wands away!

transition [00:16:02] [jaunty, stacatto string music plays]

kelly [00:16:07] Now we're going to talk about conflict villains and good versus evil in our segment "Get me Kylo Ren!"

jessie [00:16:12] Omari really took "by any means necessary" to a level I did not expect. She sacrificed a lot of innocent lives, and that's why she doesn't deserve to be queen. The people will never trust you if they think that you will. If you think of them as pieces of sacrifice instead of people were living. And I know in the end Zélie was able to save a lot of them. But I would just like, "whoa, Amari, that is a bit far."

kelly [00:16:43] I was a little surprised when she took that step. I thought it was like, I could see why. You know, in the trajectory of her character development, in the narrative arc like why it happened.

jessie [00:16:54] oh for sure!

kelly [00:16:55] But I was surprised by that. Also, that was more something I would expect Inan to do than Amari, which I think is kind of the point, right?

jessie [00:17:03] Well, I also think that we see more becoming more and more desperate. She's so desperate for the other elders to accept her. She really feels that she deserves to be in charge because she was born from a specific bloodline. So it's both ridiculous and we do, I mean, throughout the book, we see her getting more and more desperate. But I didn't think she was going to get that desperate.

kelly [00:17:30] Yeah. And this comes back to our— we have this I feel like we have this conversation a lot of the time in the segment about the means to an end. Like, are you

using people as a means? or are the ends in themselves? And here we go, some more Kant.

jessie [00:17:44] You can't get away from that guy.

kelly [00:17:46] God, he's everywhere.

transition [00:17:47] [spellcasting sound]

jessie [00:17:50] Nehanda, Amari and Inan's mom is so protective of Inan and so terrible to Amari. I also hate how overbearing she is with Inan and he just goes with it. The dynamic between those two is really weird and terrible. And something I think we see in literature and in the real world with weird protective moms of their sons.

kelly [00:18:14] True. So true.

jessie [00:18:15] I was just like, "oh my God, can someone murder Nehanda already?" I am so tired of her. [chuckles]

kelly [00:18:22] She really does seem to like bring out the worst in both of her children.

jessie [00:18:26] I know! It really tells you something about parenting.

kelly [00:18:29] It really— it really does. And I've actually thought Nehanda was like more... She seemed more evil than Saran. Because she's, I don't know, like one of the people who's like doing the machinations behind the scenes. And she was the one who, like, started the entire fire. And like all of these revelations about what she was willing to do in order to portray the magi as, I don't know, like, violent, you know? Unruly, chaotic, in need of being suppressed, basically. And so she was willing to orchestrate this massive ruse that had real, like material consequences. So, she is definitely the big bad in the story. But we do— I do think that you see— we see like the influence, you know, how it's kind of like contagious, depending on how close in proximity you are and how willing you are to stand up to that.

jessie [00:19:24] And we do see that Inan really turns the corner at this moment. And it's like, "you know what? Fuck this. No more monarchy. We can't be in charge anymore. We're just making things worse." And I think part of that is, you know, and I wasn't really surprised but that Nehanda and the monarchy is the reason that the magi are being hunted down. She's like devised this whole plan. Although I do wonder why. I don't understand. Maybe because they think if they have power, like magical powers, they could take down the monarchy, which is kind of like a self-fulfilling prophecy when they decided to murder them.

kelly [00:20:00] Right. I mean, we just just see how the— the cycle just perpetuates and how.... And so the people, the characters that we have, like protagonists in this series, are really trying to like break the wheel and stop that.

jessie [00:20:13] Yeah.

kelly [00:20:14] —from happening, which is just something that, like it's a Zeit Geist and an ethos that I just so identify with in my core that... I, maybe that's one of the reasons why I really like the series to.

kelly [00:20:26] I think another part of the conflict or evil or I don't know, violence that we can talk about is the development of new weapons. So, we do get the story behind, we get the backstory behind magicite, I believe. Right.

jessie [00:20:42] Yep.

kelly [00:20:43] And about how the— this sort of it's a power grab by humans that... it's just like abusing power and reaching for too much, that sort of like typical story that we get seems like across cultures, you know? But then we also see the magic side has been turned into a gas. And so like waging biochemical warfare now at this point. And then also they were injecting it intravenously into people. And I also thought it was interesting how the magicite, I thought, was like a good detail to include about how the magicite does affects Magi and to titâns differently. And then obviously Kosidan aren't affected by it. But I thought that that was like a nice nuance to add to it. Right, that it hurts magi more. And then the titâns are like kind of magical or have a different kind of magic. And so it like does surface damage to them. I just saw that was I appreciate the detail, I guess.

jessie [00:21:41] Yeah. And then through that we get to see some new technology that I think we didn't get to see in the last book with the like though weird like gas masks that they were using. And I thought that was really cool because I think when we think of fantasy stories, especially like. Like high fantasy stories, we typically think of, you know, like old timey things, a lack of technology. So it's kind of cool to see that something that we might see in like a modern day fantasy book. So that was really cool.

kelly [00:22:14] Yeah. And I think it's really an even more important choice when, like, pushing back against, like, stereotypes of like West African cultures, you know, as like. I don't know. Less developed or whatever. I don't know. I like.

jessie [00:22:31] Right.

kelly [00:22:31] Like the technologies are different. and Yeah, it's not so much about like ranking them, you know, than it is. I think it's like an even more important choice because like, yeah, they have a lot of technological prowess and knowledge.

jessie [00:22:48] Yeah, well, I I think it also I think sometimes we forget that there are lots of things that we don't that are technology that we don't think of technology. So,.

kelly [00:22:57] Yeah.

jessie [00:22:58] Like like Zelig's staff, like that's technology. We just don't think of it that way of the sort like a computer or whatever.

kelly [00:23:05] Right.

jessie [00:23:06] So technology can mean lots of things. Which, by the way, her staff is really cool. I really like that.

kelly [00:23:13] So cool! oh my gosh, so cool.

transition [00:23:13] [jaunty string music plays]

jessie [00:23:20] 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 and gender. This is our segment about power and bodies and how they relate. Let's start with race, because I think that's pretty important in this book. We talked about it at length last time, but many of the racial dynamics are the same as in the last book. Even though I think at the end of *Children of Blood and Bone* we thought a lot of that would have change.

kelly [00:23:48] Yeah. And it didn't change as much as we were expecting, which I would. Which makes sense. Right. Because these sorts of. Even if it's like a big rupture. It's not going to. The system is going to change overnight.

jessie [00:23:59] Yeah. Which I think is very prescient right now. There's lots of protests going on about Black Lives Matter. We're in the middle of a pandemic In addition to that. And while we do see small changes happening, things do not like because half the country is protesting for weeks on end, like that hasn't changed very much at all. But in this book in particular, we now see that there are more people with magic, but not necessarily more people who are being systemically oppressed, which I think. I mean, I talked about a little bit earlier, but something I found really interesting was that there are more people with this magical attribute, but not more people who are who are visibly oppressed because of that.

kelly [00:24:45] Right. And it's because of who they're choosing to align themselves with.

jessie [00:24:50] Right. Yeah. So I found this very interesting.

kelly [00:24:53] Definitely. And speaking of that, I want to talk a little bit more about this, like to titân and what to think about it and stuff, because I think it does have a corollary to race in a certain way. So we see Amari comes into her powers as titân, but she doesn't take the time to understand, like the history of systemic oppression that the Magi. Have like experienced, which has influenced their magic and their cultures and is like super informative to all of their traditions. And also, I mean, it's not just their trauma. But that is a big part of their history. And so instead Amari thinks that her she just assumes that her like birth, as you said before, and then also power that she knowingly has entitles her to a position as an elder of the Connector clan. So like with this new knowledge, a new power, and she just woke up and she did like things that she can be in charge. And I thought following Amari in this learning process of being more humble of like stepping back of passing the mic, of giving. I don't know of. Like she's still a leader, but she's not, like, striving for that. Like one seat of power really anymore. So this kind of reminded me of it made me think about cultural appropriation. It just made me think about how, you know, white people however well-meaning they are, you know, can take things that aren't theirs and just assume that they should be in charge and empower with this, like, new knowledge that they have or this like new consciousness that Black Lives Matter or whatever. And about how that they, like you just have to like the deep dove is really important. Otherwise, you're going to do a lot of harm. I guess, and then, like the inside work is continual. So I think a marriage is like dealing with her like oppressor past slash present like who she she came up in the line of Oppressors and is like dealing with how like the new position that she wants to like have. And like how to like live her values, I guess, in a different way. So anyway, I don't know anything about that.

jessie [00:27:13] No, I really like that. Also Amari is she has this power now that she didn't have before, magical power. In addition to her, you know, power as a part of the monarchy. But I also kind of read this almost like. Like looking at myself, a biracial person with light skin privilege. And I thought about, like, how sometimes biracial people will come

in to Black movements. Not that we're not Black. But we do benefit from more privilege than other Black people. And sometimes take over those movements as a light skinned person. And I kind of thought about that when I was reading into Amari. As one of those people who look like me, you know. And it's more difficult in this situation because Amari and Zelig, like the differences between them, is like hair-related. Like one of them with white hair, Amari with a streak in her hair. But I kind of see how this could... How this looks similar in those ways, you know, a light skinned person, it's a lot easier for them to be the face of a of a movement because they benefit from light skin privilege, whereas a dark person. It's not it's not, you know, because they're in their face so much more racism and vitriol towards them. So I guess I kind of read it in that way. But it's a little more difficult and I don't know. I mean, its readers response, like, I'm bringing this in because like this this is what I see in my day to day life. And I understand that I benefit from those things. Yeah, it was interesting to read. But also I'm just like I mean, it's good, you know. I mean, because, like. I think sometimes people who are biracial, like myself, forget that they also benefit from privileges that darker people don't, you know, colorism exists and is a real problem in lots of communities. So I think that's kind of where I was like thinking of going with the Imari thing and my feeling about Amari in general.

kelly [00:29:14] Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah. I think that I mean, it makes a lot of sense the way you describe it. And. I think the one thing this book does really effectively is it's. Well, what you're describing is like inter-group like politics and how the like there is power within groups and we have to not even like resistance groups and how that that's a constant negotiation also. And so, yeah, thank you for bringing that up, because that that is definitely something this book is like is definitely investigating for sure.

jessie [00:29:51] Yeah, I think so. And if it looks like it could be hard to talk about, you know, I mean, I'm sure white people know because they're having to talk about right now, they really hate it.

kelly [00:29:59] They're losing their collective shit. [jessie laughs]

jessie [00:30:03] Yes, they are.

kelly [00:30:05] We, I should say we. They. As if I'm not one.

jessie [00:30:09] But like for me, like it's like also something that like, you know, by biracial, I'm light skinned and I benefit from that privilege as well. So like, it's important that people who are part of the Black community, but maybe you don't suffer the same oppression as other people in the community, like they need to also check their privilege, which is not fun, but has to be done for the betterment of society.

kelly [00:30:32] Totally. And we see Amari and Inan doing that. And that's why I think, like, narrative representation matters so, so much because, like, these sort of explorations and nuances aren't going to happen. Like, we're not going to see these sorts of dynamics, like unearthed and laid out fictionally if we don't have more of these voices publishing. So that's really important.

jessie [00:30:58] Yeah, we'll publish the statistics, Lee and Low just came out with their--- oh, no sorry. The Children's Book Council, which I use a lot in my master's thesis, which is so it's like cool to see that information being used so widely now. But like, I think it was 43 percent of books about Black people are written by Black people. So that was from last

year [2019]. And those are books for children and young adults. But so very, very frustrating.

kelly [00:31:25] So. Like a lot of white gaze is still determining a lot of, like, POC representation.

jessie [00:31:33] Yeah, especially for Black people like that means like fifty seven percent of the books about Black people are being written by non Black people. Which is quite a lot.

kelly [00:31:45] Yeah.

transition [00:31:45] [spellcasting sound].

kelly [00:31:48] Wanna talk about class a little bit?

jessie [00:31:51] Yeah, I think this goes in class, but we see that Amari thinks she deserves the throne and cannot imagine giving it to Zelig. She can't imagine Zelig having more power than her. Amari was super frustrating for me throughout this book because she just couldn't get out of her own head about things. And she was very bad at seeing other perspectives throughout the story. Like she feels she deserves power, which is why she ends up like basically decimating a whole village. I was just like very frustrated with her. And like, she can't like even once she's with Lika she can't get out of her own head about being in the upper class, about being a monarch. And she feels she deserves a voice, even though maybe she doesn't.

kelly [00:32:38] Yes, she's still she's still striving for power, and I think that, like, she's been taught to do that her whole life. That's what she's been, like, groomed to do literally since birth. I kind of I related to this part of Amari's journey, because especially is like a privileged white person grew up in, you know, upper middle class suburbs characterized by white flight. You know, that like you've been told, you deserve all of these things, but not why. And like, there's no model of how to question that. And so that's been something that like like a journey that my brother and I have both been on. And so it's been helpful to have each other with that. But, yeah, this sort of like the dismantling the the supremacy and where we find that in ourselves, I think is really important in it. I think that this is. I'm really glad that you brought this up because the class aspect is like the economic privilege part. It's just seems like a self-fulfilling prophecy. The rich people think that they're special just because they're rich. And that's not... I mean, they are treated that way. Yeah, that's like materially how they're treated because you get more discounts and you get, you know, have all these connections and things. But that doesn't mean that you actually deserve what you have.

jessie [00:33:55] yeah And I think you brought it up in a past episode, as I've been going through, like, show notes, doing stuff on the website. But there was a Vox episode and billionaires that I watched recently because I'm watching, like the Netflix explained or whatever. And I really liked how that so talked about how you can if you are a billionaire, it's like easier to make more money without doing anything.

kelly [00:34:18] Right.

jessie [00:34:18] But also what the what the episode doesn't really address is that when you're a billionaire or in this case a monarch having power, even when it's like, quote

unquote taken away from you, you still feel like you deserve that power. So and I think that's something we see Amari dealing with here that we're going to see her deal with even more in the next book. And I think she realizes the problematic behavior that she has by the end of the book. She's willing it was actually really sad when Mama Akba, like, sacrificed herself. But Amari is also like willing and says, like, I will do this. I got to understand what I did was wrong. So I think we see her coming to terms with that I think because she will have to like she's going to continue to be alive. We're going to see her deal with that more in the next book.

kelly [00:35:05] Definitely.

transition [00:35:05] [Spellcasting sound]

jessie [00:35:08] Let's talk about gender.

kelly [00:35:11] It it's funny because looking through the notes before recording, neither of us really had much to say about gender. And I think that that's because Adeyemi writes strong characters of all genders. And that's not like. Determining factor of like their, you know, the character trajectory or how they relate to each other and I don't know, I just don't see, like a lot of gender stereotypes happening. And I think that's because we focus more on Zeile and Amari and less on Zain and Inan, so we're like not even....turn, and they're both like badass fighters, right? Everyone's fighting, so there aren't....

jessie [00:35:54] Well and other seem like a. A. An equal amount of like. I think we see a widespread amount of representation among even the Aika. Like the elders, it's not determined by their gender or even we see with Amari by, you know, whether they're a diviner or a titân, like it's whoever is most powerful, they get to be in charge. So we kind of see that with them as well.

kelly [00:36:28] Yeah, we I guess we just like we basically have gender equity, especially because a lot of the villains are also women. So, yeah, I like that. I like when we have women villains. I think that there are a lot of the times worse than men male villains, honestly.

jessie [00:36:41] because they do emotional damage.

kelly [00:36:46] We just like cut to the quick.

jessie [00:36:50] Yeah, yeah, that's a stereotype. I understand that. Yeah, yeah, okay.

kelly [00:36:56] Well, yeah, maybe. I mean, I didn't think of it that way.

jessie [00:37:00] But we I think we get some good villain depictions here. We also get some good female leaders in that situation, which we don't always get in the books that we read, especially with actually Mama Akba, because she is like, look, too, even though she's not an elder, but she's looked to for advice and she's a woman, but she's also old, which is awesome. So don't I feel like in the Black community there is like a very big a lot of weight on um respecting your elders, but I don't think we see that very often in other books that we read. Mm hmm. So, you know, some ageism going on in our communities. But I kind of I really like Mama eggless. I was very sad when she died.

kelly [00:37:42] I love her. She is one of my favorite characters for sure. I want to say a little bit. Talk a little bit about, like, ability and body minds and stuff. Specifically with Zeile. Because I think that we see her struggling with burnout throughout the novel. And I appreciated the scenes because we see the protagonist being really vulnerable. She just wants to live and experience joy and love. But she has to keep fighting while people she love get hurt or killed. And I just thought that this was really like an important thing to dove into with Zeile's character. And like, I think a really reasonable response. Like, she just wants to like regenerate a little bit. And knowing that that's a privilege to be able to step back and do that. And then also realizing when that's necessary and how to balance those things. But Zeile doesn't get to. She has to go through like push through and. Yeah. This this aspect reminded me of adrienne maree brown's book, *Pleasure Activism and Black girl Magic*, *Black boy Joy* and why I like those are so important also and not just focusing on the legacy of trauma.

jessie [00:39:02] Yeah, I really like there's a very good article that came out a few months ago, I think it was BuzzFeed, but about Black burnout out that I can link to in the show.

kelly [00:39:11] Yes, please do.

jessie [00:39:12] But it was really good. And I think that's particularly important now. Now, I know this episode will come out and it'll be maybe you will be at a different point in our country. But I think it's important to also talk about burnout. I was Talking with a friend of mine recently about like white burnout and a concern we had about burnout concerning Black Lives Matter and all the talk about, you know, race issues in this country and concern that, like white people get burned out. You know, reading those things and wanting things to get back to normal. And I think Zeile Zelle is a good representation of like sometimes you have burnout and you don't get to give in to that. Like you don't like rest is very important. But sometimes you can not.

kelly [00:40:01] Yeah, she doesn't get to like, go take a bath and use essential oils, you know? [jessie laughs]

jessie [00:40:04] Also side note, essential oils can be really dangerous to your cats. So if you have a cat don't like use diffusers around them, people don't know and it can kill them. anyways.

jessie [00:40:18] It's like a white people thing to use essential oils.

kelly [00:40:21] OK, I may or may not have one on downstairs, right now, bitch, so...umm it's soothing!

jessie [00:40:29] But it can kill a cat.

kelly [00:40:32] I don't have cats.

jessie [00:40:34] Yeah, for sure. But anyways, I just think it's important. Like Zelle really shows. Looks like. Yes, rest is important. And we see her trying to like give into that a bit. But sometimes like there is no choice but to keep fighting. And this is my point where I'm like, hey, white people like I know you're tired of talking about this, but we're like tired of living through it. So, like, just keep learning.

kelly [00:40:55] Yeah. Yeah. Like, white people don't you fucking think about stepping down.

jessie [00:41:01] Yeah. Sorry, I'm holding you accountable.

kelly [00:41:04] not sorry. White silence is violence.

jessie [00:41:08] Exactly.

transition [00:41:13] [jaunty string music plays]

kelly [00:41:14] Finally, it's time for Shipwrecked, a segment about asexuality, sexuality, sex, romance and relationships. And sometimes we'd take liberties and do some shipping of our own. This is not a hetero normative book. I loved that we had a lot of non straight people, especially among the Aika. I think that that's maybe a parallel to how many queer and trans Black indigenous people of color are really leading movements of resistance right now. So I think that that's really important to uplift.

jessie [00:41:50] Yeah, and I think it's good too because it really normalizes that, because I didn't write anything down for shipwrecked, but I didn't even know.

kelly [00:41:58] You didn't!

jessie [00:41:59] You know? But I also like was just like, OK. Yeah. There's like lots of different relationships going on. And I didn't even think twice about it.

kelly [00:42:07] I think we have to give props, you know, and not just like,.

jessie [00:42:09] Yeah, for sure. But I also think it shows like the products we've made in YA. But like also the progress we've made as a society where like like I didn't even notice because I'm just like everything just seems normal.

kelly [00:42:22] Yeah! It's just it's so important. I just like I think we're reading the right things clearly.

jessie [00:42:26] Yeah, I hope so.

kelly [00:42:29] So you mentioned this a little bit earlier in the gender section, but I wanted to talk about the teacher mentor relationship between Zeile and Mama Akba. And I just it just seems so wholesome And it's just I don't think those relationships are really important. And when you don't have teachers and mentors that really see you. I think that's does a lot of damage to young people. And so I just I love this character and appreciateed also how she's interacting with a Amari. And I think because she has a little bit more distance and more perspective, she can see that Amari basically, if she hadn't taken the scroll from her father, like none of this would have happened at all. So, like, Mama Akba has a little bit of the grace, I think. And to be able to like hold Amari in all of her contradictions. Right? And then also really like in treating her, treating her with kindness, like I think that Mama Akba's reaction to what Amari was going through is one of the reasons why Amari was able to, like, start on the path towards repair and being like, no, I'm going to be accountable and I'll be responsible for what I did. And I'm gona do things differently in the future.

jessie [00:43:47] Yeah. And I think we kind to see this in juxtaposition to in Nehanda , who should be that kind of figure to Amari and Inan.

kelly [00:43:55] Right.

jessie [00:43:56] So we kind of see, like, the damage she's done to both Amari and Inan in not being a good teacher slash mentor .like I know she's their mom. But I think I think it's reasonable to expect your parents to be good teachers and mentors. [laughs] Even though we don't really see that in the books that we read. Apparently, most parents are trash.

kelly [00:44:16] Or like, I don't know. Outside of the fictional world, either sometimes.

jessie [00:44:23] Oh, yeah. Yeah, for sure. But I think we could see that as a juxtaposition like, yeah, Nehanda is teaching both of her children terrible things about how to walk through the world, whereas Mama Akba is really teaching them to teach, you know, to treat people with kindness. And it might be a good person.

kelly [00:44:42] And along the same lines, I think this book really highlights the importance of elders especially. In like legacies of resistance and struggle for liberation and why that it's so important to be able to learn from, you know, ancestors of the path and like for me, a lot of those people are like the books I read and, you know, my life, the connections I have in like IRL. But. I think that in specifically, like where I grew up, white culture, there's not as like white culture as if that's a thing, right? I mean, it is, but like.

jessie [00:45:22] You have no cuture! [laughs] other than like pumpkin spice lattes.

kelly [00:45:29] [laughs] Just Leeches, cultural leeches. But I don't know what I was trying to go with that, but I just. Like, this is something that my community doesn't have as much. And so something I'm trying to, like, curate for myself and learn about. And I think that, like, white culture really does itself a disservice.

jessie [00:45:51] Well, I think we kind of see that actually, because you're talking about like the books that we read and, you know, learning from people from the past, especially people who have been involved in other movements. But we kind of see when they go to get the scrolls, like sometimes the written word can be very important in teaching future generations. And I really like that about this book that, you know, even if you don't have a person you could go to, you can look to the past and see where people have been and what lessons they learned there.

kelly [00:46:22] And that we do see the young people becoming the elders that need that need to exist for the current moment in time. And I just I really like that messaging. And I think that that's exactly what's happening.

jessie [00:46:34] Yeah, for sure.

kelly [00:46:37] We have a wee love triangle with Zeile, which I think then we could mention. I don't know. I think I have a guess about who you ship Zeile with, but I'm curious what you think.

jessie [00:46:52] I struggle with this because I don't really like either of them that much.

kelly [00:46:56] Yeah.

jessie [00:46:57] I feel like, OK. I know you think I'm gonna pick, Rowan, right?

kelly [00:47:00] Yes! I did think that.

jessie [00:47:03] But I think Inan is Just like on this different path that I'm, like, really appreciative of, like he's actually learning from his mistakes and like, well, Rowan seems to like all of her kind of. I just think in Inan's heart is in the right place. And I don't know something about Inan ...

kelly [00:47:21] Are you going soft on me?

jessie [00:47:23] I think maybe.

kelly [00:47:24] Okay.

jessie [00:47:26] I'm sorry. I think I pick Inan. [laughs].

kelly [00:47:29] That's what I ---. That's who I pick. No, that's who I pick. OK. I think Rowan is a blip on the radar. I hope she gets some like action and taps that ass and then goes back to her soulmate or whatever. Or doesn't or doesn't. Maybe she. Fine, maybe she doesn't.

jessie [00:47:46] Yeah. He kind of reminds me of Nikolai a little bit.

kelly [00:47:51] Yeah.

jessie [00:47:52] Which is fine. But at the same time, I'm just like, I already have a Nikolai, [laughs] his name is Nikolai. I don't need another one.

kelly [00:48:01] Yeah, I did see. Yeah. It's like the irreverent merchant mercenary type. Yeah.

jessie [00:48:07] Yeah. But not as. Not as like. Not as cute as funny to me. So I'm just kind of like, I don't understand.

kelly [00:48:16] And we don't have a lot of character development with him.

jessie [00:48:19] No, but we like him more the next one. I don't know. I have thoughts for the next one.

kelly [00:48:23] although I did cry when--.

jessie [00:48:27] Oh Really?!

kelly [00:48:30] We talked about this before recording. I'm more of a crier than Jessie is. Stone cold.

jessie [00:48:36] It Isn't saying very much.

kelly [00:48:37] Yeah that's true.

transition [00:48:38] [jaunty string music plays]

jessie [00:48:42] Now we're going to talk about writing style narration and characterization, plot structure and basically whatever else comes to mind in a segment called Kill Your Darlings.

kelly [00:48:50] Shout out to the artists who do the cover work and the book designers and the map and the font. It's just beautiful. It got better on book two and I thought book one was already gorgeous.

jessie [00:49:01] And it's very cohesive with book format. I think they do a good job like sinking those two things up.

kelly [00:49:09] Yeah.

jessie [00:49:09] My husband was like, didn't you already read that book? And I was like, no, this is a different book. And then I showed it because, like, children children's book covers on the back cover. He's like, Oh yeah, I recognize that book. And like, he doesn't read any of this stuff. So.

kelly [00:49:22] It's like good branding, honestly.

jessie [00:49:24] Yeah. Yeah. Like, really good. Like somebody who doesn't read YA was like they were like, hey, that book looks familiar to me.

kelly [00:49:30] Right. And then and it's also just so grab it like it's so attractive, like when you -- like it catches your eye on the bookshelf. You know, it's just beautiful.

jessie [00:49:38] Yeah. and they did actually did a really good job showing like the the progress of Zelig because remember the last one, her hair is like not as curly and coily and stuff. So we see like also her her progress from book one.

transition [00:49:51] [spellcasting sound]

jessie [00:49:54] OK. I have something to say that comes up a lot when I'm reading books or watching movies or TV or whatever. And that is making future plans. That's what you call it when we're watching something and someone makes future plans. And this is how I know a side character will almost certainly die. [kelly laughs] Mazeli is making plans for Zelig to have his children, which is really annoying to me.

kelly [00:50:16] I Agree that was annoying.

jessie [00:50:17] As soon as you said that, I was like, oh, he's going to die. He's making future plans. If you make future plans, you will die. [both laugh] If you were a character, do not make future plans.

kelly [00:50:27] Just don't do it. Like how you don't split up in a horror movie.

jessie [00:50:31] Exactly.

kelly [00:50:32] that'sThat's so true. I also noticed, like, he was just so Mzaeli's just so like earnest and pure and link, just like so loves Jagun Jagun. I also I knew that he was going

to die. I knew it. I knew it. I wasn't surprised because like it was Zeile needed another dark night of the soul, you know. So that was that for her again in this book. But yeah, that's a that's a good a little tell. I would call it.

jessie [00:51:03] yeah. for sure. That's all I have to say about that. And I will mention it forever and ever. I'm just like, yeah, I knew they were going to die. They made future plans. I'll probably regret this later, but I love the scene in Chapter twelve where we see Zeile losing her faith in the gods because of all the terrible things that have happened to her. As a Black person, I can really relate to that. What God would allow our people to be enslaved, tortured, beaten and murdered. This really reminded me of, like, Ta-nehesi Coates. He's atheist. And I don't see this lot in the Black community. So I appreciate seeing this. And that's that's it.

jessie [00:51:41] That you appreciate, like seeing the crisis of faith depicted?

jessie [00:51:44] Yeah, yeah.

kelly [00:51:46] Even though she goes back to the gods afterwards?

jessie [00:51:49] Like I said, I knew I would regret it. But it's it's fine. People can make their own decisions.

kelly [00:51:56] Yeah, it's true. It's true.

jessie [00:51:58] I just. I just. I just relate to that questioning of faith. You know?

kelly [00:52:05] Yeah. Well, I don't because I'm not Black and have not experienced this stuff. So,.

jessie [00:52:10] Yeah, I think you see it does in other communities as well.

kelly [00:52:14] I mean, I was raised super like Presbyterian is like the whitest denomination ever. So that's what I was raised and then became a rather militant atheist at the age of 12.

jessie [00:52:25] Yeah.

kelly [00:52:26] And now I don't know. Now I do tarot and have a wand. Yeah, so

jessie [00:52:30] Pretty cool.

kelly [00:52:32] Things change.

jessie [00:52:34] Yeah, totally.

transition [00:52:35] [spellcasting sound]

jessie [00:52:39] I think this is why you thought I would pick Rowan. But with his metal arm, I am now forever more picturing Rowan as Sebastian Stan as the Winter Soldier,.

kelly [00:52:48] Yes!! [laughs].

jessie [00:52:49] A.k.a. my future husband,.

kelly [00:52:51] Making future plans.

jessie [00:52:53] I Know. Well, I will almost certainly die at some point. Yeah, I am the lead in my story, so I can make it. I am No one's side character! [both laugh].

kelly [00:53:03] I totally. Oh my God. I didn't. I actually didn't think of this until I read your show notes. And I'm like, oh, that's so perfect. It's such a good corrolary. And also hot. Totally.

jessie [00:53:18] Yeah. And he's super hot.

kelly [00:53:19] Do you Sebastian Stan?

jessie [00:53:22] Eyyy, Yeah. I know that's what you wanted. That's all. That's all right. Just a positive role.

transition [00:53:32] [spellcasting sound]

jessie [00:53:32] Um, the ending left me feeling like slavery may be where the story is going in the next book. Perhaps taken by Rowan's old crew. Seems like kind of separated off from them, although he has joined back up with them. I'll be very pissed. And I mean, that's very Winter Soldier-esque, maybe his mind has been erased and he is back.

kelly [00:53:54] Have we seen this movie before? [laughs].

jessie [00:53:55] What? Oh Well, I've seen this movie before. I know only a few times. But anyways, I do think that might be where the story is going. And I'm like, oh, I am like...

kelly [00:54:10] How do you feel about that?

jessie [00:54:12] I feel wary, weary. Both. I don't want to read that. I will, but I just finished the graphic novelization of Kindred and I'm just like, I don't know, like I will have to be in the right mindspace to read it if that's where this is going. And I will read it, but it just takes some mental preparation.

kelly [00:54:38] Yeah, I think that I was I was the cliffhanger was shocking to me. And I agree with your predictions, I especially think the guess of being taken by Rowan's old crew, as is particularly on the nose.

jessie [00:54:52] They were very upset.

kelly [00:54:54] They were. Yeah, I am. I had the same thought. Which I think is important then to like make explicit that. I don't know -- Just like how enslavement is so woven into what we expect or think about when you think of Black stories.

jessie [00:55:23] Mm hmm.

kelly [00:55:25] And so. I don't know. I don't know what to do with that, I guess. Like yeah. It's like obviously incredibly important to talk about. and write about. I'm I'm just really I'm

curious to see what Adeyemi does. she surprised us with this one, so I wouldn't. I mean, she'll probably surprise us with book three.

jessie [00:55:47] For sure. And it might not go in that direction. Just like maybe she wants us to think that's the direction it's going in, which is also obviously that's her choice, her book or her book, her choice. But I am interested to see where it goes. I hope I'm wrong, but I'm also at the same time, it's kind of hard because these books are so popular, not just within the Black community. Maybe it is important that white people realize like the trauma of slavery because like it's depicted so like nicely in like books and TV shows otherwise sometimes,.

kelly [00:56:22] And how there is such-- like It's so prevalent, especially among the white white consciousness, to assume that like Black history starts with sleep enslavement. And it does not.

jessie [00:56:32] For Sure.

kelly [00:56:33] But that is definitely like the the chronology of the Black experience is like truncated in our popular imaginary, you know, like it's it's just about this.

jessie [00:56:45] For sure.

kelly [00:56:46] Which is definitely not true.

jessie [00:56:47] Yeah. Yeah, and but it also the same time I'm like, like maybe ready for, like a palate cleanser a little because this book is like. These books are really heavy.

kelly [00:56:57] Yeah. they are.

jessie [00:56:57] And so now reading I'm like a fun romance book, which is probably good for my mental, but also good like with a Black protagonist. So you kind of get like...well actually it's a book you would probably really like.

kelly [00:57:10] Oh Yeah? What's it called?

jessie [00:57:12] Take a hint, Dani Brown [by Talia Hibbert]. The first—it's the second book in the series about like these three sisters. The first one is to get a life, Chloe Brown. They're really cute. Really small.

kelly [00:57:23] I'm also going to – I'm also going to read a palate cleanser after this, I think.

jessie [00:57:27] Yeah, yeah, this is good. The book is really good. I don't mean that in Like, it left a bad taste in my mouth, but it's like it's heavy and maybe it's time for something like light and fun,.

kelly [00:57:39] Which like. Yeah. Maybe not for me, though, I guess. For me it's like a both and and you know what I mean? Like, I'm not. Yeah, I'm this sort of stuff, but I.

jessie [00:57:51] Yeah. I got you.

transition [00:57:55] [jaunty string music plays]

kelly [00:58:00] Recommend, if you like...

jessie [00:58:01] OK. I have three recommendations. That's my new goal, is to have at least three recommendations because I'm a future librarian. A future book witch. I used novelist and library thing to get these recommendations because I didn't have, like good like direct recommendations because I just didn't. I can't read everything.

kelly [00:58:22] For me, it's more like I read this book. I read these books. And now I'm so excited to, like, read all of the other West African inspired fantasy novels. Y.

jessie [00:58:32] YEah. Yeah. So Kingdom of Souls [by Rena Barron] for books with West African setting and strong female characters. That might be the only other one we've read for the show and maybe the only other one I've read outside the show as well. Set in West Africa.

kelly [00:58:46] We have a lot of other ones coming up on this season's reading list.

jessie [00:58:50] For sure. The Cruel Prince series [by Holly Black] if you like court politics, which we have done episodes for. And then King of scars [by Leigh Bardugo], if you like books that are fast paced. I haven't read it yet. But it was recommended for that reason.

kelly [00:59:04] I have read it and I would agree that it's fast paced with lots of twists.

transition [00:59:08] [jaunty string music plays]

jessie [00:59:12] Before we end, it's time for a real talk. Did reading this book make your perspective change in any way, or did it make you interrogate a concept system or trend you haven't before?

kelly [00:59:22] One thing is that I want to talk about this a little bit more meta that we talked about at the top a little bit is the quarantine slash ISO slash pandemic are definitely impacting what and how I read. And so I was curious if you want to talk about this a little bit more in-depth. So for me, at least, it's been harder to concentrate on, like written books, like written texts. Audio has been a really good medium for me. That's like keeps my ADHD brain engaged and I can knit or sew or something. And especially now it feels like, even harder to concentrate on reading. I don't know how. What do you think?

jessie [01:00:10] Yeah, I agree with that. I think I mean, part of it might be that I have I have gotten on this really weird schedule which people might notice if they see, like me posting to Instagram stories at like 3:00 in the morning. [laughs] So, like before bed, normally I would read, but --not-- I've been trying to break the habit, but for the last couple months, I've been like online scrolling Pinterest or something, something that it's like very unrelated from the pandemic. And that makes me feel good about things. Or Tumblr. I created a Tumblr I like just filled it with happy things.

kelly [01:00:44] oh! I love it!

jessie [01:00:45] Yeah. so that's been nice. But reading for some reason has been kind of difficult. I've been doing a lot of baking and a lot less, just like sitting down and still and doing nothing. And I think that might be part of it. Like, I feel like the need to be doing

something. Because I can't go anywhere and do something. Like it used to be that we would like leave and maybe just go to target and walk around or, you know, go to grocery store or whatever for. Even for small stuff, but it's just like been home a lot more baking. Cooking. I don't know. Maybe it's because it takes a lot of headspace to like you know, bring in packages from outside and thinking about all these things, in addition to, you know, the Black Lives Matter movement, which is going on in. You know, all the news about the murder of Black people.

kelly [01:01:39] Mm hmm.

jessie [01:01:40] It's been a lot. You know, there's a lot going on. And a lot of headspace being taken up.

kelly [01:01:46] And I guess it I mean, people who... Like listeners or follow the show or readers or whatever, might not know. I mean, they know that we're both like boonies and chronically ill, but might not know that we are both immunocompromised and thus.

jessie [01:01:59] Right.

kelly [01:01:59] Homebound for this pandemic for the foreseeable future until we there's herd immunity or a vaccine that people like, not a live vaccine. So a vaccine that we could actually take. Yeah. Like, that is some important context, I think, for people who might not know that about us. So like Jessie and I literally do not leave the house. Like, I walk my dog sometimes, but that's it.

jessie [01:02:24] Yeah, I've gone on a couple walks, but since, like the middle of March and it's June 28th [2020] when we're recording recording this. I have left my house twice and both of them having to go to the doctor. And I know that seems like wild to people, but it's just like because of the medication I'm on, like I could live it like I'm at a higher chance of getting coronavirus and I'm at a higher chance of having complications from that. And it's not worth it. So it's just it's weird to be home all the time, even though I'm an introvert and i love being home. It's also we're about to be able to, like, go grab something if I need it and, you know, have to wait so you can set up groceries to be delivered or packaged.

kelly [01:03:06] And it means that, like, getting the mail is a bazillion times more stressful than it used to be because like.

jessie [01:03:10] Yeah. Yeah.

kelly [01:03:12] The germs.

jessie [01:03:14] Yeah.

kelly [01:03:15] I mean, it's always been sr---, like we've always been wiping things down and washing our hands, probably more than average people. Way more than the average person. So like it's nice that people are, like, actually paying attention to that stuff now. But if you could be all if you could just like keep taking it seriously, because when you make a pandemic a sick people's problem only That's how we get a pandemic. So all y'all abelds out there.

jessie [01:03:40] Wash your hands. Wear your mask. Don't go to restaurants.

jessie [01:03:44] Like stay safer at home. I mean, I know it's a privilege to be able to do that, but like .

jessie [01:03:49] Yeah. But I mean if you can.

kelly [01:03:51] Yeah, yeah.

jessie [01:03:54] I already talked about on my bi racial issues and my privilege. So that probably could have gone in real talk.

kelly [01:03:59] That was really real. It really was.

transition [01:04:06] [jaunty string music plays].

kelly [01:04:06] Thanks for listening to JK, It's magic. We'll be back in two weeks for a discussion of Queen of Nothing by Holly Black. The second book in the Folk of the Air series. Right? Isn't that what it's called?

jessie [01:04:16] The Third Book.

kelly [01:04:18] The third Book and vocables it series. Wicked King was the second one. [laughs]

jessie [01:04:22] Yeah.

kelly [01:04:23] As always, we'd love to be in conversation with you magical folks. Let us know what you think of the episode, something we missed, or just say hi by dropping a line in the comments or by reaching out to us on Twitter or Instagram @jkmagicpod. Post or tweet about the show using the hashtag critically reading, and you can contact us via email at Jk Magic Pod at gmail Dot Com.

jessie [01:04:45] You can subscribe to Jaquet, its magic on the podcast, Your Choice, and we really appreciate it. If you would rate and review the show and spread the word to other RAD readers out there for interest in supporting J.K. its magic. You can make a One-Time donation to us on Ko-fi. You can also support us monthly on Patreon in exchange for mini-sodes, bonus eps, swag and much more. Or buy some books from our book shop.

kelly [01:05:06] Slash If you're just critically reading and talking to people about it, you're supporting us. Kelly is recording on Cheyenne, Ute and Arapaho Land. Jesse is recording on Peoria, Kaskaskia, Peankasha, Wea, miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawottamie, Ojibway and Chickasaw Land. Until next time, stay magical.

transition [01:05:34] [jaunty harpsichord and string music plays]