

## **Book Gang Podcast Transcript: New Historical Fiction to Read in 2024**

**Cindy Burnett 0:00**

Hi, my name is Cindy Burnett, I'm the host of the Thoughts From a Page podcast.

**Amy Clark 0:13**

You're a familiar voice around here; I don't feel like I need to really introduce you we have so much overlap in our lives. If people are not familiar with you, though, we do encourage you to listen to our introductory episode because Cindy tells you a lot about her reading life and how she started her podcast and this space, which we are so happy to be featuring today on the show.

Cindy, welcome over to my space. I'm so excited to have you here.

**Cindy Burnett 0:38**

I'm excited to be here. It's fun to be on the flip side.

**Amy Clark 0:41**

Yeah, I know. Is it weird?

**Cindy Burnett 0:42**

No, not at all. I have done that a number of times. But I always enjoy it because I just feel like it's a lot more relaxing

**Amy Clark 0:47**

Good. Well, I thought for today's icebreaker, because we are talking about historical fiction, I'm really happy that you're the one who is going to guide us into this next book stack.

But I wanted to start out with maybe just a memorable historical fiction book, or how you even got started in historical fiction. And I'll lead with this one because it's kind of a funny story. My very first like really memorable historical fiction book is totally out of my wheelhouse. But I joined a book club where each person got to pick the book that they wanted to lead with. And my friend Carrie picked *The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follett.

That was so out of my wheelhouse. It was so long, my kids were so so little. And we hosted that book club chat in a Chick-fil-A play area, I will never forget this. And we're talking so long and in depth about this beautiful book. And it still remains one of my very favorite historical fiction books. And that was the first time I'd been really pushed out of my wheelhouse with my reading life. So I would love to hear maybe your first memorable historical fiction book you've tackled first.

**Cindy Burnett 1:55**

That's so funny that you mentioned Ken Follett, because I just interviewed Stephanie Dray this week about one of the books I'm going to talk about, which is becoming Madam Secretary. And she mentioned Ken Follett, and I was saying, I've never read them. So that's interesting. They're so big!

**Amy Clark 2:09**

I will say about that book, it moves at such a good pace. And I was so enveloped in it that it never felt like a big book, when I was reading it. It was getting over that hurdle, like that mental hurdle. Like when you pick it up, and you look at it, and you're like, I don't think I can commit. It just went by so fast I was. So the whole experience was unexpected for me.

**Cindy Burnett 2:32**

He had a book come out in this fall. And I was telling her that I was talking about that, because I actually didn't realize he was even still alive. And then he had a book come out. And I was like, oh!

But my most memorable first book was *The Book Thief* by Markus Souza, is I read that book. So I just thought it was phenomenal. And I read it. And I just loved the way he had death being the the narrator and told the story pulled you into a time period that existed many things that happened, but there was so much else going on. So I just love it and continue to still tell people is one of my favorites.

**Amy Clark 3:04**

That's a beautiful book. I think that's a great start for anyone who is looking for either a really big tome of a book or something like that. It did introduce me to World War II historical fiction. I really, really was down a rabbit hole with those kinds of books, especially when I first started reading historical fiction. So I'm glad that you brought that one.

**Cindy Burnett 3:25**

And that was before all the World War Two books. It is true.

**Amy Clark 3:29**

I want to talk a little bit about historical fiction just in general. And I was wondering if you think there any misconceptions that we have that you would like to debunk for people who haven't embraced historical fiction in their life that you think should maybe rethink that decision?

**Cindy Burnett 3:47**

I don't know that I necessarily have any misconceptions. But I think historical fiction, the definition of historical fiction varies widely, like people will call something historical fiction. And I'll

be like, that isn't historical fiction. So I stick with a pretty standard definition story set at least 50 years ago, and that are bound in reality, not fantasy or magical realism.

So true stories are stories that actually could have happened, and at least 50 years ago. So with that definition, I think that at least gives some guidance as to, you know, where I, where I go, and my historical fiction reading. The other thing that happens, and we're going to talk about this a little more in a minute, is that there are all of these conversations all the time about historical fiction and whether it should really follow closely someone's life when it's biographical fiction, or whether it shouldn't I'm strongly in the camp. If you're gonna tackle a person, you need to follow their life closely. You need to not introduce characters that didn't exist. You need to follow what happened with them versus making all of these things up. But I think a lot of people feel differently. It's something that really does seem to elicit a lot of strong opinions.

#### **Amy Clark 4:51**

It's an interesting trend, right? I feel like for a time at least, I was reading a lot of stories of very empowered women. And so these were often stories that didn't happen or there, they would be fabricated, I guess around an idea of someone. And I did find myself being really into that for a while. But then you dive into the author's notes. And maybe you're like, Wait, so did this happen? Or did it not happen? Is this fantasy? Is this historical fiction? What's happening in this fight?

#### **Cindy Burnett 5:24**

I agree with that. And to me, fantasy doesn't really belong in historical fiction, because historical fiction is taking place in history. So fantasy obviously didn't, but I think it has its own place. It's just not in historical fiction.

But I will say there was a book last fall, I think, or maybe it was the fall before that. Miss Del Rio and Barbara Mihika wrote the story about Dolores del Rio. And she used a narrator, who was made up an assistant to Miss Del Rio's to tell Dolores del Rio story that actually worked beautifully well, because she didn't make anything up about Dolores, she just created this person who could tell the story. And that worked really well for me

And in the end, she said, no, this person isn't real. I used her as a method of telling the story. So I didn't have to tell it from first person.

But I've read other books where media about like Jackie Kennedy, and she's having a relationship with someone she didn't have a relationship with, that drives me crazy, because I finished and I'm like, that person didn't even exist. So I do feel like and I know that that is, like I said, a hot topic. But if you're going to take on people like Francis Perkins, who we're going to talk about in a little bit, then you need to follow Francis Perkins life not make up a lot of stories about.

#### **Amy Clark 6:30**

Yeah, Jackie Kennedy is like a figure that I feel like I've seen told so many different kinds of stories like what comes to mind immediately is Stephen Rowley's, the editor, right? That's a pretty good example of a relationship that didn't exist, but that were intrigued by some element of history. And it gives readers an escape for sure. But I don't know if I would like qualify that is historical fiction, right?

**Cindy Burnett 6:58**

That's what I was just gonna say, I love that book. I love Steven Rowley. I love that book. But I don't think of that as telling Jackie Kennedy story. I think of that, as somebody taking Jackie Kennedy and putting them into somebody else's story just for purposes of narrative, you know, as a narrative device, versus saying, I'm reading the story about Jackie Kennedy, there was another book, and I'm trying to think of the name of it right now, that was written where it was all about her time in Paris, and they, the person made up this whole relationship she hadn't had. And so it got to the end thinking this person had existed and he hadn't. And that's where it trips me up. I don't really love that. Yeah,

**Amy Clark 7:32**

It's funny. When it comes to stuff like that. I feel like that's where you see or identify really polarizing reviews, right? Some people enjoy that kind of escape. And then some people were like, this didn't even happen. So I can't support this kind of book. And I always see those as either being like five-star or one-star kind of experiences for people when things are fabricated.

**Cindy Burnett 7:55**

Absolutely. And if you're going to take on a story like that, why take on a real person and invent all this stuff for them? Why don't you just write about fictional characters? Generally, you know, yeah,

**Amy Clark 8:03**

Well, we want to talk about trends and what's happening in historical fiction right now. You're someone who definitely has their pulse on what's happening with new books. What are you seeing, or particularly excited about for 2024?

**Cindy Burnett 8:18**

We know it's been fascinating to me, and I mentioned it a minute ago, World War Two, I actually still like World War Two stories. I don't read them as often as I used to, because I've just read so many of them, but I still enjoy them. And I think the world was, I think the war was long it. It spanned many countries, many different people. So there are still stories to be told. But I think people are growing pretty weary. And the books are still coming out at quite a clip.

So I'm kind of curious to see if we're going to see a change in that if they're going to be fewer coming out, or if they'll continue to just generate more and more World War Two books. So

that's one thing. The other thing that I'm loving is all of these stories about women lost to history, we're seeing more and more biographical fiction as what they're calling it now historical fiction, but about actual people like Francis Perkins, and some of the other stories that have been coming out. And I love that I love learning about these women that I didn't know very much about or didn't know at all. In her case,

**Amy Clark 9:10**

I'd love to see World War One being embraced a little bit more, I too, have felt not as drawn, I would say to World War Two stories, because I got to the point where, even though every single one brings a new viewpoint, and I'm always glad that I read that I don't find myself looking for that in my book stack. But In Memoriam for example, by Alice Winn, was a book that took me out of World War Two put me in World War One, and I was like, I don't know if I have really read a lot of stories in World War One. And it was a wonderful, wonderful historical fiction experience, partially because I don't ever immerse myself there. And

**Cindy Burnett 9:49**

I'm just ready for some non war stories. You know, I almost didn't read The Women which I'm going to talk about too, because the Vietnam War it's just nice to read about periods that don't involve wars, or at least these three big wars that that are often appearing. Yeah,

**Amy Clark 10:01**

Yeah, I completely agree. Well, what advice would you give to someone who is a new reader of historical fiction? Where would you find would be a good starting point for maybe visiting this genre for the first time,

**Cindy Burnett 10:15**

I think that Kristen Hannah does a really good job. Her books are everywhere, lots of people are going to have read them. So it's easy to talk about them with people. So I would definitely recommend her. Some of hers are favorites of mine, like I really liked the women. I really liked the four winds. So I think she's a great place to start. There are also a lot of authors that aren't quite as popular, but that have beautiful books coming out and have been out and I would think any one of them would be great. Yeah.

**Amy Clark 10:41**

Kristin, Hannah is a great entry point. I'm glad that you brought her up. I know she is a familiar household name for a lot of people. I remember reading her books, even when my kids were young and really getting something out of them. And obviously, it's it's a well known name. I also have to mention that, you know, The Women is narrated by Julia Whelan, who is a big fan favorite of our listeners.

So if you are looking to dive into her books and looking for maybe an audiobook experience, I also have to recommend that as well. So I'm glad that you brought her up. Well, I'm excited to hear about some of the historical fiction books that you would be recommending right now.

We're going to talk about new historical fiction books coming to shelves in 2024. I did mention these could be even recently published, they could already be out on store shelves for readers, or they could be some of the upcoming picks because I know you are screening, and I am screening for summer reading guide. And I'm so excited to hear what you have today for us, Cindy.

**Cindy Burnett 11:39**

Well, you know, we talked about this in our inaugural episode, but I had two big reading goals for 2020 For more historical fiction, because that is what I'm known for. And I looked back last year, and I ended up reading a lot of historical fiction titles that I liked, but I didn't read nearly as many as I normally do. So I said, Okay, that's gonna be a goal. And then nonfiction. I didn't read much nonfiction at all last year. So those two have been bumped up to the top for me. So I have been reading all sorts of great historical fiction, all sorts of great nonfiction. So the first three that I'm going to talk about all came out in February, and then I'll talk about a couple upcoming ones. It's perfect. I'm excited. So the first one is *The Queen of Sugar Hill* by Shonda Tate. Have you seen it?

**Amy Clark**

I have seen it but I have not read it.

**Cindy Burnett**

*The Queen of Sugar Hill* opens the night that Hattie McDaniel becomes the first black woman to win an Academy Award for her role as Mimi in *Gone With the Wind* and follows her life until her death from cancer at age 52. Well, how do you believe that winning this historical Oscar would change her career for the better both the role and the award created more problems for her instead, Blacks despised her for her depiction of a subservient Black slave to the point that the NAACP waged a full blown war against her and other actors felt that she portrayed Blacks very negatively, and white's disliked her for being too Black in the midst of the attacks on her how he continued to fight for more roles for Black actors, while also tackling housing discrimination and navigating numerous fraught romantic relationships.

I felt that Tate brought Hattie McDaniel to life in the most sympathetic but honest manner that had me rooting for her even when I didn't agree with her decisions.

This is such a fascinating time period in Hollywood. It's one of my favorite that Golden Age Hollywood era. And I headed down so many rabbit holes researching the people and the events contained in the book. Historical fiction fans will love this one and that's *The Queen of Sugar Hill*.

**Amy Clark 13:26**

And is this a debut novel?

**Cindy Burnett**

She's written all sorts of other books. She's written under the Shonda Tate Billingsley, and I think she's written a bunch of romance novels and things like that. But this, I think, is her first historical fiction.

**Amy Clark**

Oh, wow, this sounds really amazing. I am also a big sucker for old Hollywood. We had hosted Molly Fader for *The Sunshine Girls*, which was just a wonderful soapy kind of historical fiction novel. And she bought a huge stack of these old Hollywood books. And I was just immersed in that timeline for so long. So I'm excited to dig into this. I have actually been reading a romance. Very romantic story from Kennedy Ryan. That's called *Reel*. And it is about also about a Black Hollywood star navigating kind of doing a period piece around old Hollywood and I am loving it. So I'm excited about this pick. It sounds like it's right up my alley.

**Cindy Burnett 14:26**

It was just fascinating. She was very good friends with Clark Gable. And so that relationship is depicted and just all these other things that were happening behind the scenes in that time period. I loved it. I thought it was fascinating. People have thought that the book was going to take a look at how these earlier years and it doesn't it starts when she's winning the Oscar but that to me was the most interesting time period. Well,

**Amy Clark 14:47**

I can't wait to read it. I'm really really excited about this. I'm so glad that you brought it it has been on my radar but I needed that little spin that you just gave it so that I could go and pick it up.

**Cindy Burnett 14:57**

Well in the funniest thing was when I interviewed with Shonda we were talking about her cover because I'm always so fascinated by covers. And she's like, I really wanted them to have a woman facing away and I was like I had been like out there for the last two years saying these get rid of those women facing away covers. I said, your cover so much better.

**Amy Clark 15:17**

This makes me laugh. So we are hosting which it will be live now. A book designer whose books are getting rejected for women facing away books that are designed by other designers.

It's like we can't get over this hurdle from like a decade ago, to the remove the woman facing away cover that is like become such a big part of bookselling for some reason. I'm over it too.

**Cindy Burnett 15:44**

Oh, so over it. And it does seem like that is becoming one of the changes that we're seeing in 2024. And I'm so thankful, and there was some of it in 2023 as well.

**Amy Clark 15:53**

Well, what do you have for us next, Cindy?

**Cindy Burnett 15:55**

So I always love to read stories set in Texas since I'm in Texas, and particularly by Texas authors. So my next is a debut by a Texas author and it's *The Turtle House* by Amanda Church. Okay,

**Amy Clark 16:05**

I have this one on my Kindle. I just got approved for it. So tell me a little bit about this one.

**Cindy Burnett 16:10**

So Texan Amanda Churchill's debut novel is a beautifully written gem centered around family and coming to terms with the past, it toggles between World War Two era Japan and Texas in the late 1990s, where a grandmother and a granddaughter bond as they grow to know each other better while dealing with the secrets that trouble them. Well, I thoroughly enjoyed the whole book, my favorite parts were mini ghost tales about her early life.

They are filled with glorious descriptions of Japan and Japanese society before and during the war, including life as a Japanese war bride and the importance of turtles in Japanese society. Through these stories, Leah gains an understanding of her grandmother's pain and sacrifice and realizes that she too must deal with her troubles versus just avoiding them. It's gorgeously written such a beautifully heartwarming tale about family intergenerational relationships, love heartbreak, and how sometimes we have to persevere through hardship.

And all of the parts related to Japan are just stunning. I have a program through my Patreon group where we get books early and meet with the author prior to publication. And we did that with this one. And it's been the biggest hit I've had in the last two. Oh,

**Amy Clark 17:13**

I love hearing that. And I also love it when people are excited for debut authors, because I think those are just the most special books. We love to highlight those on here. So I'm really glad that you brought this one. Like I said, I do have it on my Kindle. It is in the ever growing pile of books that I intend to read. And I'm really glad to hear your validation on this one.

**Cindy Burnett 17:33**

It has a stunning cover to I mean, absolutely beautiful cover. And she has such an interesting story that tells all about the cover and how it came about. And I always love those.

**Amy Clark**

Was there anything surprising that you discovered when she did her interview with your book club? Well, she

talked a little bit about the way the story came about. And it's based loosely on her own grandmother's story. And she talked about there was a Japanese like war bride. There's a Japanese camp for the people that married there. And so she talked all about how there's a Facebook group related to that camp, and that people have all these photos and stories and how much she gained from that. And I thought that was really interesting is where the soldiers lived. And they had married housing and single housing and what it was like to be a Japanese war bride. There were classes. It was fascinating.

**Amy Clark 18:14**

Wow, okay, I am sold. This sounds really, really good. And several people

**Cindy Burnett 18:18**

I have said, well, I don't want another world war two book. But it's not a world war two book hardly at all. The only parts are related to what it was like to you know, to be Japanese and marrying an American soldier. But there's no war aspects. And then what it was like in Japan kind of building up to the war, but I don't really consider it a world war two book.

**Amy Clark 18:36**

Okay, good for people that are not looking for that this sounds like it would be a perfect fit right now. Exactly. Perfect. Well, what's third on your agenda? Well, third is

**Cindy Burnett 18:44**

The book that we've already talked about a little bit about, or at least the author, is The Women by Kristin Hannah. So as I think I mentioned before, I wasn't really interested in reading that book. I am fairly familiar with the Vietnam War. It's such a grim time period. And I thought, I don't need to read anything else about that work. But then people kept raving about the book. And so I was like, Maybe I should pick it up. So I had a copy. And I thought, I'll try it.

And I loved it. Okay, so I am very glad that I read it. I thought it was well worth reading, again, not based on an actual person, but she does. She did a lot of research about these nurses. And so she kind of creates a composite character and what it was like working as a nurse in Vietnam during the war.

**Amy Clark 19:24**

I've heard only wonderful things about this. So I'm not surprised that you ended up loving it to my sister is a nurse and she was reading it and sent me a text. I was like, have you read this yet? Our problem is typically that I'm always looking to see what my co host on Patreon is doing. And if he's read a book then I skip it because I'm like, Alright, I won't cover that. I don't have to worry about covering that. So I have this but I'm waiting until next month when it's my turn and then I can talk and revisit this book so I'm glad to hear that it was a hit. Are you a big Kirstin Hannah reader or not?

**Cindy Burnett 19:57**

I'm not really but what I liked about well I have read all of her historical fiction, I would say some of them have worked better for me than others. But I just love this one. And I love the four winds. What I really liked so much about this one is the first half is in Vietnam. So these nurses and what it's like working as a nurse during all of this, this horrible things that are happening, but the second half is what it's like when she gets home. And so you know, people in the US have no idea what's happening over in Vietnam, it's not being covered accurately in the news. People don't realize how grim and horrific it is and what it's like. So this nurse comes home and she's trying to reintegrate. And people don't want to hear about her time in Vietnam, they don't believe her stories when she says they're grim. And everybody's just going about their everyday lives. So I thought that part was actually even more interesting what it was like trying to come back.

And then I'm a huge music fan. I love 60s and 70s music. And one of my favorite parts of the book was that she just weaves in all of these great songs from that era, puts them in the right place where you kind of are like, oh, yeah, I can hear that. And I can see what they're doing. And that was one of my favorite aspects. So I would say I'm in the middle, and Kristin Hannah, but I really liked this. Okay,

**Amy Clark 21:03**

I'm kind of in the middle, too, I would say I loved The Great Alone, that was probably one of my favorites that she wrote.

**Cindy Burnett**

It actually was probably one of my least favorite of her book.

**Amy Clark**

So that that kind of shows the the contrast of I go down different paths with her writing, and, you know, necessarily her historical fiction. So I still want to read this. And I do want to say that for listeners, like it The Sunshine Girls, going back to that, it is also about nurses during the Vietnam War. It's a lighter version. So you could do that as a book flight. Depending on what kind of reader you are, both of those will offer Vietnam war perspectives, especially from nurses. And what I loved about that book, again, is about coming back. And it was also talking a lot

about the PTSD that other people were experiencing. But no one's noticing those kinds of things. I think those are so important.

**Cindy Burnett 21:56**

I thought that *The Great Alone*, the ending, just ruined. I mean, you know, there was it was so unrealistic. And I was like, there's just I really, that hangs me up more than anything in any genre, when a book ends like that, and I'm like, I can't do it. So it just kind of threw me out. And it was just so, like, I just was so ready for some of that abuse to end. You know, I was like, move on.

**Amy Clark 22:15**

Well...I think that my hurdle, I will be honest with Kristin Hannah is they are so emotional that a lot of times I'm like, okay, I can't do this anymore. Like *The Four Winds*. I was like, no, I can't do this anymore. This is agonizing. It's like there's no hope. Like, I can't do it. And that one just, it just didn't work for me.

**Cindy Burnett 22:33**

Right, no, and I know people who said that, but I'm like, that's what happened. So I guess to me, that's at least accurate. You know, there's nothing like fantastical like, I don't want to ruin it for people that haven't read *The Great Alone*. But you get to the end and you're like, yeah, so and so at least for me, I'm like, okay, like it is depressing, but it's real. Yeah, yeah,

**Amy Clark 22:51**

I guess we follow in different camps. I also was a big fan of *Firefly Lane* when it came out. And I know that one is also, you know, you either love it or you hate it. I enjoyed watching the TV series. I liked the lighter fiction that she offered prior to the historical fiction. So I'm also coming at it from probably a different lens. And if someone is just latching on to her historical fiction.

**Cindy Burnett 23:14**

I think that's right. And all that's too light for me. So I've never read any of it.

My next is becoming *Madam Secretary*, which I had been talking about already by Stephanie Dray comes out in March. And she writes about Francis Perkins, who was the first woman to serve as a US cabinet member. I vaguely knew Francis Perkins name. But if you had said to me, like, what does she known for, I would have had to say, I have no idea.

But she was the first US female, the first US female cabinet member, and she was secretary of labor under FDR. So she's a mother of Social Security. And she helped launch the New Deal. She is responsible for so many things that we take for granted today, like Social Security, and various aspects of the New Deal. The only thing she wasn't successful in passing was healthcare, which I think is so fascinating, since that continues to be a debate today.

But it's an enthralling story about a woman who would not be cowed by the men around her, and who paved the way for future women to serve in high powered government positions. I love learning about her her role as Secretary of Labor. Her professional relationship with FDR and FDR, in his early years is covered a lot in this which I was realizing I had not read much about, till I read this one, and then the period following the depression. So she includes this fabulous author's note at the end, where she does talk about the small changes that she made. She does, I've interviewed her and she talked about how when she takes on these real people, she doesn't feel comfortable altering the important details in their lives. But if she has to shift the date a little bit or, you know, merge a couple of things together that don't involve actual people, she's happy to do that. So I love that she includes an author's note like that, because I think when you're writing fiction, you do need to have a narrative arc and you need the story to move along. And some parts of people's lives aren't going to be interesting. And so you have to kind of eliminate some of that I thought it was fabulous. It was one of my first five star reads of the year.

**Amy Clark 25:03**

This one is for sure on my bucket list because everything about this sounds like something I would find fascinating and compelling. And I love learning, particularly about women in history that are doing something like this; the fact that she was adjacent to FDR, I'm in. That's all you needed to say. You didn't even have to say anything else. Top on my list for all the books that you brought so far. Well, we'll wrap it up. You have one more book.

**Cindy Burnett 25:29**

I do have one. And I haven't read this one. So did you read *The Stationary Shop*?

**Amy Clark 25:34**

We read that as a book club together! And it was truly a beautiful book.

**Cindy Burnett**

Yes, I love that book. So she has a new book coming out in July, *The Lion Women of Tehran*, and I'll just read the summary because I haven't read it yet. So 1950s Iran seven year old Ellie lives in Grand comfort until the untimely death of her father, forcing Ellie and her mother to move to a tiny home downtown. Lonely and bearing the brunt of her mother's endless grievances led dreams of a friend to alleviate her isolation. Luckily, on the first day of school, she meets Houma, a kind passionate girl with a brave and irrepressible spirit. They play games they learn to cook, they wander around the colorful stalls of the Grand Bazaar, but their happiness is disrupted when Ellie and her mother are afforded the opportunity to return to their previous life. Now a popular student at the best Girls High School in Iran, at least memories of Houma begin to fade years later, however, her sudden reappearance in Ellie's privileged world alters the course of both of their lives. So I've been hearing fabulous reviews, people have just been raving about this one.

It would be very disappointing if she could not follow up the stationery shop, which is one of my favorite books. Also, like if you're ever looking for a universal book that's beautiful on a bookshelf that you want to give as a gift that is a beautiful book. It's one that you could share with anybody, any generation of readers, and they will get something out of it. So I'm really excited to hear that she has another one coming out. I'm excited for summer reading. We're going to be getting ready for summer reading. I know you are too. How's it going? Are you are you at a good clock right now? What's going on?

**Cindy Burnett 27:05**

You know, that's such a good question. I it's going okay, I'm still reading like April, because this has been the craziest year truly, in terms of books coming out. I was just talking to somebody about this yesterday, March is insane. There are so many books coming out. So I've already filled my slots for the podcast. But there are still a number of books from March that I wanted to read. So I'm kind of working March, April, May. But I am slowly grabbing books from the summer. I've read a few the wedding people. And I loved that. And I'm trying to think I've read several others that I just loved. So there are some but yeah, it's going slow, I need to kind of pick up the pace for summer. How about well,

**Amy Clark 27:40**

You know, strategically what I do is I go from getting our book club ready and launched in that January, timespan and I go right into June, July, August, I skip everything pretty much in the spring. And I'm placing backless people a lot of times like in those slots. During that time, if something maybe catches my eye. That's not to say that that never happens. But it's almost like we're already moving into summer season, probably by March, we start airing those kinds of interviews, because we only do two shows a month. So it's really difficult to be able to like highlight every single person. So I'm already like, kind of moving on into the next space. So I skip a lot. And I rely on someone else to fill in the gaps because I've already moved on. And we just kind of fill people in on what's happening. So they know like, Okay, here's a book to get because we have already moved on, like they know that that's happening. And then once in a while, I'll weave in a couple of backlist books just to make sure that I'm not completely like alienating people from that experience.

**Cindy Burnett 28:41**

Well, that makes sense. And I mean, I usually run two shows a week. But March is so busy, I've ended up realizing I'm going to have probably three a week, because I keep reading these books. And I'm like, they're so good. And I really want to highlight them. And I only highlight the ones I love. And so I know it's difficult, but my biggest reading time, like in terms of the books I like, generally is February to May. So I couldn't get Yeah, you know, because that would be the times when most of the books I love are coming out.

Speaker 2 29:04

Yeah. And sometimes we hold them back for the summer reading guides. So we're like, Okay, we're going to, like reveal it then and hope that at that point, people will have already read it.

Sometimes it's kind of nice to wait, you know, a few months before it's introduced, because people are like, Oh, I can get it at the library or whatever that experience might be like for budget-minded readers. So we need all the people who kind of like the front-end promotion and the people in the middle and the people that are lagging in the backlist like me, sometimes those are great, too. Well,

**Cindy Burnett 29:32**

I don't even think it's lagging. I think it's just focusing on different things. And you're right, there are enough people in the space that if we all did the same thing, it'd be so boring. So that's great that you do Yeah.

**Amy Clark 29:40**

How are you keeping up with three shows? Or two or three Shows a week? How do you do that?

**Cindy Burnett 29:44**

Two shows isn't bad because I have a schedule and I just get people you know, I always read the book before I agree to an interview. So I'm usually several months out and then I just I have an editor so that helps a lot. And then yeah, just get them out. So it's not too bad. I mean that That's kind of my main focus.

I think your main focus is your blog. So for me, my main focus is the podcast. So it's easier to focus on that, you know, just depends on kind of what's the top priority!

**Amy Clark**

Yeah, totally get that. Well, I want listeners to be able to connect with you, Cindy. Where is the best way to find you and tell us a little bit about what you're up to right now?

**Cindy Burnett**

Oh, sure. So my website is Thoughts From a Page and it has everything that I do there, my podcast episodes, but I also write two or three book columns a month.

Well, actually, three book columns, but two are in print and one is online. And then the print one runs online after the month that it is up. And then I talk to book groups and I just do all sorts of stuff. So it's been keeping me busy lately, but I love it. Well, I'm impressed. I'm so glad that we got to have you here. I feel like we have a really great historical fiction book stack for our listeners.

**Amy Clark**

We will obviously link to everything in the show notes. We'll also link to Cindy's space where she has a historical fiction book list that you can browse around either for the books that were featured here or some other books that were backlist books that she has featured prior on her site so that you can really dig around in there.

And if you like the show, make sure to rate and review it. It would be so appreciated if you support the space on Patreon. That is just the best and I appreciate you very much.

**Cindy Burnett**

And I'm excited for you to come on my show next month.

**Amy Clark**

I can't wait, Cindy. It's going to be so much fun.

**Cindy Burnett**

Thanks for having me.

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