



## Waves of YA, Episode 9: What Makes a Female Heroine?

### ***Transcript:***

00;00;00;00 - 00;00;16;24

Cecilia

Hello and welcome to Waves of Y.A., a podcast focused on young adult literacy brought to you by the Ocean County Library's teen literacy workgroup.

00;00;16;27 - 00;00;24;16

Cecilia

My name is Cecilia, I'm one of the teen services librarians at the Toms River branch. Joining me today, we have

00;00;24;19 - 00;00;28;08

Kristen

Kristen, the teen librarian at the Little Egg Harbor Branch and

00;00;28;08 - 00;00;32;11

Summer

Summer, the teen librarian at the Long Beach Island branch.

00;00;32;13 - 00;00;59;06

Cecilia

In today's episode, we will be discussing the history of Y.A. heroines. We'll be discussing female protagonists, what makes them tick and why so many are at the forefront of young adult novels. We're going to talk briefly about the history of Y.A. and female leads through our own personal experiences and publication. I was trying to think about who was the first really well-received Y.A. heroine.

00;00;59;08 - 00;01;06;03

Cecilia

I think we can even go back even further, like Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë.

00;01;06;05 - 00;01;15;03

Summer

Yeah, Jane Austen. That's a good point, because her novels were really, also even like Louisa May Alcott, because her novels were written for young women.

00;01;15;06 - 00;01;25;18

Kristen

And just like our own personal experience with our first female lead, I don't know why, but I keep thinking about A Wrinkle in Time, which is not Y.A., but

00;01;25;18 - 00;01;35;12

Kristen

that was one of the first times that I came into contact with what I felt was a lead that was solving problems that was female.

00;01;35;14 - 00;01;50;21

Summer

Yeah. The first time you felt like wrecking that, that's the thing, because a lot of my first times are also Jane. Mine was probably apart from Harry Potter, mine was probably, have you ever guys ever read The Sisters Grimm?

00;01;50;24 - 00;01;51;09

Kristen

No.

00;01;51;14 - 00;01;53;29

Cecilia

I know what that is, but I've never read it.

00;01;54;04 - 00;02;13;04

Summer

That was, I feel like, one of, because I went through a period of time in a middle school where I only read Harry Potter consistently. I'm talking. I read one to seven, went right back to one. No breaks, because I'm crazy. But Sisters Grimm was something else I was really passionate about.

00;02;13;04 - 00;02;45;11

Summer

It's about these two girls that I think they're 8 and 12 and their parents are missing, and so they shuffled around to different foster homes and they keep escaping, and then they're finally sent to live with their paternal grandmother, who they thought was dead. And they find out that they are actually descendants of the Brothers Grimm. And all fairy tale characters are real and they live in this town called Ferryport Landing but they can't leave because there's this invisible dome around the town and they basically, like, solve fairy tale relatedness mysteries

00;02;45;13 - 00;02;52;00

Summer

and it sounds really silly, but it's like incredibly dark and well plotted.

00;02;52;03 - 00;02;54;09

Cecilia

It doesn't sounds silly. It sounds amazing.

00;02;54;11 - 00;03;11;12

Summer

It is amazing. It is amazing. And the main girl is Sabrina. She's like, if you are talking about oldest daughter syndrome or oldest daughter trauma, Sabrina is 12 and she's basically had to look after her 8 year old sister for over a year when their parents are missing and take on so much responsibility.

00;03;11;12 - 00;03;31;26

Summer

And she's so jaded by the world. It's an incredibly good series. It's like eight or nine of them. And so good also, not just very tale characters are real, but also like nursery rhyme characters and Shakespearean characters like Puck from Midsummer Night's Dream as a consistent character who's also like a 12 year old boy. And they have like a lot of antagonism between them.

00;03;31;26 - 00;03;33;06

Summer

And it's really funny.

00;03;33;08 - 00;03;55;23

Kristen

I think it's interesting to hear when you talk about Harry Potter and Hermione as like one of the first heroines in your, your memory. And like for me, I understand that we are different ages, like an intellectual level, but like for me, I'm like, what did we have before? Like Hermione and Katniss, what was there?

00;03;55;23 - 00;04;04;03

Kristen

And so like, yeah, I think of A Wrinkle in Time and it was a really powerful book for me, actually a powerful series, but it wasn't the same.

00;04;04;03 - 00;04;08;16

Summer

Like I feel like probably maybe like Little House on the Prairie.

00;04;08;21 - 00;04;09;07

Cecilia

Yes.

00;04;09;07 - 00;04;10;03

Kristen

Yeah,

00;04;10;05 - 00;04;16;27

Summer

Although I didn't read those, to be fair to you, last thing, I am the same age as the Harry Potter books that came out the year I was born.

00;04;16;29 - 00;04;21;06

Kristen

Right. It still doesn't feel like that big of a gap. But,

00;04;21;06 - 00;04;21;27

Summer

Yeah, it is though.

00;04;21;27 - 00;04;34;16

Kristen

It is. And feel like when I think about because now what did you just say? Not it wasn't Anna Green Gables. It was Little House on the Prairie. Little House on the Prairie. That was not on my radar at all.

00;04;34;19 - 00;04;40;01

Summer

Me either. But I know like it was for a lot of kids, like my mom, for example, right?

00;04;40;04 - 00;04;49;15

Kristen

So. Like, I have friends that are a gap of just five years older than me, and Anne of Green Gables was their thing. Right? So like.

00;04;49;17 - 00;04;54;11

Summer

But what about like, I feel like my from my mom to like, Pippi Longstocking was one for her.

00;04;54;15 - 00;04;55;02

Cecilia

Yeah. Yeah, that's a good one.

00;04;55;06 - 00;04;58;12

Kristen

Okay. That one, Pippi Longstocking was awesome, so.

00;04;58;14 - 00;05;06;22

Summer

I feel like what? I feel like a theme that we're seeing here is like with, like, Laura Ingalls, Pippi Longstocking, Anne of Green Gables.

00;05;06;22 - 00;05;25;08

Summer

It's all young girls who are rambunctious and adventure seeking, and who kind of go against the norm. I don't know what if Laura Ingalls did to the same extent because I didn't read those, but I feel like that is a theme with Pippi Longstocking and Anne of Green Gables. They're kind of like outliers.

00;05;25;10 - 00;05;27;10

Kristen

They didn't do what they were expected to do.

00;05;27;16 - 00;05;48;10

Summer

Yeah, they're kind of troublemakers, too, which I feel like. It depends. I guess it depends on when, what time of history you're reading these books. But when you're a young girl and you're kind of being told in some way or another how to act or how to behave, having role models that are kind of mischievous for lack of a better term, is kind of aspiring.

00;05;48;13 - 00;06;09;29

Kristen

Yeah. And as the years go on, it's a different thing that makes them like a rule breaker as their setting changes and what is considered a heroine, but also what is considered a rule breaker like against the norm, changes from Pippi Longstocking to Katniss Everdeen. Those are totally different things that make them out of the norm.

00;06;10;06 - 00;06;16;10

Summer

And I think it's also about seeing the freedom to explore.

00;06;16;10 - 00;06;25;17

Summer

And I think what's a real thing and Y.A. heroines is agency and being able to like carve out a place in the world to yourself.

00;06;25;24 - 00;06;36;10

Kristen

I guess that's the question is what makes a Y.A. heroine? What makes them? So you're saying like some of that is being able to carve out a place for yourself, but there's got to be other things, right?

00;06;36;12 - 00;06;49;28

Summer

Yeah, I think it's also that no Y.A. heroine is the same. Again, like agency and making choices that are right for you. Even if everyone else is telling you they're not.

00;06;50;00 - 00;06;50;24

Kristen

Yeah.

00;06;50;26 - 00;07;09;11

Summer

I think there's always a moment in these books where the heroine gets told that they can't do something or they shouldn't do something, or maybe there's, and the stakes differ in how high they are, whether it's like a threat of death or just someone telling you not to do something.

00;07;09;13 - 00;07;24;18

Summer

But it's about making your own choices and learning to rely on your own choices, even if they're the wrong choices and you learn from them, you're still making choices for yourself instead of what other people tell you to do, which is an important thing to learn as you grow up.

00;07;24;20 - 00;07;42;09

Cecilia

Yeah, I don't know if you guys have seen traits being different based on genre, if that's a thing, because I know in a lot of like fantasy that they have to be physically strong, but in like romance novels, maybe not the same way.

00;07;42;09 - 00;07;45;28

Cecilia

They are very like, emotionally intelligent.

00;07;46;00 - 00;08;14;09

Summer

Yeah, I think that changes with time too. Like, I think right in maybe early 2000s, dystopia was a big thing, maybe not early 2000s maybe I'm thinking more like 2010s, utopia was a big thing. So physical strength was a big attribute. But I feel like now in Y.A. I'm seeing a lot more physical strength, but also strength of will, I guess, and strength of character.

00;08;14;12 - 00;08;28;16

Summer

And also there's a sense of your strength also doesn't have to be pure. I feel like a lot of Y.A. heroines I read are also like kind of almost making bad choices.

00;08;28;17 - 00;08;43;14

Cecilia

Yeah, that was something when we were talking about this subject or thinking about doing this podcast, I was like a lot of characters nowadays are allowed to make mistakes and learn from them or just kind of live with the consequences of that.

00;08;43;14 - 00;09;03;06

Summer

And again, and it depends entirely on the world the story is based in, like, you know, the concept of secondary belief? The rules for this world are as such. So you have to accept that as the reader in order to proceed with your reading. My example is, have you ever read The Folk of the Air series by Holly Black?

00;09;03;08 - 00;09;06;07

Cecilia

That's one the only series I haven't read from her.

00;09;06;13 - 00;09;15;00

Summer

Well, I was thinking of Jude because she's that definitely the heroine, but she's also, Holly Black is so good at writing extremely complex.

00;09;15;01 - 00;09;15;25

Cecilia

Yes.

00;09;15;27 - 00;09;26;12

Summer

Not unlikable characters, but complicated characters, because I'm like, dude is definitely the hero of the story. But also she's straight up just she is okay with murdering people.

00;09;26;19 - 00;09;46;28

Summer

She does not. She does not. She has no qualms. And I think that makes her a good character because she's not like she doesn't have any well, maybe, you know, she's not like a sociopath, but she also doesn't have I don't think I can remember her even having a big emotional like upheaval, like what have I done? I'm a murderer.

00;09;47;05 - 00;09;51;14

Summer

I can never live with myself. She's like, okay, I killed somebody. We're going to move on.

00;09;51;16 - 00;09;52;11

Kristen

It happened.

00;09;52;14 - 00;09;53;10

Cecilia

Yeah.

00;09;53;13 - 00;10;07;10

Summer

And I think especially because the whole point of the story is that she lived in this really brutal fey world where she has to be brutal in order to live there. And so that, again, like the secondary belief, this is the world in which she lives.

00;10;07;10 - 00;10;10;03

Summer

And so there's a different kind of morality.

00;10;10;03 - 00;10;21;29

Cecilia

Basing characters where they grew up in their settings and whatnot, and being built by not just their experiences, but the society around them too.

00;10;22;02 - 00;10;24;18

Summer

Are you guys on TikTok?

00;10;24;20 - 00;10;25;15

Kristen

I am.

00;10;25;15 - 00;10;26;29

Cecilia

I've seen some.

00;10;26;29 - 00;10;34;02

Summer

Okay, there's this little audio clip that's like, I support women's rights, but more importantly, I support women's wrongs.

00;10;34;04 - 00;10;34;18

Cecilia

Yeah,

00;10;34;21 - 00;10;38;21

Summer

and that's what I was thinking while I was writing my notes down for this.

00;10;38;23 - 00;11;05;25

Cecilia

Yeah, I love when characters make you angry. Like, why did you do that? Why did you go there? That was the wrong choice. And then, you know, seeing the consequences of that or like maybe it did end up in the long run being okay, but teens today and people in general just seeing that other people are not perfect and make perfect choices and everything is tied up in a nice bow and it's not always the case.

00;11;05;29 - 00;11;19;02

Cecilia

Even your characters are really going to not end up with the people you thought they might end up with or not end up in the places. Or maybe some of them don't end up alive at the end because something happens.

00;11;19;04 - 00;11;33;19

Summer

And I think what the kind of the question what is a Y.A. heroine? I think the answer is kind of in the question, because I think for so long in media and movies and TV, people kept asking, well, what makes a Y.A. heroine?

00;11;33;19 - 00;11;59;29

Summer

And the answers changed over time. And maybe it used to be, oh, a Y.A. heroine is good and pure and fights for what's right and justice. Always does the right thing and is kind of perfect. But then maybe it changed overtime and, Oh, the Y.A. heroine is is physically strong and emotionally cold because all she thinks about is the bottom line.

00;11;59;29 - 00;12;24;02

Summer

And she's taught that she doesn't need anyone. And I think in the act of trying to define what this main female character is for, like, in air quotes, the strong female lead in the act of defining, it's also limiting. And I think now in fiction we see more than ever that the Y.A. heroine is so many things.

00;12;24;05 - 00;12;32;10

Summer

And that's what makes the act of reading so unique, because each person can find something different in that experience.

00;12;32;10 - 00;12;40;16

Kristen

And it makes them more multidimensional. They're more realistic because we're not always all things to all people, right? So like,

00;12;40;16 - 00;12;40;23

Summer

Yeah,

00;12;40;23 - 00;12;42;05

Cecilia

yeah.

00;12;42;08 - 00;12;51;08

Kristen

Or I like seeing Y.A. heroines in a series as they like develop. I don't know if you read The Good Girl's Guide to Murder series.

00;12;51;08 - 00;12;54;19

Summer

I have not. I read the first one. But, I know it's popular.

00;12;54;24 - 00;13;20;14

Kristen

It's Holly Jackson, and the premise is so there is a murder mystery. But also she, main character is doing a podcast and uncovering this murder. And so, like the first oh, the first book. I also really like the addition of podcasts to books, that's been really, I feel like that's been very an up and coming thing that has been happening and really adds something to the reading experience.

00;13;20;16 - 00;13;45;23

Kristen

But so she's got this podcast as part of her, like, I'm going to solve a murder, right? But as the series progresses, some decisions become more, morally gray. So like at the beginning it's like, yes, this is a good girl and she is going to solve a murder. And then as you move on, you're like, can we really call her a good girl anymore?

00;13;45;24 - 00;13;53;13

Kristen

What does a good girl mean? And some of the choices just get into this area where you're like, Hmm.

00;13;53;16 - 00;13;54;28

Summer

That's very interesting.

00;13;55;04 - 00;14;06;08

Kristen

Like, what? Yeah, like, what did I think when I picked up the first book? What did I think good girl meant? And then I get to the fourth book and I'm like, Okay, so things are a little different now.

00;14;06;10 - 00;14;07;16

Cecilia

There are four books?

00;14;07;19 - 00;14;09;03

Kristen

Oh, no. I think there are three.

00;14;09;07 - 00;14;09;26

Cecilia

Oh, okay.

00;14;09;29 - 00;14;27;01

Kristen

I misspoke. There are three. But even so, you get to the third book and you're like, Huh, What? Things have changed? Right? So yeah, I like seeing the way that the heroine changes over time, even Hermione. So you go back to Hermione, or you go back to Katniss.

00;14;27;07 - 00;14;33;27

Kristen

The things that Katniss was willing to do in book one are different than the things that Katniss was willing to do in book three.

00;14;34;00 - 00;14;45;29

Summer

Yeah, and I also like that whole thing about I haven't read A Girl's Guide to Murder, but I that is so interesting because it also takes on what you said, the concept of what is a good girl and is the term good girl.

00;14;45;29 - 00;14;52;02

Summer

Just something that has been pressed upon by the male gaze and purity culture as well.

00;14;52;05 - 00;15;02;17

Cecilia

So what are everyone's favorite Y.A. heroines? What comes to mind and character specifically come to mind that we haven't talked about recent ones? Favorite?

00;15;02;23 - 00;15;11;20

Summer

Well, this isn't my all time favorite of all time since I was a kid. But there are two that I read recently that have stuck out to me.

00;15;11;22 - 00;15;47;21

Summer

One is from the Y.A. duology. The first is called Behind the Flame and it's so good. It has a world set, sort of like how a lot of fantasy is set in a world that's coded as medieval Europe. This is a world that's coded as ancient Arabia. It has lots of eastern mythology and folklore. I also realize it's a classic quest tale about this girl and some other people going on a journey to this mystical island to find this ancient book to restore magic to the world.

00;15;47;21 - 00;16;12;02

Summer

So classic quests. And there's this girl named Zafira, Z-a-f-i-r-a, and she is just a really amazing character. She's strong and she's capable and she's very logical and pragmatic, but she also has a lot of heart. I just

really enjoyed seeing her growth from book one to book two, going from a small village girl to one of the saviors of the kingdom.

00;16;12;05 - 00;16;40;15

Summer

And I think everyone should check out that series. And I also read a book recently called A Winter's Promise, which is translated from French, and the series is called The Mirror Visitor and the main character in that's named Ophelia. And I like about her is that she's not outwardly strong or abrasive. She's very much willing to play to the sidelines and observe the world around her again in order to survive.

00;16;40;15 - 00;17;06;11

Summer

Like she knows logically the world that she's thrust into, she can't just go rampaging through it. And also she kind of doesn't want to because that's not her nature. Her nature isn't to be loud, so she stays on the sidelines and observes and spies and throughout the story learns to be stronger, but in a very subdued way, because that's just who she is.

00;17;06;11 - 00;17;22;08

Summer

And I've only read the first book, but I can already see the small changes in her character that she's going to go through within the next four books. And I think that really speaks to what it means to be strong, not just physically, but internally, like strength of character and strength of will.

00;17;22;10 - 00;17;25;19

Cecilia

Yeah, I don't know if anybody has seen this recently.

00;17;25;19 - 00;17;43;21

Cecilia

When we'll talk about trends later but a lot of fantasy series and science fiction series always end up like trilogies are longer multiple books by just seeing a lot recently contemporary novels and mysteries having series, with, is it Charlotte Holmes the a study in Charlotte that

00;17;43;22 - 00;17;44;01

Summer

Oh, yes.

00;17;44;01 - 00;17;47;08

Cecilia

That series has had multiple books,

00;17;47;10 - 00;17;54;12

Summer

Yeah like the Enola Holmes, which is not a new series, but yeah, it's become popular again,

00;17;54;14 - 00;17;56;03

Kristen

Truly Devious.

00;17;56;06 - 00;17;58;29

Cecilia

Truly, that, that, I can think of the series name for that.

00;17;58;29 - 00;18;06;27

Kristen

But yeah, I think that's the one I was thinking of. That was four books. And then I said the other one had four books, but. Yeah, I lied.

00;18;07;02 - 00;18;17;04

Summer

I do love the girl detective trope, like Enola Holmes or Nancy Drew, although Nancy Drew was the classic perfect Y.A. heroine, like she could do nothing wrong.

00;18;17;06 - 00;18;20;26

Kristen

I was so much more Harriet The Spy than Nancy Drew.

00;18;20;29 - 00;18;50;03

Kristen

I was like, She's making mistakes. And I get that that's J. But she was making mistakes. She was a person in a book that was making mistakes that I could have easily made. So it wasn't unheard of for someone to make a mistake with friends or with friendship or whatever. And it's not necessarily permission to make mistakes, but it's that you can still be the hero and not be 100% perfect every time.

00;18;50;05 - 00;19;18;15

Summer

Yeah, And I think that really marks the transition in children's fiction because I feel like in the early days of J. and Y.A. Fiction, even though they weren't called that at the time, a lot of emphasis was put on teaching kids moral values and teaching them how to be a good person in a way that wasn't really realistic or that couldn't really be applied like with Nancy Drew or others, maybe like, I don't know.

00;19;18;17 - 00;19;28;22

Summer

And then the lesson changed from teaching kids how to be morally correct to teaching them to be fully fledged people.

00;19;28;24 - 00;19;30;03

Kristen

Yes.

00;19;30;06 - 00;19;32;29

Summer

And that's an important distinction that happened. I think.

00;19;32;29 - 00;19;54;07

Kristen

So for me, one of the recent series that really hit for me was *Girls with Sharp Sticks*. So that's Suzanne Young and the reason that when we talked about this podcast that that immediately came to mind was because there's sci-fi elements.

00;19;54;07 - 00;20;35;01

Kristen

So there are things that are otherworldly about the girls. But just like when we talked in the horror podcast about teams of teens solving murders and hauntings and those kinds of things, *Girls with Sharp Sticks* is a team of heroines. So they're all very different in the way that they want to go about. I'm trying not to give too much away because I think that once you read the twist in the first book, I don't want to give that away for someone, but there's a team of women that are all different from each other and all on this quest for their freedom to be able to love and live in the ways that they

00;20;35;01 - 00;20;49;18

Kristen

want to. And that group part is something that has been really powerful, I think, in recent Y.A., a group of women that are working together despite their differences or because of their differences.

00;20;49;24 - 00;20;50;29

Summer

That's really cool.

00;20;51;02 - 00;20;58;22

Cecilia

I've definitely seen like covers of books recently with a bunch of female characters on the cover, all standing.

00;20;58;24 - 00;20;59;26

Summer

One series I really like that

00;20;59;26 - 00;21;22;03

Summer

I was actually surprised that it's in Y.A. because I've seen it in both The Y.A. and Jay sections in other libraries or bookstores, etc. It's called *It's* by Catherynne M. Valente, her fairyland series. The first one is called, *The Girl who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making*. And it's,

00;21;22;09 - 00;21;23;11

Kristen

I like that title.

00;21;23;13 - 00;21;27;03

Summer

It is wild and crazy fun and crazy weird.

00;21;27;03 - 00;21;30;10

Summer

It's very Alice in Wonderland esc.

00;21;30;10 - 00;21;35;01

Cecilia

Does it have the frame on the cover with a dragon?

00;21;35;03 - 00;21;37;14

Summer

Yes, technically it's a wyvern.

00;21;37;19 - 00;21;38;08

Cecilia

Oh, okay.

00;21;38;13 - 00;22;04;02

Summer

No, I'm joking. And, well, I'm not joking. It is a wyvern, but it doesn't matter. But it's so good. It's about a girl named September who gets spirited away by the west wind to fairyland and becomes a hero of fairyland and takes out this corrupt fairy queen kind of accidentally, because, again, she's like ten.

00;22;04;04 - 00;22;24;02

Summer

And it's has this air of whimsy and magic that I feel like you only find in old fairy tales. But it's so good. And that's a quartet as well, or wait, kind of quartet. There are five are quintet and they're really short, and they're so magical.

00;22;24;02 - 00;22;30;27

Kristen

It's so interesting because you just mentioned Alice in Wonderland esc and I would not have picked Alice.

00;22;31;00 - 00;22;54;12

Kristen

I'm not talking about this book. I'm talking about Alice in Wonderland. I wouldn't have listed her as a Y.A. heroine from my childhood. I feel like the missing part was in that the book that you were just

describing in a ship of her own making. I feel like for so much of Alice in Wonderland, the thing that sticks to me is that things happen to her.

00;22;54;15 - 00;23;01;26

Cecilia

And it's not until quite far into the story that Alice starts doing things back.

00;23;01;29 - 00;23;17;25

Summer

Yeah, that's really a good point. It circles right back around to that idea of agency and making your own choices and not letting things happen to you. But there's a quote that I feel like I don't know who is attributed to. It's one of those quotes that people say a bunch of different people said, but who knows?

00;23;17;27 - 00;23;43;22

Summer

But it's, "Great people rarely sit back and let things happen to them, they went out and happened to things." But the complete definition of what we're talking about. Yeah. Which weirdly enough, I heard from the TV show Da Vinci's Demons, which is not a teen TV show and don't watch it. It's incredibly graphic. But it was so good.

00;23;43;25 - 00;24;15;04

Cecilia

Going back to favorite Y.A. heroines, one that I guess is not too recent, 2021. That's a year ago. That's fine. The Girls I've Been by Tessa Sharp, the main character is the daughter of a con artist who has broken away from her mom's con life. Her mom's in jail and is at a bank when a bank heist happens and she's there with her current girlfriend, and her ex-boyfriend.

00;24;15;06 - 00;24;39;07

Cecilia

And it goes back and forth of like all the girls she has pretended to be through her mom's clients and how those have shaped her into the person she is now. And she uses all the different sets of skills that she learned while pretending to be all these different girls and all these backgrounds as her mom tried to like woo like, these men into their money, basically.

00;24;39;09 - 00;24;40;26

Summer

Oh, that sounds really cool.

00;24;41;03 - 00;25;06;16

Cecilia

Yeah, it is awesome. But a lot of the things she does when she was younger and up either helping or hindering her in her current situation, whether it's something she's learned that was from her mom or something that she picked up along the way, or learning that she can't trust certain people. But everything she picks up snowballs into who she is and whatnot.

00;25;06;18 - 00;25;08;18

Cecilia

Does anybody want to do the trends one?

00;25;08;24 - 00;25;11;01

Summer

You mean like common themes within?

00;25;11;01 - 00;25;18;08

Cecilia

Yeah, that you're seeing? Yeah. Just say some Y.A. trends that we notice today, in recent.

00;25;18;08 - 00;25;39;22

Summer

Well, I've seen, just to list a few freedom and agency, making your own choices. Right. Setting out into the world on your own and making mistakes, being on it, especially in fantasy and sci-fi, just, you know, being on an adventure, the opposite for realistic fiction.

00;25;39;22 - 00;25;53;22

Summer

Just living your life as a teenage girl and being okay, making mistakes, coming of age, being your own hero in a sense, and also female friendships and relationships.

00;25;53;22 - 00;26;09;23

Kristen

Redefining what it means to be either good or redefining things that people might have previously stigmatized. The one book that I haven't mentioned yet, but that is phenomenal is Blood Moon.

00;26;09;26 - 00;26;38;26

Kristen

It's Lucy Cuthew. It's inverse and it deals with the stigma around menstruation and the stigma around female sexuality. It's very powerful and still has that group coming together to redefine things together. It's a very quick read, but it's also very powerful. I think if I was going to cry from a book, this would have been the one. So it's a very powerful and very fast read.

00;26;38;29 - 00;26;40;07

Summer

That sounds so cool,

00;26;40;07 - 00;26;41;27

Summer

and also, what a good title.

00;26;41;29 - 00;26;49;25

Kristen

Yes. Also, Blood Moon brings to mind witchy type things. And I think that more witchy stuff is,

00;26;49;25 - 00;26;50;06

Summer

Yes,

00;26;50;09 - 00;27;06;04

Kristen

absolutely 100% a Y.A. trend. Maybe not even just Y.A. at this point in time. All Our Hidden Gifts is Caroline O'Donoghue and that one is, I didn't know that maybe I had powers and here they are.

00;27;06;04 - 00;27;12;18

Kristen

And now what do I do with them and how do I figure out how to be true to myself but also help save this world, right?

00;27;12;22 - 00;27;28;11

Summer

Yeah, It's like. It's like the oh, dang, I'm the chosen one. Exactly. Yes. Which is very, very. And I talked about Buffy on the last podcast I was on, but I feel like Buffy is for me at least, the epitome of the Y.A. heroine.

00;27;28;13 - 00;27;52;26

Summer

Not to say she's perfect, I just mean you think she. I think she encapsulates a lot of the qualities we're talking about because she's physically strong and very powerful, but she doesn't outwardly look this way, and so it really packs a punch, ha-ha, when she's very feminine and very bubbly and very cutesy. And this is not shamed in any way.

00;27;52;26 - 00;28;17;05

Summer

This is just how she is. But it really juxtaposes nicely when she starts beating the heck out of people who deserve it, obviously. And she cheerleads and she is very into fashion and hanging out with her friends. And she wants to be a normal teenage girl, but she also has to save the world again. And she has to deal with that.

00;28;17;05 - 00;28;37;19

Summer

And she does make so many mistakes and have so many regrets. And she cries and gets beaten up and really doubts herself and she often runs away from her problems. But then she comes back and she faces them with the help of her friends. And I think that is she's a really good role model.

00;28;37;21 - 00;28;46;18

Cecilia

Yeah, I think that nowadays you're seeing people that grew up with like Buffy and all strong female characters are writing books of their own.

00;28;46;20 - 00;29;15;22

Cecilia

So that influence, I think you kind of see, I noticed a lot recently spinning stereotypes sort of on their head, a lot of the betrothal of the princess and like going against that and kind of fighting for yourself has been, I think, in a couple of different ones, I've noticed lately. This isn't a recent one, but, and I should've talked about this on the graphic novel one, but I'm going to talk about it here.

00;29;15;25 - 00;29;19;19

Cecilia

But Cosmo Nights, I don't know if anybody's read Cosmo Nights,

00;29;19;22 - 00;29;22;00

Summer

it's, sounds familiar,

00;29;22;02 - 00;29;46;02

Cecilia

It's like science fiction and princesses. Their hands are won by these knights if they fight in these giant mech battles. So, whatever knight wins gets the princess' hand. So you had this rebellion of women, awesome women that can fight, that are winning for the princesses and they're like, okay, we get the princess.

00;29;46;02 - 00;29;54;25

Cecilia

And then they reveal that they're actually not going to take them away. And they're like, Hey, you can run away from your terrible life now and you don't have to marry a total stranger.

00;29;54;28 - 00;30;05;08

Summer

And they're in like mech suits, like, what's it called, Pacific Rim? Yeah, basically. Oh, that's so cool. That's very that gives me very, like, Voltron vibes.

00;30;05;10 - 00;30;08;15

Cecilia

Yeah. The art style is very kind of Voltron.

00;30;08;18 - 00;30;34;12

Summer

That's cool. Oh, that's a graphic novel, too. It is a graphic novel. Yeah. I really like that. It's LGBTQ. Yes. I feel like that's something we do see a lot, the like, taking traditional female roles and putting them in like, especially sci-fi fantasy worlds and then defying them. It's a lot of, I feel like defiance is a big topic.

00:30;34;12 - 00:30;39;26

Cecilia

Yeah, there's a lot of rebellions in Y.A. literature in general,

00:30;39;28 - 00:30;51;23

Summer

and I think often what comes of defiance and rebellion is setting out on your own and going out into the world, which is a scary place and having to like be your own hero, which not to bring up Buffy yet

00:30;51;23 - 00:30;53;05

Summer

again, but I'm going to.

00:30;53;07 - 00:30;57;08

Cecilia

I am trying so hard not to talk more about Buffy because.

00:30;57;08 - 00:31;15;16

Summer

That is the thing when I, was that I, that I grew up on too. I have a Buffy tattoo, it says it says the Earth is doomed because that's what Niall says in the first episode. But there's a Buffy quote that I really like in the second season where she's fighting an enemy.

00:31;15;16 - 00:31;32;18

Summer

I will not say who, this doesn't want to be spoiled. But the end of season two, she's fighting an enemy and he has her back into a corner. They've been sword fighting and sword is knocked out of her hand and he's backed her into a corner and he says, Look at you all alone. You've got nothing left.

00:31;32;18 - 00:31;56;11

Summer

No weapons, no friends, no hope. Take that all away and what's left? And he tries to stab her and she catches the sword in her hand and she says, me. And then she proceeds to beat him. And it just this awesome, chilling moment where you have nothing to save you, but you have to be enough for yourself. You are enough for yourself to save yourself.

00:31;56;15 - 00:32;16;05

Cecilia

Thanks for joining us today. Be sure to check out The Ocean County Library's website for more podcasts and events on our website's calendar events page. All titles mentioned in today's episode can be found through The Ocean County Library free with your library type a next time, happy reading!