

EPISODE 43:
Two Great Tastes That Taste Great Together

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[0:00]

A: Hello, and welcome to this episode of Be the Serpent, a podcast of extremely deep literary merit, with your classy and sophisticated hosts Alexandra Rowland, Freya Marske, and Jennifer Mace. On today's episode we're discussing the first [Avengers](#) movie, the fanfic [With Fire in Their Eyes](#) by Asuka Kureru, and the fanfic [Polaris](#) by setissma.

[intro music plays]

A: Hello and welcome to Episode 43: Two Great Tastes that Taste Great Together! I'm Alex and I am cherry vanilla.

F: I'm Freya and I am lemon and garlic.

M: I'm Macey and I'm pineapple coconut.

F: We are three red-headed fantasy authors.

A: And today we're talking about fusions, whatever those are. How are they different from crossovers? Have we seen these used in professional fiction at all? We will answer all of your questions, dear listeners, but first, what are we reading fellow Serpents?

F: My reading stint has actually slowed down at last, because I am attempting to get to a certain point in the outline of my current draft before I leave for Worldcon, so I've been doing a lot of crying and trying to write.

M: Which we approve of! I mean the writing, not the crying.

[F coughs]

M: I'm sorry, please don't die.

F: While my body falls apart around me, clearly.

M: Yep, yep.

[F and M giggle]

F: I've had a shoulder injury, I've had a neck injury, and now I have a cold. I'm just, like—

M: Darling listeners, pray for Freya.

F:—miserably sipping tea over here. Uh, but I am actually—

A: You know that you wording that—if you worded it like that, it means that I have to leave your coughing in the episode instead of editing it out in post. So—

F: Sure, whatever!

A:—thank you for that.

[A laughs]

M: Pray for Freya, darling listeners, because god knows she needs it.

F: But I am paused at the moment mid-way through two books which I do hope to finish, again, before I leave for Worldcon. I'm reading [Milkman](#) by Anna Burns, which was a Booker Prize winner, I think last year? And it's literary fiction about Northern Ireland at the time of the Troubles. It's good. I can certainly tell that—what appeals to people about it, but it's been a while since I've had to make my brain fit into the literary fiction mold and it's a little bit slow going at the moment. Partly because I then had to go and google 'Northern Ireland troubles' and read the entire wikipedia page in order to understand lots of the context, because the way it's written doesn't give a lot of specific context. It's all very referential. There are no proper nouns, there's no reference to any actual real place or even people's names.

M: Wha—but—

F: Yeah. So it depends a lot on you knowing the context in order to understand how it's being clever. Anyway, it's a good book. I'll see how I go with it. And the other book I'm reading is [Valentine](#) by Jodi McAlister, who is an Australian writer. This is the first in a YA sort of contemporary fantasy series. And I don't read a lot of YA, but it turns out I can stomach it a lot better when it is extremely Australian.

[M giggles]

F: Which this one is. It's about a small Australian town and a set of teenagers who are all born on Valentine's day, and strange and creepy magical things start happening to them, and that's about as far as I've got in the book, but I'm enjoying it a lot.

M: Strange and creepy is exactly my jam.

F: Mm, yeah, I think I was reading it and I was like, "Oh, okay. This is the kind of book that I might recommend to Macey," because it's got quite a bit of creepy along with very teenage teenagers in it.

M: Oh my gosh. Bless their hearts, they don't know better. Whereas this past two weeks, I have not really done all that much reading? Because I'm meant to be hip-deep in edits and instead of doing that, I accidentally something else which we will talk about in a moment. But what I am halfway through is the novella [*This Is How You Lose the Time War*](#) by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone, and it is delightful and extremely gay and full of plant bullshit. Like, weird fucky plant bullshit, and I feel like those two points were not emphasized enough in the marketing.

[F giggles]

M: But I mean that's fair, because you just say Amal and Max wrote a book together and everyone is sold.

A: Yeah, yeah. Mood.

M: So they didn't really need a boost. Um, as well as reading that, I have been reading a bunch of nonfiction about boats and ships and then complaining about Archimedes building cruise ships for the ancient Greeks on Twitter. Because that was a thing.

A: Oh?

M: Did you know the Archimedes Screw was for draining bilge from a massive two-hundred stateroom noble cruise ship?

F: Oh.

A: Wooow.

[M starts giggling]

F: Archimedes and the super yacht! I love it.

[M keeps giggling]

A: I knew that it was for draining bilges, but I didn't know it was for boats that big. Wow.

M: Yeah, yeah. It's like massive cruise ships and then they were like, "This is stupid, because there are literally no harbors we can get into and quietly land the ship."

[A bursts out laughing; M giggles more]

A: That's hilarious.

M: Anyway, I love Archimedes, he doesn't deserve it. And as well as that, watching lots of [Black Sails](#) and [Westworld](#).

A: Yeah, you're on your boat bullshit recently.

M: I'm on my boat bullshit. I like boats.

A: I like boats too.

M: Darling listeners, hopefully two episodes from now will not be our last episode, because in between one episode after this one and the one after that, your Serpents are going to go to the north end of Ireland and go canoeing. Maybe.

F: Well, possibly the *other* two Serpents are going to go messing about in boats as Freya would have it. I may be sitting on the shore watching the boating happening, because I'm not really a boat person.

M: It's fine. We'll probably not die.

A: You can find people to replace us easily.

M: It'll just be Freya and, like, [Em](#) and an American.

F: Yes, I was gonna say, I'll need to put an ad out saying, "Specific accents needed." I'm pretty sure I can grab Em, she'll do it. She'll be the Brit.

M: Need vaguely queer femme red-head fantasy author of these specific accents, willing to accept dyes.

A: [Jenn](#)!

M: There we go.

F: Yes, perfect.

A: She's your red-headed American.

F: Excellent. So if you two do get killed in a remote North Ireland murder mystery—

[A giggles]

F:—it'll be fine. It'll be fine. I've got your replacements all lined up.

M: Anyway, Alex what have you been reading?

A: So, I have been reading a surprising number of things—

M: You have!

A:—considering that I have been on, like, sweeping and hacking my way through the rewrite of my book. I am so close to finishing that. I am, like, I am going to finish it either tonight or tomorrow, and I'm really, really excited. Right now I am listening to [Game of Kings](#), the first book of the Lymond Chronicles, because I am trying to finish sewing my outfit for the Hugo awards, and that means audiobooks. I have also been watching a new Chinese drama that I have discovered called [Oh My General](#)—

M: Yes!

A:—and I got Macey into it. It's wonderful.

M: I'm like twenty episodes in. I forgot to mention that.

A: Oh man! Wow! You, like, really outstripped me. Do you want to explain what *Oh My General* is about?

M: I don't think one can explain what *Oh My General* is about.

A: So, it's about this badass female general who gets given an arranged marriage by the emperor and his mother, and she is supposed to marry this—like, she's a *badass*. She's this badass, punchy, bisexual—

M: Beheading people a lot.

A: Beheading people a lot. Being deeply bisexual. Um, kicking ass, taking names. So she gets an arranged marriage to this beautiful, delicate nobleman. And they are disasters together and they—he hates her and has three concubines who are absolutely wildly in love with his new wife. It's a great show. You should watch it.

M: It's not a great show.

A: It plays around with gender every which way.

M: It's better than [Guardian](#) by a significant amount, but it's still not really a good, good show.

A: It's not a good show. No, it's a trash show. But it's a delicious trash show. And you should watch it. I'm, of course, still on my [Good Omens](#) bullshit, so here are your *Good Omens* fic recs of the week, because the bullshit is neverending. First of all, "[we could turn the world to gold](#)" by nikkiRA. Second, "[You. Soft and Only](#)" by thehoyden a.k.a. the most aching and romantic thing I have ever read. Holy shit, this fic. "[in his own image](#)" by taizi, which is a fic about Warlock and Nanny Ashtoreth, and it is literally perfect. And finally, "[ask. and ye shall receive](#)" by a certain fic author pseudonamed ariaste who is me!

[M laughs]

A: That's true! I wrote a fic these past two weeks!

M: We are very proud.

A: It has 31 percent kudos-to-hits ratio on Archive of Our Own. How about that?

[M is still giggling]

A: Yeah, um, do we have any news? Macey apparently accidentally a thing according to the doc points.

M: Eh, yeah. So this episode goes up on the eleventh of September?

A: Yes?

M: So, darling listeners, keep your eyes open in several weeks from now in October, because...yeah, I have a project that's coming to a funding platform near you. And that's all I'm gonna say right now.

A: Ooooh. Mysterious.

F: I'm very excited for this mysterious project for reasons that will become apparent.

M: Ooooooh.

F: Mystery.

A: Yes, yes. So that is one opportunity to give us your money, dear listeners. The other opportunity to give us your money is that yesterday [A Choir of Lies](#) came out. This is the sequel to [A Conspiracy of Truths](#). It is a fantasy novel about the power of stories and recovering from trauma and fantasy tulip mania and it's a really good book and I'm proud of it. Please go buy it.

F: It's about a soft boy falling in love.

A: Yes.

M: It's about a soft boy angsty a lot and being beaten up, but getting over it. And, like, therapy.

F: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Using stories as a way to process grief and trauma.

M: Yiss.

A: And it has been vastly improved since the first draft that Macey and Freya read.

[M giggles]

M: Insert climax scene here.

A: Yeah, insert climax in here.

[M is still giggling]

A: But also I dedicated this book to Macey and Freya.

M: I'm going to fight you. I will find you.

A: This book is dedicated to Macey and to Freya.

M: I will find the audiobook for this episode and I will cut this piece out. There will just be muffled screeching noises on the audiobook, darling listeners, and that's why.

F: All right, well, now that we have spent ten minutes telling you what you should watch and how to give us all of your money—

A: All of it.

F:—let's move on with an episode.

A: Patreon! That's another way to give us money.

F: Patreon, yes! Okay, so, let's start with an existential question. Is a fusion different from a crossover?

A: Yes.

F: Explain.

A: Yes. And here's why. I see on the dot points that Macey has a definition and I'm not going to read it, I'm very carefully not looking at it, 'cause I want to explain mine first. So the difference that I see between a fusion and a crossover, is that a crossover uses existing characters from both canons. Whereas a fusion uses the characters from one canon and either a setting or a conceit of some sort from another one. So, for example, a fic about the characters from [Captive Prince](#) talking to the characters from, I don't know, [Person of Interest](#). I just picked two of our favorite things. Which is a crossover. Versus one of the fics that we're talking about today, which is [Yuri on Ice](#) but with kaiju and jaegers.

M: So I slightly disagree with that. To me, a crossover requires two things. A crossover needs to have characters from both, and those characters have to exist in their own original contexts. With some slight fudging to let them both exist in the same universe.

F: So what if it was something—so what if it was the *Captive Prince* characters and the *Person of Interest* characters—both of them combined in a coffee shop AU?

M: That would be a fusion to me, but not a very useful one? Whereas a fic in which the *Person of Interest* characters were figure skaters interacting with *Yuri on Ice* characters is a fusion. Because they're—

A: I'm sorry. I just had to give my brain a moment to parse that.

[A starts laughing]

M: 'Cause if you are in one of their settings or the other of their settings, then it's a fusion. If you picked a setting.

F: I think I more agree with Alex's, but it's not necessarily saying that this is correct, this is incorrect. It's just how I arrange them in my brain. So for me, if there are characters from both, that is a crossover. It'll just be a crossover set in one world or the other. So, to me, yes, a fusion is one that's one world that has been meshed with elements of another, but not the characters of it. Though obviously I think you could have some gray areas. Like, if you had a [Harry Potter](#) fusion and obviously you wanted to keep some of the teachers at Hogwarts, for example, but all

of the other characters, all of the students at the school, were the ones you had yinked from the other canon. I think that would still count in my head as a fusion rather than a crossover.

A: Yeah.

M: So, darling listeners, shit's complicated, yo. Let's have a taxonomy.

F: Yay!

A: Yes!

M: I have a little taxonomy. And this is, as all taxonomies, somewhat blurry. There's no hard and fast rule as to which side this falls on. And you two may also have different types of fusions. But the two types of fusions that I see the most are fusions that are done for a setting reason. Like, I want to put my favorite characters into [The Hunger Games](#) or I want to put *Person of Interest* characters [on the Enterprise](#). And I want to have them in that setting. Like when you remake [Romeo and Juliet](#) to be about warring gangs in LA. Right?

F: Yep.

A: That movie is so fucking good.

M: Right? And it's a fusion. Totally a fusion.

F: One very, very brief [West Side Story](#) tangent. At Continuum this year, Kate Elliot was one of the guests of honour and she gave a talk on setting up audience expectations and how to open a story using the first two minutes of *West Side Story* as her text. It was one of the most amazing things I have ever seen in my life. Continue.

[15:00]

M: Alright, now that we've decontextualized the second half of the taxonomy, um—

[A + M laugh]

F: You can cut that if you like, I just had to tell someone that it had happened, it was...

M: [laughing] It sounds delightful, but the first half of the taxonomy was fusions that are about putting your characters into a setting that you want to play with.

F: Okay.

M: The second type is more about using a mechanic or a worldbuilding aspect like dæmons, but in the original context of the first fandom where the characters are from. So like, *Polaris* is very clearly a [Harry Potter](#) fic set in Hogwarts but they have dæmons.

F: Yes.

A: Mmhmm.

M: So that's where you kind of really want the magic, or the particular technology or, I would argue that soulbonds are almost a type of this, or like, there's certain forms of science fiction-y superhero-y magic that—

F: Yeah.

M: —pulling those in makes it like this.

F: And the—I can't remember, I think we did, we tent poled one of Dira Sudas' the [Generation Kill](#) [Wolfbrother](#) fic—

A: Yep.

M: Mmm.

F: —that would be a fusion that was to do with a mechanic.

M: Oh yeah, great example. That is a great example!

F: All right, let's move on. So I will talk about the first tent pole, which was a fanfic that sprang to mind immediately when we decided to do this particular episode.

[M giggles]

F: This is a fic called *Polaris* by setissma. It is, as Macey has pointed out, a *Harry Potter* fic with [His Dark Materials](#) fusion, and the central—not necessarily pairing—but relationship is Harry/Draco/Pansy which is not something I have read a lot of, but I am completely and utterly sold on it because it is Slytherins all the way down and this fic—

M: Yisss.

F: —this fic does it so well. So this is an epilogue-what-epilogue post-canon story about all three of them being professors at Hogwarts, which is a conceit that I really like in post-canon fics.

A: Mmmhmm.

F: And it's about magical houses, and it's about negotiating relationships, and it's about interesting magical worldbuilding, but mostly it's about talking about sex.

A: Yep, yep.

F: I wonder why I like it so much.

[M + F laugh]

A: This fic was so, so fascinating to me because I read the first two-thirds of the first chapter and I was so deeply involved in the plot, and there was this really creepy scene and I was getting literal chills going up and down my spine.

M: Yes.

A: I was reading it at two in the morning, it was a bad idea to read this at two in the morning—

[M laughs]

A: —this is amazingly terrifying.

M: It's a horror story.

A: An *incredible* horror story, and I don't even like horror that often, but this was the perfect level of creepy. Sort of like how some food is the perfect level of spice. And then immediately after this creepy scene, all of the plot is ground to a screeching halt.

[M giggles]

A: And like, this is one of the things that I love so much about fanfic because you could never get away with this in professional fiction, right? Professional fiction would never let you get away with bringing the plot to a screeching halt so that the characters could have tens of thousands of words to talk about their feelings and do healthy communication and negotiate polyamory and talk about their sex lives. And I just love that so much because it's so valid.

[F + M laughing]

F: So what did you think of all of the fucky plant bullshit in this one, Macey? Because setissma is a biologist—

M: Yeah, I really enjoyed a lot of that.

F: —and I think that you can tell that she knows a lot about ecology and ecosystems and how that might work once you bring magic into it. And I *loved* all the world building about the magical creatures and the magical greenhouses and how they all fit together. And I could have read three-hundred-thousand words of just the three of them geeking out about their greenhouses and their magical creature enclosures.

A: Mmmhmm.

M: Yes! I think, for me, one thing that I wanted to talk about with this fic, and with it being a fusion with *His Dark Materials* in particular is, I think that there are a lot of examples of fusions that people do because they seem kinda fun and kinda cool, I think that this one is doing something very deliberate, which is, bringing dæmons into the mix forces vulnerability on characters who really don't want to be vulnerable.

A: Mmmhmm. Yes, yes, yes. Please tell us so much more about that.

M: So, there's a lot of *His Dark Materials* crossovers, right? One of my favorite ever, that I'll talk about in more detail later, Alex highlighted in our doc as one that we tent-poled before—

A: Yep.

M: —but the thing that a dæmon does... and for those of you who haven't read *His Dark Materials* a dæmon is an animal companion that can talk, that is basically an extension of your soul. And they frequently let slip things that you would maybe rather they didn't.

A: Mmhmm.

M: And so, Harry and Draco and Pansy are all struggling with intimacy in this fic, in various different ways, and having the dæmons there gets them out of their heads, it's a forcing-function and I think it's hugely effective, and this fic... If you took the plot of this fic and wrote a synopsis of what happens in it, there's no reason that the stuff that happens in it, couldn't happen without dæmons. But if you start looking at how the fic works and what it's actually doing between the characters, the dæmons are intrinsic and completely necessary. And I think that, for the best fusions both parts that you're fusing have to be necessary, and have to, kind of, be at the core of the piece of fiction.

F: Yeah, and I think that there are a lot of, even almost throwaway lines in this fic that show why these two particular worlds can be fit together in interesting ways. Which is what I look for in fusions, I look for, if you're going to combine two things, what is it that you can use one of them to explain or elaborate about the other.

M: Right.

F: So my favorite quote from this fic, I'm going to read it out, and then I'll tell you why it's great. *"Yes," Draco said. "You value the same qualities, you're loyal, you're kind to the people you care about, you aren't ashamed of being ambitious and wanting power but you're not going to go all insane and start shoving bits of Thaxia into boxes and things and having a fake snake daemon.* And this is just something he throws into the conversation when he's trying to tell Harry that Harry is not like Voldemort, but it's talking about Slytherinness essentially. But I love—the second half of that is just saying "here's how what Voldemort did works in a world with dæmons".

M: Right.

F: Because shoving bits of Thaxia—so Thaxia is Harry's dæmon—it says, creating a horcrux is essentially dismantling your dæmon. Because dæmons are souls.

M: Yeah.

F: So in order to create a horcrux you have to actually take apart a semi-sentient part of yourself, shove it into boxes, and then this idea of a fake snake dæmon, oh and thinking of... what's the snake called?

A + M + F: [in unison] Nagini.

F: So this idea that what Voldemort did was destroy his true dæmon, split it up, hide the essence of it in objects and then use Nagini to convince people that that was his actual dæmon, to hide what he'd done.

A: Mmm.

F: And there's so much interesting worldbuilding in that, and it's just a throwaway line.

M: Yep.

A: Yeah.

F: And that's what I love about this fic.

M: So, in the interests of time, shall we continue?

F: Sure.

A: Yes, yes. Macey—

M: Yes!

A: —you get... I'm a little bit jealous that you get to talk about this tent pole, because it was so exquisite, but you did call dibs on it before I could.

M: I did [giggles].

A: So, take it away.

M: It's also perfectly formed and only eight-thousand words long, so it's what? Fifteen minutes to read it?

[moment dead air]

A: ...Sure.

F: Pause for everyone to just recalibrate their brains to Macey standards.

M: It's a half hour, come on, at most it's a half hour.

F: That's true, I read it quite fast, it's lovely.

A: Yeah, yeah it was quick.

M: This is called "With Fire In Their Eyes" by Asuka Kureru and this author also has a whole bunch of really cool fiction and original fiction on AO3, I've liked them for a really long time. I didn't even notice this was them though, until I read it in the doc just now, so, well done observation skills, Macey! [laughs]

A: Good job.

M: So, this fic is a fic in which the events of [Pacific Rim](#) which is kind of a kaiju armageddon movie, occur to the *Yuri on Ice* canon. So, we open with Yuuri getting news that San Francisco has been smushed by a giant monster and thinking that it's fake, and to Victor competing, having a kaiju crash in through the roof and nearly kill him on the ice and actually killing his mentor. And this is so well-written it really hurts.

A: Mmhmm. It *really* hurts. Oh yeah, it's brutal. It's fucking brutal.

M: Victor saying, you know, in the fallen—in the collapsed building, which collapsed on top of them, he finds Yakov's hand and holds it, and realises later that it probably only stayed warm so long because he was holding it.

M: Yeah.

A: God, yeah. Every word of this, you can just feel—

F: And unlike a lot of the *Pacific Rim* fusions you read, this one actually starts at the start of the whole kaiju disaster.

M: Mmmhmm!

F: A lot of them skip ahead to, yes well we've formed the battle domes and we've got our giant robots and we're in the middle of a battle, because that's the part that we're interested in, the part about the drift.

M: Right.

F: But this, I think very cleverly, made that decision to start things early because *Yuri on Ice* is a canon about people who are fundamentally broken at the beginning, and this says, here's the way in which they and the world, were fundamentally broken.

[25:07]

M: And I think that it's very important, because I think that it's about the effect on the *world*, whereas a lot of *Pacific Rim* fics are, kind of, uhh.. This is not a bad thing, but are kind of shallow, in that they're using the trope of drift compatible as an alternate soulmate thing.

A: Mmm. Yeah.

M: And they're using the, let's pair up and punch things as the main drift of it. And they kind of set aside the tragedy of the kaiju, which in fairness, the movie *Pacific Rim* doesn't really go all that hard on the tragedy.

F: Except for building stupid walls in the wrong place in Sydney Harbour, which I am never going to stop being very annoyed about.

[A + M laughing]

A: No, but I think that *Yuri on Ice* is a perfect canon to do this with, because it is so much about emotion and internal kind of stuff—

M: Yes.

A: —that is going on, and you mentioned that it's about people who are broken but it's also about learning about who you are, as well as learning about who the other person is.

M: Right.

A: And sort of growing together. I think that means that the drift compatibility thing is even more poignant metaphor in this situation, because it's not just a shorthand for, like, oh they're soulmates, but it's also a shorthand for, oh this is the relationship that they had to build over the course of the canon, right?

M: Mmm.

F: Even then, it starts with Victor recognizing something in Yuuri that he thinks has potential.

A: Mmmhmm.

M: Right.

F: Which is him seeing Yuuri skate his own routine, which is what happens in the *Yuri on Ice* canon, but here it just has this beautiful second meaning, where Victor says, "okay this person is skating my routines better than me, or is skating like I would have ended up skating."

M: Because Victor gave up skating in this canon after he was traumatized.

F: Yes.

A: Yeah.

F: And has basically just become someone who just goes around, essentially fundraising it seems like? And awareness-raising?

M: Yeah, being a celebrity.

F: Being a celebrity, and then he sees this person skating with the joy and the style that he used to have, and thinks "this is the person that I could be drift compatible with", and it's to do with performance and embodying someone else's lost passion, which is lovely.

A: Yeah, yeah.

M: But it's also about people who have, kind of, lost the ability to think that they can win against this thing that's happening to their world. Kind of, seeing in each other and together regaining that ability and that belief.

F: Oh yeah, if you're going to externalize the metaphor of anxiety, a kaiju is a pretty damn solid way of doing it.

[M + A laugh]

M: Solid.

A: Yes, yes, yes.

F: [laughing] Yes. That was what I quite liked about this fic, that it was an unusual choice to pair with *Pacific Rim*—

M: Right.

F: —because it's a quiet internal canon and some of the other ones that we looked at when we were choosing a *Pacific Rim* fusion for this, were of the more traditionally punch cannons—

M: Mmm!

F: —where you just say “okay, well, here's some people from a slightly action-y canon, let's just give them some robots and a soulbond.” Whereas this is, exactly as you said, much more internal.

M: Did you want to talk a little bit about the [Kingsman](#) one that you read?

F: I don't think so, I don't think it's worth going into depth in it... yeah we read a [Kingsman one](#) and were thinking about using that as a tent pole, but I liked the contrast better in this one.

M: Yes.

F: The contrast of quiet, anxious celebrity figure skaters in kaiju, rather than, oh some people who already shoot things and punch things for a living in a kaiju

A: Yes.

M: Mmhmm. I think I agree, I think those are the ones that really stick in my head as fusions, the ones that take a real contrast.

A: Yeah, like this is so much not two canons that you would ever expect to work together and yet, when they do, like, watching this fic author fit them together so beautifully, it's just like, so deeply poetic, and such an amazing example of the form. So, was it Macey who suggested this fic, or?

M: No. We went... so—darling listeners, there's this thing that I do sometimes that I'm pretty sure you two do also, where I go spelunking for fics in AO3 because I just need to read *something*. And you're like, okay, well I feel like crossover with *Pacific Rim*. So you put in “*Pacific Rim*”, and you put in “crossover”, and you put in “sort by kudos”.

A: Mmmhmm.

M: I know you do this with *Good Omens*, Alex—

A: Yes.

M: —so we kind of did this because we knew that—

A: I do this with all fandoms, yes. [laughs]

M: Well, right. We knew *Pacific Rim* crossovers and fusions were something we were really interested about, and I knew that there were some amazing ones. So we kind of went rummaging.

F: See, I don't do fic-spelunking because I am a picky bitch and I just wait for people to throw recs at me.

[Laughter]

[30:00]

M: It's fine! You can dig through my bookmarks if you ever need to go looking for some, Freya

F: Or I just sit there with my fists clenched, trying to psychically convince [Astolat](#) to move into a fandom that I want her to move into. Those are my two extremes.

A: That's a mood.

F: But I agree, I think some—the nice things about this are that there are two good flavors that would not have put together, like the first time you try strawberry and balsamic ice cream—

[gasps]

F: —and you think, oh I wouldn't have thought of that and then you're obsessed with it for a month.

M: Yep.

A: Yep. So! Our third and final tentpole, dear listeners. You may have heard of this one. It's a little bit obscure.

M: It's a little bit of an indie, cult hit I feel.

A: Yeah, yeah.

M: Not really that much backing behind it, not that much of a budget .

A: No, kind of a hipster thing.

M: It's really impressive how well they've done!

A: Yeah, exactly! So, this is Marvel's *the Avengers*.

[laughter]

A: The first Avengers film. Technically, by my taxonomy, it is a crossover. I think by Macey's taxonomy as well?

M: Kind of. I think that it's weird because they all always existed in the same universe.

A: Right.

M: And I could argue that it's kind of a fusion between an Iron Man and a Thor movie, more than anything else.

F: Mhm.

M: Because it's kind of a Thor plot in an Iron Man setting.

F: Yes.

A: Yeah.

F: With some cameo's from other, random, crossover characters.

M: Yeah. Some of whom never got their fucking movie, did they, *Marvel*. Did they.

A: Apparently they're going to though.

F: But now that they've sucked all the fucking joy out of what we enjoyed about these characters...

A: Yeah. Yeah.

M: Was there joy in it? Was there? Was there?

F: Listen. I—

A: Well there was—

F: —I have a hell of a lot—

A: —in [Thor: Ragnarok](#).

F: —of joy in Black Widow and Hawkeye after this particular movie. I wrote... [some fic](#)... I had... some feelings...

[giggles]

F: And all of those feelings have now been ground into uncaring, ambivalent dust by the rest of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, so I do feel there was a lost opportunity there...but...

A: So the Marvel Cinematic Universe is kind of weird and cool. I think that the impetus behind it could have—if some of the movies had been better—could have done even better than it has. And it has done extremely well. One of the reasons why it is such a huge benefit to do this kind of thing in professional fiction or in mainstream media, is because people want to see their favorite characters. This is why people come to read fanfiction, right? It's because people want more of these characters, they will keep coming back to see them. They will be delighted and overjoyed when there's an unexpected cameo.

M: But I think one of the things that kind of pissed me off about this movie—one of the things—was just... they had this crossover opportunity to have these interactions, and other than the sparks we get between Cap and Iron Man, most of them just punch each other a bunch.

A: Yeah.

M: And I'm just like okay! This is Superman vs. Batman. This is who would punch the other puncher punchier. And I don't have enough manliness in me to find that interesting.

A: No, of course. I mean,, what do you expect from Joss Whedon.

M: Yeah.

F: But also, I mean, if you have that many characters in one story, you can't develop and through line of relationship properly, and I think that the way—the reason I came away from it thinking, “Wow, I'm really into it for this Hawkeye/Black Widow” is because they set up and existing relationship, dropped in a few hints of really interesting backstory, and then the actors

had amazing chemistry at portraying these people who were very close, who had a lot of history. And, actually, surprisingly, the most effective emotional thread was the Black Widow having to deal with the fact that her best friend had been brainwashed and she was having to fight him. You went into that movie not really knowing or caring anything about Black Widow and Hawkeye as they had been set up in that cinematic universe, but they were used to really good effect. They could have done even more if they'd had time and space to spread out. But they couldn't spread out, because two meters away was something happening with the Hulk and two meters in the other direction was Iron Man having a tantrum... Yeah.

A: And they keep piling more and more characters into these fucking movies, like, I don't know how many characters there were in [End Game](#)—dozens? So there's no opportunity to do any deep character work on any of them and that's really what people are looking for. Does anyone care about Ant-Man?

M: No. No one cares about Ant-Man.

A: No.

M: I will say, not everyone is looking for deep character work, but you didn't even get interesting McGuffins. You know? Some of the, like, Guardians of the Galaxy had a vaguely interesting McGuffin. *Thor: Ragnarok* had a vaguely compelling plot of like, here's what you have to get away from and defeat. This one is just, Loki has an army and war because war. And everyone kept saying the word 'war' a lot and I'm like, "This is not a war?"

[35:14]

F: Yeah.

M: Why? I'm just— hmmm— I just comparing it unfavourably to [Dragon Ball Z](#) which I think is much better at being a superhero show. Because you don't put five superheroes against an army. What are you doing? This is just dull. What?

F: Yeah, and I—

M: I can't, sorry, go on. My feelings!

F: I was going to say, I really—and I think you're right in, it suffers a little in being a sort of [Iron Man](#) story colliding with a *Thor* story because they take Loki, who I genuinely find very interesting and cool as a villain and as a character, and I love him in all of the [Thor](#) movies, and made him an *Iron Man* villain. And it didn't work in that sense.

[35:55]

M: And the problem with *Iron Man* villains and *Iron Man* narratives in general— and this was something I didn't notice after the first time I watched this film, and now knowing a little more about how Hollywood works— *Iron Man* is all about American military imperialism. Always. And every time you see a tank in a movie, it's because the American Army has let them use the tank and has script-doctored their script to make sure that the American military is shown in a flattering light. I that... I'm just absolutely furious.

F: Yeah. They gave him the army of an *Iron Man* villain and then they turned him into a Captain America villain as well by making him ooo, no! Let's draw some very, very clear parallels with the Nazis—

M: —Let's just go to Germany for one scene!

F: —Let's just go to Germany and have an old man stand up and talk about what happened last time someone tried to put people down. Instead they are giving him the philosophy of a Captain America villain, and trying to make him the individual foil antagonist to four or five different people. And that's why he can't do it, because a good villain is the direct foil to the one protagonist that they are the villain for. And as soon as you have one person being the direct foil/mirror/antagonist to everyone, by giving him all these scenes one-on-one, and the one with Black Widow, everything falls apart. And that's why his characterization in this movie is for shit. And that is the end of my essay. Thank you.

M: Darling listeners. Your serpents have feelings.

F: I have so many Loki feelings!!!

A: Is this the first time we have actually like torn apart a tentpole and like, openly criticized it? I think so!

F: I think so!

M: I am very happy doing this to Whedon because honestly.

A: I mean, yes.

M: Next time we tentpole something we can tentpole [Firefly](#) so I can do it again! 'Cause I'll do it again!

F: Yeah. I feel like tearing up *Avengers* is not so much punching up as punching towards the clouds. We can't hurt this universe.

A: We're not hurting them.

F: It has so much money. It's fine.

A: There's so much opportunity for really solid criticism and I think that your points are incredibly valid and insightful. Well done.

F: Thank you.

M: But to pull it back to the topics of fusions, basically, you can't just throw things into a blender and hit blend. And I think that's what *The Avengers* shows us. You want to be thoughtful about what you're combining. You can't take everything from every ingre—you can't take every ingredient from your cupboard. Like if you're putting two things together, you pick little bits out of it. Like, *Polaris* did not include the subtle knife or the alitheometer of [His Dark Materials](#). They almost never do. You pick the elements you need to do the thing you're doing. They are tools.

A: Yep.

M: The one that is set in kaiju-land didn't have the shatter-dome, at least, not the same one. You know. Be selective.

A: Yep. Right. Be selective, be thoughtful, and be purposeful.

M: But let's bring us on into the next question, which is: what are fusions trying to achieve?

A: So I think that fusions are trying to... It's like putting two canons under the microscope at each other. Like pointing microscopes at each other, basically, right? To learn more about each canon by what we know from the other one.

M: Mhm.

A: So, for example, going back to the *Yuri!!! On Ice* one, because that was such an exquisite, amazing example of the form, by having the kaiju there, we get more insight into the *Yuri!!! On Ice* canon. And by having the *Yuri!!! On Ice* canon there, we get that beautiful, deep, emotionality into how the world reacts to the kaiju and the trauma that they're going through. So they—

M: —They illuminate each other—

A: —enhance each other. Yeah. They illuminate each other. They are more than the sum of their parts.

M: Right.

F: And I think Macey, in terms of the *Hunger Games* fusions, which I think is ones that you were talking about, I can see the appeal of them in that like many AU situations it's about taking a set of characters you really like and and putting them into an extreme.

M: Yes, exactly that.

F: And seeing, what do they do?

[40:19]

M: Exactly that. And, with *Hunger Games* particularly, it's all about really pushing them to the limit, and the thing is that your reader will already buy that because they understand what the *Hunger Games* is, it's a lot easier to get that cost without losing people when you're using a premise that somebody's already bought into.

F: Yeah, it's like what we talked about with our [personality taxonomies episode](#). When you're doing something like sorting a character into a Hogwarts house, or assigning them an animal as their daemon, your audience in the fanfic sense will already have their own opinions that they're bringing. They will be in conversation with what you're showing them and be like, "Hmm, do I agree with this? Am I prepared to be convinced? What would I have thought that this person's daemon is?"

M: It's almost like the fusion is a metaphor for canon. It's a different perspective. It's turning the book upside down and looking at it that way around.

A: Yeah.

M: It's like I always end up worldbuilding my magic as a metaphor for the theme of the society that I'm working with. Here you're using the daemons as a kind of metaphor for the magical vulnerability or whatever, but like it's a way of changing your perspective.

F: Yes, or the kaiju as your anxiety.

M: Mmhmm. Exactly.

F: Yeah, I agree, and also, I think whatever— who was it that said that the power of cameos, when we were talking about why we like these things—

A: That was me, yeah.

F: It is a way of just having fun, and eliciting a fun response from the audience of, "Oh there's that person that I love", and you see this with crossovers and fusions in the comic book world, and I think that's why the comics have, and the MCU, and a lot of the comic book TV shows

have these crossovers because people are going, “Oh I always wanna watch these people that I love popping up in other contexts, and—

M: Yes! It’s competence porn, kind of.

F: Yeah, kind of, but it’s also just that, “Ooh, yay! It’s this person that I love, like I’m thinking about the [Discworld](#) books, which are technically all the same universe, but you have characters that belong to particular pockets of it showing up, like when Sam Vimes shows up in [Monstrous Regiment](#), you don’t expect it because you’re not in a City Watch headspace, but you’re like, “Oh, that’s this person that I really love!” And I was thinking— I was trying to think of any non-comics that do canonical in-universe crossover fusions, and I came up with Disney Princesses.

M: Oh?

F: Because the idea of all the Disney Princesses sort of meeting up and talking and communicating and being pals is something that has never really been in-universe canonical. Amy Mebberson’s [Pocket Princesses](#) webcomic is quite popular for a reason, and then I think the first time it became a proper in-universe crossover was because, in Frozen, where they show Flynn and Rapunzel going into the coronation, even though it’s a really really small Easter egg thing. And then in the [second Wreck-It Ralph](#) movie, they actually show all the princesses hanging out together in a very very fanfic-y audience pleasing kind of way.

M: But I also have a small theory about a useful mapping of fusions in fandom onto a thing that we see a lot in professional fiction. Which is, those titles that you always describe as X meets Y.

A: Comp titles, as they’re known in the industry.

M: Kind of, but I’m not really talking about the way that all of us will scrabble for comp titles for all of our works.

F: This is more like a Twitter pitch.

M: Well, no, what I’m trying to say is a little bit different. What I’m trying to talk about, not every book is like this. You can pick up comp titles for every book, right? But there are some books that are very clearly two things combined. Like Rivers Solomon’s [An Unkindness of Ghosts](#) is a generation-ship, and also an Antebellum South slavery narrative. Which are super different things, but kinda get smushed together and are fascinating when that’s happened. And to me, that’s a fusion. It’s like two different genres that were never combined suddenly whoop on top of each other.

A: And I have a note here about Mary Robinette Kowal’s [Glamourist Histories](#) series? Which is a Jane Austen book, but with magic. Would you call that a fusion as well?

M: Not necessarily just because magic is very generic but the [Pride and Prejudice and Zombies](#) maybe? But it's also just like— it doesn't matter, you know? There's no real hard and fast rule.

A: No, I see what you mean though, because, like Zombie fiction has kind of its own canon. And its own rules that you're bringing in.

M: Yes. It's about tropes. It's about narrative tropes, something has to be well-defined enough not to only have magic, but also, like, narrative tropes. And I think for me, the more narrowly defined these are, the more you can smush them together and subvert expectations because the reader has expectations, whereas magic, the reader doesn't really have expectations to the same degree.

A: That's fair.

F: Yeah, I think if you found it on ao3, it would be somebody doing Jane Austen, but retelling it with a particular magic system from a different book. That would be a fusion.

M: Mmmhmm. Right. Jane Austen goes to Hogwarts!

A: I would read the shit outta that.

F: The Bennett sisters go to Hogwarts, I could see that.

M: Oh my gosh. I bet you someone's written it.

A: Oh my god.

F: Oh, they have.

A: Oh my gosh. I would read the shit outta that.

F: And I would actually read the shit out of like a multi Jane Austen. Actually, I was thinking, I think I mentioned this briefly as one of the books that I had read, one of Lucy Parker's [London Celebrities](#) romance novels. It's the— can't remember which one it is, but it's the most recent one, but it's the text that takes place within the book is [Jane Austen crossover house murder mystery reality TV](#) show.

M: Oh my gosh. That is many things.

A: That is many things.

F: Yes. It is a great crossover.

M: But I think this leads us into— there reaches a certain point where there is a parallel between the concept of a fandom, and the tropes and fanons and ideas that people have around a particular fandom, and a sub-genre in genre fiction. And like the tropes around Zombie fiction versus the tropes around [Harry Potter](#) fanfiction, and you can kinda use them to do similar things to your reader's expectations. So, like, is a [Yuri!!! on Ice](#) Japanese *Harry Potter* fusion really a fusion, or is just a magic boarding school AU?

A: I think it would depend a lot on basically aesthetics, and which bits of the magic school that you're taking. Whether you're structuring it deliberately on Hogwarts or whether you're doing something sort of Hogwarts-inspired but ultimately different.

F: Yeah, 'cause *Harry Potter* is such a seminal text now that anything set in a magical boarding school— yes did you notice my use of the word seminal? Thank you—

A: [giggles] Dick joke, check!

[Laughter]

F: —That anything set in a boarding school with magic is going to get that reference, no matter what, even if it's different stylistically, if the worldbuilding is different, if the magical mechanics are different, I think that's what you're saying. Magic boarding school slash *Harry Potter* is almost as big as zombies when it comes to being a cultural reference point.

M: Sure.

A: So, do we want to talk a little bit about some of our favourite canons to fuse things with?

M: I always like to talk about favourites!

A: Do! You have so many favourites!

M: [sings, or at least tries to] These are a few of my favourite things.

A: Tell us about some of your favourite crossovers and fusion things.

M: Yes! So I really love [Loveless](#) fusions. Which are kinda hard to come by? I don't know if either of you has read *Loveless*.

A: I watched [Loveless](#) back in 2006.

F: Is that the one with the catboy in it?

A: Yes. It is the one with the catboy.

M: Yes! It is the one where you lose your virginity and you lose your cat-ears and tail, and everyone can tell.

F: Yes, that's the extent of my knowledge about *Loveless*.

[Laughter]

[48:55]

M: And as we were speaking of earlier, people pick and choose the pieces of the canon that they bring into a fusion, and that's, let's be honest, normally one of the ones they bring because fandom is horny.

A: Yes, yes. Why wouldn't you?

M: Yeah, why wouldn't you. But the piece specifically that I really loved is that the whole magic system of *Loveless* is a paired magic system, right? You have to fight— it's kind of like the kaiju drift-compatible thing, except even more specific, it's like soulmates, you can only do magic with your partner.

A: It's kind of like *Catalyst*, Macey, just admit it. It's kind of like *Catalyst*.

M: I really like magic that you can't do on your own because I feel like that's a far more interesting way to examine society and connection between people?

A: Relationships, yeah.

M: Yeah, so I love that one. And I also love *Hunger Games* and *His Dark Materials*, but I will be controversial and say that I'm actually kind of bored of *Harry Potter* fusions. I don't find that most people really do anything interesting with them, they just have their characters have fun at boarding school—

A: Which is valid, just not for you.

M: —Which is totally valid but I won't read 300,000 words of it. And I will read 300,000 words of a lot of things.

[A laughs]

F: No, I think a good *Harry Potter* fusion is short because basically, if all you want to do is say, "Here's the Hogwarts house they would be in, here's some interesting stuff that magic can say

about the character dynamic” and then that’s it, you’re done. Unless you’ve come up with an interesting original plot to explore that through, yeah, you can get away with making your point in quite a short space.

M: Having said that, there was some very good ridiculously long [Yu Yu Hakusho](#) x *Harry Potter* crossovers on [FF.net](#) that were quite good, but that was a crossover not a fusion.

A: Freya, what are your favourites?

F: I agree, I like a good *His Dark Materials* fusion. I’m not as much into the *Hunger Games* as much Macey, mostly because most dystopian things bore me to tears, honestly.

A: Yeah, same.

M: I just like running around stabbing things, okay?

F: [laughs] Fair enough. I’m more into very tropey historical things that again have a cultural reference point. So like a Regency AU that has a very Georgette Heyer feel to it, or an Age of Sail fusion AU that has a very Patrick O’Brian feel to it, so not necessarily a true fusion, but borrowing of the greats of people who have written in those historical genres. I do like a good [Star Trek](#) fusions. I think there’s a very long [White Collar](#) *Star Trek* fusion, which I’m trying to convince you guys to let me tentpole for another episode that we have been discussing, which is extremely good.

M: Take a few sample chapters.

F: [laughs] But, yeah, I like the *Star Trek* universe as a place to put people, because again, you can decide what you’re going to do with them. What ideas are you going to use them to explore? Are you going to play with the aliens? Do you want to play with the military structure? Do you want to play with the whole “Are they a science person or a command person”?

M: *Star Trek* Houses!

F: *Star Trek* Houses! With their coloured shirts! There’s a lot of scope to explore a lot of different ideas for the *Star Trek* fusion.

M: How about Alex? What are your favourite fusions?

A: Well, I agree, *His Dark Materials*, I think is the king of fusions, just because having the daemons is such a beautiful and succinct way to talk about characters through that visual metaphor.

M: Right.

A: It doesn't get better than that. I used to be a huge fan of *Harry Potter* crossovers and fusions, and I'm just not anymore. I think that I agree with Freya, most of the time, they don't do as much as they could. But honestly, like, I'm just a weak bitch for coffeeshop AUs. And I would argue that there are enough coffeeshop AUs, that it's prevalent enough that every new coffeshop AU is kind of a fusion with all of the other coffeeshop AUs that have come before—

M: Here is a proposal—

A: Because of the laws of the coffeeshops' universe.

M: Here is a proposal. Do we feel like a coffeeshop is really a soap opera?

A: Probably.

F: Not really.

A: Okay, wow, sure.

M: I mean, you're basically writing your characters into a soap opera. It happens to be set in a coffeeshop just like [Schitt's Creek](#) happens to be set in a motel.

A: Right.

F: Fair enough.

A: Flowershop AU or like "I own one shop on one side of the street, and you own a different shop on the other side of the street".

M: That's *Schitt's Creek*.

F: Okay. Well, one of my good friends is right now at the moment writing a fusion, which is [Pride and Prejudice](#) set in a magical coffee shop. I'm so excited for this book, it's going to be so good.

A: Oh, it's original fiction. I feel like that's just—

F: Oh yeah— writes original fiction. There are a lot of *Pride and Prejudice* retellings that are original fiction.

M: Because it's out of copyright.

F: Yesss.

A: I thought that you meant this was fanfic, and I was like, “Oh, I’d read that.” Cool. Cool.

F: No, this is original. This is original fiction.

[54:13]

A: Has this been sold, is this something we can like name and?

F: No, no, I think she’s literally like two chapters in, and I’m so excited for it.

A: Oh, ok, so we can’t talk about it, cool

M: We’ll leave her be, we will ask again in a year.

F+A: Yeah

A: When she has sold it.

F: So do we want to end by talking about personal favorites?

A: More personal favorites?

F+M: Yes

M: My favorite fusion of all time is [*He Says He Is an Experimental Theologian*](#)

A+F: So good!

M: It is a *His Dark Materials* fusion/almost crossover with [*Welcome to Nightvale*](#). And one of the reasons I love it so much is because it doesn’t just pick up the daemons. It picks up the war with Heaven.

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes. And makes it weird.

F: Weirder.

M: And makes it weird and fucky because it’s *Nightvale*.

A: Yeah, ‘cause it’s *Nightvale*

M: And I love it so much. There’s traveling between worlds, and it just--it picks up so much of the rest of what made Pullman’s worldbuilding cool, that so many fusions just kind of ignore?

A: Yeah, most of the time they just take the daemons.

M: Right.

A: But this took the daemons and a bunch of other stuff. A really solid, amazing fic. We tentpoled that for Episode 2.

M: Was it Episode 2?

A: That was Episode 2, that was way back

F: I can never remember if we did actually tentpole it or if you guys just shouted about it a lot--

A: No, because here's the thing--

F: Because I still haven't read it

A: Okay, here's the thing. I went back and I listened to the beginning of the episode just to be sure. And technically, okay, technically at the beginning of the episode we said that today we're talking about [Sorting Hat Chats](#), I think, and daemon AUs.

F: I think we kind of hadn't sorted out tentpoles at that point.

A: But yeah, exactly, exactly. Like, it was Episode 2, we had no strategy at that point.

M: Freya, you are certainly not obliged to, but I think you might enjoy--

F: Oh, I'm sure I would, it's on my long list.

M: [Giggles] How about your favorites?

F: Yes, my personal favorite fusion fic is by astolat, surprise!, this is the [Fast and Furious](#) and [X-Men](#) fusion, called "[The Next Quarter Mile](#)". It begins as a fusion, and I think it would have worked very well as a pure fusion where some of the *Fast and Furious* characters discover or develop that they have mutant powers, but it becomes a crossover, because astolat just can't help herself, she has to throw enormously good plot at things.

A: Yup

F: And so there's some more stuff with the existing Mutant Brotherhood and things like that later on. But it would have worked just as well as a pure fusion and not a crossover, and I really like it because it does exactly what you were saying about turning microscopes onto fandoms by

fusing them with other ones. And it allows these semi-fantastical things that happen in the *Fast and the Furious* franchise--

M: [Laughs]

A: Yep.

F: And it formalizes them by making them actual mutant powers. So, there's this ridiculous amnesia plotline, and they're like well, clearly, there are telepaths, so someone just wiped her memories. And the idea that they can drive--they have such amazing reflexes, they can do these things that nobody else can do on the road, that becomes. . . Brian's mutant power is that he can see a little way into the future, and so he can see the hole that will appear in the traffic, and drive into it. It's just so good.

A: Mmm, that is awesome.

M: [Laughs] It's a good fic.

A: Actually, I also have a favorite *Fast and Furious* fusion, and that is yours, Freya.

F: Heyyy!

A: That you wrote with *Captive Prince*, yes?

F: That was so enjoyable to write.

M: [laughing in background]

A: And it's such a great fic, and I read it probably like four or five times now, and it's really interesting because it takes these characters from *Captive Prince* and puts them in a completely different moral premise.

F: Mmm, mhmm.

A: Where, instead of being two kings of rival nations--essentially, I'm really simplifying it, but, okay, sure, let's just go with it--you have, like, one character who is an FBI agent, right? And the other, who is kind of the leader of this slightly illegal--

F: Slightly!

A: Or, incredibly illegal gang--

M: Fairly--

F: Yeah.

A: Fairly illegal, fairly illegal gang. And just examining how relationships change us, and how someone's moral center can kind of shift, and what that takes--

F: Right.

A: And I think you just did a real good job with that one, Freya.

F: Thank you! Well, I'm just thinking about why I--why I liked that one and what I did it. . . You're right, I was taking the relationship dynamic of *The Fast and the Furious*--

A: Yeah

F: Which is the first Fast and the Furious movie is about someone who's an FBI agent and someone who's, like, a criminal, you know, gang leader--

M: Who fall for each other.

F: Yes, and they definitely fall for each other even if the movie does not let them make out.

A: [Laughs]

M: No, but they really do, listeners, they really do. Even if it's, like, platonic partnership falling-for.

A: Yeah.

F: So it was--

A: I have never seen a single *Fast and Furious* movie so I don't know what you're talking about

F: [Gasps] Oooh, I love them so much! Did you watch the first one at least, the first one is very enjoyable--

M: [simultaneously] Yeah, first one's good.

A: Okay.

F: And, yeah, so I was fusing two relationships, essentially, by using one setting.

M: Mm

A: Well, we are running out of time, dear listeners. Thank you so much for joining us! If you have any questions or other fusions or recommendations that you like, please tell us on twitter--

M: Yes! If you have long fusions, I love them, send them to me.

A: Yes.

F: Yes, send all the really long ones to Macey.

A: Macey is thirsty for--

M: [Laughs] Rude!

A: Macey's thirsty for a thick, thick fic.

F: Wow.

M: And on that note--

A+F: Goodbye!

M: I have to go murder a podcast wife.

[Laughter fading into outro music]

A: Hey everybody! Thanks for joining us on this episode of Be the Serpent, a podcast of extremely, extremely deep literary merit. What are some of your favorite examples of two great tastes that taste great together? Either actual flavors or fandom crossovers, take your pick. I think it's really interesting how adding a contrasting flavor, whether literal or figurative, can deepen and enrich the familiar one--like salted caramel. You don't usually expect salted caramel, but it's good. Well, I mean, you probably expect it these days, because it's become, you know, so popular and trendy. But back in the day, salted caramel was kind of a weird thing.

A: Anyway, we have some even more exciting topics to talk about in upcoming episodes. On the next episode, two weeks hence, on September 25th, we'll be uploading our live show from WorldCon. It was so much fun, and I can't wait for you to hear it. Or hear it again, if you were there in person. If you want to prepare in advance, one of the tentpoles for that episode is the [Les Mis](#) fanfic "[Three Days \(or the One Where Javert and Valjean Take a Roadtrip Through France and Raise a Child\)](#)", by zamwessell. So, if you have a friend who's into stuff like that, maybe give them a heads up. In the meantime, feel free to continue the conversation with us. Questions? Comments? Breathless adulation? Contact us at serpentcast@gmail.com, @serpentcast on twitter and tumblr, or join in the conversation in our fan discord chat, linked in the About the Show page of our website. If you enjoy the podcast, please consider supporting

us on Patreon. And, by the way, not everybody could pull off that particular color combination, but you totally can.

What We're Into Lately

[*Milkman*](#) by Anna Burns

[*Valentine*](#) by Jodi McAlister

[*This Is How You Lose the Time War*](#) by Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone

[*Black Sails*](#)

[*Westworld*](#)

[*Emily Tesh*](#)

[*Jenn Lyons*](#)

[*Game of Kings*](#)

[*Oh My General*](#)

[*Good Omens*](#)

[“we could turn the world to gold”](#) by nikkiRA

[“You, Soft and Only”](#) by thehoyden

[“in his own image”](#) by taizi

[“ask, and ye shall receive”](#) by ariaste

[*A Choir of Lies*](#)

[*A Conspiracy of Truths*](#).

Other Stuff We Mentioned

[*Captive Prince*](#)

[*Person of Interest*](#)

[*Yuri!!! on Ice*](#)

[*Harry Potter*](#)

[*The Hunger Games*](#)

[*Star Trek*](#)

[Romeo and Juliet](#)
[West Side Story](#)
[Harry Potter](#) by JK Rowling
[Generation Kill](#)
[You Drive Through the Dust](#) by Dira Sudas
[His Dark Materials](#) by Philip Pullman
[Pacific Rim](#)
[Kingsman: The Secret Service](#)
“[are we human. or are we dynamite](#)” by randomhorse
[Astolat](#)
[Thor: Ragnarok](#)
[some fic](#) by Fahye
Avengers: [End Game](#)
[Dragon Ball Z](#)
[Thor](#) series
[Firefly](#)
[Episode 2 of Be The Serpent: Personality taxonomies](#)
[Discworld](#) series by Terry Pratchett
[Monstrous Regiment](#) by Terry Pratchett
Amy Mebberson's [Pocket Princesses](#)
[Ralph Breaks the Internet](#)
Rivers Solomon's [An Unkindness of Ghosts](#)
Mary Robinette Kowal's [Glamourist Histories](#) series
[Pride and Prejudice and Zombies](#)
Lucy Parker's [London Celebrities](#)
[Harry Potter](#)
[Yuri!!! on Ice](#)
[Loveless](#) by Yun Kouga
[Loveless](#) the anime
[Yu Yu Hakusho](#)
[Star Trek](#)
[White Collar](#)
[Schitt's Creek](#)
[Pride and Prejudice](#) by Jane Austen
[He Says He Is an Experimental Theologian](#) by ErinPtah
[Welcome to Nightvale](#) the podcast
[Sorting Hat Chats](#) on tumblr
[Fast and Furious](#) Franchise
[X-Men](#) Franchise
“[The Next Quarter Mile](#)” by astolat
“[run all the lights](#)” by fahye
[Les Mis](#) the movie

For Next Time

[“Three Days \(or the One Where Javert and Valjean Take a Roadtrip Through France and Raise a Child\)”](#) by zamwessell