

The Hidden Bookcase Transcript
Godkiller by Hannah Kaner ft. @IndiaReadsALot

Morgan

Welcome to The Hidden Bookcase, come through and get cosy. Pick a book; your favourite book- that's the one that opens this room. Inside you'll find a warm fire, a loving cat, and a wide skylight to the stars.

Sorren

And a dangerously high "to be read" pile.

Morgan

I'm Morgan, I use they/them pronouns and I am a morally grey godling.

Sorren

I'm Sorren, I use he/him pronouns and I'm a crossroad town that specialises in brass bells.

India

And I'm India and I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the bread that Elo bakes when he is stressed.

Morgan

Sorren and I have been friends for over a decade and the two of us are always swapping books.

Sorren

Each fortnight the two of us, sometimes with help from a friend, take it in turns to recommend one another a favourite read. The first time reader tells us what they know about the book, makes some predictions about what they don't, and then we discuss our thoughts with all of you bookworms. This month is Disability Pride Month.

Morgan

So today, let's get to talking about...

Sorren

Godkiller by Hannah Kaner.

Morgan

Today we are here with India.

India

Hello!

Morgan

Who I have known for... We've known each other less than a year this is insane.
Um, but-

India

I think we've known each other less than six months, I think.

Sorren & Morgan

(Laugh)

Morgan

Maths. Oh no.

India

I'm counting on my fingers.

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

Oh, somewhere between eight to nine months. Wahey.

Sorren

Oh my god!

India

Well, it's the best eight or nine months of my life, I will say.

Morgan

(Laughs) So me and India have worked together for about eight months now.

India

(Laughs)

Morgan

And you both have read Godkiller. So...

India

Yes!

Sorren

Yes.

Morgan

...Tell me about how you found out about it.

India

I heard about it through work. For those of you who don't know, I'm a bookseller. They were sending out proofs for the book in preparation for its release and I've never sent an email so fast in my entire life being like: "I would really, really, really love- (Laughs) -If I could possibly read this book!" And everybody around me was getting the proofs and reading them and loving them. And all I could see was positive reviews. And I was like, "I think I've missed the window. I don't think I'm gonna get it." And then I think the book had just come out, like literally just come out, I'd seen all the beautiful sprayed edges and all of that kind of stuff. And then I got a parcel and it was a proof copy. And I was like, "This is the best day of my life."

Morgan

Yes!

Sorren

I also got a proof. So I was just scrolling through NetGalley and I was like "Wow, this is a cool cover. I have no idea what this is about, but I'll just hit request." I think this is in the early days of me having NetGalley so I was just sort of quite cavalier with just hitting request thinking "Oh, they won't say yes to everything."

India

Mm-hm.

Morgan

(Laughs)

Sorren

...And then getting way too many approvals.

India

And you're looking at your percentage and you're like "Wow, I can't do this..."
(Laughs)

Sorren

It's looking rough right now.

India

(Laughs)

Sorren

But Godkiller was one of the first ones and I'm very very happy that I did request it.

Morgan

I remember you messaging me and being like "Okay there's this new book coming out: don't read it. We're gonna do it for the pod."

Sorren

I was pretty sure even like a couple of chapters in I was like, "I feel like we want to do this one on the show," and then poor Morgan kept being like "Everyone's really it and telling me it's good." And I was like "Just wait!"

India

Yeah, I read the first couple of chapters and I was like, "Morgan is gonna love this." And I was shocked that, Morgan, you hadn't read it yet. I was like, "What's taking you so long to read it?" And yeah, here we are.

Morgan

It's all for the bit.

India

It's all for- (Laughs)

Morgan

And what is Godkiller about?

India

Sorren, you go.

Morgan

Me, okay? Godkiller is a high fantasy novel about a god killer who is sort of the equivalent of a monster hunter except rather than slaying traditional monsters such as werewolves or vampires or something, she slays gods, as this is a setting where gods have been outlawed, and often require sacrifices or violence to gain power. She accidentally acquires a child, as you sometimes do, who needs help separating herself from a god who she is bound to and she ends up visiting the city that used to house all of the gods, along with an ex-knight who was involved in the war that brought down the gods in the first place.

India

Ex-knight turned baker.

Sorren

Ex-knight turned baker, that's important.

Morgan

Baker knight!

India

And also you- (Laughs) You make it sound so ominous, "She acquired a child," the child...

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

...Literally would not let this woman leave.

Sorren

That's true- the child acquired her.

India

Yeah- (Laughs) We love a found family trope.

Morgan

Yes, we do. Oh my god. Okay, we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

Sorry.

Sorren

Let's listen...

Morgan

...To the blind.

[TAPE RECORDER CLICKS ON.]

Morgan

I've heard a lot about Godkiller, um, but I'm not sure how much of it is still in my brain. So I'll try remember everything. Basically, I know that it's about a character whose job is to hunt down and kill gods. I know that there's really good disability representation. I know there are lesbians. I know that it has accidental baby acquisition. Um... Basically kind of like the Witcher. I think that's actually everything I know. (Laughs) Um, the cover is very vibey there's a stag on the front. So maybe one of the gods is a stag? Um... I know that the rabbit with wings on the back cover is a character who's quite important because Sorren said he really loved that character. So I'm excited to see what the rabbit with wings is doing. I have the Waterstones exclusive edition of the book. So it's got the really pretty end papers and the sprayed edges. So I know that we've

got high fantasy, vibey worldbuilding. And honestly, this is just an absolutely gorgeous book. But that I think is everything... Um, and I can't wait to read!

[TAPE RECORDER CLICKS OFF.]

Morgan

Slay.

India

Love it.

Morgan

I knew a pretty good amount but also not any of the scale. I knew that there's a lot of disability rep in it.

India

Mm-hm.

Morgan

I didn't expect like, every single character to be disabled in like, realistic different flavours...

India

Yes.

Morgan

Because it's a postwar society so it makes sense for everybody to be...

India

Mm-hm!

Morgan

...Some sort of disabled. That was fun.

Sorren

Very refreshing.

Morgan

Didn't know there were bisexuals. I was very excited when there were bisexuals. Because originally I was like, "Okay, lesbians," and then Elo or E-lo and Kissen started making eyes at each other and I was like, "Hang on..."

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

"Oh my god!"

India

Exactly. I- especially after the first couple of chapters- was just like, "We love a lesbian." And I didn't personally see the relationship form as early as I think some people who read it did. So let me tell you when the romance- when it started sparking- for a split second, I was like, "But she only likes women!" (Laughing) And like- "Did you forget bisexual people existed babe? What are you doing?"

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

And also they took enemies to lovers to the point where I only thought they were enemies. I did not think we were gonna get any romance. I literally was thinking "Elo babe this woman is literally only for the women. So like, leave her alone." And then I was like, "Oh, wait, no, she's not. Do what you got to do girl, I respect it." And also, I love Elo so very much respect it.

Morgan

He's an icon.

Sorren

He is.

Morgan

I didn't know about him going in. I didn't know he existed!

India

Neither did I!

Sorren

I was very pleasantly surprised by all the rep actually, because I had literally no clue going in, and then Kissen's dad!

India

What a prologue!

Sorren

Honestly.

Morgan

Yeah. Oh my god.

India

The stakes were set so high from the very beginning. Morgan and my's mutual friend had read like, the first chapter and the prologue. And all he said is "All you need to know is that the main character's dad's in love with the sea god, and then there's a lot of fire," and I was like, "Oh, okay, and then I read it," and I was like, "There is a lot of fire." I may have teared up.

Morgan

The prologue literally got me. And then everything like, slowed down a bit. And I was so scared that something else is gonna happen. I'm like on edge the whole time.

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

Stressed!

Morgan

She's not afraid to just kill off every single important member in a character's life from the get go.

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

So you just know going into it- Is anybody really safe?

Sorren

Exactly.

Morgan

When we were introduced to the adventuring party? I was like, "You guys have been built specifically to be picked off one by one."

India

Mm-hm.

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

More of them survived than I expected. I can't lie.

India

I loved the married couple. I was just like, "I hope they survive."

Morgan

And they do!

India

And they do!

Sorren

I mean, they're in a pretty like, chaotic environment at the end so... But they're probably fine. I'm sure they're fine.

India

I'm sure they're fine.

Morgan

Yeah.

Sorren

Yeah.

India

I believe they are.

Morgan

The three old ladies who just want to die together-

India

Stop.

Morgan

Oh my god- And then the one who dies! And it was supposed to be together!

India

I was like, "It's not in their plan!" I didn't want to say my biggest takeaway, whenever I explain to people about the book is... I recently read a bunch of fantasy books that are kind of about 500 pages. Considering there's 500 pages, I was expecting a lot more to happen in those 500 pages. But Godkiller is, I think, just under 300. And there's so much worldbuilding, so much setup, I feel like all the characters got like, a pretty good amount of page time, set up their backstory, set up their motivations, a bunch of twists and turns and all of this, in under 300 pages. And I'm looking at everybody else and thinking "Listen, Godkiller packed a punch on every single page. And that is my standard for the rest of my reading life."

Sorren

Yeah, I think the pacing is really strong.

Morgan

It's so concise.

India

I was worried going into it that because of how short it was, is it going to do as much as it says it's going to do? Especially the amount of worldbuilding..

Sorren

Mm.

India

I was really shocked that so much was packed in there.

Morgan

It didn't feel too overwhelming, as well.

India

Mm-hm.

Morgan

Like, you know how usually the first 100 pages of a fantasy novel, you have to just be like, "Yeah, I don't know what's going on," and you pick it up as you go. That was less here. I was more, sort of, ingratiated in because it all just made sense. And maybe that's because I've read a lot of fantasy now. But like, it felt chill.

India

I think she spent more time setting up the characters rather than doing a big infodump in the first 100 pages. I will say that I found the beginnings of the civil war a little bit confusing at the beginning, trying to understand how it all started. But I felt that the beginning, like you said, did not feel like wading through pages and pages of magic system establishment.

Sorren

I think it is that tying it into character arcs, like that conversation that Kissen has where she's explaining her encounter with the love goddess, it actually tells you quite a lot about how Gods work and how curses work but it's also telling you about Kissen.

India

Yeah, that pivotal moment where Arren properly becomes King and all of that...

Sorren

Mm-hm.

India

...You find out really late into the book exactly what happened that led to those moments and like, led to his decision to like ban all the gods. You hear about it, but you don't get like, the full picture and the full story until last couple of chapters. It didn't feel like I was putting loads of puzzle pieces together and getting confused, but it did feel like a slow jigsaw puzzle forming, but not in a way where it was frustrating to wait. I guess because the page number was so short.

Morgan

It did take me quite a long time to read, I can't lie considering it's only 290 pages, it took me like a week and a half which maybe doesn't sound like a long time. But we all know me

Sorren

It took me like, months to read this the first time so I- (Laughs) I don't know what was going on there.

India

Took me three days. (Laughs)

Sorren

It took me like, three days to reread it.

Morgan

I'm gonna blame my dissertation.

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

As we record it's due in less than three weeks and I still haven't properly started writing it yet. But I felt like although the law and the worldbuilding and all that were really well spruced in the actual writing was just slightly too chewy for me.

Sorren

Mm?

Morgan

Not chewy in the sense of like, purple prose or anything, like that but chewy in the fact of like, it needed streamlining a bit more. It was just the sort of thing

where I'm like, "This is a debut," and it needed like, one more round of editing, like, just one. Some things didn't need to be that concise, they could have been allowed to breathe a bit more but also dissertation brain, so....

India

I kind of liked how to the point quite a lot of it was. I read a lot of Brandon Sanderson and there is no purple prose with that man, it is very much just to the point. I do love a good purple prose, but certain times with certain books, where they have a little bit more of an elaborate way of writing, can get lost on me a little bit. So I kind of felt that it was like a good medium to me. I didn't have many criticisms of the book to be honest, I just genuinely really enjoyed it. But the one thing I would say is I was genuinely shocked that it was a romance about halfway through. I was not against being a romance when [it] was fully formed, I was super in it. But I think at the beginning they were very, very heavy on the enemies and I was like, expecting it to be maybe more of a slow burn over the series. So it did come as a surprise to me when they suddenly were certainly were romantic, because I didn't even view them in a romance sense at all, because I didn't personally see in the writing- and maybe I just clearly missed something that was blatantly obvious. I didn't see much in the writing until it was then at my front door.

Sorren

I think I caught it more on the reread because I was expecting it. Kissen comes in with "pretty boy," and I was like "Okay..."

India

I thought that was an insult!

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

Just like a genuine insult not like a flirty insult- I've been with the same guy since I was 15 so I haven't needed to utilise any flirting so clearly it just went over my head.

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

I didn't read it as a romance.

Sorren

Yeah?

Morgan

Because they are definitely doing the enemies thing-

India

Mm-hm.

Morgan

And then they're doing like, the grudging allies thing.

India

Yeah.

Morgan

And I feel like in the grudging allies stage there's always so much sexual tension...

India

Yeah.

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

...Before there's any romance. So I feel like we're gonna get, in the later books, more actual feelings. And right now it's just more of a like, "We're about to die, we might as well bone," kind of vibe.

Sorren

Yeah, yeah.

India

Okay, fair.

Morgan

Whereas I feel like they're actually going to explore the relationship a lot more, and actually deal with the trauma of like, "Hey, you summoned the God that destroyed my entire life..."

India

Mm-hm!

Morgan

"Let's unpack that before we go any further with this, maybe."

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

"Before we adopt our co-daughter together, let's..."

India

And do what it was when I was like, "Ah, they're just like a cut little family now, who all slightly don't trust each other, or really particularly like each other, but they are also a family." That's what sold it to me. There's like, a quote near to the end, where they're like, are you gonna just show Inara what it means?" Or something like that?

India

Because then it's like, oh, you're going to a demonstration, or that you should just throw your life away for the first person that asked for it. Yes, that was really good.

India

Absolutely.

Morgan

It has great parallels to a book we did... I think it'd be a couple of months ago now: The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches.

India

Love!

Sorren

It kind of reminds me of them, yeah.

Morgan

Co-parenting and having to be like, "Okay, we don't like each other. But we are co-parenting this child right now: we need to set a good standard."

India

I really liked the way that it took all of them a really long time to trust each other. Even when they get to Blenraden and they have kind of bonded, they still don't really trust each other, and they've all got their guard up. And I think that was done really, really well because I've seen so many stories where they go on their trip, and then they fight a couple of people, and then they're like, "Wow, we're all bonded for life now!" Realistically, they've all gone through so much and they've all been betrayed one way or another, or lost people one way or another, so I thought it was very realistic, even though it came across like they wanted to stay together, they also didn't trust each other, and I liked how complex it was.

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

It's the fact that they don't trust each other until Skedi loses control, and like, pushes everyone too far. Which is like, such a funny thing because I literally went into that confrontation being like, "Oh my God, they're never going to trust them again." And they came out of the confrontation being like, "I trust you now, because you showed me all your true colours." That was so funny. Like, the fact that Kissen's like, "I'm going to murder you." And then he literally mind controls her child, and she's like, "Nah, you're cool now."

India

(Laughs)

Morgan

But it made sense. Everyone sort of like came to a new understanding... Moved forward with that understanding.

India

Very good communication, though. Skedi on the other hand... (Sighs)

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

I know, Sorren, that you liked him. I...

Sorren

No, I... (Laughing) I liked him as a character.

India

Okay, that little creature irritated me so much. Love him. But my goodness... He's making all the bad decisions for the group.

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

He's just a child. He's just driven by his ID.

Sorren

And if you're travelling with someone who exists to kill your kind, that's quite stressful.

India

I'm expecting him to be peaceful about it. I'm like, "Come on!"

Sorren

I did like how his view of Kissen shifted after he spies on Elo, he doesn't want to imagine a world without Kissen there to protect him and Inara.

Morgan

Mm! Yeah, she's your mum too!

India

I did want to say, and I want this to be explored in the next couple of books...

Sorren

Mm?

India

Arren and Elogast were in love with each other.

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

Let's talk about this right now.

Morgan

Oh, yeah.

India

I think this was another reason why I was just not viewing Kissen and Elogast together. I was like, Elogast and Arren are in love and he's doing this big thing and then when he comes back they're gonna remember how much they loved each other and they're gonna get together... And then he starts flirting with Kissen, and I'm like, "Your husband's back home. And then his husband... His husband was- (Laughs) not a nice guy."

Sorren

It was so amazing rereading that scene and Arren's there like, "Augh, don't look! I don't want to show you!" And it's like... (Laughing) You liar, you bastard!

Morgan

It's so soft!

Sorren

Yeah!

Morgan

He escapes from the palace, and he shows up and he bakes bread with Elo- But looking back at it, it's like, "What do you mean, the king of the whole realm travelled the whole day and no one noticed he was gone?"

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

That's so sus.

India

But also... If a man rode a whole day to bake bread with me... (Laughing) I probably would also go and sell my soul and my heart to the next fire god.

Sorren

That's fair.

India

I'm like, "What do you mean, you're baking bread with me?" But... That was not platonic. I don't care what people say there was nothing platonic about their relationship and I know that when like, he's like gonna go and give his heart to this bloody god Kissen says, "Were you in love with him? Did you sleep together? Like what is this?" And obviously it was like "He died for me." But I'm like, "There's more to it! You're also in love with him."

Morgan

It's giving big Merlin and Arthur vibes.

India

Stop. Right. Now.

Sorren & Morgan

(Laugh)

India

Yes it is. But also... [Censored] Arren. Do- (Laughs) Do we think the gods are skewing with his mind or this was just always his ultimate goal once he realised he was in power?

Morgan

I feel like it's a bit of absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Sorren

I think they were messing with him a little bit on top of it though, because there was a moment where Elo says something about him apparently not processing what's going on...

Morgan

Mm.

Sorren

...Towards the end. But I also think that Arren had it in him because I feel like the one he's lying at the beginning, I feel like that's all him.

India

And this is what I'm saying; he knew Elogast was in love with him.

Sorren

I thought it was gonna be an unrequited thing.

India

Mm-hm.

Sorren

Maybe Elogast was just in denial.

Morgan

(Laughs)

India

Ugh! It's just tough, but also so emotional and very entertaining to read. When it happened I was shocked. I did the classic like close the book and I was like, "What?!" After that prologue, I was like we are seeing Tseth again. This is a Chekov's God, as they say.

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

And then when she came out of the shrine I was like, "There she is... Shocker to no one." She's just a girlboss, you know? Can't stop a woman doing her job.

Morgan

Yeah.

Sorren

Unless you're the sea.

Morgan

Unless you're the sea. Ahn was absolutely such a girlboss of a God.

Sorren

Mm, I loved her!

Morgan

I was obsessed with her

India

Who I want to be in life: Just a woman chilling asking for things in exchange for goss.

Morgan

(Laughs)

Sorren

Side note, but the way that she's described as being extremely beautiful and also extremely full-figured.

Morgan

Mm!

Sorren

Also when Kissen is talking about the love goddess she says that people would go to the love goddess aiming for that, and then people fasting for the love God and that being framed as a terrible thing. I really liked that.

Morgan

Yes.

Sorren

This is a fantasy world, the beauty standard is going to be like that. Logically.

India

What I think is also so great about this book in general is the representation is just so good. The amount of disabled people in this... Kissen's first chapter as she's walking up to fight that god, and she's talking about her prosthesis... And how she uses her disability to aid her in the fight? So good! And then when you meet her friends growing up, the sign language, the way that it's just utilised so beautifully and with such ease as well. And that's the thing that stood out for me. And I was like, "Why are we not doing this more?"

Morgan

The author is a consultant for digital healthcare tools and services for the public sector.

India

Oh, no way!

Morgan

Yeah, you can see that she's done so much research, there was so much specific knowledge there.

India

Mm.

Morgan

She put so much care into it. And people having multiple things like the fact that Kissen has a prosthesis, but then she also has a like, facial disfigurement, but then she also sometimes uses a wheelchair, which was really cool to see. Because like, I knew she was gonna use a prosthesis. And then she also used a wheelchair and I was like, "Oh my God!"

India

What was done really well, as well as the flashbacks that Elo had. She was covering so much ground in the representation, which I really, really liked. So it wasn't just like, "Oh, this is one way that one person is." Disabilities in general, they affects different people in different ways. And I thought that was displayed very well.

Sorren

If I had one gripe with the whole disability representation. It's the fact that the sign language seems to be this ubiquitous thing across the entire world and Inara's talking about it being like, "Sometimes pirates use it!" And then she's speaking the exact same dialect apparently that Kissen uses with Telle, but... It is really really fantastic. She never forgets about it, which is really nice. Like if there's extreme heat or extreme cold Kissen's leg is being affected.

Morgan

The moment when Elo's kneading the bread and he gets the chronic pain in his fingers.

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

And he starts shaking and it seizes his joints. I was like, "Oh my god. Bestie, I've been there so many times!" I can't really think of any character who just has

chronic pain without a specific source: "I have this chronic pain because I have problems with my leg or something." Whereas like, this was just: "I have chronic pain because I have chronic pain." That's really not represented as much as it should be. Oh, it was so nice to see! I mean, I'm so sorry for you, Elo. But I feel that mood. Also, Elo has chronic pain. And then Arren shows up and is like, "I'm in so much pain!" [Censored] you!

Sorren

Reading that scene again I feel like he was deliberately exploiting that.

India

Arren is a menace!

Sorren

But then I also wouldn't be surprised if it turned out that actually they were causing Arren pain to make it like, more realistic and also to punish him. Because it feels like they control everything about him.

India

I just want to believe this man's an [censored.]

Sorren

(Laughs) I think he's at least a little bit in on it because he is basically making himself a god.

Morgan

Oh, no, definitely.

Sorren

He's naming rivers after himself and there are songs and- He has middle child syndrome.

India

(Laughs)

Sorren

(Laughing) That's where it's coming from...

Morgan

(Laughs)

Sorren

He's like, "My mum didn't love me as much as siblings."

Morgan

It's in the text! It's right there.

Sorren

It's right there.

India

I did want to go back though, to... There are two favourite tropes of mine: one I love a ex-knight, ex-soldier who has to do one last trip. So I think that's why I loved Elo as much as I did. And then I also love: "I never want to have kids. Oh, here's a child that needs my love, support, and help. You are now mine!" Kissen and Inara have my whole entire hearts. Also, because there's a lot in media of the dad figure and the daughter figure... It was so great to have a mum figure and a daughter figure.

Morgan

Definitely. Kissen... I love her so much. She's just grumpy and she just needs a little bit of light in her life, and Inara needs somebody to make her worse and that's what she gets!

India & Sorren

(Laugh)

India

I'm ready for Inara's revenge era: her reputation era, if you will.

Morgan

Oh my god, yes.

India

Elogast is there to do the: "I'm going to do what's right!" Like that's him, that's him, okay. Inara is like "I'm gonna burn the entire country down to get revenge, and Kissen will be there," and that's why they are the perfect duo, because I love feminine rage!

Sorren

Yes.

Morgan

Yeah.

India

They should go on a rampage together, holding hands!

Sorren & Morgan

(Laugh)

Sorren

Oh my god wait- Sorry, I just... You know Kissen's whole like, "I don't kill people," thing?

Morgan

Yeah!

Sorren

Her killing Arren and being like, "You're not a person anymore."

India

Oh!

Sorren

"You've made yourself into a god."

India

That'd be amazing.

Morgan

The thing that got me with that... It was not even any of that, it wasn't any of Kissen's like, "I don't kill people," it was Elogast-

Sorren

Yes!

Morgan

-Being like-

Sorren & Morgan

"I do!"

Morgan

I was like, "Yes!" He may be a moral high ground most of the time, but he also kills people. I love him.

India

This is why they're the best trio.

Morgan

They cover all the different bases, it's great.

India

Somehow someone's dying it just depends on which of the three are going to do it and if you're a God, watch out because Inara can literally stop you doing what you need to do.

Sorren

Okay, I have like, an insane theory about Inara and I don't know if it's insane.

India

Go!

Sorren

Because I didn't get it all my first read, and then I reread this and I was like "No, obviously right?" Because we don't know who her father is...

Morgan

Mm-hm.

Sorren

Her mother fought at Blenraden and apparently was fighting for the god of safe havens Yusef, who comes up a lot given that he doesn't actually appear or apparently be important. Like, this is her dad. She's a demigod, right?

Morgan

Oh yeah.

Sorren

Tseth calls her a halfling at the end.

India

Absolutely.

Sorren

Because also the thing about her being tied to Skedi- they have that whole thing about like, "Oh a god can like, live off another God's power if that God has a shrine."

Morgan

Mm-hm.

Sorren

Also Inara wasn't a secret when she was born, she went to court and then after the war, her mother made her a secret almost as if...

Morgan

Yep.

India

I didn't pick up on the possible who the parent was.

Sorren

I'm not sure if I'm right about that. That's a bit...

India

But still, that makes loads of sense. I see it. But definitely a demigod like 1000%.

Sorren

Absolutely.

India

The halfling line for me confirmed it. There's like a line where it's like... "You need to go back and speak to your mum and see the way that you were made," or something like that.

Sorren

Mm-hm.

India

And I was like "This girl's a demigod."

Sorren

Yeah, Ahn keeps implying stuff and then she says to Kissen; "You would feel differently about her if you knew what she was."

Morgan

Yeah.

India

Which is just so good because Kissen kills gods and then her daughter is one.

Sorren

Yeah.

India

Beautiful! Beautiful, beautiful. I really really like how the gods are done in this world. Loads of stories do have like, multiple gods but I just liked the fact that... You have a broken sandal? There's a God for that, alright?

Sorren

There's an app for that.

India & Morgan

(Laugh)

Morgan

It's very reminiscent of The Silt Verses podcast. The concept of The Silt Verses is very much, there's like, just multiple gods and there's literally a whole company which is like, "We're going to make up a new god to advertise to people. Let's make the god of cornflakes." You get like advertisements on the radio of like, "I'm supporting the god of electricity because I'm a single mother who doesn't have time to do this, this, and this! But, with the god of electricity you can." It just gave that vibe so much.. And then it also has the escalation of like, we're banning these gods because like, people have started sacrificing people for them and- Very good podcast, very similar vibes. I did have like a rogue prediction that came out so...

India

Go.

Morgan

...Not true. I was like "Skediceth: He's got antlers. You know who else has antlers? The god of war. He could be the god of war, having lost his memory."

India

That is such a good prediction. I thought that maybe the god of war was Inara's dad which I think kind of doesn't really work because he was working for the other side of the war.

Morgan

But he wasn't at the time.

India

Oh yeah!

Morgan

And if Inara's mother was going around being like, a fighter a lot of the time... You know, maybe the god of war like, respected her a lot....

India

I hope we get some flashbacks on Inara's mum because... What a woman. I need to know who Skedi is.

Sorren

Because there's that flashback where he's with the ships which I assume was that scene where all the ships got drowned and he was there whispering white

lions trying to tell people that they'd be okay... But could he be like, related to the god of war? Can gods have-

India

What is the genealogy of...

Sorren

(Laughs)

India

...Gods?

Sorren

Because it seems like you just manifest from belief, which is...

India

I need a family tree.

Morgan

But also, we know that Inara's mother did some sailing because she talks about sailors.

Sorren

Yes.

Morgan

And we know that somehow Skedi had to get to where he is now.

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

AKA, with Inara. So who do we know who have both been on the sea at some point (Laughing) in the last 20 years? Skedi and Inara's mother. This is my hot take!

India

Yeah.

Sorren

Yeah, no, definitely. I think they know each other. I don't think this was ever a secret. I don't think they would have been able to keep it a secret from Inara's mother.

India

One thing that confused me a little bit. How does Inara's powers work?

Morgan

I think 'cause will is like, part of emotions, because like, emotions fuel will.

India

Mm-hm.

Morgan

I think it's sort of all clubbed under one umbrella of like, it's all about like, the vibes you're putting out into the world. And then she's just like, "Nope!"

India

She's the god of free will! (Laughs) Or their lack of if you're getting in her way!

Sorren

(Laughs) Oh my god! I mean, possibly.

Morgan

I mean that actually makes quite a lot of sense. I did love the emotion colours.

Sorren

I knew you would like that going in Morgan!

Morgan

As an OG The Bright Sessions fan, I have been here- I've written so much nonsense about Caleb from The Bright Sessions and how his powers work- because that's not how it works in the actual show, it's just like "We're gonna metaphorically talk about colours." And I'm like, "No, he sees colours pouring out of people when he feels their emotions!" So this was like everything I've ever wanted. It's like, "Oh my god, the silver of fear. The red of anger and the blue of love." Give it to me!

Sorren

And them being like, different for different people and tied to like, certain traumatic memories-

Morgan

That was so cool. Like the fact that Elo's colours for like, love and affection were Arren's colours? Oh my God! I want to see what they are now because...

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

I want to see them turn into like, the colours that represent like Kissen and Inara.

Sorren

Red! Kissen's hair, or something.

Morgan

Oh my god, yes! Do we want to talk about our favourite characters?

India

I'm gonna have to go Elogast. As much as I love a good woman who doesn't take[censored.] I do love how kind Elogast is and the fact that he knew what he was going to do, and he did out of pure love for his friend, possible ex-lover. And how he's always striving to try and do the right thing. The internal battle he has, when he has to do things that go against his like code... And I also- That man, he bakes bread. And I love that. So he's my fav.

Morgan

Who's yours?

Sorren

Um... I'm going to be really rogue. I love the main trio, obviously, with all my heart. And Skediceth is a problematic favourite but I'm picking an even more problematic fave and I'm gonna say Arren just because I loved his page time when I reread because it was so messy.

India

Coming up from behind the shrine like, "Hello~!"

Sorren

Exactly! The absolute panache. And it was also because he's usually the archetype that gets me, in the way that he gets Elo, being like the overlooked son, and he's like, actually noble, and he just wants to kill the god of war and free everyone! That's the kind of character, if he was played straight, that I would love. So seeing that character, like, go through a corruption arc...

India

Mm!

Sorren

And become the worst possible version of himself? Absolutely immaculate.

Morgan

He's a theatre kid.

Sorren

(Laughs) Morgan, who was your fave?

Morgan

Ah!

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

Looking back at it, I think it is Elogast, because it just itches my soul when you have like, a lawful neutral character, who's like, "This is my set codes of belief. This is what I will do for it." And you're like, "Okay, isn't it morally great to kill people?" And he's like, "No, because it's within my moral code. So it's fine."

India & Sorren

(Laugh)

India

I said it is fine. So it is...

Morgan

I just love that, and like, the fact they he'll go so far, and like, the fact that he values himself so lowly... That always gets me, every single time.

India

That man was on a path of self destruction from the beginning, you don't kind of properly realise it until near to the end, and it's kind of heartbreaking when you look back on it. They're all very interesting, layered characters.

Sorren

Mm.

India

They're battling a lot against different sides of themselves, which I think is really interesting, but Elogast is my fav nothing but respect for my ex-kight slash baker. I just love the fact he bakes bread. I'm sorry, I love it so much.

Sorren

I love that he's so invested in bread. The fight where he yells out his dumpling advice to Berrick because he's like, "If I'm gonna die, I need to fix this man's dumplings."

India

When he eats them, and he's like, "This is the worst thing I've ever eaten in my life."

Sorren

And then when Berrick sees him again, and he's like, "You fixed my dumplings!"

India

(Laughs)

Morgan

When Kissen is like, convinced that this is like, a cover.

Sorren

Yeah!

Morgan

But he's really weirdly invested in this bread.

Sorren

He's really good at it!

Morgan

Maybe he is a baker!

Sorren

Kissen's like you can't be a baker and a knight, it is literally impossible,

India

But he's like, only 30... That man has gone through so much.

Sorren

Kissen's only 26!

India

Don't even get me started- Inara's 12! But I kind of really want the ending to be that everything works out and then Kissen, Inara and Elogast just open their own bakery.

Sorren

Oh my god, please.

India

It's obviously not gonna end like that. Like it's just obvious, but I'm on my knees begging and pleading that they just open up a bakery at the end of the books.
(Laughs)

Sorren

It could happen.

Morgan

I'm a big believer in the soft epilogue so...

India

Yes!

Morgan

I'm gonna keep believing until I'm violently shown otherwise Do we want to do final thoughts?

Sorren

You're the new reader, you start us off.

Morgan

I really loved it. I loved all the disability exploration, the vibe, the worldbuilding, the plot, it all came together. My only thing is I think it needed one more round of editing. It definitely felt like a debut which is why I'm very excited for the sequel because I think she will have grown so much as a writer and she won't have to wade through all of the worldbuilding to get to the story. So I think this is a 4.5 rounded up to five, but like oh my god, I love this so much. India?

India

I would definitely say I'm also a 4.5 rounded up to a five because the sparks between Kissen and Elo came as a little bit of a shock to me at the beginning and I didn't think that it was set up well enough for me personally at the beginning. And I did think there was a little bit confusion with my understanding of the timeline of the war, but those are like teeny, teeny, tiny personal gripes. I loved Kissen and Elogast together, the family vibe, and I really liked the history and the backstory of the world as a whole. Yeah, I loved it. I thought it was really, really good. I'm looking forward to everybody's revenge era in the sequel, I want the entire trilogy now.

Sorren

I think I'm in exactly the same boat. I don't give half stars as matter of course because I'm afraid of where that would lead.

Morgan

(Laughs)

Sorren

I'll start giving like, quarter stars. So I'm just gonna call it a five because I really enjoyed this. I loved all of the disability rep, the queer rep, being so nuanced. I loved the worldbuilding, love the magic system, love the character development... Very excited to see where this goes. Do we have any recommendations for people that enjoyed Godkiller?

India

I would say the Witcher because, I think a world full of monster slash gods... And if you are looking for that trio... And Legs and Roach are basically the same person...

Sorren & Morgan

(Laugh)

India

As a horse. Also thought based specifically on Kissen and Inara's relationship, The Last of Us.

Morgan

Oooh.

India

Obviously, completely different world. (Laughs) But I think if you liked Kissen and Inara's relationship and you haven't watched or played The Last of Us, I do think you would enjoy that because it's both two very jaded individuals who find solace in each other. I hope Kissen and Inara's relationship gets explored even more because I really liked it.

Sorren

Surprising no-one, my recommendation for this is Graceling by Kristin Cashore. Accidental child acquisition, disability rep, feminism, trauma! Same book, different font, I do believe Morgan sometimes says?

Morgan

(Laughs) Yeah.

Sorren

Yeah. Different feel, much lower magic. Some actually very interesting themes being explored with the little magic there is in terms of free will, and control, and power, and does absolute power corrupts absolutely... And then the other thing that I was gonna say actually it's also a nonbook recommendation but: The Second Citadel which is one of the storylines in The Penumbra Podcast. If you're looking for a disabled knight with a horse as his emotional support slash service animal, and cool worldbuilding, fun religious system, kid protagonist as of the

second season, I believe, I can't remember- but, very well written kid protagonist. Oh, and also obviously super queer.

Morgan

Yeah, Sir Caroline... Kissen.

Sorren

Yeah! Yeah...

Morgan

My recommendation... I mean The Silt Verses. Absolutely, 100%. If you like the whole gods and baned religion vibes, and rituals, just... Incredible vibes all around. My second recommendation, I'm gonna go rogue. There's no children in this one. Frontier by Grace Curtis. It's like, a sci-fi Western it's about a woman trying to get back to her love interest. The whole book is just her journey. It was really interesting because each chapter she's described as something different. She's never given a name until the very end.

India & Sorren

Oooh!

Morgan

Fun worldbuilding and... It's not about the angry planet, it's about the long way there.

India

Ah, nice. I get this reference!

Sorren

(Laughs) Thank you, India for being here. You were an absolute pleasure.

India

Thank you so much for having me. I've literally had the best time of my entire life.

Sorren

If people want to find you, where can they find you?

India

I'm pretty much IndiaReadsALot on pretty much every form of social media. I have a blog, which is indiareadsalot.com. I post on TikTok the most because I keep forgetting to post on Instagram.

Sorren

But India's TikToks are really good so if you're listening to this you should definitely go watch them.

Sorren

Thank you, I do- I do try.

Morgan

We're manifesting that by the time this episode comes out she'll be doing a series where she reads The Hunger Games.

India

I actually will, I bought all three Hunger Games books at a charity shop- Whoever donated them I love you forever. And I think I will.

Sorren

So there you go. If- if that exists, go check it out on India's TikTok.

India

Yeah, I have until whenever this comes out to put that together.

Morgan

So next time I will be forcing Sorren to read Hell Followed With Us by Andrew Joseph White. Rewired my brain when I read it. I am so excited for Sorren to read it. I think he's gonna absolutely love it, but I will not say any more because otherwise I will go on about it for hours. So until then, you're always welcome through the bookcase.

Sorren

Don't forget to scratch the cat on your way out.

[THEME MUSIC FADES IN.]

Sorren

Thank you for listening to The Hidden Bookcase, a production of Planar Prod. On this episode, you heard IndiaReadsALot, Morgan Greensmith, and Sorren Briarwood discussing Godkiller by Hannah Kaner. You can find out more about this book at hannahkaner.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @HFKaner. A huge thank you to India for joining us for this episode: you were a killer guest. You can find her @IndiaReadsALot on most social media platforms but mostly on TikTok. You can find The Hidden Bookcase on Twitter @HiddenBookcase and on Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr and TikTok @HiddenBookcasePodcast. Find out more about Planar Prod at planarprod.com. Know what we should read next? Or want to chat to us about what you thought of this episode's read? You can reach us at thehiddenbookcase@gmail.com, or send us a DM on social media. We'd love to hear from you. If you're enjoying The Hidden Bookcase, please consider

leaving us a rating or review. Or you can always tell a friend how to find us. Your whispers are the best way for bookworms to discover our show. On our next episode, which will be out on Monday the 17th of July we'll be discussing Hell Followed With Us by Andrew Joseph White. We hope to see you then, and in the meantime, you're always welcome through the bookcase.