

Nuns: Part 1

Laurel: [00:00:00] Hi, everybody. Welcome to Sapphic Culture Club, where we explore lesbian themes in film, TV, books, music, and anywhere else sapphics roam. We are your hosts. I'm Laurel Hechanova.

Audrey: [00:00:15] And I am Audrey Nieh. Today we are welcoming Laura, our resident historian, back on the show to talk about the surprisingly popular topic of nuns and convents. Although, I don't know if it's that surprising. I...

Laurel: [00:00:30] Yeah, I don't know. Maybe...

Audrey: [00:00:32] Everyone loves nuns.

Laurel: [00:00:34] Does everyone love nuns?

Audrey: [00:00:35] No, no, no. Everyone's interested in nuns. I dunno. Um, anyway, welcome back, Laura.

Laurel: [00:00:41] Yay!

Laura: [00:00:43] Nice to be back everybody.

Laurel: [00:00:44] Oh, great!

Laura: [00:00:45] The amount of questions from that original Q and A—so many were related to what, what is convent life like? We decided that it should just be, like, a completely separate episode if not a little series itself.

Laurel: [00:00:56] Yeah, yeah.

Laura: [00:00:58] Yeah, we've got plenty, plenty of things to discuss and talk about.

Laurel: [00:01:02] I wonder if part of the fascination is because we were all sort of cloistered away because of the pandemic. We all felt a little bit secluded. "What was it like for Héloïse to be...?" put us in a mindset.

Audrey: [00:01:17] Do you think we should rebrand as Sapphic Nun Club? Yeah.

Laurel: [00:01:22] Uh, yeah, or, oh, Sapphic...Sapphic Convent Club.

Audrey: [00:01:25] Oh, Sapphic Convent Club. Oh, great. Perfect. Okay, good. Okay.

Laura: [00:01:29] The picture can say the same as well, actually.

Laurel: [00:01:31] Ohhhh my God. You're right. Great

Audrey: [00:01:34] God. So easy.

Laurel: [00:01:35] Hi, everybody. Welcome to Sapphic Convent Club, where we explore lesbian themes and nunneries and...no.

Audrey: [00:01:43] We could also be Sapphic Culture Convent.

Laurel: [00:01:45] Oh, interesting Sapphic Convent Culture Club. Sapphic...

Audrey: [00:01:49] So many options.

Laurel: [00:01:51] Yeah, it just lends itself so well...

Laura: [00:01:52] It's interesting out of all those, those things, like, Sappho herself is not related to a convent though...

Laurel: [00:01:59] Oh, historians.

Laura: [00:01:59] Or even that Sapphic, necessarily, as we discussed before, but you still went for the name, but...

Laurel: [00:02:04] I know. Yeah, we did.

Audrey: [00:02:06] It's been appropriated.

Laurel: [00:02:07] It's been claimed.

Audrey: [00:02:08] Yeah, it's ours, too bad.

Laura: [00:02:11] I completely agree.

Laurel: [00:02:11] Sorry, Sappho or not sorry! Whatever. It's fine.

Audrey: [00:02:16] All right. So as Laura just mentioned, we got a bunch of listener questions for her last season and quite a few of them were nun- and convent-related. So we decided to save those and just, like, the general topic of nuns for their own special episode or episodes. And as you might've guessed, that is what we are kicking off today.

Laura: [00:02:39] Yeah, I guess the aim today is to try and get a kind of picture of what convent life was like, as that seemed to be kind of one of the major questions. Like, the ways in which it worked the way it did and actually

still does today, because there are still lots of convents still in existence today, so...

Laurel: [00:02:59] Yeah. So we've got two questions that kind of point to this "why would a woman go to a convent?" One of them comes from Mary, who said "Convent life. Chosen by women? Or a place your family sent you if they had no dowry?" And then also from Naya, "I did some research and found that it was very common to send womans while they reached marrying age, which is 26 for women apparently during the 18th century."

So Laura, why would a woman go to a convent?

Laura: [00:03:26] Well, some of the reasons that have just been given there are definitely the correct ones. I mean, there are obviously some women for whom they did, you know, perhaps have spiritual aspirations or a spiritual calling. They called it a vocation and may have wanted to have gone to a convent for that reason, you know, to fulfill that spiritual duty.

But when you actually start to look more closely at the evidence and the textual information, it becomes quite clear that a lot of women were placed into convents due to pressure from often the fathers or just the family in general, because the spiritual dowry was much less than the marriage dowry.

So if you had multiple children, you probably wouldn't necessarily be able to afford, you know, sending all of them to be married. And the women had to go somewhere because as women, they weren't kind of allowed to be unmarried and having kind of their own existence, right? So either they were

married or they went to a convent were kind of the only options for them in many ways.

Laurel: [00:04:31] Can I pause you for a second? You mentioned a spiritual dowry. I feel like that's the first I've heard of that. What does that mean?

Laura: [00:04:37] Just another term for dowry itself. So just the amount of money that was given to the convent to place the woman there was less than the marriage dowry.

Laurel: [00:04:45] I did not realize they would give a dowry to a convent.

Audrey: [00:04:48] It's like private school.

Laura: [00:04:49] Yeah.

Laurel: [00:04:49] Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense.

Laura: [00:04:50] Yeah, no, a hundred percent. And it comes with a kind of secondary layer also for the family themselves in that they kind of almost sacrifice one of the daughters for that economic convenience, because they also, on top of that economic convenience get spiritual salvation from doing so because the daughter would be praying for, supposedly, the family, you know, to be prosperous and...

Laurel: [00:05:18] Wow.

Laura: [00:05:19] and be wealthy and whatever for the rest of their lives.

Laurel: [00:05:22] I'm gonna step out of the nunnery for a second. Was there a similar setup for men who entered the monastery?

Laura: [00:05:30] Kind of, but obviously men don't have dowries in the same way, right? And also men have the choice about whether they went or not, I guess, you know, like they had more options available to them and they had agency because the father of the family would've still—male members of the family would have still been in control of the money and the decision-making within the family. And so as a man, I guess they don't lack agency in the same way that the women do.

Laurel: [00:05:56] So for monks, it was more like just of your own volition, you would decide to become a monk.

Laura: [00:05:59] Well, yeah, I mean also there are other reasons why women as well as men might want to go into a convent or a monastery, for example, and the fact that they get education and that they learn to read, which for poor families is obviously something that was a positive step. Like, social mobility is kind of the wrong word, but you know what I mean?

Like, as in, their life would be at least free from the concerns of not having enough food to eat as well, for example. You know, they would always get fed, and they would get an education, and they might be able to play their music and be somehow involved in the community in some way—monks more so than nuns. And for women as well, it was a place where they would be kind of secure, also safe from rape if they were unmarried.

And for people of lower classes, well, not just lower classes, but things like domestic violence as well. And people who were—women who were—who had been forced into prostitution as well, would sometimes become nuns because obviously the story of Mary Magdalene being an ex-prostitute who then get saved, you know, like it was quite a common theme that they would want to try and get women out of that position or women who'd been abandoned. Women who had kind of been promised a marriage or something, and the man had, had run away, for example.

Audrey: [00:07:15] But there's still a dowry involved in that? And in those situations you're talking about, cause you still have to, like, buy your way into the convent?

Laura: [00:07:21] Yes, I would presume so, yes.

Audrey: [00:07:24] Maybe there's, like, grants?

Laura: [00:07:26] Yeah, exactly. So like the money from the more wealthy families... I mean, this is what's also quite interesting is there is—often the wealthy families where you get more of these young girls being pushed into the convent as well. Which I think probably when we think about this, we don't necessarily, you know, we can't, I don't know...

I feel like convents have been...not much studied or not much, kind of, looked at as a really integral part of how society worked like in the medieval and early modern period, because it's where a lot—lots of women were

going there. You know, like there were waiting lists to go into the convent. So like in Madrid in 1674, there was a waiting list of 160 women...

Laurel: [00:08:05] Wow.

Laura: [00:08:06] ...to get in.

Like, it was really a thing that people wanted to try and get their daughters into.

Laurel: [00:08:12] Yeah, yeah.

Laura: [00:08:14] Another type of woman that might go into a convent as well is a widow. So if her husband had died, then a widow would go there or also in an annulment or divorce kind of thing, even though divorce was—divorced was not allowed, but annulment was, which is basically the same thing.

Laurel: [00:08:26] Yeah,

Laura: [00:08:28] Yeah. But it was just like sanctioned by the pope, an annulment. Yeah, so if they wanted to avoid a second marriage, they would go to a convent because otherwise the woman would get married off again. Right? Like the husband had died or disappeared for another reason.

There's also quite interesting stories in terms of colonialism.

So when European countries start creating their empires in what, the 16th century that you get forced conversions or more convents and more monasteries being set up to get the indigenous people to become part of

those convents and monasteries also to cut them off from their original families and you know, westernizing, control them and actually quite a lot of wealthy indigenous elites would send their children to those places because it was also a status symbol or thing for them because they would interact with the elite daughters of other European groups.

Laurel: [00:09:25] I hadn't heard that. Yeah, that's—I mean, I've always heard the subjugation, you know, side of that, but I hadn't thought that that would, yeah...

Laura: [00:09:31] It also happens in Europe as well. So like in Spain, for example, during the Spanish inquisition and stuff, they're trying to convert Jews or Muslims who had nominally converted to Catholicism actually then put their children into, into convents as a show to the elites that they had kind of officially converted and all that kind of stuff.

So I think that's another area of this—the situation of convents I don't think we usually think about—that kind of colonial aspect. But it's pretty bad when you think about the fact that so many women would probably, I mean, many might've wanted to go. So like we see in *Portrait*, don't we, you know, that Héloïse wanted to stay there. Like, it was a way for her to not get married to some unknown person that may have been, you know, decades older than her.

Laurel: [00:10:15] Before we, before we move on, I wanted to double-check something, but I just looked it up and we've actually, I don't know if this news has crossed the Atlantic, but recently in, like, Canada (and I think we're

starting to look at it in the United States), the schools that—like these religious schools. So I feel like these are sort of the, the modern sort of inheritors of that kind of monastic convent culture, but we've recently had news about how many children were forced to go to these schools and then were horrifically abused.

And we found mass graves and stuff. So when we talk about things like colonial subjugation of indigenous peoples, it's a very real and pretty recent thing.

Laura: [00:10:54] Oh, yeah, for sure. I mean, even in Ireland, for example, they had things called the maudlin laundries where women who were considered, you know, kind of like fallen women, who'd had children out of wedlock, for example, or just even considered too pretty in the village, would be sent there. And they were in existence until 1996.

Laurel: [00:11:17] Oh my—1996?

Laura: [00:11:19] 1996. And the first one opened in 1765 and the last one was finally officially closed in 1996.

Laurel: [00:11:25] Oh my gosh.

Audrey: [00:11:25] This was Ireland?

Laura: [00:11:26] Yeah. In Ireland, yeah.

Laurel: [00:11:29] ...too pretty.

Laura: [00:11:30] people

Audrey: [00:11:30] You're too pretty, so...

Laura: [00:11:32] Yeah. It's pretty, pretty bad. And women also would sometimes even disfigure themselves in order to go to the convent.

So we have stories, for example, Caterina Benincasa in Sienna poured boiling water on herself to disfigure herself so that she wouldn't get married to anyone, so that then she would have to go to the convent rather than getting married. And the story of Christina of Markyate, this is in England, is awful as well in that she wanted to go to the convent either to escape marriage or because she had a spiritual calling it's not made quite clear, but her family try to get a man to rape her so that she wouldn't be chaste anymore, and therefore wouldn't be allowed to go to the convent because you could only go there as a virgin, et cetera. So like...

Audrey: [00:12:20] Even if you were widowed?

Laura: [00:12:22] widowed not, but that's because you were married.

Laurel: [00:12:25] Oh, you *were* married, right.

Laura: [00:12:26] You had a marriage and...

Audrey: [00:12:27] Oh, got it. Okay.

Laurel: [00:12:28] So people who had been raped were not accepted to be brides of Christ? Like Jesus was like, "No, thanks."

Audrey: [00:12:36] Well, they're tainted.

Laurel: [00:12:39] This is so problematic. I'm so...

Laura: [00:12:42] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:12:42] Do we have a sense of like how young, cause you mentioned children a couple of times where we're going to the convent. Like, what was the youngest you might send your daughter?

Laura: [00:12:52] I'm not sure what the exact youngest age would be, but like in that teenage years in general, like, I mean, people were getting married and...

Laurel: [00:12:58] Menstruating.

Audrey: [00:12:59] Right, right, right, right.

Laurel: [00:12:59] ...and you're convent potential.

Laura: [00:13:01] Yeah, exactly. Yeah. But, you know, like elite kind of private schools or whatever there are these waiting lists, you would literally, you know, if you had given birth to a baby daughter, you would put their name on the waiting list so that—hoping that they would move up the waiting list by the time they were old enough to, to be sent there.

So essentially the fate of so many women was just decided even, you know, yeah. I guess in many ways. And they couldn't do much about it ultimately, I guess it's still at the whim of their families to decide whether they pursue that or not.

So, yeah. Yeah. Illegitimate children as well. There's another group...

Laurel: [00:13:41] Oh, yeah, that

Laura: [00:13:43] They would be sent there if they were girls.

Laurel: [00:13:45] Of course, of course, of course.

Laura: [00:13:48] Yeah.

Laurel: [00:13:49] Well, according to Héloïse, it is a life that has “advantages”.
Like ...

Laura: [00:13:55] Yep! We will see what advantages there are, yeah.

Audrey: [00:13:58] I mean, compared to some of the other outcomes it's like, maybe not so bad depending, obviously, but...

Laura: [00:14:05] But I think this is, again, it's just something that this film—I wouldn't, you know, would never have thought that, like, we all know all the kind of like historical epiphanes I had in relation to this, but just like the fact that I teach—lots of periods of history and I've just never even really particularly thought about convents.

And then I was like, looking at textbooks that we use. And it's just like, you talk about monasteries and men, but you never mention women, and it's like hold on a minute! And the more I've looked into it, I'm just like, wow, it's so erased as a kind of cultural and societal thing that was happening all the time to huge populations of women. And it's just like, oh, well, they just went into the convent and they lived there forever. And that's the end of the story.

Laurel: [00:14:51] and, like, what an interesting intersection of women too, right? Like you've got prostitutes, widows, rich daughters, you know, just a whole gamut of people, literally cloistered together.

Laura: [00:15:03] Yeah, I just, it's just kind of sad that we don't have more information or voices from them in the same way we do about other more secular areas of which men are the dominant voice. Hence why we have all of those stories, but not from here because essentially they weren't really allowed to write anything secular. Everything had to be really kind of mainly religious.

Well, they have, you know, like if they were writing things out, which then colors, what they say, I guess, but that doesn't mean that we don't have stories from them, but we will save those probably for episode two. Voices from the convent.

Laurel: [00:15:37] That's great. Yeah. Perfect, perfect. Yeah.

Audrey: [00:15:40] This is a good segue, cause we're talking about stories. So I feel like people should close their eyes and imagine what it might be like. But yeah. Can you talk about what a day in the life of a nun would be like in the 18th century?

Laura: [00:15:52] Yeah. I mean, I don't think the timetable in many ways has changed probably from, since, you know, in England, at least like the sixth century A.D. so there are different orders of Catholicism and different

convents would have been dedicated to different saints and orders, which would have slightly different rules.

So for example, Carmelite nuns were supposedly much stricter than Hieronymite nuns, but in *Portrait*, Sophie says that Héloïse is a Benedictine nun. So this is the current day in the life of a Benedictine nun.

Laurel: [00:16:22] Which, fun fact, I would like to interject, are also the nuns and the *Sound of Music*.

Laura: [00:16:28] Oh, there you go!

Laurel: [00:16:29] That's all I got.

Laura: [00:16:30] So, the Benedictine nuns who are in this convent that's in England, they get up at 5:00 AM and they pray and read.

Audrey: [00:16:38] Too early.

Laura: [00:16:41] And then they eat breakfast. And then at 6:00 AM, they read a mixture of Psalms and scriptures and at 7:15, they go to morning prayer, which is sung. And then they begin their work for the day, which is just kind of either writing or reading or doing various bits of housework within the convent. So yeah, from 7:15 till 12, they're doing that.

And then at 12, there is another midday prayer, which is sung. 12:30 they have lunch communally in the, in the kind of convent refractory. And after the lunch they carry on with their writing or hobbies or gardening or thoughts.

Audrey: [00:17:22] I'm very curious about these hobbies.

Laurel: [00:17:24] Yeah.

Laura: [00:17:25] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:17:25] we can revisit that later.

Laura: [00:17:27] And then four o'clock is some tea,

Laurel: [00:17:30] Oh,

Laura: [00:17:31] at least in Britain. Anyway, tea time, afternoon tea, and then five o'clock. They have vespers, which are also sung. And 6:45 they have the supper, which is the main meal of the day. And then after that, the whole convent is meant to basically enter a form of silence, even though it's been relatively silent for the majority of the day so far anyway. But they're meant to be able to pray or read without any disruptions at all. And then at 8:15, there's the final night prayer, which is also sung. And then you officially, after that song ends is the great silence, which has to be maintained where nobody speaks or makes any noise until they wake up again at 5:00 AM the next morning. And you have to go to bed at 11:00 PM. Well, that's when all the lights will turn off, so it's pretty strictly regimented, isn't it? I mean like...

Laurel: [00:18:27] It sounds really pleasant though. like, I would love to just have scheduled reading times throughout the day. I don't know.

Laura: [00:18:33] yeah, it's quite meditative, I guess.

Laurel: [00:18:36] Yeah. Yeah.

Laura: [00:18:38] but I guess, yeah, you can kind of see how it could be kind of a bit peaceful maybe, but like, if you've been forced in there...

Laurel: [00:18:47] Yeah, yeah,

Laura: [00:18:48] It's really strict, isn't it? It's just like, this happens here and yeah, you can't even speak for like

Laurel: [00:18:53] yeah,

Laura: [00:18:54] and if you do there were punishments, you know?

Laurel: [00:18:56] I also probably wouldn't want to read religious stuff all day.

Audrey: [00:18:59] I know I was going to say

Laurel: [00:19:00] as well.

Laura: [00:19:01] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:19:01] just sneak in some comics

Laurel: [00:19:03] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:19:04] where the nuns involved in the service, you know, like making the food and the upkeep. Did they kind of have shifts for that?

Laura: [00:19:11] Yeah. So, I mean, it's interesting. One of the kinds of things which I thought was interesting to think about because Héloïse says, doesn't she, at some point that equality is a pleasant feeling, right? But actually there were quite strict hierarchies within the convent, as we've said, there's a huge

range of women within the convents and the elite women that were in there—of which Héloïse would have been one of them, right? Were not equal to the lay women who were in there.

So although they weren't allowed to have titles of distinction, within like the cloisters, which I guess is kind of like a form of equality that maybe is different to in the secular world, you still have the choir nuns, which are the wealthy and noble ones who do most of the administration and the writing type stuff.

And then the servant nuns, which are from the rural lower class families. So yeah, the servant nuns were doing most of the cleaning, washing, cooking. They would even wash the choir sisters apparently. The more—wealthier ones.

Laurel: [00:20:09] I'm sorry, what?

Laura: [00:20:11] Yeah. So like they were still basically acting as servants to the other ones, if that makes sense. Do you know what I mean?

Audrey: [00:20:18] Yeah.

Laurel: [00:20:19] Wait. But they would wash them?

Audrey: [00:20:21] You know, like when you go to like a spa and you get like a scrub.

Laura: [00:20:25] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:20:26] Getting scrubbed by a nun. I don't know.

Laura: [00:20:28] Yeah. But they even wore different clothing. So for example, like the servant nuns wore white veils, whereas the choir sisters wore black veils.

Audrey: [00:20:35] Okay. So there's like, there is hierarchy, like visual hierarchy even though...

Laurel: [00:20:40] Wow. Yeah,

Audrey: [00:20:41] Of course.

Laurel: [00:20:42] Of course.

Laura: [00:20:43] And it was actually only in the 1960s that the Vatican amalgamated the two groups. So until the 1960s, that distinction between upper and lower classes had been maintained.

Laurel: [00:20:53] Wow.

Laura: [00:20:54] So yeah. But in terms of hierarchy as well, like another thing to bear in mind is that the rules that are put in place in the convent, even though you've got these choir nuns, which are the ones slightly higher in the, in the hierarchy, they are still subordinate to all of the rules of the male superiors in the church, because in the Catholic church, you can't have female priests, right?

Or bishops, et cetera. And ultimately the Pope is the, is the highest authority. So even within these female spaces, everything is still kind of ultimately dictated by the men, and they would often have bishops come in to do, uh,

you know, inspections and this kind of stuff and yeah, again, kind of like witness punishments.

They would often be there to enforce various rules, remove nuns or discipline nuns, that had done things out of turn or whatever. And were the ones who accepted their professions of the solemn vows as well. So it's still very much like the power is concentrated in the male members of the church, if that makes sense.

Laurel: [00:21:58] Yeah. Yeah.

Laura: [00:22:00] So.

Laurel: [00:22:01] Boo I mean, it's whatever.

Laura: [00:22:05] But what other things are, I mean, yeah, like the, ultimately the comment would be relatively quiet. Most of the time you'd have the sound of the bells when the prayers were going to start. Then you'd have the singing and, you know, you have various accounts of people in the secular society hearing the nuns and, and that was also considered a little bit like a source of tension as well, because the singing was, you know, tempting and people would try to, you know, like break into the convent and all this.

So then they end up building the walls of the convents, like higher and higher and higher and literally put bars on the windows and everything like a prison so that people, yeah...

Plus there are—nuns are never allowed out from the moment that they set foot...

Audrey: [00:22:45] Oh, wow.

Laura: [00:22:46] through the convent door.

Laurel: [00:22:46] Wow. Wow.

Laura: [00:22:48] and yeah...

Laurel: [00:22:49] So they are—let's say someone ends up there when she's 15 or 16, she's there until indefinitely. How much space—? Like, so her entire world is within these walls. How big are we talking? Like what is this area? Ish?

Laura: [00:23:07] Of the convent? Well, I mean...

Laurel: [00:23:09] I guess. I mean, it'll probably differ.

Audrey: [00:23:11] You mean like her private sleeping? Well, yeah, I

Laurel: [00:23:13] No. I mean like the yeah,

Audrey: [00:23:14] the entire convent.

Laurel: [00:23:16] The the whole, yeah, the campus, I don't know...

Laura: [00:23:19] Yeah. I mean, I guess it depends on whether you're like in a countryside convent or a city convent and it'd be like less space when they, I mean, they generally, they have like some gardens of some sort where they're often also growing things and like vegetables and

Laurel: [00:23:33] but you've probably got like a chapel, an eating area, a dormitory and some gardens. And maybe a library and maybe that's it? Wow. Whew.

Laura: [00:23:42] ...And also within the chapel itself, often the chapel was a chapel that was open to the public, right? Like as in the chapel of the convent is also open to the public. So the nuns are not even allowed in the chapel itself. They have to be kept behind an iron grill, literally.

Laurel: [00:24:07] Yeah.

Laura: [00:24:08] And yeah, like aren't allowed to like interact with the...

Laurel: [00:24:12] Oh my—

Laura: [00:24:12] ...people below and all this kind of stuff.

And in terms of like, they call themselves as well. Like their own little sleeping area is called a cell. Um, and it's yeah, pretty small. It basically just has a bed, a crucifix, an altar. But like a small little altar kneeling stool thing to pray on and a chest, and the cells would be inspected for other items and things being taken away from them.

If they had smuggled in paper, you know, any other forms of objects, you know, even like anything from, from their families as well, you know, like little trinkets and stuff would be taken away.

Laurel: [00:24:49] Wow.

Laura: [00:24:50] You know, sometimes they might be given clothes or icons or something, particularly the, the wealthier nuns might, might get a couple more objects, but really like the, you know, the purpose is to renounce all...

Laurel: [00:25:01] Right.

Laura: [00:25:02] ...worldly goods and the work that you do, whether it's like, yeah, there's silence or the activities that you're doing during the day are to avoid idleness and gossip and...

Laurel: [00:25:11] Right.

Laura: [00:25:12] Vain thoughts and all that. And so that your thoughts with the silence are reserved for God alone. Um, and that's why they maintain silence all day. And again, I think it's really interesting because when we, again, in, in *Portrait*, we see that Héloïse just doesn't talk that much, right?

And like, actually that's probably like the reality of her life that she is just kind of like quite used to not saying much.

And the only things that she is allowed to say. Have a kind of purpose to them because she's kind of spoken a bit more and then my, as the film goes on and they talk more don't they like you, you like, she loosens up a bit and does kind of...

Audrey: [00:25:47] Yeah, yeah.

Laura: [00:25:48] have a bit of a laugh and whatever. And I don't know, like, I, we have to remember these are human beings, right?

Like I just say—I ultimately don't think that people will just be silent all the time. You know? Like it's impossible to kind of do that. Isn't it? You know, it doesn't mean that just because they were told to be silent, they were always silent all the time.

Audrey: [00:26:04] She's also like always looking for a book, too.

Laura: [00:26:07] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:26:07] Familiar.

Laura: [00:26:08] Well, I think she's probably particularly interested in whatever books from the outside world...

Laurel: [00:26:12] Yeah, yeah.

Laura: [00:26:13] ...Marianne has because, yeah. Oh, another thing is they had to cut their hair short as well because supposedly brushing your hair was vain.

Laurel: [00:26:22] Right, right.

Laura: [00:26:23] you know, like, yeah. So yeah, sure.

Laurel: [00:26:27] Oh, well, speaking of appearances. So in *Portrait*, Sophie says she only wears her convent clothes. And that's, that was interesting to me because I'd seen the Benedictines in the black, right? There also known as like the black monks. And, but maybe that was, was that like a later clothing choice because she was wearing, she did have a cloak of sorts, but it was blue and.

Laura: [00:26:47] Yeah. I did think, uh, outfit was not particularly convent.

Laurel: [00:26:51] Yeah,

Audrey: [00:26:52] Yeah. Nun-y.

Laurel: [00:26:54] Maybe it's just what she went to the convent in.

Laura: [00:26:57] Yeah. And again, she was obviously one of the wealthier choir nuns, and she's like, maybe she was allowed to have the blue cloak as like one of the things that she was allowed, but she's obviously not wearing a habit anymore, is she? But it seems like that was kind of first thing to, you know...

Laurel: [00:27:12] Yeah.

Laura: [00:27:13] So yeah.

Laurel: [00:27:17] Do we want to talk about the Protestant Reformation?

Real smooth...

Audrey: [00:27:21] ...segue into that. Yeah.

Laurel: [00:27:23] Yeah.

Laura: [00:27:25] So this was quite an interesting question in terms of chronology, because in *Portrait* we're in the 18th century, aren't we? And the Protestant Reformation is happening in the 16th century. So the Reformation has happened by that point. Whilst Catholic women were being forced into convents quite a lot of the time, particularly by their families.

When the Protestant reformation starts to happen, the Protestants are arguing that being in a convent is preventing women from fulfilling their roles as a wife and a mother. So the Protestants are trying to force women out of the convents. And actually you have then this strange situation of women not wanting to leave the convents and then convents being closed down.

So it kind of works both ways, right? Catholics trying to put women into convents against their will, while Protestants are trying to force women out of the conference against their will. And Martin Luther himself, like the father of the Reformation, actually ended up marrying an ex-nun who escaped from the nunnery with eight other nuns.

So yeah, like the...

Laurel: [00:28:29] So they were, they were shut down around the Reformation. Is that what you're saying? And then did

Laura: [00:28:33] In some areas, yeah

Laurel: [00:28:34] reopen at some point? Okay.

Audrey: [00:28:36] I think there was some backlash, right?

Laura: [00:28:37] Yeah, exactly. You have the Counter-Reformation and then, you know, events after lots of turmoil, lots of states allow Catholics to maintain certain monasteries or convents. And laws are relaxed a little bit, and that kind of thing, but it takes a very long time to gain a kind of equilibrium on that issue.

So essentially the Catholic convents just continue.

Laurel: [00:28:57] Okay. Yeah.

What about, so like then we've got Héloïse's period in the convent and then shortly afterwards, the French Revolution, right? Did anything happen with the convents at that point?

Laura: [00:29:07] essentially, there are just like periods where people start to turn against religion or organized religion or the power of the Pope and this kind of stuff gets questioned. And so then places like convents and monasteries are targeted as areas where the Pope has influence, right? Like over people or over young people as well.

So like we were saying during the colonial era, it's a way to indoctrinate people, isn't it? And so like if Protestant-leaning countries or formal Protestant state countries were not wanting that influence, then they would ideally want those convents and monasteries to be shut down, essentially.

And that causes lots of social problems as well, because basically, you know, if the convents are closed down, then those women have to be married or they are condemned to a life of poverty, because there is nothing that an unmarried woman can do, right? And many of them would have been in middle-age therefore wouldn't have been kind of on the marriage market, let's say.

And so it causes like huge social problems for women in that sense. And a lot of the wealthy members of society as well, don't want the convents to shut

down because they don't want their daughters to be forced to marry men of a lesser status because they like, you know, not enough men of their status available to marry.

So you end up having these kinds of like petitions of wealthy families, wanting to try and maintain what they saw as kind of a prestigious way of life. Within the convent for their daughters. Again, we're not quite sure necessarily what the daughters thought about this, but like, it's a kind of like interesting phenomenon.

And then we ended up in the, in the late 17th, early 18th century, and a woman called Mary Estel and she starts to argue that women should be allowed to have the right to an unmarried communal life of women, whether it's religious or not. And that's when you start to get the first kind of starts of female boarding schools, essentially where women—only women would be allowed to be the teachers.

And so it's kind of like a convent model really.

Audrey: [00:31:07] Yeah.

Laura: [00:31:07] ...but secularized—semi-secularized. Um, and yeah, although interesting because I think that, yeah, it's like semi-secularized, yeah, but has kind of a bit less influence, perhaps, from male bishops and things because women are becoming the head mistresses and that kind of stuff so...

Laurel: [00:31:26] But that's just for school-aged women then like what happens after they matriculate out?

Laura: [00:31:32] They become teachers, I

Laurel: [00:31:33] And then the—oh, great. So just back in the system? Okay, great.

Laura: [00:31:35] Yeah. Just...

Audrey: [00:31:36] Just a cycle.

Laura: [00:31:37] ...right around.

Audrey: [00:31:39] That could be a whole nother episode.

Laurel: [00:31:42] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:31:43] Lesbians in boarding school.

Laura: [00:31:45] I mean not,

Laurel: [00:31:46] Okay. Actually, speaking of status and stuff, people with status would put their daughters into these convents and you, you sort of mentioned briefly that they weren't available. Is that like at all? not, even to go to like a market or something, but then also the followup question is, did they play any roles outside of the convent, like in public life or did they have any power in the society?

Laura: [00:32:12] So, I mean the short answer to the question of all they allowed out of the convent is no, literally it is essentially a prison and they go

into the convent. They never allowed out. They literally get married to Jesus. Um, with a song called "Come, Thou Bride of Christ" is, is sung. Yeah, maybe we can play it in a second.

Laurel: [00:32:31] Okay. This is not GAYSMR.

Laura: [00:32:33] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:32:34] This is whatever the opposite is of GAYSMR, yeah.

Audio clip [00:32:35] sparse choir, singing:

Veni sponsa Christi

Accipe coronam

Quam tibi Dominus,

Praeparavit in aeternum

Alleluia...

Laura: [00:32:50] ...but yeah, I mean like essentially the families leave, and the door closes, and it literally never opens again because usually even when they die, they get buried within the cloister of the convent.

Laurel: [00:33:02] Wow.

Audrey: [00:33:02] Okay. So obviously Héloïse has been removed.

Laurel: [00:33:05] Right.

Audrey: [00:33:06] Right. Are there other instances in history that you can cite where people have gotten out of the convent?

Laura: [00:33:11] Yeah.

Laurel: [00:33:12] ...'caus it also seems like sort of a storage unit for your daughter in case you need like an extra marry-able—marriageable female in your life.

Laura: [00:33:19] Yeah, I mean, so in theory, they're not allowed a little bit, like we said, in terms of like, in theory, you're not allowed a divorce, but the Pope can allow an annulment.

Laurel: [00:33:29] So then do you sing the bride of Christ song backwards like as you walk backwards. Like a satanic...

Laura: [00:33:32] ...backwards—now I'm not the bride of Christ! No, it's just basically a really difficult legal procedure to kind of like revoke the vows that they've had to give, because they are like solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Audrey: [00:33:50] Yeah.

Laura: [00:33:50] You know, not going to be chaste anymore, if they're going to be married, right? And so like, yeah, it's like a really difficult legal process that the families have to deal with to be able to do that. But it does sometimes happen. There are also another form of nun, particularly, I imagine that when women went into the convent at kind of like younger

ages, like in their teenage / early twenties, where they have like, what's called like a tertiary status.

Where they don't take the complete solemn vow. They take some of them, so that it's a bit easier to revoke them. So I wonder whether perhaps Héloïse is maybe, I mean, I don't know... If she's meant to be 28, I don't know. Maybe she's, you know, kind of getting a bit older for that to be the case...

Laurel: [00:34:30] Right. Cause like, so if you go in, when you're younger, you could take, like, the mini vows, right? And then like you start to become more marriageable and then it's like, "Hey, you should probably, you know..."

Audrey: [00:34:41] Finish your vows.

Laurel: [00:34:43] Christ should put a ring on it, and you should...

Laura: [00:34:45] But that is also for a lot of it is to do with like the, as an economic strategy of the family. So for example, if the sister got married, but then died, like in childbirth, for example, or any kind of epidemic disease, then to stop the money going to a different family, because the man might remarry, you just swap the sister in.

Laurel: [00:35:07] Oh my God,

Laura: [00:35:08] That happened a lot.

Audrey: [00:35:08] It's a different type of storage unit.

Laurel: [00:35:10] right? Yeah, It's just...

Laura: [00:35:12] I mean, it was considered like a way to keep the children if there were children to, again, kind of, yeah. Like half of them being brought up within the same family kind of thing as well, but yeah, ultimately it's, again, it's kind of an economic thing to stop the money being funneled to another family, because if you remarried then, yeah, you get other money from the other dowry of the other family. Yeah, I dunno. I mean, I don't know how popular putting another sister in would really have been because the man, if he remarried, would get the marriage dowry of the other new wife, right?

Laurel: [00:35:44] Right. Right, right. Well, and that feels like something familiar from the Bible as well. Where like, if your brother dies you, ah, what is it? It's like...

Audrey: [00:35:56] Dig deep, Laurel.

Laurel: [00:35:57] I know, well, this it's something that kinda like it stuck with me, you know, from religious school. You're a guy, you're married. You die in battle. Then your brother like inherits your wife or something.

It's very sort of it's—it's weird. I don't know.

Audrey: [00:36:14] Gross.

Laurel: [00:36:15] Gross!

Laura: [00:36:17] Yeah, but I mean, it's, it is really interesting though. Like you said, at the beginning, like, you know, there are differences between monks and nuns cause monks were allowed out, like, so, you know, you have

examples of monks going to town, for example. Monks going to the market and selling things like beer and whatever that they've made within the monastery.

But the women weren't allowed to do that because they were considered, you know, they would make them impure in various ways. And you know, I mean, if you think about it, secular women will have to have a chaperone at all times. So like, how is a nun going to go out and just—be around... You know, all of this, ultimately just still comes down to the issue of controlling women's bodies. Like, that's literally what the issue is.

Laurel: [00:36:56] We buried that lede. Sorry.

Audrey: [00:36:57] Yeah, the TLDR.

Laurel: [00:36:59] Yeah.

Laura: [00:37:00] And essentially the idea being that if they're kept inside and they're kept—never allowed out the convent that they wouldn't ever sin either...

Laurel: [00:37:08] Right, right. Which is the...

Laura: [00:37:10] They couldn't do any sinful behavior, which, you know, perhaps apart from certain things, which we have...in the convent.

Laurel: [00:37:19] But even those certain things kind of didn't count to some people it's like, oh, that's just gals being pals, you know, like no one really...

Laura: [00:37:26] Yeah, but like also to them, did it technically count? Because it still maintained their chastity in a certain way. Do you know what I mean?

Laurel: [00:37:37] Great.

Audrey: [00:37:37] Let's keep talking around this.

Laurel: [00:37:38] Yeah,

Laura: [00:37:39] yeah, yeah.

Laurel: [00:37:40] Well, so, okay. But did they have anything to do with public life outside of the convent at all? Like, did they have any power in society?

Laura: [00:37:49] Yeah. So although they can't go out of the convent, there was an area called the parlor, which was an area where by appointment people could meet with a nun. Now this is usually only happening with, again, the kind of more wealthy, distinguished families, you know, they might meet with their sister or their mother, for example, but also with politicians, you know, like families that are involved in ruling the town.

So they're still behind a grill. They're not allowed to touch or...

Audrey: [00:38:19] It's really like prison.

Laurel: [00:38:20] Yeah.

Laura: [00:38:21] literally it's like, like a meeting area in a prison unit. But then there are accounts of like music and dancing and things kind of

happening at the parlor. They're a little bit more lighthearted perhaps, but they're not like the family aren't allowed into the cloisters and the nuns aren't allowed into the parlor area with the, where the secular people are.

But yeah. So as the daughters of elites, many people kind of wanted their advice. So they kind of act like sometimes they're political advisors. I don't know. Maybe you think they're religious. Yeah. They've got all this quiet time to think about kind of, you know, perhaps not just religious stuff, but like the kind of political machinations of how things could be organized in different ways.

Laurel: [00:39:02] I love it. So they were kind of like the McKinsey of the town. It's like they're consultants.

Laura: [00:39:05] Yeah. Like consultants. Yeah...kind of.

Audrey: [00:39:08] Okay.

Laura: [00:39:12] But then they're kind of praying for the protection of the city and this kind of stuff and the families, you know, like, so I guess again, the parlor is an area where people from the secular world can come and say, can you like intervene on this issue? And so therefore they are kind of somehow intervening and advising on issues because they've been told the issue to like kind of like intervene on, on a praying level, but like also they can obviously talk about it as well and suggest ways to overcome various different issues.

But you've also got examples of nuns pushing boundaries against monks trying to take away power from them. So there's like a really interesting story in Munich in 1662, where some nuns secretly organized to bring back the relics of Saint Dorothea to their church, because they think that that's going to bring more visitors and therefore they can kind of gain more influence in public life.

Laurel: [00:40:07] Huh. Wow.

Laura: [00:40:09] If you got more tourists or more like people thinking that, that convent like an important convent, especially compared to, like you said, like these other orders of convents, you're kind of competing with them as well in some cities. And you're like, if you have various orders, but the Bishop refused to allow the nuns to do this and took it away.

And the monks then, do the procession of the relic and take the...

Audrey: [00:40:32] Whaaat.

Laura: [00:40:33] ...relics away. And the nuns have to remain locked in the, behind the grills and all of that. So that example is quite interesting because it shows how the nuns were trying to exert influence over various events. But as soon as it starts to become something that is public like "We want to do this procession of the relics into our church." It's like, "Well, you're not doing that. The monks are going to do it. And the bishops are going to do it." Like you're not allowed to have that public representative type role. And so they

want to try and have a public role and they don't like it when it's being curtailed from them.

So, yeah. Yeah.

Laurel: [00:41:07] Oh, it was such a good try. Like I thought it was a really good strategy on their part.

Laura: [00:41:14] But again, I think it's quite easy because like we said, at the beginning again, it's kind of seems like, oh, these women are kept away and they are in most ways, but they are also playing a kind of role as well, like a different role, but yeah. Yeah.

Laurel: [00:41:27] So to wrap up part one, one of the things that Héloïse points out is that, so Marianne says, "Oh, tomorrow you'll be free." Héloïse says, "Okay, I'll, I'm going to go to mass." And Marianne says, "To receive communion?" and Héloïse sort of laughs. At that point it was, I thought was really cute, but she says, "No, she'll go to mass to hear music."

And like earlier she also, or was it later? Oh, she also mentioned that there's like, it's a life that has advantages. There's a library. You can sing, you can hear music. So could you tell us a little bit more about all these sort of extracurriculars or the entertainment that happened in these places? Because that seems to be sort of like the main thing that Héloïse enjoyed about that life.

Audrey: [00:42:09] We know in the parlor, there was some dancing and stuff.

Laura: [00:42:11] Yeah. Yeah. I mean, so like we said, like, there are ways in which women are being women, right? Like that, you know, they're going to have friends and stuff and, you know, have a laugh and a joke as well. It's not all just like serious all the time, even though it does often seem like that. And in some orders it may have been like that.

So for example, there are some orders that did ban music. So not all...

Laurel: [00:42:34] Was it the Carmelites? Those jerks.

Laura: [00:42:36] Probably Carmelites. Yeah. One of the reasons is because they were worried about the influence of male teachers coming into the convents to teach young girls, having to play instruments, for example. And also, as I mentioned before, the idea of nuns learning to sing well was then considered in a kind of sexualized way as well. Which I, yeah. I mean, this is also probably where quite a lot of the idea of like the idea of a convent has been quite sexualized. Hasn't it, like in general? Just because it's like a place full of women, it's like, well, what could possibly be going on there? But yeah, I mean, in most of the convents, so it would have been quite a lot of singing going on.

Like we saw with the Benedictines, you know, they are singing what, like five times a day sounds of bells, um, various instruments and things that they could learn to play like the organ violin, viola, horn, trombone, flute, and guitar. And that's, that's a Dominican order in...

Laurel: [00:43:32] The trombone. Did you say the trombone? That's great.

Laura: [00:43:35] was in Florence, probably in about the 18th century there Dominican order.

And sometimes they would pay musicians from the secular world to come in and do performances as well. Even though again, the nuns would have had to stay behind the grills and all of that.

Audrey: [00:43:48] Oh god.

Laura: [00:43:49] But like there were special feast days in which there might be performances specifically for the nuns. And aside from music and singing, they also did quite a lot of theater.

So the nuns themselves would act either acting out kind of like religious stories and stuff, but also some slightly more secularized things, but it was considered a little bit controversial and a bit transgressive in some periods because the women obviously have to play the male characters as well, right?

And yeah, like I think it's quite interesting, more research needs to be done on that kind of theater stuff. Cause I don't think again, you don't really think of nuns as, like, putting on a play. You know, it's not really like what we're imagining is going on in the convent, but yeah, we have examples of nuns who had written plays that were playwrights themselves. But the nuns, by playing different characters, were also given a little bit of a chance, I guess, to play or given—have an experience of what the world outside was like, you know, which they otherwise kind of wouldn't do.

And I also find it really interesting that one of the common themes for these theater plays is Judith and Holofernes, which I think I mentioned the very, very first one, you know? Yeah. Like these famous paintings by Artemisia Gentileschi by Judith cuts off Holofernes' head and all this. And I'm just like, that's so interesting to me that like that's a really common theme in the convent plays are like women cutting off a head of like kings.

Laurel: [00:45:09] Okay.

Laura: [00:45:09] And then later on, again, so we're talking more like 18th to 19th century now, convents start to become schools. Like I said, you have nuns that are also teachers. Although some convents just became completely secular. And like we said, they're kind of—the girls end up becoming teachers. And that kind of creates the boarding school system. But they did sometimes have convents where there were nuns still in the convent, but they would go to the school to teach the children, but the children weren't nuns themselves, if that makes sense. And so the convent next door, they would be teaching history, geography, maths, literature, all of this kind of stuff. And that I guess kind of starts to open up the types of education that the women can learn about and the books they can read and all that kind of stuff.

So it's not always the books that I have in the library as well. And they're not religious books. I mean, obviously that's the majority of the library, but there are books on history and, and all that kind of stuff as well. Yeah.

I don't know. I just find it really interesting, like thinking about the portrait where like, you know, Héloïse is in the theater watching this music and it's like, it's, you know, if she was in a convent church and was participating in music, like from the other side, do you think that she would be crying and mourning the life that she might have had on the other side of the grill?

You know? So it's kind of like both.

Laurel: [00:46:22] Would she have ever known?

Laura: [00:46:25] Yeah. I guess just mourning the life that she did have.

Laurel: [00:46:29] mm mm.

Laura: [00:46:30] Yeah. But, but would you, do you also mourn than the life that you wish you had if the situation was different? You know, so yeah.

Yeah, so that's a grand overview of convent life. If anyone wants to find out more like one of the really useful books on this is called *Nuns: a History of Convent Life* by Sylvia Evangelisti, which I've been laughing at because the front cover is literally, like the page 28, finger on the book that is literally a close up of what the cover of that book is.

Audrey: [00:47:00] When did that come out? What's the copy. Copyright?

Laura: [00:47:04] it is what the publication from 2007.

Audrey: [00:47:08] Okay. Got it. Hmm.

Laurel: [00:47:10] And we will link to that in the show notes.

Laura: [00:47:12] And do you also call Denis Diderot's novel Vernon, which is quite a depressing read really, and really quite complicated. It's French and from the 18th century, so it's kind of like the closest kind of...

Audrey: [00:47:26] Oh, all right. Okay. Everyone's like ordering right now.

Laura: [00:47:30] I mean, yeah. I wouldn't really necessarily recommend it. It's quite long and slow, but it's a short book. Sorry, but like... Yeah, there's no chapters and stuff. It's just like one long...

Audrey: [00:47:40] Oh, wow. Okay.

Laura: [00:47:41] I'm going to...

Laurel: [00:47:41] So a less than half-hearted recommendation.

Laura: [00:47:44] ...but it's a bit complicated as well. Cause it's like a man writing the story. And then you find out that he wrote it as like a joke for his friend

Audrey: [00:47:52] What?!

Laura: [00:47:52] about how bad it was to be a nun and like...I don't know. It was just a little bit like odd, but there, there are some goings on in the story.

Laurel: [00:48:00] If someone wants to just summarize it for us, that'd be great.

Laura: [00:48:03] yeah. Well, it's, it's basically, she's, she's a nun that doesn't want to go to the convent. Um, and so you see that story of like, I was forced

to go there and then she finds out why her family sent her there and then she's kind of like abused.

Laurel: [00:48:16] But he made all this up or did he?

Laura: [00:48:18] well, th he made it up that it's meant to be kind of based on reality

Laurel: [00:48:22] Yeah.

Audrey: [00:48:22] Okay. Very half-hearted recommendation

Laurel: [00:48:24] Yeah, yeah.

Laura: [00:48:26] yeah, no there's things that people might...

Laurel: [00:48:32] Great.

Audrey: [00:48:34] Okay.

Laura: [00:48:35] It is an overall quite sad book. That's what I'm saying. Cause it's not a very happy story, but...

Laurel: [00:48:41] That was great. Okay. Do we want to hint at what could be coming up in part two?

Audrey: [00:48:45] Yeah, we didn't mention when we started, but there, this is a part, one of part two, maybe, maybe more depending. I mean, I think we're

Laura: [00:48:51] I mean, people will feel free to send in questions about, I mean, you seem to have lots of questions about convent life. So tell me what more you want to know about convents.

Laurel: [00:48:59] Yeah, like in part two, we've got this question from Christina who asks, "Were all nuns, just being Sapphic with each other in convents?" So We'll be talking about whether it was really the sort of like "world without men", or, you know, we've already talked about how men still hold a lot of the power here in this female space, but was it a sort of lesbian utopia?

Find out in our next episode about nuns!

Audrey: [00:49:23] We'll also talk about rebellious nuns and then maybe hear from some real voices from the convent. I don't know what that's gonna look like. Are we going to bring them in? Yes, no,

Laurel: [00:49:33] Skype them in from the 18th century. Yeah.

Laura: [00:49:36] To read their words

Audrey: [00:49:37] Laura is going to speak in their voice, but in like a Muppet voice.

Laurel: [00:49:42] Perfect.

Audrey: [00:49:45] Before we wrap up, we've been trying out this new segment where we share, you know, basically like what we are watching,

reading, consuming, listening to in the sapphic or queer stratosphere. And so we're going to ask you, Laura, if you have any recommendations.

Laura: [00:49:59] Yeah. Well, I mean, aside from all this convents...

Audrey: [00:50:02] Yeah.

Laura: [00:50:03] no, I mean the, my portrait 2021 is the cartoon series She-Ra, which every single person who's listening to this definitely needs to watch, if you haven't already seen it.

I mean, as a cartoon, I felt like, I wouldn't have so much historical things to say, but it sparked a lot of other things in my head about things like colonialism and, um, childhood trauma identity, all of this kind of stuff.

So, yeah, I'm sure we'll probably talk about that at some point, but highly, highly recommended and season five is completely worth it. So...

Audrey: [00:50:38] Okay. All right.

Laura: [00:50:40] Yeah. For cartoons as well, like I just, I find it incredible that kids are watching stuff like this now. Like it's...

Audrey: [00:50:46] It's so good. Cartoons are so gay now. So queer.

Laura: [00:50:48] like, they're like how, when we were young, that wasn't the case and

Audrey: [00:50:52] but it's all subtext.

Laura: [00:50:53] Yeah. But like, it's nice that it's not like a heteronormative world. Is it? So then it's just like normalized and it's, that makes such a difference. I think

Audrey: [00:51:02] I think we could do a whole episode on that and we should bring you back to

Laurel: [00:51:05] That's a great idea. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Great. We'll have you back for

Audrey: [00:51:09] Our resident historian is back to talk about cartoons.

Laura: [00:51:12] Resident historian is here for any historical inquiries.

Laurel: [00:51:17] Yeah. Isn't that the show runner that is Noelle Stevenson, right? And she did, or they started out in comics and that's when I started following them. And then to hear that they were redoing She-Ra was just mind-blowing. It's so good.

Laura: [00:51:29] I watched all of it in four days, which is mental, so...

Laurel: [00:51:33] That's so great. yeah.

Yeah. And now it's time for this week's GAYSMR. Laura, what are we listening to this week?

Laura: [00:51:48] Well, we are going to listen to the sound of a Quill on paper, reminiscent of nuns in their convents during, perhaps the silent towers of the day, noting down their thoughts in the convent, cloisters and yeah. Enjoy.

Laurel: [00:52:06] Enjoy.

Audrey: [00:52:07] But before you enjoy

Laurel: [00:52:09] We always do this!

Audrey: [00:52:10] we always do this. Do you have any, do you have any questions for the next show or do you have your own GAYSMR sounds that you want to share with us or recommend? Let us know. You can email us at sapphiccultureclub@gmail.com. You can find us on Instagram at @sapphiccultureclub and Twitter at @sapphicpodcast.

Thank you, Laura, for joining us!

Laurel: [00:52:29] Oh my gosh. Yeah. Thank you so much. This has been so great.

Audrey: [00:52:33] Always appreciate it. Always leave this feeling way more intelligent than I came into it.

Laura: [00:52:38] I, like I said, I love doing all this. It's nice that the research is going to people that want to find out about it. You know, my poor students just get told about these random things that I find out most of the time. So, yeah, but do you get in touch @LABhistorical on Twitter, if you've got any further questions or send them to you guys, of course. Anything historical I'm more than happy to find out about and, and chat about.

Yeah, that's what the resident historian's for, I guess.

Audrey: [00:53:06] Excellent. We will see you for part two.

Laurel: [00:53:09] And now you can enjoy

Audrey: [00:53:11] Now you can enjoy some GAYSMR.