

**The Hidden Bookcase Transcript**  
**Hooky Vol 1. by Míriam Bonastre Tur**

[THEME MUSIC FADES IN.]

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 youth crowned in black flying through the skies.

Sorren

I'm Sorren, I use he/him pronouns and I am a cat named Cat.

Morgan

We've been friends for over a decade and are always swapping books.

Sorren

Each fortnight we 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.

Morgan

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

Sorren

Hooky by Míriam Bonastre Tur.

[THEME MUSIC FADES OUT.]

Morgan  
Sorren.

Sorren  
Here we are. Final episode of the year.

Morgan  
Yes. Oh my gosh! And what a book to pick.

Sorren  
What a book to end on.

Morgan  
Tell me about Hooky.

Sorren  
I am unprepared to summarise Hooky, so I'm going to tell you guys how I found out about it first, which is a very simple story. I was in my local bookshop. I was not having a good day. I was standing in the graphic novel aisle. I saw something with a cute spine. I pulled it out. I was charmed by the colourful art and soft vibes and cute character designs. So I bought this book.

Morgan  
(Laughs)

Sorren  
I don't remember why I was having a bad day, but I was having a bad day. So I was like, "I can justify buying a slightly expensive graphic novel." What is Hooky about? Hooky is about a pair of twins who are witches, and they miss the bus to magic school. They miss the teleporting bus, so they can't catch up with it. Basically decide to play hooky for the whole year. So they bounce around, they stay with an aunt for a little while. And eventually they end up with this mysterious wizard fellow who lives in a tower and fall into his life and they make some friends and there's large plot machinations

happening mixed with slice of life magical shenanigans, and that's Hooky.

Morgan  
It's my bread and butter!

Sorren  
(Laughs)

Morgan  
Exactly what I want!

Sorren  
Exactly!

Morgan  
I'm just gonna say... Literally, this book, I literally was like, I was like, reading it and it was chill. And then like, last night, I was like, "Oh I actually have to re- I have to finish it."

Sorren  
Mm.

Morgan  
"And I also have this essay I have to do. So I'm just gonna sit down, I'm going to finish it." And I was like, less than halfway through the book. And then I finished the book. And I was making sounds...

Sorren  
(Laughs)

Morgan  
My flatmate came over to check on me and I literally turned around to her and I was like, "I think this is my favourite book of the year." Because like, the second half...

Sorren

Mm, mm-hm!

Morgan

...Was just like- beat after beat was just like: Morgan's gonna love this, Morgan's gonna love this, Morgan's gonna love this- Like every- It was like, written for me.

Sorren

That's kind of what I felt-

Morgan

Specifically.

Sorren

-That's why I had to pick it. But I also had a similar thing where I was reading it like, after work, I think it was like a week where I had picked up loads of extra shifts. And I was having like nine hours a day and I was just coming home and I was reading like, one chapter and then falling asleep. So it took me ages. And then when I hit the second half, I was exhausted and I still stayed up really late. There's just something in the second half. It's addictive,

Morgan

It imploded my brain and gave me energy. And I was just like... I checked online to see if my store had a copy of volume two. And I went into work early. (Laughing) And I found that volume and I bought it before work. I put down this book and I was like "No, but I need to read volume two, like now."

Sorren

Exactly.

Morgan

"Like, I need to read it now." Yeah, I don't want to get too into before you've done the blind but I...

Sorren

Let's do the blind, let's do the blind...

Morgan  
Yes.

Sorren  
...So that we can... scream.

[TAPE RECORDER CLICKS ON.]

Morgan  
The more I do blind reacts, the more I'm learning that I'm really good at forgetting everything I know about a book. But here we are with Hooky. Um... It's very pretty. It's very cute. Um... I think anything I possibly know about it is linked in my brain with My Hero Academia, Little Witch Academia, and Witch Hat Atelier. They're all the same thing in my brain. And I know they're not. But they are. Having said that I know literally nothing about this book. I don't know what it's about. I know there's a witch on the front cover. She's got a really cute cat. It looks very vibey, um I know Sorren's read it. I know my friend India has read it. I've heard only good things. Um... Yeah, that's it. So can't wait to read it.

[TAPE RECORDER CLICKS OFF.]

Sorren  
(Laughing) Not you just ignoring Dorian's existence on the cover!

Morgan  
(Laughs) I am a very specific man, I have my specific tastes...

Sorren  
You're a feminist!

Morgan  
...And it is magical women. Magical girls. The priorities are there, okay?

Sorren

It's on brand to just ignore his existence, to be fair, I feel like, so...

Morgan

(Laughs) Also, I feel like I should say I have not read or watched or know anything about any of the three anime slash manga that I just listed in my blind. They were all the same soup in my brain.

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

They occupied the same dimension. But here we are.

Sorren

And this one doesn't actually have a magical school because they never make it. (Laughs)

Morgan

(Laughing) Yeah.

Sorren

I mean, I guess there is one.

Morgan

Categorically, it does exist.

Sorren

As far as we know.

Morgan

As far as we know.

Sorren

This would have been their first year because they talk about making friends.

Morgan

Yeah.

Sorren

So...

Morgan

They don't seem to know what happens in a magic school. They're like, "Yes, we made friends. That's what we're going to write in our letter. Haha."

Sorren

I think it's like a secondary school vibe, because they're like, 12.  
So...

Morgan

Yeah.

Sorren

Presumably they were homeschooled up to this point, which kind of explains the everything about them.

Morgan

(Laughs) Definitely.

Sorren

Okay. Are we talking about the cover?

Morgan

Yeah.

Sorren

It's very, pretty

Morgan

Pretty. It's like, pastels but also bright at the same time,

Sorren

The wraparound, getting to see everybody on the back. I love that.

Morgan  
Yeah!

Sorren  
Everyone's just having such a little wholesome time. It looks like nothing bad could ever happen to anybody. They're all just eating tea and raisin pudding!

Morgan  
On the outside, this looks so chill...

Sorren  
Right?!

Morgan  
And so like, calm, and then you get in there, and it's like, "What if this was a whole narrative about being hunted, and learning to accept who you are, and going off the [censored]-ing rails, but also they're 12."

Sorren  
But also they're 12. It's a really interesting balance, because I remember when I was like, "Oh, yeah, let's do this again." And then rereading it- I only read it like, a few months ago. But in my brain, I was like, "Oh, yeah, it starts out pretty relaxed. And then it slowly introduces you to the horrors," and then I reread it and I was like, "Hang on, there's like kidnapping and prisons in like, 20 pages."

Morgan  
They're literally complicit in multiple crimes by like, page 12.

Sorren  
(Laughing) They're complicit in an abduction on page 17.

Morgan  
Love that for them.



Sorren

So not really, actually. But then things just sort of brighten up for a bit and everything's fine for a while.

Morgan

Mm-hm! It's all chill. It's slice of life. They're just- They're doing things, they get a beach episode,

Sorren

They get a beach episode.

Morgan

This would make such a good cartoon.

Sorren

It would, honestly.

Morgan

Someone animate it, please.

Sorren

Oh my god.

Morgan

And I would die for you.

Sorren

It would be so fun. Okay, tell me what you wanted to say. Before we listened to your blind.

Sorren

I don't know man. You know me.

Sorren

I do!

Morgan

The listeners are beginning to learn to know me. "Aren't you tired of being nice?" Tick. Cute magical princess with like, Manic Pixie Dream Girl vibes, going a bit goth and also being like, everything is possible through the power of friendship and anime? Amazing. The bit that really, really like, got me was the "Aren't you tired of being nice moment?"

Sorren  
Yeah, yeah.

Morgan  
Just- I love it when a protagonist breaks and becomes like, really OP.

Sorren  
Exactly.

Morgan  
It's beautiful.

Sorren  
And there are kind of several of them here, which is great. Both of them are sort of having a villain arc because we need to have that, "Which one of them is going to be the Witch King?" And then they throw Damien in there.

Morgan  
Yeah. The aesthetics of Damien.

Sorren  
The aesthetics of Damien... He does indeed have white hair and trauma.

Sorren & Morgan  
(Laughing)

Sorren  
He's even homosexual. I'm pretty confident.

Morgan  
Oh my god, yeah.

Sorren  
We only see him rejecting Will's advances here, but like, they're in love. We know they're in love.

Morgan  
Oh my god, it's so Merlin and Arthur coded.

Sorren  
Mm!

Morgan  
Oh, my God. It's beautiful. The way he like, walks past them, and he like, sees them and then blocks it off. So that he's like, "Yeah, I didn't see anybody, even though I'm supposed to be the evil witch king. And I'm literally only doing this because you've got my boyfriend." Love that for him.

Sorren  
He's trying his best. Oh my God, there's just so many things- Also, I need to like, gush about the rereading experience. I was kind of almost like, "I don't really want to reread this again. I've got so many other things to read at the moment. Like, I had a great time. But how much am I gonna get out of a reread?" And I was so wrong, because I got so much out of a reread because I forgot how many like, little twists there are and how much foreshadowing there is in this. And it was just driving me insane. Like, the fact that Master Pendragon is like, after he reveals his whole; "I was gonna murder you kids. And then I thought maybe I'll train you as apprentices instead." And he was like, "I tried to recruit you with advertisements." At the beginning of this book,...(Laughing) There's all these little stupid advertisements of him in the background, which I obviously completely missed on my first read. Like there's one in the jail for some reason? Just a poster of his face. Dead expression, being like, "I'm looking for apprentices." What is this?!

Morgan  
Beautiful. Incredible vibes.

Sorren  
It's so good. And there's little mentions of Damien as well, like there's a bit where they're discussing... Like, the twins are having this conversation about their parents and getting in trouble with their parents. And they're like, "Oh, and also..." And then they're like, "No, no, let's not talk about him!"

Morgan  
Yeah... The good soup.

Sorren  
Amazing. You can tell this is plotted very, very carefully.

Morgan  
It's just- It's so good. And you have like- the characters are all so well rounded.

Sorren  
Mm.

Morgan  
And are like, having their whole interior lives. Nico, at the beginning, when he's like, "Yeah, I hate Mark. Let's go bully Mark, he's my bully." And then you find out that they're literally like, best friends. And they live together...

Sorren  
Practically brothers, and he's just having a moment where he's like, "Ugh, Mark."

Morgan  
And then he gets his whole segue where he just goes on about his like, trauma. And it's like, "Sir, I would die for you."

Sorren

Honestly. It's like, "Oh, he's just like, the little character to bounce off of," and then it's like, "Nope." He's got all this going on.

Morgan

Yeah.

Sorren

He has a tragic backstory of his own.

In Unison

Yeah.

Morgan

The magic system is just cool. Like, it's soft, but it's also like... It's beautiful.

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

Especially with how Dani's powers work. I'm just like... We've only got hints of it in volume one. And I'm like, "This is perfect."

Sorren

Mm-hm. It reminded me of, um... Galadriel from the Scholomance...  
(Laughs)

Morgan

(Laughing) I was gonna say! Like, yeah, I just tried to clean my room, but I accidentally have this spell that slaughters millions...  
Whoops!

Sorren

(Laughing) Conveniently for [Dani], she's in like, a PG-13 novel so she's only killed animals so far, but like...

Morgan

So far.

Sorren  
So far.

Morgan

Yeah. When she started just, floating and she didn't even have a wand and she was still doing stuff because she was so angry. 'Cause she was like "You've killed the nice witches. I'm the only one [censored]-ing left." I'm gonna swear a lot in this episode, but here we are.

Sorren

Honestly, killing Alex as well- narrative power move because I never expected it. It kind of snuck up on me even the second time reading it. I was like, "I forgot that this just happened so suddenly and horrifically."

Morgan

Like, you're gonna kill off the queer mentor character, really?

Sorren  
Brutal.

Morgan

The like, older, vaguely crush-esque character.

Sorren

Danielle hadn't even dyed her hair blue yet.

Morgan

Devastating. But it's like perfect for the narrative.

Sorren

So good, but also, oh my god.

Morgan  
Mm-hm!

Sorren

After the little band scene as well which is so wholesome. It is just the weird balance of completely devastating and so cute and cosy.

Morgan

Yeah!

Sorren

Like, I want to call this cosy fantasy... (Laughing) But that's just incorrect because there's too much death.

Morgan

There's murder in many of our favourite cosy fantasies.

Sorren

Yeah, but I feel like the ensuing war between the witches and the humans is a little bit too intense. Like, it's not like one person buried under some sunflowers. It's... (Laughs)

Morgan

Okay, this is cosy fantasy in the way that Steven Universe is cosy fantasy.

Sorren

Yeah, no, I'll agree with that.

Morgan

Because Steven Universe, objectively, at least the first couple seasons: cosy fantasy, and then you get "Oh yeah, also, there's genocide. Have fun."

Sorren

Yeah. Which is the same thing that's happening here. It's cosy. And then there's genocide. And you're like, "Oh."

Morgan

Yeah. Oh, wow, we're really going to deal with this in a- in a kid's book. Okay. I love it. Jesus Christ.

Sorren

I wonder if it had a bit of an advantage there, because obviously, if you're pitching something as a kid's book, but it's not published yet, you might have to be quite strict about fitting into the parameters of 'children's book.' And I appreciate that if this is 9 to 12, it's not like, more intense than Percy Jackson or something, for example. But then it has the effect of like, there is actually like, blood shown on page and stuff like that, which, obviously, non graphic novels get to sort of dance around by not having images. But because this was like, a phenomenon on the internet first, are publishers not going to be like, well, let's make changes to the story if something's already objectively successful.

Morgan

Yeah, I think that's definitely true. It slightly threw me, because I thought that I'd be able to switch back and forth between the Webtoon version and this version.

Sorren

Ah...

Morgan

You cannot do that.

Sorren

Yes. I was thinking about warning you about that. And then I was like, "They'll figure it out."

Morgan

Yeah. I- I learnt. I figured it out.

Sorren

The art is not the same.

Morgan



The words are not the same.

Sorren

This is definitely a distilled version- And if anyone is listening to this episode, having read the Webtoon version, I would highly recommend that you pick up the graphic novels as like, a more polished version, even having any read the first one. They're so gorgeous- Not that the Webtoon is not gorgeous, but there's obviously like, huge artist improvement here.

Morgan

Yes.

Sorren

Okay. I have to ask you, who's your favourite character?

Morgan

(Whimpers)

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

Okay, for the first half of the book...

Sorren

Mm-hm.

Morgan

It was Princess Monica. The vibes of her of like, "I'm a princess, and I'm like, a Manic Pixie Dream Girl because I've lived in a tower and I read romance novels." And like, I have a D&D character exactly like this. Did I look at her and immediately go, "Know what's be a great cosplay for next Comic Con?"

Sorren

(Gasps)

Morgan  
I already have the wig.

Sorren  
Oh my god, please. That'd be so cute.

Morgan  
Like, the goth version of her-

Sorren  
Yes!

Morgan  
-Could be so much fun. I would do that in a heartbeat. So like aesthetics wise, it's her potential wise, vibes wise, plot wise... It's got to be Dani,

Sorren  
You see... (Laughs) Have you seen the covers of the subsequent graphic novels?

Morgan  
I've seen the cover of the second one.

Sorren  
Okay. I will not say anything, then.

Morgan  
I have seen the cover of the third one somewhere. I don't know where.

Sorren  
I feel like if you look at it now...

Morgan  
Spoilers?

Sorren

It's not spoilers, necessarily, because it's not clear. But I'm just- I'm very curious to- Actually now I kind of just want you to look at it to see what your reaction will be.

Morgan

I've definitely seen it. So I will look at it now.

Sorren

Look at it now because I feel like it's gonna be interesting to discuss the potential direction of these characters. And I guess it's a cover so it doesn't really count as a spoiler.

Morgan

That's really giving: We've moved from Steven Universe to Vampire Diaries.

Sorren

(Laughs) For those at home who cannot see the covers, we've gone from 12 year old Dani and Dorian to young adult Dani and Dorian. Dani is like, in her goth era, I want to say. In her swamp witch era.

Morgan

Yeah, because when I first glimpsed it, I was like "That's different characters. That's not-"

Sorren

Yeah!

Morgan

"-the same characters. That's not Dorian and Dani." I have a feeling that the more I read this, the more I... The more feral I will go.

Sorren

Yeah, seeing that makes me think that you're going to get more feral over Dani, and I don't even know what's going to happen.

Morgan

I'm so predictable at this point.

Sorren  
You're so correct, though.

Morgan  
I mean, Monica has such like... I would just like that vibe.

Sorren  
Mm-hm.

Morgan  
I would dress that way. I have pink hair. I see another pink hair character. I'm like, "Oh my God. I don't have to wear a wig for this one, maybe-" Except I would because she's got really cool hair, but it's the same as Mirabelle from The Starless Sea: the vibes.

Sorren  
No, I know exactly what you mean, though. Like, the very energetic... I don't want to say like, "feminine," vibes, because gender is a social construct and blah, blah, blah, but the traits that we usually associate with that...

Morgan  
Yes, I do have quite a hyperfixation on hyperfeminine characters in narratives, I think, because I don't feel that and have never felt that, I find characters who are that very interesting, because I'm like, "Oooh, let me take you apart and see how you work." And that's why I like playing that in D&D as well, because I like exploring that aspect. Because it's not something that I connect to, personally.

Sorren  
Yeah, I feel that like, especially when they get to be interesting and rounded characters, because at least... I mean, speaking for me here, I feel like the hyperfeminine character, when we were young, was usually just sort of villainized in one way or another. She was usually just like, the popular girl in pink being mean, or she was kind of put in odds with another female character who was like less

traditionally feminine, but still feminine in the ways that... She would still shave her legs and her underarms, but like, she could fix a car, so she was cool...

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
...Kind of thing. And I just, I also really like seeing those characters, yeah.

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
But Dani...?

Morgan  
But Dani, she's so... "Yeah, I'm never gonna magic again, I don't want to hurt anybody." And then she's like, "Oh, actually, maybe violence is the answer." And she's so real for that. And I love her so much.

Sorren  
Mm.

Morgan  
And she's so OP without even trying, but it's like, a good kind of OP, and it feels earned, because she's been struggling with it throughout the entire book, because it's like, she's powerful, but not in the way that she wants to be, and not in a way that is helpful for real life. And then as soon as is helpful...

Sorren  
Exactly.

Morgan

...It's very, very helpful. It's like, if you've ever watched the Hello Future Me videos on writing, and especially, they have a video on writing overpowered characters and how you have to make their power conditional in order for it to feel satisfying. That really is done so effortlessly in here, 'cause you don't even really notice the build until you're like, oh, this makes sense.

Sorren

Yeah, exactly. It's not like you're gonna be like, "Wait, how did Dani kill a dragon?" It's like, "Of course, Dani could kill a dragon. She also can't levitate a cup."

Morgan

I'm very intrigued by Dorian on the cover for volume three. He didn't compel me very much in this book. Like, he was interesting.

And I enjoyed him and I enjoyed how he played off with all the other characters. I didn't gravitate towards him, which I don't really gravitate towards male characters a lot of the time anyway. And I see him now and I'm like, "Hello, sir. You look interesting now. Tell me how you got here."

Sorren

He looks- And this is going to be like, a deep cut, like, one person listening will know what I'm saying- He looks like Professor Caraway from High Guardian Spice.

Morgan

Okay.

Sorren

(Laughing) Which I haven't even seen by the way. But he looks like that, which makes me think that he's going to be like, a magic professor or something. I don't know. I love that he still has the wand though, the pink wand.

Morgan

Yes, I'm obsessed with that. He looks to me like he's in his Jonathan Harker era. Like he's being haunted by the narrative, but he cannot escape.

Sorren

Yeah, he's not having a good time. Definitely.

Morgan

He's like, "Yeah, okay. Like, I'll, like, help because you're on your girlboss journey, but..."

Sorren

Oh, see that's interesting, because I feel like they're at odds in volume three, like, the- the vibe that I got is like they're on opposite sides now.

Morgan

Ah, okay. The vibe- I don't know because I think because they're next to each other in it, it feels like they're more situated than in like, the sort of like, surrealness of the volume one cover. So my brain is kind of like, maybe she's kind of dragging him along for the ride and he's like, (Long-suffering) "Okay..."

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

"I'm only here to make sure you don't go completely over the moral edge." If he's gonna go down that route, I'm like "Dorian, let her go over the moral edge. She's tired of being nice."

Sorren

Support woman's wrong, Dorian, come on.

Morgan

Exactly. Support women's wrongs. You are the one who started this whole thing by picking up a dragon egg for no apparent reason.

Sorren

Yeah, he was just like, "I want to touch it."

Morgan

You directly- You started the engine of this story. You got to commit to the bit.

Sorren

Well, I mean, in contrast to you, I think Dorian was my favourite...

Morgan

Mm-hm!

Sorren

...In Volume One.

Morgan

Tell me more.

Sorren

He loves his little magical creatures, and he just wants to have friends so bad.

Morgan

Mm...

Sorren

And his character design is so cute. I feel like it's simple reasons- And to be fair, he also gets to have a slightly unhinged moment where he's protecting Dani-

Morgan

Yes.

Sorren

-Who's unconscious. And I do love that. I'm a sucker for that. I also like that he's younger than her. But he's still the heir because



Damien's gone now and I guess, witches are sexist? Or is it because he's better at magic?

In Unison  
I don't know.

Sorren  
But, either way.

Sorren  
When he had that moment, I was like, "Oh, you're getting interesting now, can we have more of this?"

Sorren  
Mm.

Morgan  
And then Monica came in and was like, "No! Don't do that! You're better than this!" And I was like, "Come on, Monica!"

Sorren  
(Laughs)

Morgan  
Let him have his moment!

Sorren  
Let him cook.

Morgan  
I feel like if he'd been able to go over the edge, then- If they do end up on alternate sides, if he'd been allowed to cook in that moment, he would have gone over the edge too.

Sorren  
Maybe. To be fair, I do also find his relationship with Monica surprisingly cute. I'm usually a bit like, "Do the boy-girl friends in a friendship group have to get together?" And I guess there is kind of

an element of that here where there's like, romantic feelings between pretty much every possible permutation of this group that is heterosexual...

Morgan  
Which I love.

Sorren  
Which is... Yeah, I feel like it's cute because it's messy and it doesn't actually get in the way of their friendship a lot.

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren  
Like, there's no like, fighting over it in an irritating way. Like Nico is occasionally jealous of Mark because of Dani's attention on Mark, but it doesn't seem like Mark is seriously interested in Dani in any way.

Morgan  
It's interesting to see the Monica/Dorian dynamic and parallel it to a lot of other things. For example, Katara and Aang, which have the exact same ages. But they get together-

Sorren  
Yeah!

Morgan  
-romantically, which has always been weird.

Sorren  
But I feel like Dorian is almost 13, and therefore- Monica is 14, so it's like, you're basically a year apart, I'm assuming... And also you haven't pretended to be his mum. (Laughs)

Morgan  
Yeah, no, this is true.

Sorren

Like, I feel like they feel very much on the same level maturity-wise.

Morgan

Mm.

Sorren

And I don't feel like they're about to get together any moment, even if they have like a little mutual crush going on.

Morgan

Yeah, it's definitely better. It's a lot better...

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

Than Katara and Aang which- In which they literally have a whole episode where they go, "Wow, I see him like a child." "She has been mothering me."

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

And then he goes, "Yeah, but we should still get together though."  
(Gags.)

Sorren

Yeah, exactly.

Morgan

No.

Sorren

Like the Kataang thing, I think is just the way that their relationship has been coded since the beginning with Katara being like, a

caretaker, and it doesn't feel equal. Whereas here, it's like, oh, okay, you look out for each other. You have each other's backs, like it feels...

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren  
...More normal in that respect.

Morgan  
Yeah, I just don't see why it's necessary to make them 12 and 14.

Sorren  
Fair.

Morgan  
I don't know. My brain was reading everybody as queer the whole time. Every time they- Everybody talked, I was like, "Wow, that's a- that's a gay thing to say."

Sorren  
To be fair I feel like Dorian has a crush on like, every boy that he sees as well, because he's just like, "Wow, he's so cool."

Morgan  
Dorian, and Nico were giving me such vibes.

Sorren  
Yes, that's true.

Morgan  
I could see them being like rivals to lovers. I can see that.

Sorren  
I- I can also see that. Yeah,

Morgan

I think ace Monica, should live in my heart very strongly.

Sorren

That would be cute. Honestly, yeah.

Morgan

She's like, "Wow. This is what I want because I've read about it in books so much. I love reading about romance." And then a man comes up to her and she's like, "Oh, no." (Laughs) "That's not it."

Sorren

She's already ruled out Will romantically when she decides she only likes Will, which is an interesting little double-think there, she's like, "Hm... Yeah, there's no way that this could work and therefore, I want to marry you." And it's like, "Okay. Okay, Monica."

Morgan

Interesting.

Sorren

But at least we have Will and Damien in the background to be like, definitely queer.

Morgan

Thank God. (Laughs)

Sorren

Because... That's why Damien is the way that he is really, it's just that he's like, the oldest gay kid. It's that thing.

Morgan

(Laughs) It's like, "No-one can understand me." And then both of his siblings are like, "Yeah, I've been bisexual this whole time." (Laughing) As somebody with younger siblings, I can... I can talk to this- this experience being like, "Ah! No-one can understand me. I'm the only queer person in this family." And then everyone turns around and is like, "[Censored], you thought?!"

Sorren

I have an important question about Damien...

Morgan

Okay.

Sorren

...And his queer rebellion. Did he dye his hair...?

Morgan

(Laughs)

Sorren

Or did something happen?

Morgan

I feel like maybe he has trauma-anime hair?

Sorren

Yeah, that's what I'm thinking. Is it because of his parents?

Morgan

Yeah, probably- I think, okay. I did not understand why he kept showing up until he's revealed as their sibling.

Sorren

Ah.

Morgan

I was like, "Why are you living in the palace, why do I care about you? I don't understand where you've come from." None of these questions are particularly answered in the narrative. He just lives in the palace.

Sorren

He lives in the palace for inexplicable reasons. Monica is like "Yeah, he lives in the palace." I don't even know she says that he's a witch,

because she freaks out when she finds out that Dani and Dorian are witches, so I'm not sure that she knew that...

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
...Damien was a witch? But the king obviously knows that Damien is a witch because he's like, "I trust you completely. Go do your witchy business for me and also look for my daughter." So like, he knows.

Morgan  
Like, why is he there?

Sorren  
Did he run away and join the king?

Morgan  
He ran away, we know that much. But...

Sorren  
Yeah, yeah.

Morgan  
How did he end up in the palace? Why does anybody trust him? How did he end up BFFs slash romantic interests with Will?

Sorren  
And he's been there since he was like, kind of youngish? In flashbacks where Monica is younger and Will is younger, he's younger too, and he's hanging around. So he was like- He looks like he was Dani and Dorian's age...

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren

In the palace. So what happened there? I feel like he's got a darker backstory than them in terms of I feel like it happened when he was younger...

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren  
That he figured out that his parents were...

Morgan  
I feel like we've got to dig into it at some point.

Sorren  
No, surely. They've done all this setup for Damien and he's so intriguing. And I bet he was a fan favourite for the Webtoon.

Morgan  
Oh, yeah. The aesthetics, the vibes.

Sorren  
The aesthetics alone. The panel where he has the crown on and it's like, dripping black ichor into his hair.

Morgan  
Oh my god. Beautiful. Showstopping. Spectacular...

Sorren  
But he still has the blue eyes. So is- Is it him? Probably not.

Morgan  
You know, I want it to be Dani. I want that for her.

Sorren  
Can we talk about the fashion in general? I know we've already said about Monica, but I just love everyone's outfits. I love Dani's outfits when she starts wearing colour.



Morgan  
Mm!

Sorren  
I love Dorian and Dani's matching outfits. All of the outfit designs are so, so cute.

Morgan  
Yeah! The suspenders, the vibes. They're adorable. I love them.

Morgan  
Also just the detail of backgrounds. Yes. When- Especially when I was first reading it I was like, "Wow, I don't care about the characters- show me the house."

Sorren  
The first page. The detail on the street is insane.

Morgan  
Mm. The way it bends like it's in a fisheye lens.

Sorren  
Mm, adds to the whimsical kind of vibe. It's very cute.

Morgan  
(Whispers) It's so cool!

Sorren  
That was another thing that I really enjoyed on rereading was just seeing all of these little things that I had missed in panels because I was too invested in the story. Cat clinging to the broom on page five. The scene where Monica is apologising to Dorian on page 259- Cat and Carlos are like, peeking over the mattress, and it's the cutest thing in the world. Also, them both getting startled when she comes in. And I shudder to think how long this took in general.

Morgan  
Yeah, it's so long. So good.

Sorren

I love the really thick lineart and the brushes that she uses.

Morgan

Yeah. I love the colour coding of the speech bubbles and like, when the twins talk at the same time and the bubble's like half blue, half pink.

Sorren

That's so cute.

Morgan

I've got to give a shout out to Will because I did not connect him to being the prince at first because like- Him when he can't talk and he's like, just tied up. He looks like the most glowing like, YA protagonist...

Sorren

(Laughs)

Morgan

And then when you actually meet him in Monica's memories. He's the kltuziest like, vibiest guy who's just out here being a silly little man...

Sorren

That scene where she's like, running him through all of those questions. And he's answering them. And then she's like, "Amazing, you didn't get any of them, right!"

Sorren & Morgan

(Laughing)

Morgan

The characterization is so thorough, in the sort of perceptions of characters, in that, like, they have whole interior lives going on and

motivations. And like, how they're perceived by different characters changes, a little bit like, the way they exist on the page.

Sorren  
Yeah.

Morgan  
And it's so cool.

Sorren  
It's so good. Yeah, everyone has misconceptions about everyone. Which sounds like it would be a miscommunication nightmare, but it's just reality. Also, action scenes, fight scenes, always feel like I knew what was going on.

Morgan  
Mm. Dynamic!

Sorren  
Some really fun panelling, not even just in fight scenes, but just in like, normal conversation scenes. The scene right after Nico first gets shrunk where they're walking through the woods comes to mind and they're kind of sliding around the swamp. There's just some very fun angles. And I'm going to be slightly mean and say that sometimes with Webtoons I feel like people get very simple with dialogue and things, and they're just like, "Let me just draw this so that I can get it out," kind of thing.

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren  
Whereas I feel like here, the creative decision is consistently made, even if it will be a lot more difficult.

Morgan  
Yeah, it's very dialogue heavy, but I really like it.

Sorren  
Surprisingly so, I think.

Morgan  
It works- still very readable, still very understandable.

Sorren  
I feel like the dialogue also has a very natural cadence and people have good voices. Like, even without colour coding, I bet the majority of the time you could tell who was talking, even if you didn't have a tail leading to the person.

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
I do love that it can be really creepy at points. Like, when Monica climbs up into the Rapunzel tower, and it's like this weird dead-eyed doll.

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren  
What's going on there? I'm scared.

Morgan  
I thought it was supposed to be like a ghost version of her.

Sorren  
Ah...

Morgan  
It was so innovative though to have like, "Oh, yeah, you can climb up Rapunzel's hair. She's not real though. How are you gonna get down?"

Sorren

And I do love the broom scene right after that.

Morgan

Yeah. I love they're just like, lampshading a bunch of different like, fairy tales. I love that Monica is the party cleric. I love that she's like, "Are you serious? You didn't think to learn healing magic?"

Sorren

(Laughing) Yeah!

Morgan

"Of all the things- That wasn't day one?!"

Sorren

She's the archetypal or reluctant healer.

Morgan

She's truly like, I just want to use Inflict Wounds, but I have to use Cure Wounds instead. Goddammit.

Sorren

Monica is complaining loudly at the Dungeons & Dragons table every time her turn comes up and she has to spend it healing whatever the rest of the party just did when she was about to Spiritual Weapon, and behead something. I feel like she actually, surprisingly almost has like, the strongest moral core, which is quite fun, because I feel like with the archetypal like, 'spoiled character,' often, they can just- again like, default to mean. Even like, her ladies in waiting, like, she cares about them a lot.

Morgan

Mm.

Sorren

She's really excited to see them again when she reunited with them and then she's very, very distressed when she has to rescue them.

Morgan

She's the most willing to change.

Sorren

Mm.

Morgan

She's constantly having her like, perceptions like, challenged, but she very regularly is like, "Okay, yeah, I've learned now."

Sorren

Yeah.

Morgan

"Cool. I'm happy to take on this knowledge and change accordingly." And she's so trusting despite the fact that like, lots of [censored] happens. She's like, "Yeah, I'll come live with this stranger in this house. Despite the fact he's cursed all my guards, so they don't remember being here. This is a great idea!"

Sorren

It's fine.

Morgan

I love that for her.

Sorren

She has a bodyguard with her, it's fine. (Laughing) The bodyguard being Nico obviously.

Morgan

(Laughing) Yes.

Sorren

I also love that the Master's plan is to just murder these children. Like, it's so dark. Like, you'd think that maybe they would hedge it and be like, "Oh, he's just gonna lock them in a basement forever so that there's no chance that they can become the Witch King." But he's like, "No, I'm just gonna kill them."

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
And he's not even like, "Oh, I know which one it is and therefore I'll kill that one." He's like, "I don't know." (Laughing) "So I'm just gonna kill both of them to be safe."

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
(Laughing) It's such an insane plan.

Morgan  
Like it's literally the first moment you meet him. Like, with that cup of tea. They could have been dead from day one.

Sorren  
He's trying to poison them.

Morgan  
I love that they're like, "Yes, hot chocolate! This hot chocolate tastes really watery and leafy, almost like tea!"

Sorren  
They're so cute.

Morgan  
Oh, I love the king. I love...

Sorren  
Mm!

Morgan  
...The plot twist with the king, that he's like genuinely actually trying to like, broker peace.

Sorren  
Yeah.

Morgan  
That was really nice, I think. It could have been very like, straightforward, typical, exactly what you expect. Like, "Yeah!"

Sorren  
Exactly.

Morgan  
"He's actually secretly hated witches and was tricking you here all along." It's like, no, he genuinely just wants peace. And he's like, "We're all humans. Can we- Can we be nice to each other? We've lost too many things. And also, you've been good friends to my daughter, d'you wanna live in my palace?"

Sorren  
Yeah.

Morgan  
Kind of an icon. I kind of love that for him.

Sorren  
He's a frog now.

Morgan  
He's a frog now.

Sorren  
Which I thought was also an interesting- Because everyone thinks that he's dead. Because we get that panel later where everyone's like, "Oh my god, the King's dead." It's like, "No, he's just a frog, he's fine. I mean, he's not fine."

Morgan  
So Monica is gonna have to be queen now. Oh boy.



Sorren  
Oh my God, I didn't even think that.

Morgan  
That's not gonna go well. She's gonna get so traumatised. Love that for her!

Sorren  
All this responsibility on everybody. The scene when Dani nearly gets burned alive, the hug afterwards. It's just important to me.

Morgan  
Mm!

Sorren  
This is like, the equivalent of me doing quotes, and just saying the weight of that hug.

Morgan  
Yeah.

Sorren  
When she's just like, bawling because she's just a little kid. And she nearly just got burned at the bloody stake.

Morgan  
Yeah. The way everyone is so soft with her after that, like, just in that scene.

Sorren  
And Mark's like, Oh, I'm gonna have to give her a hug. And she's like, "I do not give a damn about your existence right now and I just want my brother."

Morgan  
Yeah, cute! I don't have the time to read this book next. But I want to.

Sorren

Before we do final thoughts, I'll just say that I would read like, so many chilled out slice of life, comics about these people just like...

Morgan

Mm.

Sorren

Vibing. Having little adventures making potions at the beach.

Morgan

Yeah. And you get a little bit of that at the end, which I really liked!

Sorren

You do. It's interesting, because I was wondering how they decided to split up the volumes because presumably, it was just chapter by chapter as a Webtoon and... I don't know if there will hiatuses and things that have now sort of taken the places of the volume breaks but... It's an interesting feeling that I felt like I usually only get with manga, where things are just sort of happening...

Morgan

Mm.

Sorren

And there are obviously overarching arcs. But the way that the volume ends is a bit like, "Wait, wait! Keep going!"

Morgan

I don't know. I felt like that was quite a solid climax for the book.

Sorren

Yeah, I do feel like it was a sort of climax, but I also just feel like it wouldn't have been like that if it was planned d'you know what I mean? Not in a bad way at all.

Morgan

Yeah, I feel like if something is so long running, you kind of have to plan it in arcs.

Sorren

Oh, yeah. No, definitely. I feel like there's almost like, three climaxes in this in that there's like, Dani nearly dying, and then there's the floating rock situation, and the reveal that Pendragon's just gonna murder these children possibly. And then the palace climax.

Morgan

Yeah. I feel like, it's... It's a good place to end it, though.

Sorren

Yeah, no, I'm not saying it's a bad place to end it, but I'm just saying like, if you were like, "Give me a three act structure for this one volume novel," you'd be like, "No, I can give you like, three three act structures, or..."

Morgan

Yeah! Yeah, that's why it's a volume.

Sorren

Morgan, you're the new reader of Hooky. What are your final thoughts on this book?

Morgan

It was really good. I would read this again. I would read the sequel. I would make everybody else I know read it. I literally hopped into The Hidden Bookcase Discord and like, started ranting about it in the like, spoiler tags.

Sorren

Oh, is that what you were talking about? Because you were like, "Sorren don't look at this!"

Morgan

It was literally just me being like, "What the [censored] is in this book? I'm going feral." When I came up to my coworkers with the second book I was like, "Oh my god, I finished this last night. You guys have to read it. It's so good!" I love this book. I love everything about it. It was written for me specifically...

Sorren  
It was.

Morgan  
It has every single one of my favourite tropes.

Sorren  
It also has the thing that you were talking about on some recent episodes, which I was feeling very smug about while editing them, which is that it's second world fantasy, but it has cars and phones and technology.

Morgan  
Mm. I do like that. It might end up being in my top ten.

Sorren  
Oh.

Morgan  
Quite possibly, which...

Sorren  
Is a very high honour.

Morgan  
For listeners, I'm gonna give you a sneak peek: the top ten is going to be a lot harder to decide this year.

Sorren  
What's your current count? ...For listeners, we're recording this in early November. So Morgan has two more months to go feral.

Morgan  
321.

Sorren  
How many days have there been in this year so far?

Morgan  
No that many!

Sorren  
312. So you've read 10 more books than there are days in the year.

Morgan  
(Laughing) How am I supposed to pick my top 10?! ...Sorren. How did it feel rereading this book? What are your final thoughts?

Sorren  
This was so much fun, if anything I liked it more on a reread. Uh, maybe I was just so exhausted on the initial read that I was like, "Yeah, this is- I feel like this is really good and that Morgan would really like it," and then I read it when I was awake and I was like "Oh, this is actually like, really good. Yeah." I love it. I love the art style. I love the writing. I love the dialogue. I love the plot. I love the tropes involved. I love Dorian and Dani, and I love their twin vibes and I love the fact that they make me feel like I'm watching Gravity Falls again for the first time or watching The Owl House for the first time. or watching a Ghibli movie. I think this is a five star for me, but I'm really excited to see what happens next. And I love them.

Morgan  
I should- I should say this is a five star for me as well. There's something about sibling dynamics in like, quirky fantasy kids media that just hits so different.

Sorren  
You've got actual siblings so I feel like you're better placed to explain it than me.

Morgan

Yeah, me and my siblings would not go on quirky fantasy adventures together, we would kill each other within five minutes.

Sorren

Morgan for people who loved Hooky Volume One, what would you recommend that they read next?

Morgan

I mean, we've discussed A Deadly Education by Naomi Novik. And I'm definitely gonna recommend that because I think the magic vibes makes them less sense. The sort of like, weird balance between like, funny and horrifying is well struck, I think, as well. 'Cause it does read like a YA novel, and then the narrator is out here being like, "Yeah, I'm incredibly autistic-coded, anyway..." But then also, you've got the absolutely horrifying bits of like, "Yeah, it's regular for like a quarter of the class to survive to graduation. Yeah, I tried to clean my room, and I came up with a few murder spells by accident." It's beautiful. I really, really love it. So I would recommend that. I feel like Gravity Falls.

Sorren

Yeah, I was gonna say if you were'nt. If you want more twins, and they have a similar-ish dynamic, in that it's like the slightly uptight, bookish boy and the more gregarious girl, but um, Dani's not as unhinged as Mabel is sadly.

In Unison  
(Laughing)

Morgan

I feel like these two have slightly too much repression to be like the Pines twins...

Sorren

Mm, yeah that's what it is.

Morgan  
Whereas those two grew up in the USA, therefore...

Sorren  
(Laughs)

Morgan  
They get a little extra unhingedness for spice.

Sorren  
Exactly.

Morgan  
Also, if you like frogs: Amphibia.

Sorren  
Yeah, I feel like that has that really similar vibe of this like, colourful, whimsical world, that seems so fun and cute. And then it's like, "Have some grief." And you're like, "Oh, my God!"

Morgan  
(Laughing)

Sorren  
Like, "Have some really serious themes explored in a really emotional way."

Morgan  
Yeah, "Have the destruction of places and like, all these like, legacies of colonialism. Have fun." And you're like, "Thank you. Okay. I'm devastated."

Sorren  
Similarly, if you want more queer witches I have to say The Owl House. I know we briefly mentioned it.

Morgan  
Mm.

Sorren  
But it's right there.

Morgan  
We're going for cartoons today.

Sorren  
Yeah, I mean, I felt like it's just the vibe of Hooky, like, it feels like it should be a cartoon, and therefore, we're recommending a bunch of cartoons.

Morgan  
If you like the colour, and like the background vibes, and the overarching narrative plot, finding home, which we've previously done an episode on, and it's also available on Webtoon. And it's finished now, unlike when we first did it.

Sorren  
(Laughs) I'm also going to recommend Cardcaptor Sakura by CLAMP- with the caveat that it is dated, and that it involves some weird age gap relationships, because CLAMP were very much like, "Love is love, including a teacher with a student!" And that's gross. So we don't like that. But what we do like is that they have queer representation. So just go in, with your eyes open, knowing that's going to happen. But I feel like this does take quite a lot of influence from like, the Magical Girl genre and from like, shoujo manga in general, but obviously also from like shounen, because it's a blend, it's a nice blend- Cardcaptor Sakura is very much like, a trope definer, and it's very fun. And it's got lots of cute outfits, if you enjoyed that aspect of Hooky, and it's just got coming-of-age vibes and kids dealing with the fact that they're magic. And specifically if you liked the whole rivals-to-crushes vibe of Dorian and Monica, that's basically the dynamic between Saka and Syaoran Li and also, if you like the whole crush on someone older who is definitely just gay for his best friend trope because you think it's funny...

(Laughing) That also happens in Cardcaptor Sakura, so... That's there too. And then also for Webtoons, if you want more whimsical



fantasy vibes that are kind of slice of life, and then a little bit of plot kicks in, and if you want it to be extremely homosexual: High Class Homos by Momozerii. It's really fun. It's about a princess and a prince who- They're in a lavender engagement, they're not married yet, but they are both queer. The prince has a whole thing with his knight and he's having a great time, and the princess is having a lot more of a messy sapphic time, she's got exes, and she's got crushes, and it's a whole situation, but they're best friends. Lots of like, silly little comedy of errors type shenanigans. And it's also like a really cute sort of colourful pastel vibe. But it's good fun. And also the princess is an amputee.

Morgan  
That's very cool.

Sorren  
Which I think is quite cool. She uses a prosthetic and it's just like, a fun bit of disability rep. I find it hilarious that it's called High Class Homos because it makes it almost impossible to recommend to anybody because you have to say the phrase High Class Homos...

Sorren & Morgan  
(Laughing)

Sorren  
But it's actually really good.

Morgan  
Mm-hm.

Sorren  
And it is not finished-finished. But there is a whole season of it out. So there's like over 100 episodes. You can get stuck in. Our next episode will be our 2023 wrap up- This is horrifying...

Morgan  
Yep.

Sorren

...Our 2023 reading wrap up where we will talk about the books that we read this year. The staggering number of them in Morgan's case.

Morgan  
(Laughs)

Sorren

What we want to read in 2024, what like, our anticipated releases are, what we hope to read, if we want to read around in some new genres or read more of a certain demographic of author, that kind of thing.

Morgan

Sorren what if I finish a book at a New Year's Eve party? What if I'm that boring person who will read a book at a New Year's party, and then I have to be like, "I lied on The Hidden Bookcase."

Sorren

You won't have lied because it-

Morgan  
It's for posterity!

Sorren

You'll- (Laughs) We'll see where we're at closer to the time. It could be that you will have just finished a bunch of things and you'll be starting a long book and you'll be like, "Well there's no way I'll finish this by the end of the year."

Morgan

Maybe I'll deliberately do that.

Sorren

If you want. (Laughing) I'm not that concerned.

Morgan

Slow myself down. As soon as I get to 365, I'll find every book over 500 pages and start them all at once.

Sorren

Our reading wrap up for 2023 will be out on January the 15th.

Morgan

Three days before my birthday.

Sorren

(Laughing) Three days before Morgan's birthday.

Morgan

Until then, you're always welcome through the bookcase.

Sorren

Don't forget to scritch 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 Morgan Greensmith and Sorren Briarwood discussing Hooky by Miriam Banastre Tur. You can find out more about this book on Tur's author page on [harpercollins.com](https://www.harpercollins.com) and you can follow Tur on Instagram @miriambonastre. 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](https://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](mailto:thehiddenbookcase@gmail.com) send us a DM on social media, or come chat with your fellow bookworms in our growing Discord server. The link is in the shownotes. Want to support The Hidden Bookcase? You can support us on Patreon for bonus episodes every month: outtakes, playlists, and other extras, buy a book through our [bookshop.org](https://bookshop.org) page linked in the shownotes, or consider leaving

us a rating or a review, or telling a friend to find us. Your whispers are the best way for bookworms to discover our show. Our next episode will be our 2023 Reading Wrap Up and will be out on the 15th of January. Thanks so much for being along with us for our first full year of reading at The Hidden Bookcase. We've had so much fun reading with all of you bookwyrms, new and old, and we wish you nothing short of a truly magical 2024.