

“Octavia’s Parables, Mind of My Mind - Chapter 11 [September 5, 2022]

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{introduction music playing}

adrienne: (00:50) Hello, hello, hello and welcome back. Welcome back. This is Octavia's Parables, our podcast, where we are reading Octavia E Butler's classic text one chapter at a time. We are currently in the Patternist Series in Book Two, Mind of My Mind, and we're on Chapter Eleven of Part Three, which means we are in the next to last episode of our show.

Toshi: Amazing.

adrienne: I can't believe how quickly this is going.

Toshi: Wow.

adrienne: And {laughs} yeah. Before we hop into content, any updates or announcements from you, Toshi Reagon,

Toshi: Uh, big announcements, yo.

adrienne: Mmmmm.

Toshi: Everybody just occupy kindness as much as you can. {laughter}

Toshi: It's, it's this world. It's like, you know, it's...

adrienne: Talk about it.

Toshi: Yeah. Just occupy kindness. Like make sure you are getting some nutrients into your systems.

adrienne: Mmm.

Toshi: Um, make sure you you're caring for yourself.

adrienne: Mmmmm.

Toshi: Um, gathering, doing those simple things, sharing a meal or going for a walk. It doesn't have to be a whole weekend retreat, {adrienne laughs} but like just some, you know, continuous nutrients into your systems. Support frontline activists. Like if you're like, oh, I got cash, but I'm not getting up and going anywhere, you know? Send some of that currency. And then of course send all of the other currencies that you, you know, have available. You know, I'm a true believer that artists can make transformation in these kinds of times that feel like the only thing that can be transformative is money or the government.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: Or the things like that. Weapons. I think the artists can do it. I think communities can do it. I think frontline activists can do it. And so occupy as many of those spaces as you can, and find a little bit of time every day to say something sweet to yourself. That's my big announcement. Like {laughs}, it can be the simplest thing, but like, you know, know just, just say something sweet to yourself and um...

adrienne: Mmm!

Toshi: Yeah, that's what I got.

adrienne: I love you, Toshi.

Toshi: Mm-hmm.

adrienne: That was so sweet and unexpected. {laughs} I keep having these, these really sweet moments where I'm just like, oh, be a friend. Be kind. Like be a nice person. Like we're in that stage of {laughs} of the transitions in, in world systems right now. I have a happy announcement, which is that I just today got really excellent news about the Octavia E Butler Tarot deck. And I'm kind of over the moon swooning about it. Um, looks like, you know, it's just, it's a lot of moving parts. It's like twenty something people all trying to get lined up to pull this thing off today. It all lined up. So I am happy, really happy today. And really excited to be here with you, Toshi and in the, the wisdom. So this is a very exciting part of the book we're here. Let us land in it. Tell us what we're we're up to what's happening.

Toshi: Oh my goodness. This is like, this is like a great time. And I just really feel for this time, because I've had this feeling that I feel that Mary has right now so much.

adrienne: Yep.

Toshi: t is like peak adrenaline. It's like...

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: ...when you, you know, when someone is trying to keep you from your, your purpose and your thing and they think they can do it. And you're a little bit swayed by their intention and you have, you know, you have all this medicine and know how, and you're cultivate, you're in the biggest state of cultivating that you could be in. And then somebody's just trying to hold you back. And it's, it is like... This has happened to me so many times. Of course, I know y'all can resonate with this. So Mary, Doro has just told Mary, like, no!

adrienne: Yah.

Toshi: Like stop doing your Pattern and Patterns. Like stop the Patterns, stop going out and saving latents, like stop everything. And also it's like, you know, not a temporary like, okay, stop today and maybe next week, but like twenty years, twenty years.

adrienne: Mm!

Toshi: And this is basically kind of a death sentence to Mary, because simultaneously, Mary is understanding for the kind of being that she is, she actually survives with the, with the Pattern. So she act, and it can't be like a stagnant Pattern. It can't be like, oh, I have twenty people. And that's enough, if you all remember, it was, I think seven people at the beginning now it's fifteen hundred people. So she, and then she has to keep it going. And then that sustains her. And then she sustains and feeds the Pattern. It's a, you know, that's, it's a beautiful thing. So she is mad. She is mad, mad, mad at Doro. She finds everything he said unreasonable, and she's trying to figure it out. She gets home and Karl is trying to settle a dispute between some, some, two Patternists. Everything is happening of course, in the Pattern. And so she's easy for her to just be like, I'm not gonna worry about that, but she has to tell all her searchers like to stop. And these are the people that she sends out to go and find the latents. And you know, the latents that she wants, the latents that are in the worst shape, the latent that are in horrific situations.

adrienne: That's right.

Toshi: And so everybody's out there looking for these latent and then she's like, everybody stopped. And of course, huge protests, huge protests.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: No, we don't wanna stop. Like we, on our way. We're working this out and she can't even navigate that with them. She's like, do it, cuz I said, so, and keep it moving. So this is starting,

this is like starting the wave of like, there are big problems. And Karl, Karl wants to like understand, uh, further what is happening and is like, I'll, I'll support you. I'll listen to you if you wanna talk. And she just opens up to him so that she, he can just, just read everything.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: This is beautiful. Her and Karl have really become a team.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: And that whole wall of like worry is gone. So, and thank goodness, it couldn't have happened at a better time.

adrienne: Yup.

Toshi: So you know, it, it, Karl is focused on this idea of competition and Doro, um, in competition with her. And um, at first, you know, she's like, no, he can't be in competition. Like we're not doing the same thing, but this is the whole discovery to what kind of being Mary actually is.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: And like what her potential actually is. And...

Toshi: Yes.

Toshi: ...that, you know how much she tries to convince him.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: Like we're not in competition. I, I'll take these raggedy latents, like, but it starts to come to the surface. Especially with the body that Doro had, which was like one of her stepbrothers bodies that maybe these are the bodies that Doro likes the most as well.

adrienne: (08:01) Yeah.

Toshi: Um, when he does his kills. And so they're more in competition than anybody wants to like admit to. Also there is this part. I, I just wanna read this because Anyanwu/Emma. It just is not a good look for her right now. So here we go. "I'll get back to you in a minute." That's what she's saying. She says you reached, "I reached out to the old neighborhood to Emma. I could

reach her fast now, because she belonged to me. I had a kind of link with her that would let me know the minute some other Patternist touched her, and at the same time, let the Patternist know she was mine. I had that kind of connection with Rina too, since she was too old for me to risk her life by trying to push her into transition." So she owns Emma.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: Like just dig this arc for the Anyanwu/Emma character person. You know, I, I feel very bad for her {laughs} when I read that. I was like, no, this isn't, this isn't cool. So I'm reading again. "I read Emma, saw that Doro had been to see her just a few hours before. And he talked a lot. Now since he knew Emma was mine, I knew that anything he said to her, I would eventually pick up, I assumed that he had been talking at least partly to me. Perhaps more to me than about me. I looked at Karl. 'This morning, Doro told Emma, he was afraid I'd disobey him and this and make him kill me.' " So Karl's like, "Obviously he's wrong." And this is such an I, I just wonder if you have questions about this idea of fear based and tension that somebody's gonna do something to you. And so therefore you can't get beyond it. And therefore you just go to murdering right away.

adrienne: Hmmm.

Toshi: I mean, is that maybe happening somewhere in a country called America right now? {laughter} I... Hallelujah. I don't know.

Adrienne: Yup.

Toshi: Um, so she is just swirling with all of this stuff. So Karl and her are just like going back and forth about this. And then here is the thing. Karl is like, don't you think fifteen hundred people might be enough to sustain you? And you know, she really is like, yeah, I, I would love to say yes to this, but that that's not how it works. It's that is not enough. And that she is more like a Doro than she'd like to be.

adrienne: Yeah.

adrienne: So in the same way, good people that Doro has to continuously change his body. And that when he waits a little bit too long between changing his bodies, he starts to fall apart.

adrienne: Yup.

Toshi: You know, and if he's li, like, here's a good explanation. If he's really in trouble, he's liable to lose control and just take whoever's close, closest to him. So, and this is how do's whole path

began when he was a child. He lost control. And he just started taking his mom. Then he took his dad and then he took everybody...

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: ...in the whole place. And then, you know, took him probably years before he figured out, oh, wait a minute. I can just stay in this body and be calm for a minute and make plans. So she can feel the adrenaline when she adds new people.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: That she can, she, she says this eagerness, she can feel this eagerness. And she actually hasn't experienced what it would be like not to add to the Pattern cuz she's just been continuously adding people.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: So it's getting to a very dire situation. She's like, "I'll try anything within reason. But I don't think anything less than my complete obedience will satisfy him." She has to do whatever Doro says. He needs to be 100% in control. So they're trying to figure out why Doro is so scared. They're like, it might be because you can use these people against him. You can't hurt him by yourself, but she, if she had the whole Pattern, maybe should, maybe she could. So she's like, you know, I'm not trying to risk like all of these things just to like, you know, settle this situation. But they start to come to the conclusion that there might need to be a fight. And she's like, you know, it's never been tried before, but, "I know you couldn't do it. Not even all fifteen hundred of you together, because, as far as he's concerned, you wouldn't really be together." He'd just take everybody one at a time. So it's just this idea that Doro could just sweep through the Pattern and actually attack the bodies of the people and like save himself, you know?

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: So he's like, "Strength alone isn't enough to defeat me." This is Doro. And part of the reason he he gave is that, you know, she can't change bodies. So if he can like get to Mary's body first, then it's a wrap. There won't be anybody to take the Pattern potentially until Mary's son. Which, you know? They don't say that but that's the first person I think he would go kill. So... {laughs}

adrienne: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Toshi: Um, but Karl is like big interrupt and saying, he's never faced anyone like you, he doesn't know what's up. You know? A killing is a way of life for him, but he hasn't killed anyone like Mary who's so close to him.

adrienne: Mm.

Toshi: You know, she's like, I'm not gonna give him my life or the lives of the Patternist. If I have to fight him, it will be a battle, not a route. And he's like, you'll take strength from us. And then she's like, some of you, all the strongest of us, and he's like beginning with me and she nodded. But she knows she will have to use, you know, more than herself to kill, kill Doro. So here we go, y'all. "Doro stayed at Larkin House that night. We still kept his room ready for him though he didn't use it much anymore. He didn't intend to use it that night. Instead he came across the hall to my room. I was sitting in the middle of my bed, in the dark thinking. And he walked in without knocking. He and I hadn't made love..." Ugh! {laughs} ..."hadn't made love..."

adrienne: Blech! I know. I'm like, ew, no! {laughter} Don't have sex with your dad/boss/oppressor.

Toshi: Yes.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: "He and I hadn't made love for over a year, but he walked in as though there had been no break at all. Knowing him, I wasn't surprised. He sat on the side of my bed, took off his shoes and lay down beside me, fully clothed. I was stark naked myself." You know, this is just all so problematic. It's the death. It's the competition. It's the, it's the Doro. It's just so creepy.

adrienne: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Toshi: He said, um, " 'I checked in on a few of your searchers,' he said, 'I see they're starting for home.' " She didn't say anything. So basically this is another kind of navigation between Mary um, Mary and Doro. She's just really trying to make him feel like I, I don't know the best way to think about it is safe enough to pull off of his like twenty year plan. So she's just telling him, like, you don't actually know what this is.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: Like, you've stayed away from us too long. You're not involved. If you could be involved, if you could see this, if you could, could see how wonderful everything is. If you could see how we're growing things. And Doro just says, no. Um, he's like, it's not gonna work. But she still

tries. "If you get to know us as we are now. Doro, you might find that we really are the people, the race, that you've been working for for so long to build. We already belong to you, and you can be one of us. We haven't shut you out." This feels really beautiful to me. Like as an opportunity for a murderer and a rapist to join a family, basically. {laughs} And...

adrienne: Yes, yes.

Toshi: He's like, no, he's like, "It doesn't matter. Because it's not going to change anything. The order I gave you is final. I'm not going to be talked out of it. Not by getting to know your people better. Not by renewing my relationship with you." And she's like, well, what are you doing here? "Oh, I intend to renew our relationship. I just don't intend to let you charge me for it."

adrienne: (16:13) Mmm.

Toshi: These are his words. Mm!

adrienne: Mm.

Toshi: Mmmm. Mmmm. Mmm. Literally I wrote nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty, like five hundred times on this page.

adrienne: {laughs} Um, yep.

Toshi: So she kicked him outta bed. Get the f- outta here. So she kicked him out. She said they were positioned perfectly for, and she just let it, she let him have it. On the side with both feet. Yay!!

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: And, um, and he's upset. What he, what the hell was I supposed to prove? Anyway, he ignored that and sat down on a bed. And he was like, that was stupid. And that was dangerous. And she was like, "No, it wasn't. You have some control. You can control your mouth too when you want to." {laughs} I. Love. Mary!

adrienne: I love Mary.

Toshi: I love Mary. Except the for sleeping with her dad part, I love Mary. So he said, well, at least you're back to normal. And then she's just, she's kind of over it. She's, "Pleading for my people isn't normal. Acting like a latent is normal. Stay with us, Doro. Get to know us..." She's still going on and on. She's offering him such a, a beautiful place.

adrienne: Mm.

Toshi: Y'all know from Anyanwu's journeys with Doro that he is not very good at accepting beautiful places. It's just...

adrienne: Nope.

Toshi: ...not his, not his thing. She kind of says, "If you destroy us, you'll be destroying part of yourself."

adrienne: Mm!

Toshi: "All the time you spent creating us will be wasted. Your long life wasted. Join us." And this was just very triggering for Doro. It was like, you know, I don't know if y'all had this experience when somebody is telling you something, but they're telling you they're better than you at the same time. Even if they don't realize it, like...

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: ...their, their vision is so much wider than yours. Or they, they have an extra idea you didn't think about. And they're kind of like, we could just do this and you just wanna smack 'em because you're like..

adrienne: Yup. Yeah.

adrienne: ...insecure about yourself. And don't realize like, didn't realize their fabulous vision. You get mad and you fire them. Like...

adrienne: That's right.

Toshi: ...this is where Doro is. {laughs} Doro is basically like, you know, he is burnt. Like she is too visionary. She sees too big a picture. She has too many answers. His no is not working. And her coming back with this kind of continuous, join us, get to know us, get the, is her basically saying, fuck you. I'm not gonna do what you say. That's what he hears. Fuck you. I'm not gonna do what you say. He basically gets out and leaves the room. Because he's, he's done. He can't really deal with it. So, uh, "In only ten days Karl knew without a doubt that Mary's suspicions have been justified." Mary's falling apart. Like she actually needs...

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: I mean, ten days is a very short time. I don't know if they knew how many days it would take for her. But basically she needs to continuously add to the pattern.

adrienne: Adding.

Toshi: Yeah. It's not like, oh, a year could pass. It's like, not even a month could pass. Not even two weeks. It just needs to be a continuous situation. So Karl was getting very, very, very worried about her. He really is like, yo, we have to do something about this. He's like to Doro, like we can't let her just be like this. And Doro's, like, I can't afford her unless she can obey me. And he just dismisses {pages turns} this whole idea of saving Mary.

adrienne: Mmmm.

Toshi: So he says no. And Mary is just laying down and trying to like keep herself together. And they come to the conclusion that, that she's gonna have to fight Doro. Karl's like, you're gonna have to fight and you're gonna, and you're going to win. "You are going to kill him. You're going to do whatever you have to do to kill him." And...

adrienne:Oooof.

Toshi: ...he's, he's pumping her up. You know? "The next day, Karl called the family together. Mary had gone to see August, and Karl wanted to talk to the others before she returned. She would find out what had been said. He planned to tell her himself, in fact. But he wanted to talk to them first without her. They already knew why Mary had called in her searchers. They didn't like it. Mary's enthusiasm where the Pattern's growth had infected all of them." So the whole community is aware of what's happening. They're aware of the dynamic that's happening between Mary. They all have our team married, you know? So Karl is like, she's gonna have to fight Doro. If she, she disobeys Doro everybody needs to get ready? That's the short of it. It's actually a really long paragraph. But basically...

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: ...he is like, y'all get ready cuz {laughs} if she has to fight him, it's gonna be on. So you get to hear from some of these, like, you know, First Family of the, the Pattern. And so Karl is like, you know, basically saying, if you, if you don't wanna be a part of this, like get out now, like go away.

adrienne: Mm-hm.

Toshi: And so Seth is like I'm down. Ada is like, how can I leave the school? And all these children that we have. And Rachel's like, "I think Doro made a mistake... I think he's waited too long to do this. I don't see how any one person could resist so many of us." You know, they're all ready to get in there together. They see their strength. They see their togetherness. Think about how this First Family came together, people!

adrienne: Mmm-hm.

Toshi: They was trying to get out of there. Running for their lives. And now they're like, no. {singing} We are family! {laughter} I got all my Pattern with me.

adrienne: Pattern with me. That's cute!

Toshi: Yeah. Yeah.

adrienne: Oh, you're cute! {laughter} I love that.

Toshi: I know. {laughs} So, so, um, yeah. Jan is even like, "I think Doro has made more than one mistake... I think he's wrong to believe that Mary still belongs to him. With the responsibility she's taken on for all of us that she's built here, she belongs to us, the people. To all of us." So basically Mary has got herself. Mary has got her man. Mary has got the Pattern. The Pattern believes in Mary. And here we are. Here we are at the end of Chapter Eleven.

adrienne: Mmm.

Toshi: Ready. Ready for what comes next, y'all.

adrienne: I know. I love that. "God knows what he'd do if he realized his cattle had finally gotten the nerves to plot against him."

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: It's so good. It's so good.

Toshi: It's so good.

adrienne: And I love, like, I just have to say before I get into the questions. I love the multiple levels of this. That Mary, that some part of her was still trying to be obedient. That literally, if she could obey him and live, she would.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Right? Like she's angry at him, but she's also like I'm calling them back, you know? Like I, I wanna protect them if I can protect them and honor what you're saying.

Toshi: Yup.

adrienne: You know, this is that fundamental parental piece. Right?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Where it's just sort of like, when you're like the generations that came before us are wrong on some things, but oh my God sometimes, sometimes we fight to the death...

Toshi: Mm-hmm.

adrienne: ...to try and obey that before we have to finally say like, we have to choose life. It just makes me think of queerness and transness and freedom and being a freedom fighter and all of it.

Toshi: That's right.

adrienne: So, okay. So questions I have for our, our listeners here, the first one is, have you ever had to come up against someone who is afraid of your power? Right? I think many of us have this experience, maybe even most of us. And I think it starts very young for most of us. [laughs]

Toshi: (23:58) Uh-huh.

adrienne: You know? Like, I feel like the first time I was in a classroom, I, I could feel a teacher was really scared of like my, uh, confidence. {laughs} You know? My confidence. That I was like, I deserve to speak. {laughter} Um, but, but in a real way, right. Like I definitely have had this experience multiple times in my life where I wasn't picking up on that...

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: ...at first and then realized like, oh, there's like the reason this, all isn't adding up is because I'm not seeing that the person's actually afraid of my power.

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: Which I'm not presuming I have. Right?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Have you ever experienced that, Toshi?

Toshi: Oh my God. Yeah. I mean all...

adrienne: Oh yeah.

Toshi: Like all the, all the time. I thank God for Bernice Johnson Reagon, you know?

adrienne: Mmm-hmmm.

Toshi: Bernice Johnson Reagon just told me, like, I don't know if she said it when I was in the womb, but she was just like, {adrienne laughs} you know, some people not gonna understand your flow and you just need to keep flowing anyway. And...

adrienne: Yeah, my parents said the same thing. I think Jane and Jerry Brown were just sort of like, it's not up to them. They don't have to live your life.

Toshi: Yep.

adrienne: You have, you have to fully occupy what you've gotta give here.

Toshi: Yeah.

adrienne: And yeah...

Toshi: I mean, I've had, I've had educators in particular, but in most parts of my life, I, I had people try to put me in a box. And it like, like literally one educator, you know? Was basically brought me into the office and was like, you can't, you are not allowed to be in these particular spaces...

adrienne: Mmmmmmm.

Toshi: ...on a campus. You're not allowed to, you're not allowed to have more, more than two people around you at a time. Cuz you know, I was out like with like...

adrienne: Oh yeah, building your Pattern. {laughs}.

Toshi: Yeah. I was building a Pattern with my acoustic guitar and Neil Young songs.

adrienne: Mmm.

Toshi: So {laughs} and they were like, no, you, you, you can't do this. You can't do that. And I was like, wait, are you trying to enact Jim Crow laws on me? And I said that in the meeting.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: And they were like, what? And I was like, I hear Jim Crow laws. I hear you making Jim Crow laws.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: I was like, I'm gonna sue you. And I'm gonna go home and tell my mother. {adrienne laughs} And then we're gonna, we're gonna show up tomorrow with lawyers. I didn't know if that would happen or not, but I was like, we're gonna come tomorrow {laughs} with lawyers. And I did, I went home and told my mom and my mom like laughed hysterically for like twenty minutes. And I don't know what she did...

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: Cuz I'm sure she did something. But the next day it was like, it was gone. {laughs}.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: It's like gone.

adrienne: They're like, we're sorry {laughs}.

Toshi: It was gone. She was like...

adrienne: We examined our Jim Crow tendencies and we got ourselves together. {laughs}

Toshi: She was like, don't worry about this, she's... And then she told me, she said, they're scared of you. And it never occurred to me.

adrienne: Yeah.

Toshi: Like the, that people could be scared of me when I was that young and they were like much older than me. But she's like, oh no. She's like, they're scared of you right now. Like...

adrienne: Self-possession...

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: ...can be really terrifying for some so. And I love that too. {laughs} I absolutely love that because I think the parents, you know, there's times when they have to go in and fight the fight and there's times when they're the ones who are like you don't I need to help you understand a little bit about yourself here.

Toshi: Yes.

adrienne: Anyone who would walk in and be like in a meeting, like, oh, we're suing you and not understand that they might be scared of you. {laughter} Fantastic. {laughter} I love that baby Toshi. Um, yeah. So this is a good one. I want folks to just think about, I think this is also always our circumstance. You know, those of us who are small and mighty and trying to organize against really big powers, that there's a million places where we are surrendering those powers before we ever come up in the big fight. So just really pay attention to, you know, even how are you teaching your children to be obedient?

Toshi: Mm.

adrienne: Are you teaching them to be in their power?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: You know? Are you interacting with your friends in ways that help them like tow the line? Or are you interacting with your friends in ways that support them to fully embody their power?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: With your lovers, with your family, right? Like how do we keep inviting each other's power forward?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: So the next question I have is have you ever had someone stop you from saving others?

Toshi: Mm.

adrienne: Right, because what's happening to Mary, you know, she has a need, but then she's also really cultivated this paternal/maternal Pattern-ternal energy for her people and for all the people who are out there suffering where she's like, I know exactly what can relieve that suffering. I know how to give them peace, how to help them find a role that is satisfying in this world.

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: That's a really important thing. And you know, is there codependency in the pattern dependency in the pattern? Absolutely. This is a complex thing and undeniably she can help these people. Like there's something about, you know, the sensate-ness of it all. That's like they are benefiting from the pattern and she's more moved into action to protect them than she is to protect herself.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Always.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: So have you had that feeling where you're like, I'm, I'm actually trying to help this person or help someone and this system or this person is getting in the way of that?

Toshi: (29:05) Right.

adrienne: Yeah?

Toshi: Yeah. Yeah.

adrienne: And then, we've talked about this before, I talk about this a lot. I think about this a lot. But how big does your pattern need to be for you to feel sustained?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Yeah. Right? So seven wasn't enough for her. Fifteen hundred wasn't enough for her.

Toshi: Yeah.

adrienne: She needs more. Right? And I always think about this for like the super mega pop star, you know. Beyonce just got crowned the number one pop star of the century. And...

Toshi: I'm like really early in the century. {laughs}

adrienne: It's very early in the century and yet {laughter}, you know, it doesn't even feel gauche, right?

Toshi: Yeah.

adrienne: It's just like, well? You know? But I think about I'm like, oh, how many people have to be in that Pattern? Have to be in that hive. How, how many people have to be in it?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: And you know, for someone like me, I'm like, oh, my Pattern is, is again like twenty people are in that intimate part of my Pattern where I'm like, I'm opening. What she does with Karl. You know? I'm like I open to them. I let them see what's happening behind the mask, behind the projection, behind anything else.

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: And like, here's what it's actually like. And how many people do you need at that level? Right? To make you feel sustained? What happens when you don't get that? Right? When you don't have those numbers met.

Toshi: Mm.

adrienne: So just noticing all that for you. Who do you fully trust to hold you in your big emotions? Who can you fully open up to?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: And again, when I ask these questions, you can sit, you can reflect on it. You can see who comes to mind. You can draw an image of your Pattern. Which I, I deeply recommend at some point before this book is done. Draw your Pattern. Right?

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: Maybe it's concentric circles? Who is in your pattern? How are they connected to you? To each other? And is the Pattern big enough for you?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Or is it too big? Right? Are you able to sustain this?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Yeah. And then you, so I love that you asked this question! Because I was like the Doro question. This is the way I put it. Where do you see Doro's style of predictive and projected fear based violence...

Toshi: (31:12) Mm!

adrienne: ...in our current political landscape? {laughter}

Toshi: Deep. Deep. Deep.

adrienne: So it's that. Right? That I'm like, you know, this has always been the case of like, you know, it's like Black people were not being some terrifying thing. Right? White supremacy was formed of like, oh, Black people, you know, we are gonna imagine this horrific scary thing. And then we're gonna create this Pattern of cross-racial slavery to navigate that projected fear and predictive. Like we're predicting your behavior and then we're gonna be violent in reaction to it. Even though there's no ground for it. Now we live in this circumstance where we have all particularly this huge body of white men who are just doing this all over the place.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Thank God they don't have the level of power that Doro has, but they're not powerless either.

Toshi: That's right.

adrienne: And they're trying to form a Pattern of this fear based violence. And we have to form our own Pattern of life against that. Right?

Toshi: Hmm.

adrienne: So just really notice like...

Toshi: Hmm.

adrienne: ...what are the politics of that fear based violence in our current political landscape right now? Where do you see that?

Toshi: Well, you...

adrienne: Um, yeah.

Toshi: You know I want to do a side... I don't know what it is, a side podcast or a side...

adrienne: Mm-hm.

Toshi: Something with you on this. Cuz I really, I really want us to see the connection to our current...

adrienne: Mm-hm.

Toshi: ...you know, our current world and the occupation of laws. Rules.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: Then mixed with this, that whole network of fear based...

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: ..execution and violence.

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: And then...

adrienne: Yes.

Toshi: ...where we see ourselves in it. And what our possibilities are.

adrienne: Yup.

Toshi: Like, like how confused, you know, so many people are about it, you know?

adrienne: Well, I mean, there's so many aspects of it that really scream from this text. Like the fact that the rules are always changing.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Right? It's like, oh, the rules are always changing. What's logical is changing. Such that, as we are taping this, you have people who are hyper conservative, hyper right, right wing saying defund the FBI. {laughter}

Toshi: {inaudible} {laughs}

adrienne: I'm sorry. I can't even get it out without laughing. {laughs} Cuz I'm just like someone has got y'all so fucked up right now.

Toshi: Yeah.

adrienne: That you don't make sense. Like there's week to week y'all's logic doesn't add up, but you can't see it. So I'm like, that's when you know, you're in someone else's control pattern. Like you really, your mind is being messed with. Like, these are the folks who are like, you know, you're being treated like mutes in a system.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: And there's something really, you need to really pay attention.

Toshi: Yeah.

adrienne: Like, you know, I'm like, if, if you're like struggling to make sense of your own thought patterns, {laughs} you might be in someone else's pattern.

Toshi: Mmmm!

adrienne: (33:58) Right?

Toshi: Mmm. Mmm. Mm.

adrienne: And then the other, the other thing that feels really big to me is the focus desire of reproductive rights.

Toshi: Mm-hmm.

adrienne: That it's like, oh, who is, who is handling this? Who is controlling this? Treating it like a breeding system.

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: And I'm like, oh {laughs} as a non breeder, you cannot treat me this way!

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: But that urge is in that same Doro piece, which is like, if we don't control the population, we're gonna lose control of the society. And when, once that clicks, that narrative clicks into place...

Toshi: Yes.

adrienne: ...rather than, you know what we're all saying is there's nothing wrong with living in a much more diverse society. It's actually like, what y'all have done is a mess and it doesn't work and that's why everyone's miserable. And there's another way.

Toshi: Yup.

adrienne: There's other options.

Toshi: Yep. Yup.

adrienne: You know, that's the most terrifying idea is that they could be irrelevant and not at the top of, of this projected food chain. So yeah. We can side podcast. And I'm excited to see how our readers take this on...

Toshi: Mmm-hm.

adrienne: ...because this is, this is the heart of it all.

Toshi: Absolutely.

adrienne: So, and, and like inside of it really ask yourself, what is Doro really scared of? Like keep asking that question and then looking up at our political landscape. What are they scared of? What are white men most afraid of? What are white women most afraid of?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: Right? What are these alpha males like most afraid of?

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: The, the toxic masculinity practitioners, what are they actually really scared about? Right? Those who, who are really trying to control other people's lives and other people's bodies. What's up with that? Right? When you're transphobic, what are you actually scared of?

Toshi: Mm. Mm. Mmm.

adrienne: Right? Because it's so much fear that like has nothing the fuck to do with you, but what are you actually scared of?

Toshi: Yeah.

adrienne: Because there is something about you in it. Right? So what is, what are you actually scared of? So get into it! Get into it!

Toshi: Mm.

adrienne: Alright. So then the other two though, I have two last questions. One is one that I always have at this point about Mary and the Pattern. Right? Because it's like the fact that Mary is so deeply impacted by not being able to grow the Pattern that it's like, she needs to be expanding. I'm like, is the Pattern in Mary or is Mary in the Pattern? Right? Like what is the relationship between this woman and this Pattern? And like, when it first pops off, it's like, oh, there's this pattern. And Mary is like a powerful player in it, but then it's like, she's beyond a player.

Toshi: Right.

adrienne: Like there's a way that every aspect of this pattern roots into her, there's nothing in the pattern. That's not touching her and flowing in and through her. And so just think for yourself, you know, come to some conclusions around how you see this working because it matters. Right? Is if we're not replaceable, then our Pattern is not really a liberated space.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: And I think Octavia's giving us the trouble here. She's like, I really want you to wrestle with what is the, what is the relationship of the, the people in this Pattern? What is the relationship of Mary to the Pattern?

Toshi: (37:11) Mm.

adrienne: And then my final question is, do you have an accurate understanding of your power? An accurate assessment of your power? Both individually and in your individual life and relationships. And collectively where you fit into a larger collective body. Do you have a sense of powerlessness? Powerfulness? Something in between? Right?

Toshi: Mm.

adrienne: Are you using your power or are you being obedient without meaning to? {laughter} Right? Because you know, we have a tendency with this podcast towards the powerfulness.

Toshi: Mm-hm.

adrienne: And we hope that we're generating more and more of an assessment of powerfulness here, but something that you have to determine, dear listener. So that is Chapter Eleven.

Toshi: Yeah, yeah.

adrienne: Yeah. And we love y'all and the next episode is gonna be the final one. We're heading to Chapter Twelve and the Epilogue. So come on back. Uh, we are hosted by myself, adrienne maree brown and the beloved and sweet and delightful, Toshi Reagon. I don't think I even said that at the top.

Toshi: Yeah. But we got into it. It special.

adrienne: I mean, we just got... They knew. They know.

Toshi: They know.

adrienne: Ok. {laughs} I was like, {singing} If you don't know me by now. You will never never never know me!

Toshi: Right. {laughs} Y'all will never!

adrienne: {singing} Never, never, never know me. Okay.

Toshi: Uh, great song.

adrienne: Our producers... {laughs} That song!

Toshi: Great song.

adrienne: Now I've gotta go listen to that song. {laughter} I was like, wait, that song is one of the best songs of all time.

Toshi: Yes.

adrienne: Um, and I, I feel that song every day. {laughter} Our producer is Kat Aaron. Our show art is from Krista Franklin. We are transcribed by Jess Pinkham and Sarah Rubbins-Breen. You can find us on Twitter and Instagram @oparables. And @patreon.com/oparables if you wanna become a long term supporter of our continuous work. And transcripts for every single episode we've ever done live at readingoctavia.com

Toshi: Mm. Mm. And music for Octavia's Parables is You Don't Know the Time, written and performed by Toshi Reagon and The Sower Song, which, uh, is by the cast of Octavia E Butler's Parable of the Sower. Recorded at Memorial Hall, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

adrienne: Yay.

Toshi: Boom.

(39:44) Closing music begins to play