

Episode 31 - Murderbot Diaries - All Systems Red: Jahoob Talk

<INTRO MUSIC>

00:12

Hey guys!

Lori 00:13

Hi!

Haley 00:14

Howdy!

Lori 00:14

Hey, hey.

Amy 00:15

I'm Amy.

Lori 00:16

I'm Lori.

Haley 00:17

I'm Haley.

Amy 00:18

And this is Hugo Girl!, a hilarious podcast where we talk about science fiction and fantasy and adjacent works.

Haley 00:27

And The Terror.

Amy 00:28

Right! <laughs>

Lori 00:29

And Moby Dick. And food and flossing...

Amy 00:32

<Laughs> Adjacent topics, obviously, to science fiction, fantasy. Ummmm, any follower acknowledgement comments?

Lori 00:39

Yes, yes. We got a nice review!

Amy 00:43

Yaasss! (Singing) It makes her whole month!

Lori 00:45

Yes. On Apple Podcasts. And it's from Jessica, who I work with. She's a nice coworker, and she listens and she left us this very, very nice review. And it says, "Delightful, thought-provoking and

hilarious." [Amy: That's us!] Yep. "It feels like my fantasy version of book club where the selection is sci-fi every time, everyone actually reads the book and took notes! The attendees all have something witty or interesting to say and they manage to crack themselves up the whole way through." [Amy: Yes, we do.] I don't know, is that gauche that we laugh at our own jokes? I don't care. "The hosts' fresh feminist take on a wide variety of Hugo winners is insightful without getting pedantic. I also enjoy the curmudgeonly but good-humored asides on grammar and editing." Amy, shout out to Amy. <laughs>

Amy 01:28

I have some thoughts today!

Lori 01:29

"Even when they are breaking down the book with some well-deserved critique the hosts do it in a way that feels authentic, humble and without malice. I also heart the fantastic subtitles for each episode. Personal fave so far: Ship Protecc, Ship Attack. Keep up the great work! 14/10 would recommend." My favorite thing about this is this is our second review that says that our criticisms are done without malice. <laughter>

Amy 01:51

We're very well-meaning! [Lori: Yeah!] And humble, which, I think we're pretty great at being humble.

Lori 01:55

Me too, we're the best at it! I also wanted to follow up on our cookbook episode briefly. [Amy: Okay!] You know, I had all that chermoula and all that beetroot chutney, and the beetroot chutney, I wanted to add, was delicious over some pasta later on in the week. [Amy: It was so good.] It was really good with pasta! And I think, like, without even blending it into a chutney, just, like, the prep version of it - the roasted beets with all the goodies? That'd be a good side dish, too. And then last night, I used up about half of the leftover chermoula, because you may recall I only needed one teaspoon for the recipe so I had a lot! And I made shrimp with it and it was delicious. And we just had some klah from Dragonriders - not White Claw, "klah", k-l-a-h from the Dragonriders of Pern that is in the cookbook - and that was yummy too! <pause, laughter> That's Amy finishing her klah. Kevin might edit that out. <laughter> Um, yeah, that's all it's all my housekeeping.

Amy 02:52

I hate to say it, but my chicken - my chicken - <correcting self> My cheese pottage and my mushrooms. I did combine them at some point into just one big mushroom and cheese soup. And it was good one day and the next day was not good anymore. I don't know what happened there.

Haley 03:05

The vinegar the cream...

Amy 03:06

It only lasted for so long. <laughs>

Lori 03:08

That's true, vinegar plus cream.

Amy 03:10

Yeah, but that was a good time!

Lori 03:10

That was a good time! I had fun. Thanks for doing that with me guys.

Amy 03:13

Good time. Okay, so we read "All Systems Red", the first of the Murderbot Diaries series. For this, today's episode. It is a 2017 novella by Martha Wells. It won the 2017 Nebula Award and the 2018 Hugo Award for Best Novella. And, I don't know of anything in particular interesting about it winning. Anybody have any details?

Haley 03:40

I remember reading that all of the novellas were published at once and they were all nominated. And she declined a nomination for all but one.

Amy 03:47

Oh, interesting.

Lori 03:47

Oh, I didn't know that!

Amy 03:48

That explains something. Because when I was looking for Goodies By Goodreads, people were so mad that it got split up.

Lori 03:56

Oh, I didn't realize that it wasn't released, like sequentially.

Amy 03:59

That's good context.

Haley 04:00

It may have been released... Well, I'm not sure how it was released. But like, they all came out the same year, I think.

Amy 04:04

Okay, that makes a lot of sense, then.

Haley 04:06

That's what I remember from the top part of Wikipedia when I was reading about it.

Amy 04:08

But she did later, fairly recently, I think, come out with a novel, a Murderbot novel.

Lori 04:13

Yeah that's nominated for Best Novel this year.

Amy 04:15

Oh, it is okay!

Lori 04:15

Yeah, she's on the list. What's the name of it? I can't remember.

Haley 04:20

2 Murder 2 Bot. <all laugh>

Lori 04:23

Yes!

Amy 04:24

Murderbot 6: Electric Boogaloo. Okay, that makes a lot of sense, then. And I will say, now that I know that, that is a little strange. Why not just make them into one book?

Lori 04:33

Yeah, I didn't realize that, and people were saying it cost like \$36 to buy all of them. Yeah, it was the underlying a lot of the negative reviews. They weren't actually about the book.

Amy 04:41

That's what I noted, too. And I was like, are these people just really cheap? Did they not know they were buying a novella? But now it makes more sense.

Haley 04:45

Yeah. And well, because when I bought this in 2018, I bought just the one on Amazon for my Kindle, but, like, they're published through Tor, which is also a website. So I wonder if it's, like, maybe it was cheap to publish them separately? I don't know.

Amy 04:57

Maybe. Tor also, I mean, Tor also publishes... I think they originally did like The Wheel of Time and stuff like that, so.

Haley 05:02

Yeah, that's true. I just... I'm more familiar with it as a website I guess.

Amy 05:05

You know this is so funny, this coming up, because I thought they were a publisher. And then I looked it up recently and, in fact no, they mostly do the website. Tor? Tor what are you?

Lori 05:13

They are a publisher though. Because most of the nominees, there's, like, some discussion about how they seem to kind of have a... There publications seem to kind of have a stranglehold on Hugo nominations. [Amy: Huh!] [Haley: Interesting.] I have no opinion on that. I'm not educated on it. I've just seen a lot of discussion.

Amy 05:27

Or is it just that if you publish the most of a genre, you're going to inevitably have the most nominations? [Lori: Don't know man.] Like, I went to an all girls Catholic school and we had more pregnancies, but we also had more women. So. <laughter>

Lori 05:28

The book that is nominated this year for Best Novel is called "Network Effect."

Amy 05:43

Thank you. Not "Expedition... something".

Haley 05:45

No, you're just reading The Expanse.

Amy 05:47

I am reading The Expanse! Ah, those books are so good. You know, one day we should read that whole series because it won one time.

Haley 05:52

I was gonna tell our listeners, y'all know that I'm not a big fantasy person, but I like my queer high fantasy book that I'm reading that's 800 pages.

Amy 05:59

I thought you didn't like it, you like it now? Or did you not like it at first? Or am I making that up?

Haley 06:03

I'm reading it. I think I like it.

Amy 06:04

Okay.

Lori 06:05

What book? What's the name of it?

Haley 06:06

"The Priory of the Orange Tree."

Amy 06:08

I saw that in the bookstore I was in in Salt Lake City. I thought of you.

Haley 06:11

I'm digging it. There's not any horses. Well, there is but not a lot. <laughter>

Amy 06:15

Any hobbits?

Haley 06:16

No, there's mainly humans.

Lori 06:18

Dwarves?

Haley 06:19

Nope. Nope. There's... It's...

Amy 06:21

Tell me how it's fantasy.

Haley 06:22

It's more like Game of Thrones. There's like oliphants <laughter> and then there's... a queendom ...

Lori 06:26

That's right. If you have oliphants it's definitely fantasy.

Amy 06:29

It's like mildly medieval?

Haley 06:31

Yeah, well, so it's, it's very much, like... It's like if England and Japan were very close. So there's like a Western thing with dragons. There's an Eastern thing with dragons.

Amy 06:39

Oh, there's dragons, okay.

Haley 06:40

And they call the dragons "high westerns", which I think is funny.

Amy 06:43

The name of, like... the species?

Haley 06:44

The type of dragon? I don't know. They said a high western. It sounds like a meteorological front or something.

Lori 06:49

Or a kind of, you know, a kind of horse. [Lori: A thoroughbred.] [Haley: A high western.] <Amy laughs>

Amy 06:53

The dragons are the horses.

Lori 06:54

Pot-ay-to, pot-ah-to.

Haley 06:55

So I'm reading that y'all.

Amy 06:56

Okay! I'm proud of you.

Haley 06:59

I will do anything for a gay character. <All laugh>

Amy 07:02

Which reminds me I still need to read Gideon.

Lori 07:03

Oh, Gideon is so good.

Amy 07:05

Should we just read Gideon for next time?

Lori 07:07

Yeah, fine.

Amy 07:08

Okay, so this is gonna be a very brief plot summary because it's not a very long book. And frankly, while some things happen, not a lot happens. So... The story is told from the point of view of a Murderbot, a quasi-human cyborg provided by an unnamed corporation to provide security for a team of scientists exploring an uninhabited planet. The science team's mission goes off the rails when they discover another science team on the planet has been murdered (dun, dun). Murderbot has to help the humans not be murdered and get off the planet. Murderbot is not supposed to be able to disobey the humans it's assigned to, but in a highly unauthorized move, Murderbot has hacked the governor module software that controls its

actions and that obligates it to be obedient. So, basically, it doesn't have to do what they say anymore. After the humans figure this out, Murderbot has to deal, not only with keeping its team alive, but it also has to contend with the team's increasing insistence on treating the Murderbot as a human. This makes the Murderbot deeply uncomfortable as it wants nothing more than to be left alone to watch its stories, which makes this murder machine deeply relatable to me. And then basically, it's about him interacting with them and then there's some action while they all try not to get killed. The end.

Lori 08:18

Yeah! That sounds right!

Amy 08:21

Okay, Goodies From Goodreads. I will say my favorite one. We talked about this already. I kind of did note that most people just seemed mad that they paid for a novella and I couldn't figure out why. But now it makes sense. My favorite Goodreads was by, was just this one line by this person, Althea who said, "I was not capable of not loving Murderbot", which was how I felt. I was not capable of not loving Murderbot.

Lori 08:42

Same.

Amy 08:44

RJ Slayer of Trolls on Goodreads had a lot to say about the snarky tone of the book, which, you know, I think we should talk about at some point. Like, Murderbot is very snarky. It's got a snarky tone. He says, "Meet the next iteration of snarky dialogue. Snarky narration. That's right, the snarkiness brought to you by John Scalzi and his clones as a substitute for character development doesn't have to stop at witty rejoinders. [Lori: Eek!] Now you can get a steady stream of it all book long. In this case, courtesy of a Murderbot, which is a security robot with a troubled past. It's probably the bot character that is causing this brief flurry of irrationally exuberant popularity here at Goodreads. That and the snarkiness, which is like being dipped into the mind of a sulky teenage girl but with 100% less Justin Bieber references." And actually when he said that it made me start thinking about something which I would like talk about. Uh, <Amy finding her place> "Everybody knows you don't go full Skynet..." "Story is nothing special,

but it moves along at a relatively brief, brisk pace and Wells's Color by Number prose is adequate for maximum snarkiness delivery. Proceed at your own risk."

Lori 09:46

Oh, my.

Amy 09:47

He did not... He didn't like it, guys. I don't think he liked it. I'm assuming it's a him.

Lori 09:51

Yeah probably.

Amy 09:52

Did you guys find anything?

Haley 09:55

Everyone loves this book. So it wasn't much fun, to, uh...

Amy 10:00

Delve into the bad reviews?

Haley 10:00

Yeah, it was just it was just like people like it. People did like it, it's a Murderbot.

Lori 10:04

I have one. This is from Goodreads user Lovely Day. And you have to know a little bit of Goodreads lingo so "DNF" means "Did Not Finish". And Lovely Day's review says, "DNF'd at 5% at first F word." <Amy laughs very loudly>

Haley 10:21

Goodness! 2 Murderbots, 2 Dirty.

Lori 10:24

I mean, what can you... Do you only read like Berenstain Bears then? Like what? If that is enough for you to just walk away from a book like...

Amy 10:33

Phewf!

Haley 10:34

Especially a book about Murderbots?

Amy 10:35

Yeah you picked up a book called MURDERbots!

Lori 10:37

Yeah what did you think? I mean, goodness. 'I thought they were just gonna pick flowers and say nice things'.

Amy 10:43

I read the Christian Geeks review of this and they were okay with the profanity.

Lori 10:47

Yeah, I mean, no one's saying it TO you. <Amy laughs> They didn't say YOU eff off.

Haley 10:51

I'm also an adult.

Amy 10:53

It's okay. You could not let it affect your life.

Haley 10:55

Yeah. Well, I mean, I'm a big fan of the F word, so...

Amy 10:57

I say it a lot.

Lori 10:58

There was only 1% one star reviews. This is an overwhelmingly well-liked book.

Amy 11:03

I noticed that too! I saw 1% one and 1% two on both Amazon and Goodreads. And then there were some threes. I think the threes were mostly like, it was kind of short not well developed. I'm like, is that really fair? It's a novella. [Lori: Right? Yeah.] Yeah.

Amy 11:17

So guys, General Discussion. It's a really short book. There's, I mean, there's not a whole lot to delve into. But, the first thing I wanted to ask was, Haley, have you read Martha Wells's Star Wars book?

Haley 11:30

Which one is it?

Amy 11:31

It's "Empire and Rebellion: Razor's Edge".

Haley 11:34

I don't believe so. Must be one of the newer one.

Amy 11:36

Dangit. I was really curious about that. Whether it was any good. Oh, well.

Haley 11:39

I'll look it up.

Amy 11:40

Guys, Martha Wells wrote a Star Wars book.

Lori 11:42

That's cool!

Haley 11:43

She's written a ton. I was reading about her.

Amy 11:45

Do you guys like novellas?

Lori 11:48

I think I do. I'm not really a short story reader, because I like a little more story. But yeah, I like a nice, tight novella, that gives me a complete story. And I don't have to slog through anything. Like this is a very efficient story.

Amy 12:04

Yeah, I agree.

Lori 12:05

So it wasn't just like, two pages.

Amy 12:07

Which is the opposite of some of the things we've been reading.

Lori 12:09

Right! Yeah.

Haley 12:10

And that's what we, you know, often criticize books for is, like, you know, this shouldn't have been 500 pages, it should have been 200.

Lori 12:16

And to go back to "The City and The City", where I was talking about how, like, we wanted to know more about the background of the cities. And I contrasted it with "Bloodchild", where I was like, in "Bloodchild" you're just, like, dropped in the middle of this situation. You don't know the backstory, but for some reason, it's like, even though you want to know the backstory, you can still really enjoy what you have. And I felt like that with this. I would like to know more about this universe, I hope to find out more about this universe. But I was still very happy with this story.

Amy 12:45

I was interested that... So most of the story takes place on an uninhabited planet. So like, she doesn't really need to build out the world that much because the inhabited world isn't really where it takes place. But you get to, you know that there are corporations controlling access to uninhabited planets, you know that there are different kinds of governments on different kinds of planets, you get what a Murderbot is, you get that there are other kinds of bots. Like you get a lot about the world even though it doesn't take place there and there's no, like, exposition really. Yeah.

Haley 13:18

Well, and I was never confused, which is always a good sign. <laughter>

Lori 13:21

Right? Yeah. Like, the confusion, I don't have the confusion from a lack of information like I had with "The City and the City".

Haley 13:26

And a lot of the company/corporation stuff is such a standard trope in sci-fi that you're already familiar with it. And you're like, yeah okay, I know what's going on. So

Amy 13:33

Did you guys get the sense of whether the Corporation was supposed to be good, bad neutral?

Haley 13:39

I was neutral about it.

Lori 13:40

Neutral bad?

Haley 13:41

Yeah. I mean, like, every corporation's bad. <laughter>

Lori 13:45

Because Murderbot does tell us that, I think, I can't remember if it implies that they might have taken a bribe to not share some information that could ultimately pose a safety risk. Or if it said that it wouldn't do that, because it would damage its potential future contracts. I don't know. It seems like it's definitely not good.

Haley 14:03

Oh, and they're like, they're cheap, too. You know.

Amy 14:06

The worst thing they had to say about him really was that they were money-oriented.

Lori 14:08

Well but here's the thing. Like, I think you skew toward evil if you are making judgment calls about, like, health and safety and quality of life based on economics, which is basically what corporations do. [Haley: Yeah.] So I think they all land a little on the evil side, I think.

Amy 14:27

Like, what is it "chaotic evil" or something?

Lori 14:32

Lawful evil? [Amy: Yeah <laughs>.]

Haley 14:34

Lawful Evil, yeah, like Darth Vader.

Amy 14:35

The more money you pay, the safer and healthier you'll be. But even if you pay a lot of money, you're not going to get great upholstery.

Lori 14:41

Yeah, they don't wish you ill, but they don't care in sort of morally bankrupt way.

Amy 14:46

Yeah, they're doing a very cost-benefit analysis, which is...

Haley 14:49

Do y'all know y'all's alignment?

Amy 14:52

Oh, um, I think that I am lawfully neutral.

Haley 14:57

That's what I am.

Amy 14:58

Yeah. Okay. So novella works here, I think. I've already bought the second one. I'm interested in getting more into the world and seeing what happens to our little Murderbot. Should I spoil the end? [Lori: Yeah!] Okay. So at the end, our Murderbot gets bought by one of the scientists, the lead scientist on this team. And they're like, you're going to come back to the planet with us and you're going to be free, quote unquote "free". But it's, you know, still obligated to live with this person because...

Lori 15:26

Legally it has to have a guardian.

Amy 15:27

And Murderbot has no idea how to be in society and that sort of thing. So instead of going to live with the person who bought it, Murderbot packs up and takes off on a cargo ship. And it buys passage on the cargo ship by promising to show the cargo ship AI all of its entertainment.

Lori 15:43

I love it. I love that. <Amy giggling>

Amy 15:45

It's like, "I have so many stories. Let me on. We'll watch TV together into the void."

Lori 15:50

Do you know what that just reminded me of? In "The Courtship of Princess Leia" when C3-PO was trying to find out some hot goss and he goes to talk to the city AI to find out what's going on. I can't remember the details. Haley, maybe you remember. But he definitely did that. He went to go, like, check with another robot to find out...

Haley 16:05

Yeah, I mean, it's either him or R2-D2 pluggin' into the mainframe.

Lori 16:09

So Murderbot takes off. And I'm interested to see what Murderbot gets into. And if Murderbot ever comes back to her/its humans. I'm curious. Because it's not like Murderbot didn't like it's humans. But this gets into one of the things I was gonna talk about. So if like, Murderbot's freedom, quote unquote, is bought by [Lori: Dr. Mensa.] Mensa, yeah.

Lori 16:30

Who's the leader of the expedition that he's assigned to?

Amy 16:33

Yes. Do you think this is supposed to have a slavery subtext? Or am I reading into it too much?

Lori 16:39

No, I, I think it does.

Haley 16:41

They address it explicitly.

Lori 16:42

Yeah. Cause Murderbot is like, "Well I've been bought, but I'm not free." [Amy:Yeah.] "I can't just go get an apartment and a job, like, I don't get to do that."

Haley 16:52

But they talk about how on some planets, the preservation people, they have more rights for these types of creatures. [Lori: Yeah! Yes.] But they still have to have like a guardian ad litem.

Amy 17:02

These are, like, these are sentient creatures who had something literally built into their heads that makes them... that forces them to be obedient, up to and including tearing each other limb from limb for the entertainment of the people who own them. And it's an interesting, you know, sort of foray into that, I think. Because our Murderbot is sort of coming into its own humanity as we kind of watch and trying to figure out what it can have and what it wants, which is a new different thing for a Murderbot.

Haley 17:32

It took a while for me to understand exactly what... Because I think going into it I assumed that he was a robot, and then you get more and more details. And so they're definitely born human.

Amy 17:41

Oh, really? I did not think that.

Haley 17:43

Oh, I don't know.

Lori 17:43

I think they're, like, cybrids kinda.

Amy 17:45

Yeah I think they're created.

Haley 17:47

I couldn't tell. And I still don't know.

Amy 17:48

I don't know if we really know. That was my assumption that they were created as Murderbots.

Haley 17:53

When I was reading it, I couldn't imagine a robot saying these things. So I assumed that it was a man that had been mostly made into like... Like Darth Vader kinda.

Amy 18:00

This is actually funny cause this is one thing I was gonna ask you guys, if you guys grafted man, woman or nothing on to the Murderbot. So, you're talking about it like you thought it was a man.

Haley 18:07

Yeah, I mean, I tried to picture it as a woman and I couldn't.

Amy 18:09

That's so funny, I pictured it a woman the whole time.

Lori 18:10

I tried to picture nothing. Like I just tried to picture it very neutral. And I almost always ended up back toward man. Like in scenes where its helmet was up I was imagining a man's face.

Amy 18:23

That's so funny because I was picturing a woman the whole time. Maybe just because a woman wrote it. I don't know.

Haley 18:27

It just it just sounds like a man to me.

Amy 18:29

<Laughing> It just sounds like a woman to me!

Lori 18:31

A man who watches soap operas?

Amy 18:34

I don't know. I don't know why. That's so funny. That's really funny.

Haley 18:37

I pictured, like, a big beefy, like, actually, I pictured the guy who plays Jengo Fett in Star Wars just like a dark haired man.

Amy 18:44

I think I picture kind of a Brienne of Tarth character.

Haley 18:47

I mean, I think I think that makes it more interesting.

Lori 18:49

I was imagining just sort of like a Ken doll. Like a very nondescript [Amy: Smooth like a Ken doll?] Yeah, smooth, muscular, nondescript, kind of appearance.

Amy 18:58

I think it could go either way. I think that it's written... It's written so that you could really graft whatever you want onto this Murderbot.

Lori 19:04

And I'll say, I'll own that it's probably a little internalized sexism that I imagined it as a man because it's like a strong security-- It's a bodyguard, right? So I kind of just defaulted to big beefy, man.

Amy 19:16

Maybe it's because I'm reading The Expanse. But, like, the strongest, beefiest, gunny... gunny-est person in The Expanse is a woman. So it's like, maybe that's why it's leaking into my consciousness.

Haley 19:27

I think, I mean, I don't usually picture like a lot of visual detail. I just, I just think he talks like a man. I don't know.

Amy 19:32

That's interesting. I would like examples, but I know you probably don't have them ready.

Haley 19:37

No, I mean, this is the personal thing. He reminds me very much of Holden Caulfield from "Catcher in the Rye". So.

Amy 19:44

Oh, see, that's so funny because when I read that review by this person who said it was like being in the mind of a sulky teenage girl, it made me start thinking about it in those terms, and I absolutely think that's correct. Yeah. Sounds like a sort of, like, pissed off adolescent girl to me.

Lori 19:58

Well, on that note, and you haven't read "Gideon" yet but... It reminded me of the same narrative style of "Gideon the Ninth". Where it's got, like, that snarkiness. I will say, I don't... I think we all kind of agree that sarcasm is... It's not... We don't like that much. It's not that nice. Just in general, like, I don't, I don't like when people are sarcastic. I don't think it's cute. And I don't normally like snark as a thing. But I think this book and "Gideon" both have that but are, like, tempered with a lot of sensitivity and, like, sincerity. Like Murderbot is snarky and you can see from the inside that it's like a defense mechanism. And then they begrudgingly develop this very real affection for their people, and put their own life on the line for their people, even though they don't have to. So I think I found it Oh, see, that's so funny.fun and tolerable. [Amy: Just the snark factor?] But if it was just like your nonstop snark, with not without that, I wouldn't have liked it.

Lori 20:49

I definitely think that line gets walked very well.

Haley 21:03

Murderbot reminds me of one of my ex-girlfriends. So. <laughter>

Amy 21:06

Are we rethinking our gender?

Haley 21:08

Who only liked to watch TV, hated people, and just wanted to be left alone. So.

Lori 21:14

Who's this Kevin, I'll edit it out. [BLEEP] Kevin, will you just put a [BLEEP].

Haley 21:20

So, like, Murderbot to me, like... I didn't NOT like this book. But Murderbot I thought was just, like, if I heard one more time about how he doesn't care. I was just, ...

Lori 21:29

Oh I thought that was very funny. [Haley: Oh I didn't laugh once.] Because, like, the people are so dumbfounded when they're like, "Oh, didn't you read the file?" And Murderbot's like, "No." And they're like, "Why?" And Murderbot's like, "I wasn't interested in your life story." And the people just cannot believe that their security droid made the choice to know less about them because it would rather watch TV, and they just can't believe it. I laughed out loud at that part, too.

Amy 21:52

I thought it was great. I don't know, the Murderbot's internal narrative/dialogue... What's the word? Monologue! Reminds me of me at my most depressed. <laughter> It cannot gather the energy to be...to give a crap about most things. I just want to watch Angel over and over and over again. <laughs>

Haley 22:10

I guess I didn't understand like, does Murderbot just want to sit in a closet and watch TV. [Lori: Yes! For sure.] [Amy: Yes, 100%.] So like, why does he care about freedom then?

Amy 22:19

Because he doesn't have... I don't know... Well, he says he hacked his governor module (I've started saying 'he') because it went nuts that one time and killed a bunch of people. And it hacked its governor module as some sort of defense mechanism against that, it sounded like. Or in response to what they did to it after it did all that. It was some sort of self preservation urge, right. But the Murderbot says at one point, like when I did that I could have either gone insane and killed everybody, or do what I did, which was discover that there's unlimited entertainment in the world, and I'm just gonna sit and watch. Yeah. So like, it's just the way it's personality, skewed, it just wanted to sit and watch TV. But I think also it was a little bit of a, like, because when you're super depressed, like sitting and watching other people be people and not having to interact with those people and not having to, like... Not having to contend with anything, not having to deal with it is really appealing. So I think it had something to do with its mindset. It just sort of wasn't prepared to have to be a person.

Lori 23:18

And it's in a dead end job. It didn't choose that job, that job was foisted on it. It doesn't like its job, and it just wants to watch TV. I identify with that to a degree. I mean, I like my job, okay, if anyone's listening, I like my job. But I think we, you know, we all identify with like, "I just want to stay home and watch TV today." And Murderbot never chose that job for itself. So why wouldn't it want to just only watch TV?

Amy 23:44

Yeah, and I think also, it's exhausting and overwhelming to have to deal with actual humans, when you're not in a good mental space, but you can feel like you're getting human interaction, and you can feel like you're being acted upon by passively watching TV. And actively consuming entertainment and those moments. So, I don't know. I've never identified with a character more in my life <laughs> than Murderbot. I don't know.

Lori 24:05

One of my favorite parts is when Murderbot's in the room full of everyone talking and Mensa has been like, "I know you hate this, but you need to open up your mask because they're going to be less afraid of you if they look at you and they're like, 'Oh, you're at least somewhat, some human'. And they can see you that way and you know, help them see you as a person and not a threat." So Murderbot has their helmet open. And then they just get so uncomfortable that they go and face the wall while they're talking. <laughter> And I was like, oh, I feel, you know, we've all wanted to do that. Like, it's, you know, everyone knows what it's like to want to disappear in a situation. And Murderbot doesn't have years and years and years of conditioning to, like, force yourself through a conversation that you don't want to be in. So Murderbot's just like, "I'm

nope-ing out of this. I'm gonna go I'm gonna put myself in a corner. I could rip everybody's head here right off their shoulders, but what I'm gonna do is I'm just gonna go stand in the corner."

Lori 24:14

I don't know, I found that all charming.

Lori 25:09

Oh, me, too. I was really rooting for murder bot.

Haley 25:12

Yeah, no. I mean, I just, he did not strike a chord with me.

Lori 25:15

I like that Murderbot isn't particularly great at much besides protection. Like, so many things that we read, you know, there's like the whole Mary Sue trope, like someone's good at everything. Ender, Ender is good at everything. And you know, so many characters in sci-fi and fantasy are good at everything. They're like, this special teenager, you know, Harry Potter kind of character. And Murderbot's like, "Yeah, I'm kind of a one trick pony. I've hacked myself so I can watch TV all day." And I like that. I like that Murderbot has a very average... Well, he does have a very particular set of skills, but is also very average at those things. And it's just it still does its best. It makes the conscious choice to do its best with what it has, which isn't much it hasn't been given much.

Amy 26:07

It talks about the, sort of, crappy education [Lori: Yeah!] that they give Murderbots. And he's like, I was supposed to learn something about this, but I didn't really learn it that well, so I don't really know.

Lori 26:16

Yeah, it's apathetic in a lot of ways. But when it counts...

Amy 26:20

And also just uneducated in a lot of ways.

Lori 26:21

It makes the choice to try its best. And I like characters like that, who are just doing their best with what they have.

Amy 26:28

I read an NPR review. I was curious what you guys had had to say about this, whether you think this is just too much English major. This person said, "There are subtexts to be read into Murderbot." That it's "experienced as a coming out narrative", that it "mirrors the lives of trans people, immigrants, those on the autism spectrum, or anyone else who feels the need to hide some essential part of themselves from a population that either threatens or can't possibly understand them, or both. And I get all of that, because every one of those reads is right."

Haley 26:56

I read that review, yeah.

Amy 26:57

What do you think? Do you think that's right?

Lori 26:58

I think that that's right. And I thought at the end, I was thinking about it as like a passing narrative, because if Murderbot doesn't have their armor on and they wear their skin suit (which I'm dying to know what exactly is a skin suit).

Amy 27:12

I also really want to know, is it skin, Lori?

Lori 27:14

But we know that their face looks like a human face. So if they put on a full outfit of clothes, they could visually pass for a human. So I was thinking about that at the end in terms of a passing narrative. And I mean, you can pass in terms of your sexual orientation, your gender identity, your race, you know, I mean, passing is something that, you know, occurs and affects many marginalized populations. And so that's what I saw happening at the end.

Amy 27:39

That is really interesting. I didn't think about that. That's true. And that especially feeds back into the slavery thing we were talking about before, like, people would get out of slavery. And the whiter they were, the more likely they were to be able to integrate into, you know, the whiter they looked, the more likely they were to be able to integrate into society and not worry about being harassed or captured or, you know, anything like that. That's interesting, I think, yeah.

Lori 27:59

Unless somebody outed them. So even if you're, even if you are able to pass, you're still in constant danger. [Amy: Yes.] And I think that's true, here, with Murderbot, because now Murderbot's basically a fugitive.

Amy 28:10

Yeah, I guess he is. Because like he got... He's supposed to stay with his guardian, right? Yeah.

Lori 28:15

Yeah. So legally Murderbot, I think, is a fugitive, and I think authority figures would probably consider them very dangerous.

Haley 28:23

They gotta send the Blade Runner.

Amy 28:25

What's that?

Haley 28:26

They gotta send a Blade Runner to get em.

Amy 28:27

<Laughing> Oooh, maybe that's the next thing that happens. They send a Blade Runner.

Lori 28:31

I can't wait to read the next one. Kevin got me a Kobo for my birthday. And I am just loving it after being so resistant to an e-reader. [Haley: They're great.] [Amy: They have their merits.] Well, I went straight to the library and got a library card. I never had a library card before. And I was very excited to get the second book and it's on like a 15 week delay <laughs>.

Amy 28:53

Yeah, you're gonna be borrowing mine. I went to a little bookstore in Salt Lake and I bought it, so, I'll let you borrow it. I got you girl.

Lori 28:58

Did I tell you the funny thing about getting my library card? The librarian was telling me about all the things that you can get with the library card now and not just paper books. [Haley: Oh there's a lot, yeah.] She was like, oh, and we have, you know, ebooks and audio books. And she said and if you go to such and such you can watch movies and she said we have over this many adult movies. And I had a mask on so I think I had no visible reaction.

Amy 29:25

No, you know, your eyebrows went to your scalp.

Lori 29:27

I knew what she meant. I knew she meant like, movie, you know "films", not like Dora the Explorer, that I can download and watch. You know, I knew she just meant like movies. But she stopped herself and she goes "I just mean movies. I don't mean porn." She goes, "We ARE still the public library." <laughter>

Amy 29:48

And what if they started carrying porn?

Haley 29:50

One thing that I don't like about the Fulton County Library is that they keep all of the LGBTQ books in their own section right by the register. [Amy and Lori: Huh!] So they will pull books out of the fiction section, and out of the biography section, and out of the nonfiction section and put them all in a rainbow ghetto so that I guess, people don't go and do bad things. [Lori: Wooooow.] I don't know.

Lori 30:10

That's also a complaint about... Some Black writers complain about their books being an African-American section.

Haley 30:17

I mean, the same thing's been said about science fiction as well. [Amy: Interesting.] The ghettoization of science fiction, like taking it out of literature.

Lori 30:23

Yeah, I mean that's definitely a thing but it's certainly worse to take a marginalized community's literature and put it on a shelf!

Amy 30:33

My very privileged, unexamined response to that has always been this is a special interest section, like people who are interested in this can now easily find it.

Haley 30:43

I think what it is, is that people don't like gay sex, because there's plenty of books in straight novels that have explicit sex scenes. There's entire romance sections that get put up with literature though, so.

Lori 30:53

N.K. Jemisin has at least tweeted fairly extensively about not wanting to see her books in an African-American section. She's like, it's science fiction, and it's fantasy. That's where it should be. And it has less in common with Ta-Nehisi Coates's book of essays than it does with "Lord of the Rings", you know? So she's written about that before and been like, if you see my books in an African-American section [Amy: Re-shelve them? <laughs>] They don't belong there. Yeah. And I mean, I'm sure people you know, reasonable people can disagree about that. But it's definitely a conversation.

Amy 31:24

I'm glad we had this conversation. I never thought about that before.

Haley 31:26

Even an author that is gay that doesn't write about being gay, they put in the gay section. [Amy: Huh!] That's very weird. I don't like it.

Amy 31:28

Yeah. I can see why.

Lori 31:35

That is weird.

Haley 31:36

I've only ever seen it done at the Fulton County Ponce library. So maybe it's not like other places. So.

Amy 31:40

The other the other thing I would probably have thought prior to this conversation, and now I'll re-examine this, is that they were putting it front and center to show how proud they were that they had LGBT things. <laughs>

Haley 31:50

No, I don't know. I always felt weird going to get, like, a Truman Capote book, which is just you know, he's just a gay man, but didn't write about being gay. So.

Amy 31:57

Yeah, that makes sense.

Lori 31:57

"In Cold Blood" is on the LGBT shelf.

Haley 31:59

Yes!

Amy 32:00

Woof! Well that's not where that belongs!

Haley 32:03

No! So that's my story about that. My other story about the library... So I, I go to the library probably about once a week and have for most of my adult life. One time I thought I lost the book, but I ended up not so I'm my record is clear. <laughter> But I wrote, not "I wrote", I lost I thought I lost the book called "Vagina". It's like a cultural history or biography. Some, you know... But I had to go up and tell the person who worked at the front desk that, it was, I lost my vagina book. <Lori laughs> And it was this old man. And he'd be like, which book is it? I was like, "Vagina", sir. And he'd be like, got to put a search on the vagina book. <Lori and Amy wheeze from laughing.> For 10 minutes it was me and him talking about a vagina book.

Amy 32:43

I feel like that's a Portlandia sketch or something. That's really funny.

Haley 32:45

I have a picture of him and he looked like the father from "Family Matters".

Lori 32:51

Oh, Carl Winslow!

Amy 32:53

Officer Carl Winslow? [Haley: Yeah.] Oh, man. Oh, man.

Lori 32:56

Reginald VelJohnson.

Haley 32:56

We went back and forth and then I ended up going home. And then, because, at a lot of libraries if you report a book lost, they'll send somebody internally to go look for it. Like maybe it got mis-shelved. And I ended up finding it at home when I moved, but.

Haley 32:58

I am glad they have a book called "Vagina". They don't have porn because they are still the public library.

Amy 33:17

A Brief History of Vaginas.

Lori 33:18

What else?

Amy 33:20

That was about it. That's about all I had. Does anybody have anything else?

Haley 33:25

I like that... So he's obsessed with the soap opera called "Sanctuary Moon", which is what they call Endor in "Return of the Jedi".

Lori 33:31

Oh, that's nice!

Amy 33:33

Oh, Haley! That's good color commentary!

Haley 33:35

What else? I think this book is fine. One thing that I did not like was it's a little bit heavy handed about armor, like, taking off your armor [Amy: They did talk about the armor a lot.] his emotional armor. I get I get it. I get it. I get he's got armor, y'all.

Haley 33:54

I was a little confused. So I think... So obviously, I want Murderbot to go to therapy. I think he's got incredibly low self esteem. So he calls himself Murderbot. But at best he's a, like, Walmart security bot, right?

Amy 34:04

That's right. So he calls himself Murderbot, but his actual term is SECunit. Security unit? Yeah. So he calls himself Murderbot. And it's true. It's a very self hatred term that I'm going to need Murderbot to learn to let go of.

Lori 34:19

Because if it thinks of itself that way, then no one can hurt it by calling it a murderer because it's already done it.

Amy 34:24

That's true. That's true, Lori.

Haley 34:26

Yeah. I mean, I get all this intellectually. I think one of the things that I hate most in this planet, though, is apathy, so I'd like Murderbot come on.

Lori 34:31

Well, the thing about Murderbot's apathy is, you know, it's definitely a defense mechanism. And what I like is you see it growing out of that, because it does come to care about the humans. It didn't care enough about them to read their personnel files. Which, I mean, you know, maybe you would maybe you wouldn't on your co workers. I would, I'm petty. [Haley: Oh 100% I would.] Yeah, so Murderbot goes from being like, "I didn't give a shit about reading your file" to "I'm gonna jump into the mouth of this sandworm to save you and I'm was going to save this other person that's going to slow me down and my programming wouldn't let me. But I'm making the active choice to save this person." So it's like, the apathy is definitely a front. I mean, it's got some apathy. It's like I didn't care about your file, but it's definitely a front. And I think it's coming out of that.

Amy 35:16

I agree.

Haley 35:16

Oh, for sure. Yeah, I I think to me the the most touching part of Murderbot, because he says that he doesn't care the entire book, I get it. I know that's a front and then he shows dedication to saving them. But the one thing I think that did, like, emotionally hit me in terms of showing that he cares was after he gets done rescuing them from the big sand monster, whatever. There's video of him, like just talking to him like, "Hey, how's your wife? Have you got kids?" [Amy: Yeah!] That's like the one time where I was like, okay, Murderbot, I see that you care in a way that is true. Instead of saying, I don't care, but then I'll save your life. Like that was one way that I really appreciated it.

Amy 35:49

That was literally what I was gonna say, when we started talking at the same time was that was one of my favorite reveals was [Lori: That really was a beautiful scene.] when they showed Murderbot what Murderbot said.

Haley 35:57

Yeah, like that was, that was the one time in the book where I was like, okay, he does care. So.

Lori 36:03

Murderbot reminded me of Ancillary Justice, in many ways. Like, Breq with a sense of humor? Like I think Murderbot, the way Murderbot is starting to feel about Dr. Mensa reminded me of how Breq felt about Lieutenant Awn, if you all remember that. And it's not necessarily a romantic attachment, but it's like, there's definitely a love there. And, you know, it drives Breq's, like, centuries-long quest for justice. And Ancillary Justice is decidedly not a comedy. But this reminded me of, you know, a similar kind of relationship where the AI develops an attachment that, you know, it's not supposed to, and it's not, or it's not predicted, it's not expected, but it develops this emotional attachment. But here Murderbot's, like, hmmm I think this actually isn't good for me, because I really like her and now she's my owner. I'm getting out of here. Gettin' out of town. So it's like sort of a comedic take on that.

Amy 36:59

Oh, and at the end you find out that the entire narrative has been a recording by Murderbot for Dr. Mensa to explain to Dr. Mensa what was going through the Murderbot's head during this whole thing and why Murderbot left.

Haley 37:10

Yeah.

Amy 37:10

I forgot about that part.

Lori 37:11

<Whispering> I didn't know that. I didn't know. Maybe I did and forgot immediately.

Amy 37:19

Maybe! It's not, I mean, it's not a huge point.

Lori 37:22

It seems important! Sometimes I'm not a good reader.

Haley 37:25

Yeah, it was like, the last page though.

Amy 37:26

You're a good reader!

Lori 37:27

Thanks, Amy.

Haley 37:28

Murderbot reminds me of the depressed, apathetic version of Johnny 5 from "Short Circuit". Because all Johnny 5 wants, and I relate, I relate super well to Johnny 5, because he just wants input and he wants to read and he wants to learn. And he loves his humans. He loves Ally Sheedy. In a kind of, like, inappropriate way actually. And I think Murderbot gets there a little bit cause like he's got all these TV shows. And he wants... And I think by getting all this exposure to things he becomes more human, which is a common trope in sci-fi. But yeah, he... He's just like, Johnny 5 needs Lexapro.

Amy 38:04

I kind of think so does Murderbot.

Haley 38:07

Oh, no no. Johnny 5 is healthy, I think. But Murderbot is just, like, Johnny 5 just, like, with depression.

Amy 38:13

Oh I see what you're saying. Yes. Oh, god bless Murderbot. Um, guys, did you have a Feminist Fave?

Lori 38:19

Just the book. <Amy laughs>

Amy 38:21

Dr. Mensa was my Feminist Fave just in general.

Lori 38:23

Yeah, Dr. Mensa's, like, the president of something. Some governmental unit that we don't quite understand.

Haley 38:28

She has a short haircut.

Amy 38:29

Does she or did you just make that up?

Haley 38:30

No, he says that she does and that he assumes that she is old because young people wouldn't be given a position of power.

Amy 38:36

Okay, okay.

Lori 38:38

That's a fun assumption.

Amy 38:40

I do kind of like that, since we're getting everything through Murderbot's... Now. This was a little point of contention in the reviews that I could see. It's like, because we're getting everything through Murderbot's perspective and Murderbot doesn't have a good handle on how humans grow and operate, you don't get a lot of characterization about the people on the science team. You get some. Like you know that one of them is a augmented human and has some sort of...

Haley 39:00

They're all polyamorous.

Amy 39:01

They're all polyamorous. Some of them seem like they might be somewhere on the, somewhere on the homosexuality spectrum.

Haley 39:07

Oh, really? I didn't know that.

Amy 39:08

There's two lesbians in there.

Lori 39:09

Oh, yeah. Two of the team members are together. And I think they're both women. Yeah.

Haley 39:14

I could not tell you one thing about any team member.

Amy 39:16

Well, that's what I was saying. So, like, you get it all through Murderbot. So it's not high on the characterization. You know? And some people were like, I didn't get to know these characters at all. They're all flat. But I think that makes sense since you're getting it through Murderbot's perspective. But I did like what you did get from Murderbot. Like, what Murderbot thought was important about these people. Like whether they were going to read the data and understand it, whether they were going to be, like, what they were gonna do with regard to each other. I just thought that was interesting.

Haley 39:42

I liked how he describes them. He says, "It was a low-stress group. They didn't argue much or antagonize each other for fun." And that's what I look for in friends.

Lori 39:48

I really like that about this book is that everyone (except for, you know, the antagonists, which we don't see a whole lot of them) everyone is really trying to help each other. Even the guy that Murderbot kind of has an eye on and is a little worried about, I kept worrying that there was going to be some side quest where that guy stabbed them in the back. And he didn't. Everyone really was just doing their best. And that's my favorite kind of story.

Amy 40:09

And he had a legitimate grievance about Murderbot. Like, he was like, "This Murderbot doesn't have a governor module. This Murderbot could kill us all." I mean, that's a legitimate grievance. So I mean, I didn't think that...

Lori 40:18

This Murderbot has killed 57 people before. [Haley: Yeah.]

Amy 40:21

Like, this augmented human person whose name I can't remember, like, I think he was sort of lightly painted as a potential antagonist. But I thought he had pretty good reason. So I don't know. It didn't bother me.

Lori 40:34

It was not an unreasonable concern.

Amy 40:36

No, exactly. And he got over it with the correct input. [Lori: Yeah.] Uh, Misogynist Moment? Boob Talk?

Lori 40:47

I think there are no boobs in this book.

Haley 40:49

There's definitely no genitalia in this book.

Lori 40:51

But here's what I... So I have a stand in. [Amy: Okay.] I am currently reading "Salem's Lot" by Stephen King. [Amy: Oh!] And there are so many fucking boobs in that movie, or in that book. So I started taking some boob notes. <laughter> And I can share some boob... [Amy: Yes, please!]

Haley 41:08

We did some surrogate boobs!

Lori 41:09

Yeah, I've got some surrogate... <laughs> I've got a wet nurse, Stephen King.

Haley 41:12

Oh, God! <Lori giggles>

Amy 41:15

Lori, take that back. <all laugh>

Lori 41:19

Sorry.

Amy 41:20

<Giggling> Stephen King is my wet nurse. <All giggle> That's the most appalling thing I've ever heard!

Lori 41:25

My boobs just felt weird when you said that. <Amy continues laughing> So, this is my first Stephen King novel, but I have seen excerpts of his writing on the Men Write Women Twitter. [Amy: Oh man.]

Haley 41:36

Oh he has a very specific style.

Amy 41:37

And when he decides to go sexy, it's a real left turn sometimes.

Haley 41:41

Or sexual assault-y like in "It."

Lori 41:43

OH, DEAR.

Amy 41:43

Just a little sexual assault-y, with, like like a 12 year old.

Haley 41:45

Like a seven page sexual assault.

Lori 41:46

Yeah, I skipped "It" because I... That was available from the library, and I skipped that because I felt like ah, there are kids in that I don't want ehhhh.

Amy 41:53

I do really like that book though.

Lori 41:55

So "Salem's Lot". Yeah. So this is my first Stephen King novel. It's Stephen King's second Stephen King novel. And, uh, I did... There are passages in that book that are just beautiful, talking about the town and the people.

Haley 42:06

He loves Maine.

Amy 42:07

He's a good writer!

Lori 42:08

Listen to these boobs. So there's like a kind of bad guy in the town. You know, this "Salem's Lot". Have you read it? It's basically "Dracula". [Haley: Oh, yeah. But no, I haven't read it.] And it's basically, it's basically Dracula. So there's a character in the book who was the one who like rents the equivalent of Carfax Abbey to Dracula. And so he's, he's like the town muckety muck real estate guy, lawyer guy, and he's talking about his secretary. And he thinks of his secretary's breasts, as the quote, "the most delectable set of jahoobies you ever clapped an eye to!" <Amy dies laughing>

Haley 42:47

Wait wait wait, hold on. I want to spell it. J-A... Oh, hold on. "Jahoobies." J-A-H-O-O-B-I-E-S. "Jahoobies."

Lori 42:56

She stuck the landing! [All: Yay!] <laughter> And jahoobies comes up more than once. [Amy: Jahoobies!] Yeah, but I just took down the one jahobie quote.

Haley 43:04

Is it a child? No, it's not a child.

Lori 43:07

No it's an adult man talking about his, like, 20 year old secretary.

Haley 43:13

I mean, it rhymes with boobies.

Lori 43:14

Yeah, this is this has been Jahoob Talk. So then there's another one.

Amy 43:19

I think this is a word he made up.

Haley 43:22

Oh he's like Shakespeare.

Amy 43:23

There's another one where he's talking about the false fronts on the buildings to, like, make them look like cute old buildings. [Haley: I know where this is going.] "The people know there is nothing behind those false facades, just as most of them know that Loretta Starcher wears falsies." Oh, I have so much to say about this. Like, "false facade". First of all, you don't need to say "false" facade. I've got it. And also in the previous sentence you just said the fronts of the shops are all fake fronts. And, and then, like 'everyone knows Loretta Starcher wears falsies'. I just imagined him at his typewriter. He wrote that sentence and he sat back and looked at it was like, "Oh, that is so good." [Amy: What a metaphor.] So good! And then, then there's one where he's waxing eloquent about how a town sort of has a person that lives in it. And the town and the person are inextricably bound up in each other and it's actually, it's pretty good. And then it says, "You know the town like you know the shape of your wife's breast." [Haley: Hmm.] Which one? <laughter>

Haley 44:30

Just the one, the left one.

Amy 44:31

You know the right one's a mess.

Lori 44:32

Listen, they're not shaped the same ever. Okay?

Amy 44:36

You just know, the one. The bigger one, obviously.

Lori 44:37

Oh yeah. That's the one you pay the most attention to.

Amy 44:39

Obviously it's the bigger one.

Lori 44:40

Or the one that's on the side of your dominant hand. <all laugh>

Haley 44:46

That's what Wanda Sykes says. All righties always...I wonder what it's like to write a metaphor for only half the population.

Amy 44:56

Well, and, and women who like breasts?

Haley 44:59

Yeah, but like not even... Well, not even half the population, because not every man is married either. Not every man likes women. It's just very specific.

Amy 45:06

Some of the population, just some percentage of the population.

Lori 45:08

Well, and a lot of people who like boobs also don't want to read this old man talking about jahoobies.

Haley 45:14

That's true. There's definitely more eloquent ways to say it.

Amy 45:17

He has a, he has some blind spots.

Lori 45:19

It's very funny. And I you know, when I first read the jahoobie thing I sat with it for a minute and I thought, well, this is being used to tell me that this is a lecherous character. So is it Stephen King calling him jahoobies? [Haley: That's very forgiving, I like it.] Yes and no. Because Stephen King wrote it, but it's also like definitely a device for saying this is a lecherous, creepy, man. But like, basically, every man in that book has some thought to himself about someone's boobs.

Haley 45:46

It's the same way in "The Stand", which I read half of. There's just, that's just, he likes talking... I mean, it was the 70s. He likes talking about women. I don't know.

Amy 45:53

It doesn't get much better as it goes along either. By the way. Later, when he tries to be a little more PC his books get really boring.

Lori 45:58

I really liked this book though.

Amy 46:00

I love Stephen King. I've read a whole lot of Stephen King.

Lori 46:02

This my first one and I am really enjoying it. But there are some moments where I'm like, Stephen, you okay?

Amy 46:09

I think I'm gonna name my next cat Jahoobies.

Lori 46:15

Alright, that's all theJahooob Talk that I have.

Haley 46:18

There's a very meta scene for Soap Stuff.

Lori 46:22

Oh yeah, there're literal soaps!

Amy 46:23

Was there any Fantastic Food? I don't think there was.

Lori 46:25

I don't think anyone eats.

Haley 46:25

They don't. They don't eat.

Amy 46:26

Okay, good. Soap Stuff.

Haley 46:27

So at one point, and I don't have, I don't have this specific thing he says. When they're like, man he just like wants to watch soap operas. And they're like, "Yeah, cause like that guy does the thing," and he's like, "No, he doesn't!" And he's talking about the characters. Like, don't you talk about my story, she would never do that. So he likes the soap stuff.

Amy 46:41

I was like, I kind of really want to watch "Sanctuary Moon", I think it sounds kind of good.

Lori 46:46

Well, and it's like Murderbot's kind of learned how to be a person from "Sanctuary Moon". [Haley: Yeah.] Like, cause how else did Murderbot know, when a person is on the verge of having like, a nervous breakdown, talking to them, and like, Murderbot's kind of using grounding techniques. Like, "tell me about your family, you know, tell me" to keep the person present and keep them from kind of really going off the rails emotionally. I think Murderbot probably learned that from "Sanctuary Moon". [Amy: 100%.] So I think it's a great show.

Haley 47:12

I assumed that he'd also maybe watched like, documentaries about everything... Because if there's, you know, 35 million hours of whatever...

Amy 47:21

It can't all be "Sanctuary Moon".

Haley 47:22

Yeah.

Lori 47:23

I read one Goodreads review that said that Murderbot felt like a really good episode of "Doctor Who". [Amy: Yeah!] It does. And, and I wonder if "Sanctuary Moon" is kind of a "Doctor Who" show? Because "Doctor Who" is basically a soap opera with space. [Amy and Haley: Yes.]

Amy 47:38

I kind of think I might have learned how to be a human from "Buffy".

Lori 47:42

Oh, yeah. It didn't hurt.

Amy 47:43

Yeah, I think I might have. [Lori: Mm hmm.] Okay. Um, did you like the book?

Lori 47:48

Emphatically I liked the book.

Haley 47:50

It was decent.

Amy 47:51

I liked the book.

Lori 47:53

Kevin really liked the book too.

Amy 47:55

Uh, Star Wars or Lord of the Rings? For a minute, I was like, could it be neither? And then...

Lori 48:02

Doctor Who. <Haley laughs>

Haley 48:04

I'm fine with that.

Amy 48:05

I think I'm okay with that.

Haley 48:06

There's no I mean, there's not a ton of space in any meaningful way.

Lori 48:09

There are no rules here.

Amy 48:10

It's not really a hero's journey.

Haley 48:11

No, he's not really a hero.

Amy 48:13

I mean, it's a little Lord of the Rings because there's this ragtag group of people have to get through the wilderness and get to safety. I mean, that's a thing. But that also happens in Star Wars, so.

Haley 48:22

I mean, you could argue that a governor is basically a restraining bolt, which is what all the droids have in Star Wars, but it doesn't feel like Star Wars to me.

Amy 48:30

Oh, well, that is true. Star Wars has androids and I mean, uh, yeah. [Haley: That's true.] And and...

Haley 48:36

Lando Calrissian's administrator guy, Lobot, who's the bald man with a thing around his head. He's like an android. There's not a ton of androids in Star Wars though.

Amy 48:42

Is an Uruk-hai a Murderbot? [Lori and Haley consider.] They don't have inorganic parts. Okay, no, it's Doctor Who.

Lori 48:54

Yeah.

Amy 48:55

I'm good with that. Okay, coming up next time.

Lori 48:59

Okay. Coming up next. We will be reading for our September episode, "The Three Body Problem". And then for October, not sure yet if this will be our main episode, or if it'll be a spooky special and we'll pick another book for a main episode. But we're going to read "The Uninvited" which won a Retro Hugo for, I believe, 1944?

Haley 49:22

Yeah, I was at the beach July 4th weekend looking for spooky books anticipating my early onset spooky season. And I Googled haunted house books and this came up as a Retro Hugo so I thought we should read it.

Lori 49:35

So I had my brand new Kobo and I got excited and I bought it and read it immediately. So I already read it. It is wonderful. I'm excited for you to read it. It is everything that you wanted in a haunted and spooky book. It's full on haunted house! [Haley: Uh, that's all I want!] There are ghosts, there are other ghosts. There's a good twist.

Haley 49:53

And it's not just like, I feel like a lot of 1940s ones are like, it's just the memory of a wife.
<laughter> Scary metaphor!

Lori 50:01

It's such a good book and there's so much... I kept thinking of you, Haley, you're gonna love it. There's so much, like, fried an egg, made the coffee, cooked the bacon. Like it's just it's very evocative. The ghosts are cool. The people are likable, the narrator is likable, but also kind of a D sometimes. There's a lot going on, and it is very good. [Amy: Great!] So if you have the opportunity to buy it and read it and listen along with us, I highly recommend it because that is a great book.

Haley 50:27

I have such fond memories of reading the witch one we read last October, and making little flannel hands. <laughter> [Amy: "Conjure Wife" was awesome.] I enjoyed that.

Amy 50:30

That whole period of our lives was great.

Haley 50:39

It was a good spooky season last year, I anticipate a good one coming up. And so I'll tell y'all now. I am planning a party for around October. I've got to pick the people. I want it to be like around ten people. So there's, there's at least four of us going. I want to have a haunted doll party where you have to find or make a haunted doll and bring it to my house. And you have to write like a paragraph about why it's so haunted. [Amy: A paragraph!] Because I want a

backstory to this doll. [Amy: Okay, I love this plan.] You can go buy a Barbie doll you can go to the thrift shop, but I want it to be a spooky doll. And I want everyone to put, like, the old college try into it. [Amy: I'm very excited.] So I'm gonna come up with a clever name for it and then invite around ten people. [Amy: Cool.] And we're gonna have haunted dolls.

Amy 51:19

So we can share our paragraph with the group?

Haley 51:21

Yes. And the doll's name, and why it's haunted. It's gonna be so fun!

Amy 51:24

Kind of a spooky Cabbage Patch.

Haley 51:25

Yeah, I'm excited. <laughter> Maybe we'll put some photos on Hugo, Girl! so.

Lori 51:30

Yeah, why not?

Haley 51:31

If there's a doll that was left on a spaceship and it's gonna space you, bring it!

Amy 51:34

You guys, if you guys want to submit some spooky dolls and some spooky doll backstories to our email at hugogirlpodcast at gmail dot com, we will share the good ones on our social media.

Lori 51:44

The good ones!

Haley 51:44

That's true, we could just open it up.

Amy 51:46

The good ones, the bad ones - no.

Haley 51:49

You know the bad ones will be the best.

Lori 51:51

You just send us a Barbie we're not posting it.

Amy 51:54

You have to do the college try as said earlier. [Lori: That's a fun idea.] So basically that means if you try it all we'll share it on social media.

Lori 52:01

Yeah, I have a feeling we're not going to be inundated so we'll probably have the bandwidth to share them.

Amy 52:07

Keep the hope alive.

Lori 52:09

Alright anything else?

Amy 52:10

No! Don't forget to rate, review, and subscribe.

Lori 52:14

Yes please.

Amy 52:15

Because if you write a review Lori can carry on living for another month. So do that for her.

Lori 52:22

Thank yooooou.

Amy 52:23

Thank you bye bye.

Lori 52:24

Bye!

Amy 52:25

[Post-outro] But I really want to say things when we do the room tone.

Unidentified Goblin 52:39

Helooooooooooooo.