

Not Your Mother's Library Transcript

Episode 17: Zucchini or Zucchini's?

(Brief intro music)

Rachel: Hello, and welcome to Not Your Mother's Library, a readers' advisory podcast from the Oak Creek Public Library. I'm Rachel.

Leah: And I'm Leah.

Rachel: We are pleased to be able to welcome you back inside the library building! It has been open with restricted hours and services since early July, so mask up and come on by to browse some books! We've missed you. Leah, you and I both know that given the effect of COVID-19 on our community, programs have been getting dialed back—or going virtual—to ensure everyone's safety. Luckily, this has not had much of an impact on the Summer Reading Challenge, something that we put on every year without fail. There is still some time left to participate...why don't you fill our listeners in?

Leah: Sure! The Summer Reading Challenge promotes a love of reading well away from school. Patrons of all ages can take part. Just read and log 10 hours of any books you want. This year, the Challenge is available entirely online, and you can earn badges by writing book reviews, completing activities, and—of course—reading! You will receive special recognition on our giant Jack and the Beanstalk mural for reading at least 10 hours. Go to our website at oakcreeklibrary.org/src to sign up.

Rachel: And I have to say: Leah designed and painted that mural, and it looks incredible.

Leah: Thank you.

Rachel: Of course! If you or members of your family have completed the challenge but, if you're not comfortable coming inside the building itself, you can still see your name in fame by walking around to the north side of the building—that's right across from the town square—and take a looksee at the windows. The mural spans both floors, but we're doing our best to keep all of your names on ground level so that you can read them more easily. The Challenge ends August 15th, so there's still time! With that, let's start today's podcast. I thought we could discuss some of the things we have been reading toward our own 10-hour goals, but Leah also brought a very important holiday to my attention.

Leah: You guys.

Rachel: (laughs)

Leah: August 8th is 'National Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor's Porch Day'!

Rachel: Woo!

Leah: Who know that they had a day for that? And about that holiday in particular...we used to have this ongoing competition all summer for being able to sneak extra garden produce onto neighbors' porches. So, this holiday speaks to me.

Rachel: (laughs)

Leah: My dad had a bountiful garden growing up, and so did a few of my neighbors. So, quite often we'd open the front door and see a paper bag full of produce and, specifically, zucchinis. And we sure would return that favor with our bountiful harvest. One crop my dad always had a lot of were Asian pears. We would have bags and bags and bags full of them from his tree. My mind sure was blown when I got to try some as an adult and they were, like, \$2.00 apiece at the grocery store.

Rachel: Ouch.

Leah: Yeah! I'd also like to add that when I was searching for ideas about zucchini, I came across a movie named "My Life as a Zucchini." But don't be fooled; it's not a movie about a vegetable! The main character is actually nicknamed 'Zucchini'. Now, it's an animated PG-13 movie featuring Nick Offerman, Ellen Page, Amy Sedaris, and Will Forte. From what I gather, it's a movie about an orphan who goes to a foster home and learns to love and trust again. I haven't watched it yet, but I certainly did check out Oak Creek's copy so I can! Anyways, I grabbed a book entitled "Vegetable Literacy," by Deborah Madison. It has a whole chapter on summer squash which is technically what zucchini is, if you were unaware. When I was flipping through it, one recipe that really caught my attention was "Roasted Spaghetti Squash with Winter Tomato Sauce." This reminded me of one of the things my mom used to do with our extra zucchini, which was make mostaccioli with a spicy Italian sausage, and she'd add in some sautéed zucchini. That dish just reminds me so much of summer, where at first it was amazing and by the end of summer you were really sick of it.

Rachel: (laughs) Sure.

Leah: No more zucchini!

Rachel: (laughs)

Leah: So, the recipe in "Vegetable Literacy" hits a lot of the same notes as my childhood food, although mushrooms are replacing the spicy sausage. I have every intention of giving it a shot, and maybe I'll add in a pinch of red pepper flakes for some spice.

Rachel: You know, I didn't really start using zucchini in my cooking until this year. My husband and I started using a subscription dinner service where a company sends us a set of ingredients to make so many meals a week, and zucchini are sometimes included as one of the side dishes. But I enjoy them for an entirely different reason. Have you guys ever seen those videos on YouTube about cats getting scared by zucchinis or cucumbers?

Leah: (laughs)

Rachel: The videos are so dumb. (laughs)

Leah: But they're so good!

Rachel: They're...they are great. Basically, you place either one of these vegetables behind a cat as its eating or distracted or whatever, and when it turns and notices this thing on the ground, the poor creature jumps out of its skin. (laughs) If you start typing the question 'Why are cats...' into a search engine, the top auto-completion is 'afraid of cucumbers'. So, way to go, Googlers! You have made me proud. One theory is that these vegetables look enough like snakes to trigger cats' instinctive fear of them. Now, I don't want you to try to scare your poor kitty by leaving some surprise cukes lying in

wait—that’s a mean thing to do. But also funny. But mostly mean! There are already plenty of compilations of this phenomenon online to sate your sadism, anyway. Instead, I recommend using these vegetables as intended.

Leah: Good plan.

Rachel: (laughs) I picked up a cookbook called “Harvest: Unexpected Projects Using 47 Extraordinary Garden Plants” by Stefani Bittner. It’s available as part of OCPL’s physical collection, and it caught my eye because it has some really nice photographs, and the recipes make use of some...unusual plants. Amaranth for a midseason herb salad, pineapple guava for syrup, Australian finger lime for G & T...these all strike me as being uncommon, but the author also includes a table with ingredient alternatives that might be easier for you to find at the grocery store. The book boasts ‘projects’ rather than ‘recipes’ outright, and a lot of them are for decorative purposes or for indigestibles like facial scrubs and toner.

Leah: Don’t eat the facial scrub or toner.

Rachel: You really shouldn’t. If you have time on your hands to try your hand at making that sort of stuff, then this book is perfect for you. I don’t normally read cookbooks, though. So, to help me meet my 10-hour goal for Summer Reading, I settled down with my go to, which is fiction. If any of you listened Mini-episode #4 of Not Your Mother’s Library, you’ll remember that I discussed the “Uncharted” video game franchise. For people who don’t know me that well, let me explain: I hyperfixate on things that I like.

Leah: (laughs)

Rachel: It’s just one feature of my stunning personality.

Leah: Stunning!

Rachel: (laughs) So, after I played each game in the “Uncharted” series, I wanted more and found a tie-in novel. It’s called “The Forth Labyrinth” and is written by Christopher Golden, an author who has written plenty of other media tie-ins for shows like “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and “Sons of Anarchy.” Anyway, “Uncharted” itself is all about adventure, and “The Fourth Labyrinth” takes readers to Egypt, Greece, and China as a group of treasure hunters try to uncover the mystery of some ancient mazes. There’s murder, and minotaurs, and mayhem. Whether you’re familiar with “Uncharted” or not, it’s a fun, fast-paced read. Mostly, though, I want to advocate for media tie-in novels. If you are a fan of a particular game, TV show, or movie, it’s pretty much guaranteed that you’ll be able to find a tie-in for it. The bonus here is that if you like the original work you’ll probably also enjoy reading an expanded universe story. If you’re looking for something to read, try looking up a tie-in for a work that you already know and love. What have you been reading for the SRC, Leah?

Leah: Well, I read very fast. So, something that I reread recently is a book by Linda Howard simply called “Prey.” And that’s ‘prey’ like ‘predator and prey’, not in a religious sense.

Rachel: (laughs) Sure, sure.

Leah: The book is about a woman who works as a guide for tourists in the Montana wilderness. And, if you guys listen to a lot of the mini-episodes that I did, you’ll notice a lot of them are themed around camping and hiking and wilderness. So, this might not come as any surprise that I enjoy fiction about it, too. Anyways, so she works as a guide for tourists in the wilderness. There’s a local guy in town who has

the same kind of business, and they're rivals in business...butt heads. Our heroine, Angie, takes two men out on a guided trip rather late in the season. The only problem? One of the guys kills the other guy.

Rachel: Oh, jeez.

Leah: And then tries to kill Angie.

Rachel: Oh, no!

Leah: Which is very dramatic!

Rachel: Very! (laughs)

Leah: They have a huge struggle...

Rachel: Yeah!

Leah: Only to be interrupted by a grizzly bear who was attracted by the smell of the blood. The killer makes a dramatic getaway with all of the horses.

Rachel: Oh, no.

Leah: And Angie ends up hurting her ankle in the process. But she does get away from the bear!

Rachel: So, it's not like "The Revenant?"

Leah: No.

Rachel: (laughs)

Leah: Not at all.

Rachel: That's good!

Leah: That's just the start of her trouble, though. She's injured and can't walk in the middle of the Montana wilderness as a bad storm bears down on the area. The killer—as I said—took all of the horses with him when he escaped. But Angie is a strong woman and, basically, she just starts crawling down the mountain, trying to go for help. Just as she's at a real low point, enter the story's hero. Her competitor, Dare, happens to have a personal cabin somewhat near where this occurred. He's a veteran who's up there for the weekend, and was awoken by pistol shots. See, in the wilderness you might expect to hear rifle shots if you're protecting yourself from an animal, and because he only heard three pistol shots relatively spaced out, he thought it was unlikely that the shots were for protection from an animal. So, he saddles up his horse to go take a look and see if Angie is okay. He does eventually come across her, quite by accident, and oh my gosh do they have trials and tribulations getting back to Dare's cabin. But enough about that. I don't want to spoil any of the ending for the story, but suffice it to say there are a lot of challenges that Angie and Dare will have to face in the future. And, just as an FYI, this is a romance, so there are some steamy scenes at Dare's cabin, and we do get a happily ever after. I hope you guys have found some new favorites or rediscovered some old ones during your summer reading.

Rachel: Very nice, and I think that is where we will end of episode. Be sure to check the show notes for information on the Summer Reading Program and log your hours for 10 hours of reading before August 15th! Subscribe and rate the podcast if you like what you hear. You can reach us through Oak Creek

Public Library's website or Facebook page. Just use the #notyourmotherslibrary. Until next time, happy reading.

Leah and Rachel: Bye!

(Brief outro music)