

Not Your Mother's Library Transcript

Episode 35: Oceans of Possibilities

(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, and since Leah has flown the coop, I am currently the show's only host. Which is fine, right? We'll keep each other company, listeners. Even better, on this episode we have a couple of guests. Please welcome our Youth Services Librarians Amanda and Meagan. It's great to have you both here!

Meagan: Thanks for having us.

Amanda: Yes, hello!

Rachel: Of course! Yes. (laughs) Now, I am chomping at the bit to get this episode going, because it is all about the Summer Reading Challenge. For those who don't know, the annual reading challenge is a big deal here at the library. I will let Amanda and Meagan tell us all about it.

Amanda: All right, thank you, Rachel!

Rachel: Mhm!

Amanda: We are very excited for this all-ages Summer Reading Challenge that runs until Saturday, August 6th. Participants who read for ten hours will receive a prize and have their name added to the window mural overlooking Drexel Town Square. This year's theme is Oceans of Possibilities.

Meagan: You can join the challenge by going to our website and creating an account with Beanstack, which is a helpful program where you can track your reading and earn electronic badges for your reading, and from doing other activities like making a pizza that has a face made out of toppings...

Rachel: (laughs)

Meagan: ...or checking out a book from our library's featured Sikh Collection. Earning badges is a lot of fun.

Rachel: And we love to promote literacy here at the library. Keeping minds active during the summer months is very important. By the time this episode goes out, the Challenge itself will be in full swing, and

there are plenty of programs to attend! Could you tell our listeners a little bit about what's on the docket?

Amanda: So, we have, um, Oceans of Possibilities with the Racine Zoo. That is on July 12th at 1:30. So, this program introduces students to endangered species, combining an illustrated storybook with live animal meet-and-greets.

Rachel: Ooo!

Amanda: It takes participants on a journey through the sea. Um, if you are interested in, um, getting close to the animals—six feet or closer—or be able to touch an animal, you do need to wear a mask.

Rachel: That's good to know.

Meagan: Mmhm.

Amanda: Uh, we have Story Times at the Farmers Market. Um, so, on Saturday, July 2nd and August 6th, and September 3rd. Um, two different time slots—9:30 and 10:30—in Drexel Town Square. Um, this twenty-minute interactive Story Time incorporates stories, songs, and rhymes. We also have STEAM Labs for grades 1st through 6th. So, we are going to work as a team to create, experiment, and learn through hands-on activities such as building a boat, making a Hexbot Drawbot, and creating a paper plate maze. Um, this does require registration.

Rachel: Sure.

Amanda: Um, we have a Tween Board Game Club July 13th, 20th, and 27th. Tweens in grades 6th through 8th are welcome to join us for an afternoon of playing board games at the library from 3:00 to 4:00.

Meagan: We'll also have more Story Times inside. So, starting the week of July 11th, our lineup will include Music and Movement on Mondays, Baby Story Time on Tuesdays, and Toddler Story Time on Wednesdays. For all of these you get to choose between a twenty minutes time slot at 9:30 or 10:30. Make sure to check in at the children's reference desk when you arrive. Prior registration is not required, but space is limited to the first fifteen families. We'll also be hosting Family Fun afternoons on Thursdays where the whole family is invited to have fun with various stations and hands-on activities that explore different themes likes maps, the water cycle, and oceans. This program is geared towards children ages four to eleven with an adult, and of course siblings are welcome.

Rachel: Cool.

Meagan: We'll also have Drop-in LEGO® Challenges on Tuesdays, July 19th and July 26th. Drop by the library's Story Time Room any time between 1:30 and 4:00 p.m. to try a new and exciting LEGO® Challenge.

Rachel: Those all sound incredible! When I was a child, LEGOs were the best!

Meagan: Oh, yeah!

Rachel: So, Drop-in Challenges would have been my jam.

Amanda: (laughs)

Rachel: And, who am I kidding? They're just as fun now that I'm an adult. (laughs) That's just me adding fuel to the fire of grown-ups being nothing more than giant kids.

Meagan: Agreed.

Rachel and Meagan: (laughs)

Rachel: Uh, anyway, I thought our listeners might like to get some reading recommendations that are on-theme with 'Oceans of Possibilities'. These can be books about the ocean, sea life, boating—anything nautical. So, first up I chose a book called "The Girl from the Sea" by Molly Know Ostertag It's a "teen summer romance graphic novel," and I'm just going to read out a bit of the blurb because it's very thorough.

Amanda: (laughs)

Rachel: So, "Fifteen-year-old Morgan has a secret: She can't wait to escape the perfect little island where she lives. She's desperate to finish high school and escape her sad divorced mom, her volatile little brother, and worst of all, her great group of friends...who don't understand Morgan at all. Because really, Morgan's biggest secret is that she has [lots] of secrets. Then one night, Morgan is saved from drowning by a mysterious girl named Keltie. The two become friends and, suddenly, life on the island doesn't seem so stifling anymore. But Keltie has some secrets of her own. And as the girls start to fall in love, everything they're each trying to hide will find its way [back] to the surface...whether Morgan is ready or not." Now, this isn't a spoiler, because it is very obvious from the get-go that Keltie is a selkie, which is a creature that's half fish, half human.

Meagan: Oh yeah.

Rachel: Kind of like mermaid. (laughs) She's also very sweet and innocent because she isn't tied down by cultural human standards.

Amanda: Hm.

Rachel: The story features a female protagonist who not only struggles to come out to her family and friends but also contends with being biracial in America. Morgan doesn't like sticking out from the crowd and, over the course of the summer, she gains a lot of self-confidence and is finally able to feel more comfortable in her own skin. Keltie's struggle, on the other hand, is choosing a skin. As a shape-shifter, she can change with ease, but before befriending Morgan she's never felt much need to show her human face. If you're looking for a readalike, I suggest another graphic novel called "You Brought Me the Ocean" by Alex Sanchez. This one also has LGBTQ elements and magical beings that live in the water. I also have another recommendation for a series called "The Syrena Legacy" by Anna Banks. This is a young adult series and, again, I'm just going to read some of the blurb. So, it's "a romantic fantasy...trilogy. Galen, the mermaid prince of the underwater kingdom of Syrena, travels to land in order to find a girl who is said to be able to communicate with fish. There he meets Emma...who he has an immediate connection with and who may be the key to saving his kingdom. As the series continues, Emma finds that she has connections to the undersea world that put her at odds both with mermaids and with humans. With the help of Galen, she has to work to reconcile the two worlds in order to continue her life in peace." It sounds like your typical forbidden romance between two people from different worlds, but there is a lot of political intrigue and lots of drama. The point of view shifts between Galen and Emma, which can also be pretty refreshing. The Syrena Legacy is highly rated, and there are a few novellas to go with it if you can't get enough of the underwater world Banks has created.

Meagan: All of those sound good!

Rachel: Yeah!

Meagan and Rachel: (laugh)

Amanda: All right, so, my picks are not that thorough.

Rachel, Amanda, and Meagan: (laughs)

Amanda: So, I just picked a couple picture books that are 'under the sea'.

Rachel: Sure.

Amanda: So, we have, uh, the “Tickly Octopus”—

Rachel: (laughs)

Amanda: —by Ruth Galloway. Um, so “Octopus enjoys tickling other creatures, although most of them want him to stop, but one day his tickling causes big trouble and while he is trying to set things right, he discovers that he is good at doing other things, as well.” And then, another picture book is called “I Am a Shark” by Bob Shea. Um, so, this is about “a boastful shark [who says he’s] not afraid of anything, which impresses his underwater friends until they ask about spiders.

Meagan: Mm!

Rachel: (laughs) I understand that fear so thoroughly. (laughs)

Amanda: (laughs) Yes, big bad shark afraid of spiders.

Rachel: (laughs)

Amanda: Um, then we have “Bunny Overboard” by Claudia Rue...day-a? I think it’s called Rueda? So, “Bunny goes sailing on the sea, and the reader is invited to follow instructions to blow wind into his sails, rock the boat, and guess what Bunny will see next as he explores undersea life.” So, this one’s a very interactive picture book where your little one can help tell the story with you.

Meagan: Aw, fun!

Rachel: Nice.

Meagan: I also chose three picture books.

Rachel: Mmhm.

Meagan: Um, because they are awesome. So, my first one is “The Tale of the Whale,” and it’s written by Karen Swann and illustrated by Padmacandra. This book rhymes, has beautiful illustrations, and inspires me to use less plastic.

Rachel: Hm.

Meagan: So, here's the description: "A child joins a friendly whale for a magical journey of discovery. They sail the blue ocean, dance with dolphins, and tail-splash seagulls. But the child also sees an ocean filled with plastic trash. And that inspires a promise of help, for the whale and all [of] earth's creatures."

Rachel: That sounds really nice.

Meagan: Yeah, it's...it's pretty, too.

Rachel: Yeah.

Meagan: Um, okay, and my next one is "The Ocean Calls: A Haenyeo Mermaid Story." It's written by Tina Cho and is illustrated by Jess X. Snow. So, this one also has some mermaid vibes and features an adorable intergenerational relationship. So, "Dayeon wants to be a haenyeo just like Grandma. The haenyeo dive off the coast of Jeju Island to pluck treasures from the sea—generations of Korean women have done so for centuries. To Dayeon, the haenyeo are as strong and graceful as mermaids. To give her strength, Dayeon eats Grandma's abalone porridge. She practices holding her breath while they do the dishes. And when Grandma suits up for her next dive, Dayeon grabs her suit, flippers, and goggles. A scary memory of the sea keeps Dayeon clinging to the shore, but with Grandma's guidance, Dayeon comes to appreciate the ocean's many gifts."

Rachel: Interesting!

Meagan: Yeah! Also beautiful.

Rachel: Mmhm.

Meagan: Um, okay, and then my last one is "The Mysterious Sea Bunny" written and illustrated by Peter Raymundo. This book is one of my favorite combinations: silly and informative. And even the description is a little funny. It says, "Shh, we are about to observe the one-inch-long sea bunny—"

Rachel: (laughs)

Meagan: "—as it journeys slowly across the ocean floor! Along the way, we'll learn some interesting facts: how it crawls upside-down using slime, how it breathes through its...um...fluffy-looking backside,"

Rachel: (laughs)

Meagan: “—and why predators would be in for an unsavory surprise if they ever got ahold of it. Young readers will float away with loads of new knowledge about this fascinating sea slug species, and they'll be reminded to never judge a book by its cover—or a sea slug by its slime.”

Rachel: That was a very good ‘David Attenborough’.

Meagan and Amanda: (laugh)

Rachel: I liked that.

Meagan: I was trying!

Rachel and Meagan: (laugh)

Meagan: I can't do an accent, but I tried. (laughs)

Rachel: You did great. I loved it.

Meagan: (laughs) Thanks!

Rachel: So, that is all that we have time for for today's episode. Thank you, Amanda and Meagan, for being such fabulous guests!

Amanda: (laughs)

Meagan: Thank you for having us.

Amanda: Yes!

Rachel: Of course!

Meagan: Mmhm.

Rachel: I'm even more hyped for the Summer Reading Challenge now, as if that were possible! Listeners, remember to visit the show notes section for a complete list of everything we just talked about, plus links to sign up for the Challenge and various programs. We hope you will subscribe and rate the podcast if you like what you hear. Reach us at any time through the Oak Creek Public Library website or Facebook page by messaging @OakCreekLibrary. Until next time, happy reading. Bye!

Amanda and Meagan: Bye!

(Brief outro music)