



Read with Pride, Ep. 6, Sorry, Bro

Transcript:

00;00;09;17 - 00;00;17;27

Voiceover

[VOICEOVER] Hello and welcome to Read with Pride, a podcast focused on LGBTQIA+ literature brought to you by the Ocean County Library's Ocean Pride Committee.

00;00;18;21 - 00;00;22;17

Diane

[DIANE] Hi, I'm Diane. I work for the Toms River Branch, and I'm on the Ocean Pride Committee.

00;00;23;04 - 00;00;39;24

Frank

[FRANK] Hi. My name's Frank. I work at the Lakewood Branch of the Ocean County Library, and I am on the Ocean Pride Committee. And today, we're going to be talking about the novel *Sorry, Bro* by Taleen Voskuni. So, Diane, overall, what was your impression of this book?

00;00;40;15 - 00;00;46;16

Diane

[DIANE] I liked it. I thought it was a good book. It wasn't my favorite. Oh, I didn't know if I was going to start by saying that.

00;00;46;16 - 00;00;48;06

Frank

[FRANK] I'm really excited.

00;00;49;16 - 00;01;14;12

Diane

[DIANE] But I did like it. I felt it was a good piece for our Read with Pride. But I was just thinking it had that same kind of a woman deciding like, "Oh, I am bisexual" and I feel like I'm maybe finding more books like that. I don't know if it's because what's going on in my life or if that's what is out there on the market.

00;01;14;21 - 00;02;30;01

Frank

[FRANK] All right. Well, I will say that I found Sorry, Bro to be very good for what I think is a pretty solid and well-established genre of closed door Sapphic romance novels. I think that it is very good and I think it's very notable for its engaging in culture and tradition despite being a very queer novel. And I'd love to get more into that. But I felt like our protagonist, Nar, who comes from a very tight knit Armenian family, she is aware that she's bisexual. She's just been kind of stealth about it, where she's always dated men. She messed around in college, and never felt a need to publicly come out because of how she felt her very conservative, tight knit family and community would respond. I will say we definitely have a lot of "Oh, I've never felt this way about a woman before" in Sapphic media, and I would love to see more romances that focus on unapologetically and already openly queer characters.

00;02;30;05 - 00;02;34;00

Diane

[DIANE] Hmm. Well, when you say closed door, what do you mean by that?

00;02;34;01 - 00;03;03;08

Frank

[FRANK] Oh, so I am - I'm not closeted about many things these days - but for a while I'm coming out of the closet as a romance reader. So there are different terms thrown around in romance. So you can be like, Oh, this is really spicy. And that means that there are more explicit and adult scenes. Sorry, Bro as well as the other book by this author are closed door romances, which means that when things are getting steamy, we fade to black.

00;03;03;08 - 00;03;05;14

Diane

[DIANE] Got it. More of a clean read, sort of.

00;03;05;14 - 00;03;15;12

Frank

[FRANK] More of a clean read for people who don't necessarily want something explicit but aren't opposed to adult romance in concept.

00;03;15;13 - 00;03;16;25

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, thank you for educating me on that.

00;03;16;27 - 00;03;17;26

Frank

[FRANK] Happy to do so.

00;03;18;18 - 00;03;26;10

Diane

[DIANE] We do want to mention briefly about the Armenian Genocide because that was a huge topic in this book. Did you want a minute to talk about that?

00:03;26;18 - 00:04;54;23

Frank

[FRANK] I will do my best. Sorry, Bro focuses, as I've mentioned, on a young Armenian woman living in the San Francisco Bay Area. The whole book revolves around her giving up on her previous relationship with a non-Armenian boyfriend that she'd had for years right after he proposes disastrously. And she finally agrees to let her mom vet nice Armenian boys for her. And Nar will go to various cultural events at this month-long Explore Armenia Festival that has food classes and then like a series of lectures and Voskuni does not shy away from the fact that the Armenian Genocide one: happened, two: continues to impact the diasporic community to this day. This is not a history podcast. I am not going to claim to be a subject expert by any means. The library does have a handful of materials if you are interested in researching more. And I will say that after reading this book, I was moved to do a little bit more research because this is something that not enough people know about. And I really do respect Voskuni for choosing to infuse it into a romance novel, which you don't traditionally expect to take such big swings.

00:04;55;18 - 00:06;00;19

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I was interested in it because I didn't know anything about it. You know? And when we were pre-talking about it, Frank had said, "Hey, how are we going to touch on this?" And I'm like, "Oh, do they touch on a lot?" And they do. It's definitely spoken about, you know, a lot. But then I think of my family and, you know, my family's from Italy and not my family, but my ancestors. So, yeah, that's a big part of my family that were are Italian descent. So of course, it should be a big part of their family. So it did definitely make me also do a little research and find out that we have some books in the library. So it's important to mention it. And I think it's good to know there's more diverse authors out there. You know, that's what's good, too, because I did find another - some other books in YA that we'll talk about later a little bit that have people from Armenian descent. So it's important to have the diverse voices out there so we can get these books. So did you find any similarities between you and these characters, and what character do you find yourself relating to the most?

00:06;01;03 - 00:07;25;26

Frank

[FRANK] Who? I found myself relating to Erebuni, the love interest of this book quite a bit, because I myself am queer and I'm bisexual. I'm transgender, and I also have been working very hard to connect with my cultural roots. And this is something I mentioned earlier that I really respected about this book, because so often when people hear like, Oh, you know, like, I can't tell my Italian nonna that I'm gay, it'll break her heart. I have been working very hard on being myself, who is like, I'm unapologetically queer and trans and Jewish and Syrian and Italian and all of these things make up who I am. So the fact that Erebuni very much brings her whole self into her professional life, that she works on a center for genocide studies and is a scholar and an expert, and also doesn't hide herself in her professional capacity as a queer woman. So even to the point where it can negatively impact her standing within the community, I really respected that. And it's something that I try hard to emulate in my own personal life. What about you?

00:07;26;23 - 00:07;30;00

Diane

[DIANE] I was opposite. I definitely related more to is it Nareh.

00;07;30;10 - 00;07;31;10

Frank

[FRNAK] Nareh or Nar.

00;07;31;19 - 00;08;14;18

Diane

[DIANE] Nar, right, okay. And you're right, she did say that she's always been bisexual. She just was more closed or closed mouth about it, I guess. Right? Not as open, but I just recently am like, "Hey, maybe I'm bisexual." So in a way, in a way I've related more to her. Plus she's more timid. She in her work environment, she'll be like, okay, sort of let like somebody else take the glory. And I related to her in the family, the piece of the family, even though and they spoke about, you know, Catholicism. And that's what I was raised as Catholic and Catholic guilt. They even say somewhere like, oh, Catholic guilt. Yeah, that's it. That's a serious thing. You know, it's a it's something you work with and you deal with.

00;08;14;18 - 00;08;17;19

Frank

[FRANK] And our therapists certainly know about it.

00;08;17;22 - 00;08;35;27

Diane

[DIANE] That's right. That's for sure. Mental health matters, but, um, so I think I related more to her. And I like that she definitely grew. You know, there was definitely a growth. And I'd like to think in my life I keep moving forward and I keep growing. So that's who I found I related to more.

00;08;35;28 - 00;08;44;23

Frank

[FRANK] That's wonderful. And also it's awesome. And I hope you know that we're all very proud of you as you are open with this journey, because it is very scary.

00;08;44;24 - 00;08;56;03

Diane

[DIANE] Yes, I'm proud of you because, you know, I think we know there's always an age gap. I've spoken to other ones that I'm Gen X all the way and but definitely the youth because and you're younger than me.

00;08;56;03 - 00;08;57;01

Frank

[FRANK] I'm a zoomer.

00;08;57;01 - 00;09;16;03

Diane

[DIANE] That's right. Your generation - my children - they're so, like, unapologetic about who they are. And it gives me more power. Like, I think seeing my children gave me power to be who I am authentically, not easy. And not everybody knows. Unless they listen to this podcast, they might not know.

00;09;16;03 - 00;09;18;25

Frank

[FRANK] Our real friends are regular listeners, of course.

00;09;18;26 - 00;09;19;26

Diane

[DIANE] That's right. That's right.

00;09;21;20 - 00;09;32;06

Frank

[FRANK] So what did you find was like your favorite part and your least favorite part of the book? I have strong feelings. I always have strong feelings.

00;09;32;06 - 00;09;35;00

Diane

[DIANE] Can you go first then, or do you want me to?

00;09;35;00 - 00;09;36;21

Frank

[FRANK] I'll start by being a hater.

00;09;36;24 - 00;09;38;03

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, okay.

00;09;38;09 - 00;11;00;24

Frank

[FRANK] I'm going to come out swinging. I did not like Trevor. At Trevor's, the boyfriend at the beginning, and I wasn't supposed to like him. And specifically, I have notes where he, on like page 20 really early on... he's discussed as like, being really dismissive of Nar's Armenian-ness. And will even talk about like, "Oh, what's that devil language you're talking about?" You're talking in when she calls her mom and speaks in Armenian, whereas he very much so is like, "Hey, you should wear this beer maiden costume for me, no reason, but you should wear it. And I'm going to propose to you in a loud German beer hall and only call you by the German word for sweetheart and not your actual name." And there's the assumption that, like, she's going to take his name when he proposes, and it made Nar's skin crawl. And I think it was clear that he understood the value of your heritage because he's like very proudly, like half or a quarter German. And he's fluent in the language and he's very connected with his own culture and seemed to want Nar to just assimilate into his instead of really accepting her as a whole, which is why it didn't work out.

00;11;01;10 - 00;11;44;09

Diane

[DIANE] I'm going to jump in. You're right. Trevor, yeah, probably my least favorite and this might be a spoiler was when at the end Nar went to see Trevor and he had gotten a promotion and she lost her job, I think. And he's like, "Oh, you never have to work again." And like, I think he was saying it almost like that it doesn't matter, you know, and that if she works or not, which that's great if some people could be supported like that, but if they need to be or if they want to be. You know, he wasn't even - it wasn't even that option. And then he also invited his colleague from work to join them. And that was kind of weird. And so, yeah, you're right. Least favorite person is definitely Trevor.

00;11;44;21 - 00;11;57;27

Frank

[FRANK] He wasn't a bad guy. He was just kind of an idiot in a way that I did not personally find endearing. And I don't think it was the author's goal to make him endearing. So she succeeded very well there.

00;11;57;27 - 00;11;58;07

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah.

00;11;58;21 - 00;12;57;20

Frank

[FRANK] My favorite part of the book I really liked and I said this already, but like the message of being fully yourself that in Nar's eventual big coming out post on Instagram, she says, I am this person who will post these beautiful pictures of flowers and I will still enjoy a matcha oatmilk latte. But I am also Armenian. I am also bisexual and that is who I am. And if you don't like it, you can unfollow me. I thought that that really was a great summation of everything that happens in this book and her growth, because so often I feel like a lot of the growth that I see in romance novels is typically you're only overcoming like one particular challenge together and things can be more one dimensional. And I do think that Nar's growth was more multi-dimensional and she was a fuller character, which I really enjoyed.

00;12;58;01 - 00;13;38;13

Diane

[DIANE] It's so interesting because I like sometimes just a fluffy romance, and it definitely wasn't a fluffy romance, right? It definitely had some more heavier themes and maybe that's what made me lean towards like, do I? Did I like the book, you know? Yeah. So what's my favorite part? I did love the festivals, you know, like any kind of really fun times and the family parts. Like she definitely had a, a strong family, which made it very challenging for her to be who she wanted to be or to be open about it. But I enjoyed even the parties at the end. So yeah, I think my favorite part, I don't have a specific, but I think just the family aspect.

00;13;38;15 - 00;14;32;15

Frank

[FRANK] I do love a sassy grandma. I really liked how Nar's mother is. She's never reduced to this like one dimensional, like, Oh, my overbearing mom. She gets her own side development as well with finding a way to, like, reenter her community and make friends again after her husband's passing and her retiring from work. That's a whole side book, or it could be. And we also have Nar continuing to figure all this out and find these potential suitors. Oh, and like her mom and her cousin, make a spreadsheet and figure out who could be acceptable for you to check out at these events. It's very much so everyone's coming all together throughout the entire book, and I think that kind of sense of community was really cool.

00;14;32;18 - 00;15;11;09

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, there were a lot of characters. She had a lot of like even when you say that about the spreadsheet, I'm like, "Oh, that's right." There was even - I think there might have been an Orthodox priest. It was definitely a priest that - and he did like her wife interview. I was like, "Oh, wow." And it was it was a very small part of it, but it was yeah, it was used. So, and the other piece that wasn't my favorite or least favorite either way, but she lost her dad, you know, and that, that was a part of it also. So that was a heavy thing also, that there's their grief. And if I remember correctly, the way the dad died, she had to deal with that. So yeah, that was a big part of the book. There was a lot to the book for a rom com. Well, maybe it wasn't a rom com.

00;15;11;09 - 00;16;00;18

Frank

[FRANK] I would call it a romance - I don't - I would probably consider this a rom com, but I will say a lot of the romances that I end up reading, a lot of queer romances end up also being like, bam, background drama, bam, background drama. In my anecdotal personal experience, I am not a mental health expert. I'm just one guy. I found a lot of my, like best and closest queer friendships happen where it's like the first time I'm hanging out with you, then I'm like, "Well, I think it all happened, it started in my childhood," and then they'll just meet me where I am and do the same thing. And that's how you become queer best friends with people in my personal experience. So this might just be a thing in queer romance as well, because it is a thing that happens in queer life.

00;16;00;20 - 00;16;08;24

Diane

[DIANE] I don't really have an answer for this question, but I think it's important to ask because the title is Sorry, Bro. So what do you think the significance of the title is?

00;16;09;26 - 00;16;49;12

Frank

[FRANK] I think it's taken from dialog in the book where one of Erebuni's friends makes a joke after Nar rejects some guy who's like asking her out and he's like, "Yeah, sorry bro, you can't hang with us." And I also see it and I laugh because sometimes when you're out at a bar or something and a guy is hitting on a woman and she maybe isn't interested in men, it'll be like, "Sorry, bro, I'm gay, this isn't going to work." So that's what I think it might be.

00;16;49;20 - 00;17;20;07

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. When I look at a cover of a book, I'm like, sometimes drawn to it, and I had no idea. Sorry, Bro. Obviously, when we chose these titles, it was just like, "titles from 2023." I think that's how we came up to a lot of the titles, and I really had no idea. But yes, I'm sure it's like, sorry, bro, like you're not the one like, Hey, sorry, Trevor. Like, and that's where I saw it also, like sort of at the end when she was like, yeah, when she just came to the realization like, Oh yeah, no, this isn't the life for me.

00;17;20;08 - 00;17;29;08

Frank

[FRANK] Yeah. And that's definitely different from Voskuni's next book that came out this year in 2024 Lavash at First Sight.

00;17;29;08 - 00;17;29;25

Diane

[DIANE] Did you read it?

00;17;29;25 - 00;17;30;19

Frank

[FRANK] I did read it.

00;17;30;19 - 00;17;31;08

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, okay.

00;17;31;08 - 00;18;34;20

Frank

[FRANK] And it carries a lot of the same themes of the importance of Armenian-ness being part of your queerness and your culture and your queerness. It's very different where we have two Armenian families that are attending a packaged food conference in Chicago and they enter a competition and are pushed to be rivals by like producers of a show. And on the first night of the conference, our two love interests meet at a bar and like, immediately hit it off and then find out that their parents not only know each other, but almost went into business together and are now like sworn enemies. So it's very much like, "Oh, I have to hide that I'm dating this person. Really hitting it off with them. So that way our parents don't know." And it's less about hiding your queerness and more about like, don't wake up the parents or don't let them know. Don't let them see that we're gallivanting around Chicago having a great time.

00;18;36;07 - 00;18;37;26

Diane

[DIANE] How do you like it?

00;18;38;12 - 00;19;04;29

Frank

[FRANK] I don't know if I would say it's better. I think I think they're a similar level of quality. I like the title more because I am such a food person and so I think this one made a little bit more sense that it's all about Armenian food is really the heart and soul of this book and so to have a fun little food pun I really liked. So what other books do you find Sorry, Bro to be like in conversation with?

00;19;05;09 - 00;19;55;10

Diane

[DIANE] So yeah, I think one that I read a few months ago was called That Summer Feeling by Bridget Morrissey. And that one the reason again, it was a girl, a woman that was like realizing they're bisexual and they might have the same thing and might have like that they knew and but they were coming to realize it more and I think sharing it with her family. So that's why not so much the culture or the family, but just because of the bisexual piece of it. Two other books I grabbed were by Michael Barakiva. One is One Man Guy and the other one is Hold My Hand. Michael is a author of Armenian-Israeli descent. He lives in the city and these books I thought were similar, they're for a YA audience, but I thought they would have that same kind of vibe to them.

00;19;55;10 - 00;20;00;29

Frank

[FRANK] So tell me, is it about teenage girls, teenage boys, teenage non-binary people?

00;20;01;07 - 00;20;02;12

Diane

[DIANE] I didn't read them!

00;20;02;12 - 00;20;04;14

Frank

[FRANK] Oh, no!

00;20;04;14 - 00;20;08;05

Diane

[DIANE] I just researched a little and found it.

00;20;08;05 - 00;20;08;18

Frank

[FRANK] I'm sorry.

00;20;08;18 - 00;20;15;18

Diane

[DIANE] It's fine. But I think these are teenage boys. Let's see, we could all read the side. Sorry, Frank.

00;20;17;02 - 00;20;18;02

Frank

[FRANK] You're okay.

00;20;18;04 - 00;20;19;15

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, man, I'm not okay.

00;20;19;18 - 00;20;21;02

Frank

[FRANK] I think we're having fun.

00;20;21;02 - 00;20;45;19

Diane

[DIANE] We are, yup. Oh, okay. So interestingly, it has a lot about a restaurant. You know, his parents took him to a restaurant, and he's saying that Armenians never eat out because our food is so much better. So why would they go to a restaurant? So then he has to go to summer school and that's why his parents brought him out to pick up his grades. And when he goes to summer school, that's when he meets Ethan. So this is two boys.

00;20;46;04 - 00;20;47;07

Frank

[FRANK] That sounds cute.

00;20;47;12 - 00;20;50;04

Diane

[DIANE] And then the next book is like a continuation.

00;20;50;21 - 00;20;54;04

Frank

[FRANK] As someone who works with teens, I might have to pick this up now.

00;20;54;04 - 00;21;00;05

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, you can check them right out. We have them in our system, and I think Hoopla also.

00;21;00;05 - 00;21;48;27

Frank

[FRANK] Very exciting. Following on the food theme now, obviously this book is in conversation with the follow up book by the author, but I also want to connect it to one of my personal favorite romance authors and series: The Chef's Kiss and Chef's Choice by TJ Alexander. Chef's Kiss is about a bisexual woman Simone who ends up - kind of in an enemies-to-lovers kind of way - falling for Ray, a non-binary kitchen manager at her fancy food magazine job. It really does kind of read like Bon Appétit fan fiction. Some people are going to get what that means immediately and some people aren't and that's okay.

00;21;49;07 - 00;21;55;00

Diane

[DIANE] I think we should have a podcast where we talk about books and have food, and then we can also bring the favorite dishes from it.

00;21;55;00 - 00;21;56;05

Frank

[FRANK] I would love to do that.

00;21;56;05 - 00;21;57;20

Diane

[DIANE] We'll do that next year, I'm sure.

00;21;58;25 - 00;23;25;12

Frank

[FRANK] But the reason I felt like this was in conversation with it was because like Nareh, struggling to bring her Armenian-ness into the newsroom after her boss is like, "No one cares about reading Armenian stories. No one's going to read that. Go interview a girl who wrote a letter about hats to the princess in England or the Grand Duchess or whatever." Simone and Ray are having a really hard time advocating for themselves as a group of workers who are struggling against a boss who's in charge of bringing the magazine into the 21st century and doing, like, fun videos. This guy isn't listening to the ideas that are actually interesting and popular, and the magazine is incredibly hostile to Ray's being non-binary. Ray needs this job to get health insurance to cover their top surgery and so they can't really leave. But they also are very clearly struggling and need the support of the other people that they're working with to figure out what to do next. Simone is not "not" openly bi, similarly to Nareh, but she has never brought it up at work. And that does come up in Chef's Kiss. And I'm not going to spoil how it does because I do think people should read this book. It's really good.

00;23;26;28 - 00;23;27;16

Diane

[DIANE] I have it on my list.

00;23;27;19 - 00;24;42;11

Frank

[FRANK] Yes, and this book also very much so centered around food and unapologetically being yourself. And those are two things that I am really passionate about. I thought that it was really funny when Nareh, so this is a thing that frequently happens in these like, I'm out, I know that I'm bi, but I'm not like 100% out, is that the character who's not 100% out needs to find a way to out themselves without being weird. And the way that Nareh did it was just being like, Oh yeah, it's June Pride month. We're making Kabobs Pride Month. Not going to say anything else about it. I thought that was hilarious. As someone who considers themselves practically a walking Pride flag, I definitely could see where Erebuni might have taken that to just be like, "Is she trying to tell me something? You can just say it. You can just say, 'By the way, I'm bi.'" But I found it really endearing and I found it really funny. So how did you consume the book?

00;24;42;19 - 00;25;02;04

Diane

[DIANE] I listen to all my books, almost all of them. It helps my ADHD brain to like be doing a few things at once. So I listen to it and I usually increase the speed. So audio version and we have it on hoopla. Oh no, we have it on Libby. This one is on Libby, so that's how I consumed it. What about you?

00;25;02;12 - 00;25;28;26

Frank

[FRANK] So this is actually my second time reading it, which is why I think I have all these details. The first time I read it, I read it digitally on Libby, and then this time I read it in the print version. I didn't feel a huge difference between going from digital to print. I think I probably would have really enjoyed listening to this as an audiobook because it seemed like the narrator gave the characters a lot of personality. Would you agree?

00;25;29;04 - 00;26;16;29

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah. I think what was interesting about the audiobook as compared to a print is I don't have the time a lot of times to write, like I'm not writing the notes. Sometimes I click a bookmark thing or something like that to remember, but when I'm really enjoying it, I don't need that. So I was enjoying it. And then I actually read it as I was driving up north. So I was in Jersey City, so I did kind of feel the like diverse culture vibe going on, like just, you know, all around. What's hard is because I increase the speed. Sometimes I don't get the right, what's the word I'm looking for? Maybe I increase the vibe a little bit too much when I... But no, I think they still conveyed it well in the book, the audio. Did you like the ending? Without spoiling too much.

00;26;17;10 - 00;27;11;24

Frank

[FRANK] I will say I did like the ending. I thought that it was appropriate if a little bit cheesy. There is a happy ending, folks. This is important. This book is not going to take your heart and put it on a roller coaster and then crash. It is cute. There are deep and dark moments, but you don't end in the long, dark night of the soul. I saw that it was on the more optimistic side of realistic. That things are not going to be perfect, but when you have your person or people and you have your community and your chosen family, which can also include your biological family, things that people say are less scary. So I liked it.

00;27;12;02 - 00;27;23;17

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I like the ending. I thought it wrapped it up nice and it was a positive ending. You know, like you said, it's a happy ending, but that's what I was looking for. You know, with the book.

00;27;23;18 - 00;27;32;07

Frank

[FRANK] When I'm reading a romance, I want to be left with a warm, fuzzy feeling. And I definitely think this delivered.

00;27;32;15 - 00;28;19;16

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, sure. Yeah. I mean, there's a time for every book. Sometimes you need like a good harsh cry or sometimes you want maybe a horror read. Not as much for me, but I'm giving it a try. But no, this is good. Oh, and then our next question is, have you or would you read another book by this author? So you already answered that. And I will give it another try, especially because I'm pretty sure she's a newer author. I think her first novel is Sorry, k Bro. So I feel also if you are going out of the gate with her being the hard with Armenian, which is great and LGBTQ too, like I'm like, good for her. So yeah, I might. I should read another book to see. Also, I like it. And you said the other one's got more food stuff in it, so.

00;28;20;06 - 00;29;08;19

Frank

[FRANK] It's a food competition. A food convention. I love connecting with people through food and I think that food is also a really accessible way for people to learn more about other people's cultures, because you can learn a lot by like, what is the order in which dishes are served? Does it tend to have like multiple small things? Is it meat heavy? Is it dairy heavy? Is it heavy on fermented or preserved ingredients? And you can really learn about how labor intensive are traditional dishes because that can say something about like how much time is expected to be devoted to food versus other kinds of work. I think you got to call me when you do the food podcast.

00;29;08;19 - 00;29;13;20

Diane

[DIANE] Oh, for sure. You're a great podcast person.

00;29;13;20 - 00;29;14;08

Frank

[FRANK] Thank you.

00;29;14;08 - 00;29;30;18

Diane

[DIANE] You go deep, you know, like, wow. Like, I don't think I give as much thought to food and not that I... obviously growing up Italian like it's about food, but it's about sitting around the table and having good bread and your sauce and my family calls it sauce. Sorry, everyone out there.

00;29;30;19 - 00;29;31;17

Frank

[FRANK] No, I'm also from a sauce family.

00;29;32;01 - 00;29;45;22

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, it's about sitting and just enjoying and connecting at the table for hours on a time. All right, so this is the part that I asked for. Five quick thoughts. So, one, would you recommend this book to someone on the street?

00;29;45;22 - 00;29;55;16

Frank

[FRANK] Yeah. Yeah, I think it's funny. It's cute. Even if it does have some more serious moments. I think that this is something that is very broadly enjoyable.

00;29;55;20 - 00;29;59;28

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I think so. If you could give this book a different title, what would it be?

00;30;00;01 - 00;30;03;08

Frank

[FRANK] Oh, boy. I'm bad at these.

00;30;03;17 - 00;30;04;23

Diane

[DIANE] Giving a different title is hard.

00;30;04;23 - 00;30;05;19

Frank

[FRANK] Giving a different title is hard.

00;30;05;19 - 00;30;09;21

Diane

[DIANE] Because I'm like, that person, they chose that title for a reason, so...

00;30;11;16 - 00;30;17;00

Frank

[FRANK] I would want to do something like Explore Armenia with Heart.

00;30;17;00 - 00;30;31;25

Diane

[DIANE] Hmm. That's a good one. Like, yeah, because that was the thing she decided to give was called Explore Armenia, right? So she decides to give that a chance. So maybe like, yeah, like Explore and Love or something. Something.

00;30;31;25 - 00;30;41;17

Frank

[FRANK] I mean, there's also a more, I guess me, me, Gen Z way of being like Explorer Armenia, full homo. But I don't think that would sell as well.

00;30;41;17 - 00;30;45;14

Diane

[DIANE] Probably not, probably not. What emotions did you feel when you read this book?

00;30;45;19 - 00;31;11;12

Frank

[FRANK] I felt some highs. I felt some lows. There was no point in this book that brought me to tears. I did feel so triumphant when they finally kiss, I put the book down and I quite literally, I was in the waiting room of a doctor's office and I did a fist pump, "Yeah!" and then I continued to read. So people would not look at me quite as strangely.

00;31;11;12 - 00;31;36;23

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I felt the feelings. You're right. It was nothing too heavy. Even when I think about like, "Oh, yeah, that's right. Her dad died." Like, I'm not like, [sadder tone] "Oh, that's right. Her dad died." Like, it was something in the book, but it didn't make me feel anything so heavy. The next one we already spoke about. What format did you consume it? I was audio. Did you think your reaction would be different if you read in a different way? I sometimes think if I read things in print, I absorbed them a little better, but maybe not.

00;31;37;06 - 00;31;54;22

Frank

[FRANK] I think if I listen to the book, I may have been more emotionally moved. I find myself having stronger reactions to audiobooks because the performance aspect of audiobook narration is so impressive to me because you can emote so much with just slight changes in your voice.

00;31;55;20 - 00;32;04;26

Diane

[DIANE] Well, it's interesting you say that. Here's a little side thing - the book I'm just starting to listen to by Chuck Tingle. They have like ten narrators, so that's interesting

00;32;04;26 - 00;32;05;05

Frank

[FRANK] A full cast!

00;32;05;17 - 00;32;09;23

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah... and one of them is TJ Klune who is another author like, so I'm like...

00;32;09;23 - 00;32;11;03

Frank

[FRANK] I love them so much.

00;32;11;03 - 00;32;14;00

Diane

[DIANE] Oh my gosh, me too. You know, that second book's coming out.

00;32;14;01 - 00;32;19;02

Frank

[FRANK] I apologize for the person I'm going to be when that comes out. I will not talk about anything else.

00;32;19;03 - 00;32;25;12

Diane

[DIANE] I can't wait. I can't wait. We will have to talk about that in the future. If you could pick a theme song for this book, what would it be?

00;32;26;02 - 00;32;32;19

Frank

[FRANK] I think I would pick Naked in Manhattan by Chappell Roan.

00;32;32;19 - 00;32;33;26

Diane

[DIANE] It's a good book. Good song.

00;32;34;17 - 00;32;59;03

Frank

[FRANK] Specifically because the song is all about wanting to take that leap with someone for the first time. And even though Nareh hasn't like she's known that she's bi, but she hasn't really like, been in a relationship with a woman before, and I think that song has a lot to do about like, "Yeah, I'm gonna do it. I'm going to take that step and it might not work out, but what if it does?"

00;32;59;03 - 00;33;11;11

Diane

[DIANE] Well, now you say Chappell Roan, who I just started listening to, I'm a little behind the game, but there's that other one she has that would be good also. Is it Red Supernova?

00;33;11;11 - 00;33;11;24

Frank

[FRANK] Red Wine Supernova.

00;33;11;24 - 00;34;02;20

Diane

[DIANE] Red Wine Supernova, I think that would be good too by Chappell Roan. But the other thing is, I just found out that System of a Down the lead singer is Armenian descent and he actually has a book out and talks about the Armenian genocide. So I kind of think that maybe even though it's a little hard, maybe one of their songs and I think it's called Toxicity might be good, even though it's more of a heavy song... I just feel like to go along with Armenian descent would be good. And the lead singer from System of a Down, hold on because let me go to my... Serj Tankian, if saying that right, and he has a biography out that we have in the library. So yeah that's what I think. Do you have any other thoughts about the book?

00;34;03;10 - 00;34;19;29

Frank

[FRANK] Read queer books. I think that's a good way to end any of these is read more queer books, read own voices, authors. If you want to learn about a particular group's experience, that group is the best and by far most authoritative place to learn about it.

00;34;20;12 - 00;34;28;16

Diane

[DIANE] Yeah, I love having so many different authors and diverse authors that we can read and choose from. So yeah, super. All right. Well, thank you very much.

00;34;28;16 - 00;34;29;22

Frank

[FRANK] Thank you for having me.

00;34;30;26 - 00;34;45;12

Voiceover

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