



## Waves of YA, Ep. 26, Dystopian

### **Transcript:**

00;00;08;01 - 00;00;18;12

Chris

[CHRIS] Hello and welcome to Waves of YA, a podcast focused on YA literacy. Brought to you by the Ocean County Library's teen literacy workgroup. My name is Chris. I'm a teen librarian at the Lakewood Branch. Joining me today we have...

00;00;18;12 - 00;00;21;11

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Hi, I'm Brielle. I'm also a Lakewood YA teen librarian.

00;00;21;21 - 00;00;24;24

Rachel

[RACHEL] And I am Rachel. I am a teen librarian at the Barnegat Branch.

00;00;25;02 - 00;00;30;04

Chris

[CHRIS] Today's episode will be focused on dystopian novels. Do you have a favorite dystopian novel?

00;00;30;13 - 00;01;46;15

Rachel

[RACHEL] I'd start with this one. One of my very favorite dystopian novels, and this is also the novel that kind of got me really into reading is *The Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard. I love that series. So that book takes place in a dystopian world where people are separated by blood. So you have either red or silver blood, and the red bloods are commoners. They live in poverty, don't have much to eat. And then the silvers are elite and they have godlike super powers. And the main character is Mayor Barrow, who is a 17 year old red girl from the stills. And then she gets a job at a silver palace as a servant, and then she finds out she has superpowers. But she has red blood, so she's like, "How can this be?" So the silver elites kind of hide her in plain view as a long lost silver princess. And she knows not to defy the rules or anything they're asking her to do because she knows it could cost of her life. She is silently working with the Red Guard, a military resistance group, to bring down the Silver Regiment. And she's able to give them information from inside the silver palace, where she's being hidden by the silver elite. It is a series of about four books, I think, and they're wonderfully written. I love this book so much.

00;01;46;25 - 00;01;50;06

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Are they relatively new? I never heard of that.

00;01;50;10 - 00;01;54;09

Rachel

[RACHEL] They're not real new. I think the first one came out in, like, '15 or '16.

00;01;54;19 - 00;02;02;21

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Sort of like newer. Like a decade old. So it's fine.

00;02;03;10 - 00;02;12;28

Rachel

[RACHEL] That author also wrote Realm Breaker. Are you familiar with that one? That's a duology. She was just the same author.

00;02;13;10 - 00;02;22;06

Chris

[BRIELLE] We circulate them often. They go out a lot at our branch. So those two I've definitely seen.

00;02;22;06 - 00;04;22;19

Chris

[CHRIS] I really like the We Set the Dark on Fire duology by Taylor Kay Mejia. The first book is from Dani's perspective, and the second book is from Carmen. And in the society, the wealthy people get two wives, one to basically run your household, do all the financing, budgeting, hard math type of things, and one to like be softer and raise the kids and be like flowery and girly. And Dani shaped her identity, basically as a child, to be trained to do this, to like have a better chance at life, so that way she's not living outside the walls of the city that has like all the money and rise above her station and she gets like one of the resistance groups reaches out to her is like, "Hey, look, you're getting married to the prince. So we need you to be our inside man and try and, like, screw things up, get us information." She's like, "No, I'm already, like, faking my identity. This is not my jam." And they're like, "We know you're faking your identity. We're going to screw everything up for you if you don't help us." So it's like her kind of figuring out where her morals lie. She did it for just herself and to help everyone. And then she's, like, living there with Carmen, the other wife, and she's like, "Oh, I'm not really into the prince. I am kind of into Carmen, though." And like, the second book, you get Carmen's perspective and like, what's going on with Carmen and her life and the two of them kind of try to figure out how to work together and like, where does everyone stand? So it's really cool and really enjoyable with the politics and also like a little bit of romance. And the other one I read recently was Cake Eater by Allyson Dahlin, which is a futuristic dystopian about Marie Antoinette basically being a clone or to be basically new Marie Antoinette except a little more aware of what's going on and so it's cool because it wants history to be like, "Marie Antoinette famously got her head chopped off. So where are we going with this YA novel?"

00;04;22;19 - 00;04;22;23

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I saw that one.

00;04;22;23 - 00;04;24;18

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, and it's just a ticking clock of, like...

00;04;24;18 - 00;04;25;19

Brielle

[BRIELLE] It looked interesting.

00;04;25;19 - 00;04;36;24

Chris

[CHRIS] It's good. It's really good. So if you know history, you're like, we know where things are going. How are we getting there? Also, are we really going to kill our protagonist?

00;04;36;24 - 00;04;42;28

Rachel

[RACHEL] I feel like that would make people want to keep reading the book too, because if they know how it ends, then you just want to know, like how they're going to get there.

00;04;42;28 - 00;05;51;16

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah. Yeah. I guess my favorite as a child was *The City of Ember*. We actually talked about that at the middle school recently, like in the fall. And I think they still sometimes read it in the schools, but it's just fun. It's like a very wholesome, fun, almost treasure hunting story about the society just living underground. But they're losing resources and are trying to figure out a way to get above ground before the lights go out. And I just really like the dynamic between the two main characters. I think it might be hinted that they might like each other, but it wasn't focused on romance. It was like really just focused on uncovering the truth behind the politics of the town and why they're losing stores of power and like how to get aboveground. It was just a very fun action adventure book. I remember enjoying that a lot as a child. And then I also have *The Giver*. I have *Dune*. Honorable mention for *Fahrenheit 451*, so almost - they're a bit old, but I like my grandma choices.

00;05;51;16 - 00;05;55;21

Chris

[CHRIS] I love *Fahrenheit 451*. It's our whole thing: don't ban books.

00;05;55;21 - 00;06;10;15

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah, some of them are for school. So some things are a little tainted if, like, you've read them for school or have to read them for school, but then sometimes I've gone back as an adult or even later, and I've re-read some of our school reads and I've still enjoyed them.

00;06;10;15 - 00;06;16;15

Chris

[CHRIS] Now, that actually leads us into our second question of how does classic and modern day dystopia differ?

00;06;16;15 - 00;07;35;28

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah, and I think I brought that up with you earlier because like there's a lot of bleed over, especially with sci fi. So the follow up question to that is like, where is the hard line? Also, there is dystopian fantasy as well, but that usually like leans sci fi. I think dystopian is a subgenre underneath fantasy and sci fi, but I think the emphasis has to be on society and how they're set up and what they're doing and how they deal with it, just like how society is crumbled and this now dystopian way of managing people has come about and the wrongs it's doing and the characters trying to push back against that. So there's plenty of dystopian settings in sci fi and fantasy, but the focus isn't completely on that. It's like sci fi, like sci fi dystopian always differentiate between post-apocalyptic. Like there's a moral, a kind of like a goal for it. Like I love the Mad Max movies, but yeah, that's post-apocalyptic. They're not telling me like, Hey, great rhetoric very much is like, don't ban books, don't just get sucked into like watching TV, listen to the radio all the time. Like, cool, that was a moral to this dystopian. Mad Max is like, we're going to go have adventures and like, basically just him trying to get stuff back all the time.

00;07;37;04 - 00;07;53;08

Rachel

[RACHEL] Yeah, I haven't read too much classic dystopian besides what I did for school. I read Animal Farm for a summer reading book and I didn't even like it that much. It was really weird. It was just about a pig that walks on two legs and I don't even have much to say about it, it was just really weird.

00;07;54;17 - 00;08;07;07

Chris

[CHRIS] It's all historical allegory. So like, my teacher used to be a history teacher, so she got like real deep into the history, and Oingo Boingo has a song about that too. So it's just like...

00;08;07;07 - 00;08;29;03

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I think the emphasis on society and how it's oppressing our farming caste is what makes it more of a dystopian than just like a general post-apocalyptic or a sci fi or fantasy novel. And then I feel like the common themes of the human spirit and resilience and teamwork are kind of central focus around those as well.

00;08;29;18 - 00;09;03;08

Rachel

[RACHEL] I think another central focus is also like that big figure that people worship collectively. Like I know in 1984, that's kind of what that was about. I also find that classic dystopian might predict the near

future. I kind of feel like because 1984 came out in what, the forties, the 1940s... So it's like they were saying, like, this is what the world is going to be like in 20 years. And I mean, yeah, there are some books that are like, This is what North America is going to be like in the year 3000, but like we're not going to be alive to see that.

00;09;04;00 - 00;09;24;18

Chris

[CHRIS] The other stuff a little bit more immediate, like Fahrenheit 451 ends with a nuclear bomb going off because it's like Cold War era and The Handmaid's Tale is like five years from now or something like... I assume it only lasts like, five years and they're like, yeah it collapsed immediately, it's unsustainable.

00;09;24;18 - 00;09;37;01

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah, we were talking about this a little bit earlier too. But I also think it's just like the level of reading, like some of the more classic dystopian novels like 1984 or even Feed a little bit.

00;09;37;01 - 00;09;39;21

Rachel

[RACHEL] Yeah, Anderson's Feed is fantastic.

00;09;39;21 - 00;09;58;20

Brielle

[BRIELLE] The reading level's a bit higher because I think it's just now a classic novel. And so things from anywhere between the forties to the early eighties read a bit drier and have more elevated language, whereas modern day is more geared towards the reading level of middle and high schoolers.

00;09;58;20 - 00;10;33;16

Chris

[CHRIS] And it's more accessible for them. Like they're the ones that make the change. Like wealthy adults, like, like they're like, Oh, it's dystopian sci fi, it's for adults... They're smart enough to handle it and mature enough and like, yeah, give it to the teens and like the middle schoolers, they are fully capable of handling this. And like, understanding the themes, and also being able to look and apply and be like we're the change. Like that's the demographic that's going to be the change for things that people are like, you have the chance to change things while you're young. So we can shift now instead of like, well missed that chance.

00;10;33;16 - 00;11;14;24

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah. I mean like I said, accessibility is important. So like if you compare the reading level of the first Hunger Games to 1984, 1984 reads like a textbook. And I get why it's important to talk about the concepts in the books, especially the older dystopian novels, are really important to talk about because they parallel today's world. Like you were saying, Rachel, but like the reading level is so much higher and drier, whereas Hunger Games, you can kind of relate more to the characters, the reading

level's a little easier. You kind of just very quickly go through it. So I feel like that's the kind of a big difference and what makes them more accessible.

00;11;14;24 - 00;11;17;17

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, they're the more character focused than, like...

00;11;17;17 - 00;11;18;23

Brielle

[BRIELLE] More first person.

00;11;18;23 - 00;11;21;12

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, first person. You get to feel the feelings.

00;11;21;12 - 00;11;34;26

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Third person and like omnipresent was still pretty big in older novels. So I think in YA, first person had a big shift in relatability and accessibility for young readers.

00;11;35;12 - 00;11;42;23

Chris

[CHRIS] What are some of the favorite factors, situations and characteristics that make up dystopian society or dystopian novels for you guys?

00;11;42;23 - 00;11;57;22

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I think, definitely it's a cornerstone is how the society is working. So the general world building, setting, and especially the way the government works, usually that's a big focus on what system is governing the people and therefore oppressing them.

00;11;58;20 - 00;13;00;14

Rachel

[RACHEL] Yeah, I know one of my favorites is also the dystopian world is something that we feel like could be a utopia, but it's actually a dystopia if that makes sense. Like, I think a good example of that is the book *Scythe* by Neil Shusterman, and that takes place in a world where we have raided the world of all natural deaths. So there's no crime, there's no disease. If you jump off a building, they will bring you back to life. But how to stop the world from becoming overpopulated, they have scythes who end lives. So two teens get taken on as a scythe's apprentice, which neither of them really want. And they're basically told, "Here are five people, pick who you want to kill today," so you can't kill too much. You can't do it too little. It's like you have to keep the world in balance and, you know, thinking of like, oh, meanwhile my family is going to get sick and die. Like, that sounds awesome, but no, it's really not because you could turn around and a scythe could be standing right behind you at any moment in life.

00;13;01;04 - 00;13;09;16

Chris

[CHRIS] I want to read that it looks really good. Like this cover looks great just based on the cover, like, I want to read this. No, idea what the plot is. Thank you for telling me.

00;13;09;16 - 00;13;11;22

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Very popular in our branch.

00;13;11;22 - 00;13;24;11

Chris

[CHRIS] Yes, it's super popular. The middle school will also really enjoy it as well... I feel like this is going to be like required reading at some point, possibly in like five years.

00;13;24;27 - 00;13;32;13

Rachel

[RACHEL] I'm surprised it's not already because like you can have good discussions about ethics and morals and stuff like that in it too.

00;13;33;04 - 00;13;36;21

Brielle

[BRIELLE] If you can have kids read Lord of the Flies, they can read Scythe.

00;13;36;21 - 00;13;38;03

Chris

[CHRIS] Oh, I forgot Lord of the Flies.

00;13;38;03 - 00;13;46;27

Brielle

[BRIELLE] That is technically dystopian. It's contemporary. They create their own dystopia just by situation.

00;13;46;27 - 00;13;50;22

Chris

[CHRIS] Don't leave a bunch of school kids on an island.

00;13;50;22 - 00;13;53;22

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Don't cut pigs' heads off.

00;13;53;22 - 00;13;55;27

Chris

[CHRIS] Have you read Beauty Queens by Libba Ray?

00;13;55;27 - 00;13;57;24

Brielle

[BRIELLE] No.

00;13;58;04 - 00;14;18;03

Chris

[CHRIS] Okay, it's basically... a plane crashes with a bunch of beauty queens. It is making fun of Lord of the Flies. So instead of creating a dystopian, they like work together. They're like, "We've got that beauty queen spirit. Everything is great. How are we going to make the world better?"

00;14;18;03 - 00;14;19;19

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Lord of the Flies satire? Oh, that's funny.

00;14;20;03 - 00;14;55;15

Chris

[CHRIS] It's real funny, and then you find out that there's more going on the island they crashed on but at one point - and Libba Ray has, like, dark humor - like one of the girls has like the tray table lodged in her head and they can't take it out. They're just like, "This is how we're living for now." They're like, "Alright, well, my talent for the pageant was sewing. I can sew together clothing for us." And someone's like, "Oh, mine was carpentry. I can build things based on working together" and also, like, figuring out what's going on with the island.

00;14;55;15 - 00;14;57;10

Brielle

[BRIELLE] That's funny. I like that a lot.

00;14;57;10 - 00;14;58;07

Chris

[CHRIS] It's so good.

00;14;58;29 - 00;15;10;11

Rachel

[RACHEL] I also can't imagine though a beauty pageants' talent being carpentry. Like, what was she going to do? Like build a birdhouse on stage? I guess it's not the point, but it's like...

00;15;10;21 - 00;15;18;23

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, they all have different skills that like, could tie in to survival. But like if you just applied it differently than for the pageant, it was really cool.

00;15;18;23 - 00;15;22;01

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Sounds like magical girls



00;15;22;01 - 00;16;39;18

Chris

[CHRIS] They're like, "We're gonna work together." Like they do have like some faction-y, like breaking off. But like, for the most part, they're like, "We are beauty queens. We are going to act as though we are on stage for this pageant. Well behaved women. We are going to win this pageant. Or, you know, make sure our island does not fall into chaos." So the question is still favorite factors and situations in dystopian. I really like that it's like one person that can make a difference. Kind of like see something, say something. Everyone, like you said, it's mostly perceived to be a utopia, but like one person is like, "This is wrong." And like, once normally that one person speaks up or does something against the rules, it's like a little ripple domino effect of they didn't do anything huge, but it was enough for other people to be like, "You're right" and start making the change. So they don't necessarily do something massive, but by the end is a huge difference and is completely shaped the world for like basically like ripple effect throwing a stone into the pond and see where it goes. I do like it's one person, but like they work with other people. They're not like, "I'm here alone." It's like I'm the hero that has now made a whole network of other people to help and, like, work together.

00;16;39;18 - 00;16;55;13

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah, that's why I wrote the theme of teamwork kind of winds up being a central part of the plot as the story goes on. It takes a village to overthrow dystopia.

00;16;55;13 - 00;17;04;20

Chris

[CHRIS] Pretty much. And then our other one is - What are your favorite dystopian novels that have been made into movies?

00;17;04;20 - 00;18;05;13

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I don't know. I've seen many, but I don't have like a favorite. But I do really, really like the new Dune because Timothee Chalamet is "Oooh!" But it's also a truer adaptation of the book. Because don't get me wrong, I love 1984 Dune. I love it for very different reasons. And I've met purists that were like, "No, that movie is great. It's so good," and I'm like "Adaptation?" I feel like the newer Dune is truer to the book. I mean, the book is still way more graphic and violent. Both movies dumbed down the violence a little bit, but I just don't like how lost over the second and the good portion of the third book is in the original film, whereas the newer films are actually taking the time and making it a trilogy and following the book and fleshing out a lot more. So I feel like it's a much truer adaptation of Dune than the 1984 one, even though that one is also very good.

00;18;07;17 - 00;18;12;08

Chris

[CHRIS] That was an experience. I watched it years ago, and I'm just like, "What's happening?"

00;18;12;08 - 00;18;39;01

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I actually watched it with my husband around Halloween this past year, and it was just a very... it was just hilarious truly. But yeah, they really like gloss over the second book. They just kind of narrate over and see the highlights of it and then boom, the ending is happening and then all of a sudden it's over it and I feel like I've missed something. So I'm really glad that they're taking it and revamping it in the new series.

00;18;40;01 - 00;19;02;18

Rachel

[RACHEL] I haven't seen the Dune movie or read the book, but I feel like taking their time with it, they can also have people like lose interest too, because like if you compare that to like The Hunger Games, they did one movie for each book and then the last one was like split into two parts. And by the time Mockingjay came around, I wasn't even interested anymore because it's like, I don't want to see part one and then have to wait another year for part two.

00;19;03;18 - 00;19;04;02

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah.

00;19;04;02 - 00;19;05;02

Rachel

[RACHEL] You know what I mean?

00;19;05;11 - 00;19;08;03

Chris

[CHRIS] That was like trend chasing though, because...

00;19;08;03 - 00;19;10;13

Rachel

[RACHEL] I feel like Harry Potter did it first.

00;19;10;13 - 00;19;12;08

Chris

[CHRIS] Deathly Hollows got split in half and like, kind of needed to be.

00;19;12;14 - 00;19;14;24

Rachel

[RACHEL] And then Twilight did it and then Hunger Games did it.

00;19;14;24 - 00;19;22;15

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah. And then yes, they're just kind of like trend chasing like, oh, the last book needs be split into two. And I was like, "This is a mess." Like you said, that was unnecessary.

00;19;22;15 - 00;19;48;26

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Movies have also been trending towards becoming longer, whereas when we were kids, they were like a lot shorter. They were an hour drive to an hour and a half. Now it's like two hour and a halves to 3 hours - Avatar. But I feel like that's also part of that, where they wanted to trend longer, but it sort of just committing to one long film, they just cut it into two. I'm not sure.

00;19;48;26 - 00;20;03;00

Chris

[CHRIS] I do not have the attention span. Like, I can't sit here with your for 3 hours plus credits, plus previews. Like you can book your seat I'm here sliding in like five minutes before movie starts. I'm like, I can show up like 20 minutes late, still previews.

00;20;03;00 - 00;20;18;29

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I feel very "eh" towards both Divergent and The Hunger Games. I don't know which one I prefer over the other. I guess Divergent is slightly more interesting based on the characters, I don't know which one to put above the other.

00;20;19;13 - 00;20;29;22

Chris

[CHRIS] I've only read and watched The Hunger Games and I have not done either for Divergent. So cannot contribute other than like I enjoyed the Hunger Games - the only one I've read in this situation.

00;20;29;22 - 00;20;41;17

Brielle

[BRIELLE] My feelings towards them are the same, which is kind of like "eh" - both the movies and the books. Although I think the books of Divergent is a bit better. Yeah, the writing is pretty good.

00;20;42;09 - 00;20;52;19

Rachel

[RAHCEL] I know for this question, I had two movies in mind. I put down The Maze Runner. I read the book and then watched the movie. I thought the movie was terrible, so I can't even say it's my favorite.

00;20;53;10 - 00;20;55;03

Chris

[CHRIS] I've only watched the movie.

00;20;55;03 - 00;20;56;13

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I've only watched the movie as well.

00;20;56;13 - 00;21;01;18

Chris

[CHRIS] And like I only watched the movie at all because I was watching Teen Wolf. But I was like, "All right, Dylan O'Brien, let's do it."

00;21;01;18 - 00;21;05;28

Rachel

[RACHEL] Dylan O'Brien's in it?

00;21;05;28 - 00;21;14;20

Chris

[CHRIS] I have no basis for comparison of like, how does this compare to the book but it was like, "Well, that's a movie." And I was like, "Oh it's the kid that plays mute that does not age." I can never remember his name.

00;21;14;28 - 00;21;30;00

Rachel

[RACHEL] Yeah, it's like when you read the book first, then the movie is terrible. The general concept was the same where it's boys in a maze and they're trying to get out. But all the events that lead up to the ending are completely different. And I was like, what is this?

00;21;31;04 - 00;21;31;19

Chris

[CHRIS] I didn't know that.

00;21;31;19 - 00;21;33;17

Rachel

[RACHEL] I'm like, this is not what I read, so yeah.

00;21;33;17 - 00;22;34;16

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Yeah, going back to old ones, there's also the original movies for Fahrenheit 451 and 1984. I've had to watch both for school. The 1984 movie is a very, very true adaptation of the books, which means it's just as boring watching it as it is reading. I kind of maybe have nodded off in class during that one. The film for Fahrenheit 451 and I'm talking like the 1966 one is a wild watch. I don't know if you've ever seen that. It's very avant-garde. Just the way it's shot and just like how it plays out, the audio is a bit garbled, but it's 1966 so like, I don't know but then it doesn't end with like a - spoilers for a movie from 1966 - but like, it doesn't end with the like the bomb going off.

00;22;34;16 - 00;22;37;06

Chris

[CHRIS] I spoiled the book already, so...

00;22;37;08 - 00;22;42;09

Brielle

[BRIELLE] They go off into the woods and like go live with, I guess the rebels.

00;22;42;09 - 00;22;46;11

Chris

[CHRIS] So they do in the book and then the bomb goes off.

00;22;46;11 - 00;22;55;08

Brielle

[BRIELLE] They just kind of nix the bomb happening. They just kind of wander, like the movie just kind of tends they wander off into the sunset.

00;22;55;08 - 00;23;24;24

Chris

[CHRIS] I found out there was a movie and there was a new movie as well. I was very confused cause I was like, Ray Bradbury hated radio, not television. Everyone's like it's good television like it is, but it's mostly against radio. Like that man did not support radio broadcasts, and he greenlit not one, well he was dead for the second movie, but like he greenlit a movie for his book against radios. So I was like, how did we get here? Like, probably you need money, speculation but like...

00;23;24;24 - 00;23;27;27

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I heard mixed things about the 2018 version.

00;23;27;27 - 00;23;31;13

Chris

[CHRIS] I just didn't even I was like, no.

00;23;31;13 - 00;23;43;28

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I heard that if you watch the original movie, it's better than the original movie, but it's still kind of "meh." So I haven't seen that. I didn't like the serial for The Handmaid's Tale.

00;23;44;24 - 00;23;47;17

Rachel

[RACHEL] I watched season one.

00;23;47;17 - 00;24;23;13

Brielle

[BRIELLE] But like, they continue making more past where the book ends, so anything past that season, I completely lost interest. It kind of it was like they backpedaled on all the character development and stuff and started people from square one. I didn't like that. So like anything past, like the second guy's house didn't make any sense to me. So once they ran out of the source material, they just kind of threw spaghetti at the wall and I kind of just stopped watching at that point. But if you watch the first three seasons, it's okay.

00;24;23;21 - 00;24;29;04

Rachel

[RACHEL] That also makes me think of, it's not a dystopian, but have you ever seen 13 Reasons Why that TV show?

00;24;29;11 - 00;24;39;00

Chris

[BRIELLE] I have a very staunch big fat no towards both the book and the TV show.

00;24;39;01 - 00;25;13;12

Rachel

[RACHEL] Well, I did both of them, but what I'm trying to say is it kind of made me think of the same thing because after season one of the TV show, they ran out of the material for the book. So then they kind of continued the story beyond the book. And I feel like they exploded the story like out of proportion made it ten times more dramatic than it actually was for the sake of making a watchable bingeable TV show. And I loved the book. I thought the book was beautiful and then I watched the TV show and I'm like, Yeah, it follows the book really well. But they just made ten times more of a drama, which was completely unnecessary.

00;25;13;20 - 00;25;22;10

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I mean, as an anime fan, they often do us dirty like that where they continue well past the source material and make it bad.

00;25;22;10 - 00;25;57;02

Chris

[CHRIS] Oh, speaking of anime, one of the things I have down for dystopian novels movies is Battle Angel Alita. The movie is goofy. I remember reading the manga like 15 years ago. At this point, you're like, really enjoying it. And I like this we have it on I want to say Libby or Hoopla, like we have it digitally, and then be like, I loved it. Do I remember any of it? Not greatly. I just remember she a cyborg and like random chunks of it... and I was like, "They're going to make it into a movie!" I don't know why I got excited. I knew this was going to go badly.

00;25;57;02 - 00;26;31;01

Brielle

[BRIELLE] It wasn't as gritty, like, you know, they made it kind of nice and I'm like, the whole point of it being in a dystopia is for it to not be nice. It's like, I don't want to live in this world. And like the original manga makes it so that like and I think that also lends to like comic books and graphic novels where the visuals can help elevate the story. So it being kind of gritty and dark made you really feel bad for the characters, whereas it was kind of bright and fun in the movie.

00;26;31;01 - 00;26;33;09

Chris

[CHRIS] It was very neon.

00;26;33;09 - 00;26;48;07

Brielle

[BRIELLE] It doesn't seem so bad. I enjoyed this, but it's definitely not the source material vibe.

00;26;48;07 - 00;26;50;09

Chris

[CHRIS] Did either of you read or watch Sweet Tooth?

00;26;50;10 - 00;26;52;12

Rachel

[RACHEL] No.

00;26;52;12 - 00;27;42;18

Chris

[CHRIS] We definitely have it digitally. I'm pretty sure we have it print now as well, but it's not YA. But it's a Netflix adaptation, so it teens might or might not have watched it. Where the protagonist is a boy born with antlers, and it is dark and it is gritty. It's new adult. Yeah, it is real dark and gritty, like very much like the world. Kind of ended til you find out when he's young, but you find out that the world kind of ended about when he was born and he's never been outside like a forest preserve because like he's a kid with antlers. So it's like him trying to survive on his own after his father passes away and then like going out into the world, finding out about what the world outside is like.

00;27;43;13 - 00;27;55;20

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I wanted to watch that. It looked really good. My mother in law watched it. She recommended it to us, but she said it was hard to describe. It was odd, but in a good way. And I'm like, okay.

00;27;55;20 - 00;28;01;17

Chris

[CHRIS] It's like dark and depressing, like a marathon of the graphic novels for it.

00;28;01;17 - 00;28;04;07

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I didn't know it was a graphic novel.

00;28;04;07 - 00;28;18;18

Chris

[CHRIS] It's a graphic novel... That's another good dystopian novel. It's definitely like a little more above like YA level in parts... if you've ever read Walking Dead... about that level.

00;28;18;18 - 00;28;25;18

Brielle

[BRIELLE] A really niche pick that my husband and I watched all three seasons of is Dark. Have you ever seen Dark?

00;28;25;18 - 00;28;26;15

Chris

[CHRIS] No.

00;28;26;15 - 00;28;27;02

Rachel

[RACHEL] No.

00;28;27;22 - 00;30;56;01

Brielle

[BRIELLE] It came on Netflix when Stranger Things started getting kind of big, and it's in the same vein of Stranger Things, but not like monsters and dimensional stuff, but kind of. But it's also a German show, but we watched it in the English dub over, which I was skeptical about because I didn't want to have like a Godzilla moment, but it wasn't bad. You can watch the English dub over like it's pretty okay. It's the wildest thing. My husband and I still talk about it to this day because it just goes places. It has to do with like time travel. You don't think it's dystopian, but it does have to deal with parallel timelines. So like the main timeline that branches and like in the other branches, once this particular event on this particular day happens, dystopian happens. So it's like the world ending and then like you wind up switching timelines and seeing where some of the characters end up. It's so insane. The first two seasons are like very, very good, and just the first 1 to 3 episodes is very slow because you're setting up all the people in the town, and all the people in town have like skeletons in their closet and they're all interconnected through misdeeds they've done to each other. And it's because of this like butterfly effect that the end of the society happens. So then you wind up following a couple of the characters who go back or forward in time, and you can see where society winds up and how people are managing like past it crumbling and everything like that. It's all like a butterfly effect, the result of two people's decisions really, which is so wild. The third season goes off, the rails completely. I remember when my mom was binging through it and she's like, I'm so lost in season three and I'm like, "Just trust me, watch the whole way through." And then the final episode explains everything and it ends and you're just like, "Wow, that was insane." I want to say it's very good. It's just very, very, very strange and you have to have patience to watch it.

00;30;56;01 - 00;31;00;17

Rachel

[RACHEL] I have a hard time keeping up with TV shows, so I don't think that's the one for me.

00;31;01;10 - 00;31;06;27

Brielle

[BRIELLE] No, that's true. You would probably drop off somewhere in season two.

00;31;06;27 - 00;31;16;05

Chris



[CHRIS] Yeah, I'd need like a buddy to be like, We're keeping watch on this... I'm not great on following up on TV shows either.

00;31;16;05 - 00;31;28;05

Brielle

[BRIELLE] And like I said, it's a German TV show as well. Just like the way I guess it's written, it's formatted like storytelling might be a little bit different, but I find that interesting, so yeah.

00;31;28;05 - 00;31;43;23

Chris

[CHRIS] Are there any other dystopian books that you want to mention or bring up? We actually did not talk about anything by Marie Lu. We actually missed a lot of major dystopian authors.

00;31;43;23 - 00;31;44;28

Chris

[BRIELLE] Is that like Cinder?

00;31;44;28 - 00;31;50;00

Chris

[CHRIS] No, that's Marissa Meyer. We missed a bunch of like major, like dystopian names

00;31;50;00 - 00;31;54;19

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I'm old and I haven't read any new books.

00;31;54;19 - 00;32;22;06

Chris

[CHRIS] Alright so Marie Lu did Warcross where she's a hacker that gets, like, brought in, but she's hacking then she gets caught by the government. The government is like, you work for us now. And then she's like trying to work from the inside as a hacker. It was like video game kind of based. Brandon Sanderson I think all his are also dystopian. I just haven't read any of his.

00;32;22;06 - 00;32;43;27

Brielle

[BRIELLE] I don't know, edging towards like new adult, tail end of YA, but I really enjoyed Cyberpunk: Edgerunners. That destroyed my soul in the best way possible. Studio Trigger at its finest, and even though it's not a book, it's based on the game which is dystopian, which is... I guess you could throw in Blade Runner in there too, because kind of in the same vein. I don't know, was Blade Runner a book?

00;32;44;12 - 00;32;52;24

Chris

[CHRIS] Blade Runner is based on the book Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep by Phillip K. Dick.

00;32;52;24 - 00;32;59;20

Brielle

[BRIELLE] Have you seen, well the obviously the original and like the newer one was Ryan Gosling?

00;32;59;20 - 00;33;03;17

Chris

[CHRIS] Yes so I marathoned them so they merged into one movie.

00;33;03;17 - 00;33;11;27

Brielle

[BRIELLE] It kind of is. It kind of is. I enjoyed the second one I think a bit more than like other people did but I also really like the original Blade Runner.

00;33;11;27 - 00;33;12;27

Chris

[CHRIS] Are there any others?

00;33;14;06 - 00;34;44;02

Rachel

[RACHEL] The only other big one I really, really like is An Ember in the Ashes series by Sabaa Tahir. I only read the first one so far because these books are really long and I'm a slow reader, so I have a hard time binging series one right after the other. But I really, really like the first one. That book is about the martial empire who is ruled by the Emperor. And everybody knows not to defy the Emperor because you know what happens, because bad things happen to those who do. So the main character, Laia, lives with her grandparents and her brother and her grandparents are killed by the Emperor's soldiers and her brother is arrested for treason. So in order to get her brother out of prison, Laia enlists the help of the rebel alliance, who agrees to help her break her brother out of prison, and in exchange, Laia has to spy for them in the Empire's greatest military academy, which is a really hard job. And there Laia meets Elias, who is the school's finest soldier. But he's also the school's most unwilling soldier. He really doesn't want to enforce the laws or anything like that. And they kind of realize they need each other's help in order to get what each of them wants. So I think it was four or five in the series, but they are pretty long, but they're pretty quick reads. They're not hard to understand or anything like that, but I really enjoyed them.

00;34;44;02 - 00;34;45;28

Chris

[CHRIS] The author name sounds familiar.

00;34;46;00 - 00;34;50;20

Rachel

[RACHEL] She also wrote All My Rage, which like just came out.

00;34;51;05 - 00;35;06;02

Voiceover

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