



## 01: RENEGADES TRILOGY

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**LAURA:** Please visit [shitweveread.com](http://shitweveread.com) to support the show.

**JASON:** Now, let's talk about some books.

(theme music)

**LAURA:** Hello and welcome to the very first episode of *Shit We've Read*. A sci-fi fantasy book podcast, featuring myself Laura Benson and my other co-host-

**JASON:** Hi, Jason Rico. How's it goin'.

**LAURA:** (laughs) Um... Today in this triple-stuffed premiere episode, we're going to cover, not one, not two, but *three* books.

**JASON:** (laughs) "Threeeeeee?"

**LAURA:** It's a lot of books.

**JASON:** You sound unsure of this.

**JASON:** "Are we really cover threeee?"

**LAURA:** It is a lot.

**LAURA:** Three books? We're gonna talk about three books and an hour? We're going to try.

**JASON:** That's right. We'll see how this goes.

**LAURA:** Just remember, before we jump into this. We are *not* professional book reviewers or critics.

**JASON:** Absolutely not.

**LAURA:** We're just talking about the shit we've read. So maybe don't take us too seriously? (laughs) So the books we're going to talk about are *Renegades*, *Archenemies*, and *Supernova*, which is a young adult superhero trilogy by Marissa Meyer. And if you recognize her name that is because she is also the author of *The Lunar Chronicles* which is a very popular series.

**JASON:** Yes.

**LAURA:** Also very good.



**JASON:** Read it if you haven't.

**LAURA:** Definitely. But before we get into that, let's talk about the shit we're currently reading.

**JASON:** Yes. Let's.

**LAURA:** Jason, what are you reading?

**JASON:** So, I wanna talk about a few things that I actually had just finished reading over the last few weeks. The first of them is the entirety of the Grishaverse by Leigh Bardugo.

**LAURA:** That's a lot of books.

**JASON:** There's seven main novels and two collections of short stories, I guess I would call them. As I'm sure many of you know, *Shadow and Bone*, the new Netflix show was released on April 23rd, which as the recording of this was a few days ago and I wanted to read all the books to prepare it for that. I hadn't ever read them before. They had been on my list and the show coming out was the kick in the butt to actually sit down and read them. And I really like them. It's really, really good. It's a trilogy and then to do duologies, and they're all kind of connected. Some characters crossover, there's some new characters, they're kind of independence, you don't really need to read all of them if you don't want, but I highly recommend that you do. Except for the short story, though. The collection of short stories, those are- add flavor to the universe, but not really part of the story. It's just if you're a fan of this, you like it if not, ignore them.

**LAURA:** I have not read those yet but I would like to get to them soon. I think I'm going to watch the TV show and then read the books.

**JASON:** Yeah, they're, they're good books. I like the show as well, and if you are a fan, I'm going to do a plug here real quick. If you are a fan of the books and or the show, we have a couple friends who are doing a podcast about the show called *Grisha Watch*, which is part of the BYLO Network. You should be able to look them up on wherever you get your podcasts and they cover the show. Is it done by 2 or friends. One of them has read the books. One of them has not read the books-

**LAURA:** At all.

**JASON:** At all. Actually the person who had read the books told the other person "Ignored the trailers, I want you to know nothing about this so you're coming in totally fresh?" And so it's interesting to hear them both kinda come at it from totally different perspectives.

**LAURA:** It's pretty cool. They do one episode per TV episode and compare it to the books also. So, if you haven't read the book and you plan to and you don't want spoilers, you could do what I'm doing and wait until you've read and watched them both and then listen to it.

**JASON:** Yeah, by the time this episode releases most, if not all of their episodes, should also be released. So again, *Grisha Watch*. Check it out. But I digress. I finished the Grishaverse. Oh, and then that led me to want to read *Jupiter's Legacy*, which are a bunch of graphic novels, because that's also another Netflix show that's releasing on my birthday May 7th.

**LAURA:** Aye!



**JASON:** And so I wanted to read those graphic novels to prepare myself for that show. And also like, those are really good graphic novels.

**LAURA:** They were good? Okay. I'm hoping to watch them. I'm hoping to watch the show and read them. That title is something that came up a lot in the comic shop and I know the actor Paul Amos. I think that's how you say his last name. He's in it. And I'm a really big fan of his. (laughs) So he's been pushing it a lot and so I'm excited to see him in that show. So.

**JASON:** Wait. I know that name was. Who's Paul Amos?

**LAURA:** Paul Amos is- I know him mainly as Vex from Lost Girl.

**JASON:** Okay, that's who I thought you were talking about. I didn't know he was in the show.

**LAURA:** Yes.

**JASON:** Okay. Now I'm more excited.

**LAURA:** That's how I first found out that they were making it as a show because he started pushing it on his on his Instagram.

**JASON:** Wait now I need to look up who he's playing.

**LAURA:** And then in case you're a video game fan, he also does the voice of Jacob Frye in the Assassin's Creed game. I'm blanking on which one it's called, but it's the one with the twins. And I've actually met him. I hung out with him. I had drinks with him.

**JASON:** You did. I remember being very jealous.

**LAURA:** Yeah. When he was in town. And so it's, yeah, it's pretty cool to see him in another project coming up. So I'm excited for that title.

**JASON:** I did not know that. That makes me even more excited for the show. Yeah, it's a good. It's a good graphic novel series. I'm going to just- The simple way to explain it is superheroes, but Boomers versus Millennials.

**LAURA:** (laughs)

**JASON:** It's kind of, it's kind of the way it plays out. You know, think of like the Justice League as the Boomers. Like, they're the classics. You have Superman and Wonder Woman. Like the classic archetypes. And then you have the new generation that are like "Man, these old guys don't know what the heck they're doing." So it's that kind of generational clash. It's really good.

**LAURA:** Well, it looks cool. I'm excited for it. And, and yeah. So so read, read the comics. You're saying,

**JASON:** Oh, yeah. They're like quick reads. Quick reads. I read all those four volumes, and I read them all in like, two days. So.

**LAURA:** Cool. Well I'll have to pick those up soon.

**JASON:** Yeah. Anyhow. That's what I've been reading. What about you?



**LAURA:** I am in between books right now. So I just finished *Kingdom of the Wicked* by Karri Maniscalco. It is a YA fantasy. I want to say maybe a little bit historical fiction? But it's, it was pretty cool. It's about a couple of twin witches and basically, the seven deadly sins kind of and there's definitely some romance in here.

**JASON:** It wouldn't be a YA book without it.

**LAURA:** Of course not. Um, but it is funny. (laughs) Jason, I totally thought you had read this book before I read it.

**JASON:** Nope. Not yet.

**LAURA:** So yeah. I was reading it and I sent Jason a message and was like "Am I reading a romance novel? This sounds like a romance novel. The way that the author is describing some of the men sounds like this is a romance novel."

(both laugh)

**LAURA:** But you know it surprisingly- There was a lot more focus on on the magic side of it. So it was pretty cool. It did end on a pretty big cliffhanger so I am waiting for the second book to come out so that I can hopefully get the ending. But I don't know if this is a duology or a trilogy, so-

**JASON:** We'll find out.

**LAURA:** I guess I'll find out when the next one comes out. When is that? Um, *Kingdom of the Cursed* is the next one out in end of October. So I got a few more months. But um, I did enjoy it for the most part, so I would recommend it so far. So, alright, so that's what we've been reading. If our listeners would like to share the shit they've just read, please follow us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and send us some comments. Let us know what you're reading. Maybe, there's something that you've read that we also need to read but we don't know about.

**JASON:** Yeah. And if you've read what we just mentioned this talk about it, please.

**LAURA:** Yeah. Because we like to talk about the shit we've just read.

**JASON:** It's kind of the whole point of this podcast.

**LAURA:** All right. So do you want to- do you want to jump into our featured books for this episode?

**JASON:** Yeah, let's do it. It's a three for one special this time.

**LAURA:** Yes. There's potentially a lot to cover, being three books. So we're going to talk about the *Renegades* series by Marissa Meyer. It falls under a lot of categories. So it's absolutely 100% a young adult book.

**JASON:** Mhmm

**LAURA:** Second I would say superheroes.

**JASON:** Yep. Agreed.

**LAURA:** I would say science fiction, and romance.

**JASON:** Yeah, I would, I think superheroes in general is a sub-genre of science fiction.



**LAURA:** Okay. Yeah. No, you're right. Also, there's a little bit of a dystopian kind of thing going.

**JASON:** A little bit. A little bit.

**LAURA:** And what I found really weird was on Goodreads the number one genre that people had this book under was fantasy.

**JASON:** Really? That's yeah, that's interesting.

**LAURA:** Yeah. It was a little weird for me. I mean I can kind of see that but I definitely thought it was more science fiction than fantasy.

**JASON:** Yeah, I wonder how much of that is because maybe readers were just associating fantasy with the author. So that would say she is, she's more a fantasy author than-

**LAURA:** That's true.

**JASON:** -than science fiction so maybe they just automatically just put in that category.

**LAURA:** Yeah, that wouldn't make a lot of sense for sure. Let me just read the the Goodreads synopsis for the series to give everybody kind of an idea of what it's about.

**LAURA:** "In Marissa Meyer's New York Times bestselling young adult series, superheroes and supervillains battle for supremacy of Gatlon City in a high-stakes world of adventure, passion, danger, and betrayal. Possessed with extraordinary abilities, the Renegades are champions of justice, protecting the citizens against the anarchists determined to destroy them. But Nova walks the line of both hero and villain--torn between a desire for revenge against the Renegades and a deepening love for one of its members..."

**LAURA:** Sounds kind of, kind of interesting and epic in a way.

**JASON:** It definitely piqued my interest when this book was first announced a few years ago for sure.

**LAURA:** Yes, same with me. I am all about powered people. So, like X-Men. Love X-Men. Anything, anything related to that, I'm into. So when I found out about the series, I was very interested. Before we jump into first impressions, what exactly were you expecting from this series? Just just from Reading those synopsis.

**JASON:** So I honestly-

**LAURA:** Synopsises?

**JASON:** Synopods?

**LAURA:** (laughs)

**JASON:** Octopods? Honestly, I didn't know what to expect only because I think her first series, The Lunar Chronicles was definitely fantasy, fairytale retelling, romance. Actually, when I think about it, there was some sci-fi in her original series too. But it's very young adult for me. And so when I-She now chose writing a superhero trilogy, I didn't- my brain couldn't put superhero and young adult together because I had never read anything like that before. You know, we're both big



comic book geeks so all the superhero stuff I'm familiar with are from comic books. And I wouldn't say really many comic books are young adult, even like the teenage superhero teams, I wouldn't classify them as a young adult.

**LAURA:** Yeah. The teen rated comics usually border more adult.

**JASON:** Yeah, so I didn't, I didn't really know what to expect but I was very interested in seeing what she did. I always love seeing new takes on a superhero universe that isn't the big two, DC or Marvel. Seeing how people kind of, lay out their own universe and their own set of rules or powers, and who gets powers and what are they called, and what is a hero? Blah blah blah. So I didn't really have many expectations other than I really liked her first series and I had high hopes that her next series would be just as good.

**LAURA:** Okay.

**JASON:** What about you? Any expectations?

**LAURA:** I didn't know exactly what I expected from it. I kind of came into this with the same similar perspective in that. I really liked- I did really enjoy *The Lunar Chronicles* and so I was hoping for something kind of similar. But being that this is a superhero/villains kind of thing, I think I also kind of was expecting something a little more adult. Another thing that I was very interested in was the whole balancing between good and evil. I've not really read very many books that the protagonist was kind of morally ambiguous. So I was very interested in reading this series to kind of, you know, explore that aspect of following somebody who's kind of technically the bad guy, but also kind of the good guy. And, you know, seeing how their journey is where they- where they want to go. So I was very interested in getting more into the, kind of, villain side with this.

**JASON:** I don't think-

**LAURA:** If that makes sense.

**JASON:** Yeah, totally. It does. I don't think I realized how much the villain side would play into the series. I think when I read the synopsis for the very first book, I kind of just took it as like a superhero story, I'm down sign me up. And then the synopsis for the next two came out, I'm like oh, this is more villainy than I anticipated. And again I- There isn't a whole lot of stories out there that really focus on the the villain as a protagonist. And so, I was really eager to see how she does that.

**LAURA:** Well, so non-spoiler first impressions really quick. Did you like it?

**JASON:** Overall. Yes, I did like the series. I will admit, I think I judged it a little more harshly than I would another series just because it was superheroes and I have knowledge of superhero stories and so I just couldn't help it. As I was reading it, I was like, okay well this has been done before and I read a story like this that was done a little better and so that kind of like stopped it from reaching like five star status, for me. I will say though, there is one major thread throughout the entire series that really bugged me. It wasn't a huge issue. In the first book. It was definitely an issue in the second book and then it totally ruin the third book for me.

**LAURA:** Oh, no.

**JASON:** And we'll get to that later. But-

**LAURA:** Okay.

**JASON:** -that aside, I did like it. I did like the characters and just kind of the mythology she she built in her world.



**LAURA:** I would agree too. I think overall I did very much enjoy reading this. I did like the characters and some of the scenes and storylines. Overall, it is a very good read. I would say very fun entertaining. But also very young adult. (laughs) Okay, so if any listeners have not read this series, we're going to jump into spoilers now. So tune out, go read it and then come back.

**JASON:** Mhm. We'll wait.

(long pause)

**LAURA:** Okay. Okay, spoiler Impressions. I want to start with what did we specifically like? Do you want to go first?

**JASON:** If you have something, go ahead have to think about this just a little bit.

**LAURA:** (laughs) I honestly, I think I really just liked the, the characters in general. I feel like it would have been really great to learn a little bit more about some of them. Have more scenes or more opportunities to dig into their deeper character and also their powers. See what their abilities are. Some of them felt a little two-dimensional sometimes, but I feel like they- there could be a lot more to those characters.

**JASON:** Yeah, one thing I really liked about the series was that the- So one of the main protagonist. He's a hero. His parents are essentially like the Superman/Batman of this universe and they are a couple. They are a gay couple and I really like that. Like it-

**LAURA:** I thought that was cool.

**JASON:** -didn't really change the story at all. There is nothing really dependent on them being men or heterosexual couple or whatever.

**LAURA:** It just did it- It was what it was.

**JASON:** Yeah. It just was a nice change of pace. And on top of that, the main, the main protagonist kid, he was adopted so they weren't even his biological parents. They were- he was adopted. Again, so I like that. It just kind of takes the norm and just twisted a little bit, it makes it fresh. So I really liked that. I did like the characters. I like seeing her kind of take these archetypes and superheroes like the Superman character, and the Batman character and you know that the vigilante and the villain and kind of just do her own take on these. As I was reading and every time a character would be introduced, I was like "Oh that character's like Green Lantern or that character's, you know? Like this character." Or like, that's always fun for me. Just as a comic book geek to see who takes on what we already know.

**LAURA:** Yeah, I thought that the- you could see where she got some of her inspiration, but still also did some things to make the characters her own. It is, it is hard to create something new with these days so it was, it was a nice change from what we're used.

**JASON:** I'm very curious and I honestly shouldn't look this up already, but I'm curious to to know what her background with comic books is.

**LAURA:** Oh, yeah!

**JASON:** I know all these characters, did she just create them from scratch and they just happen to be similar to other characters just because like there's only so many different things you could do with heroes? Or is she familiar with superheroes? Like, "You know what? I'm going to make my own version of this character or my own take on that character." You know?



**LAURA:** Yeah, that's a, that's a good question. I would think there might be some kind of backing, background to it. But I don't know. We'll have to look that up later.

**JASON:** Yeah

**LAURA:** Or if any listeners know, feel free to let us know. Okay, what do we not like, Jason?

**JASON:** Oh, boy. Okay. So.

**LAURA:** (laughs)

**JASON:** Okay, my biggest, my biggest gripe with the series was- Okay, we've already had spoilers. I'm just going to dive into it.

**LAURA:** Yep. Go for it.

**JASON:** Nova. She is a villain, who is infiltrating the good guys. She's going undercover and infiltrating their organization. Her villainous persona has the ability to put people to sleep. Her superhero identity, her power is to not fall asleep ever. She joins the superhero team and then all these things start happening. Ugh. Okay. Let me just back a little.

**LAURA:** (laughs)

**JASON:** Let me back up. I was so frustrated. It annoyed the heck out of me that no one knew she was the bad guy.

**LAURA:** I, I agreed.

**JASON:** Everybody was so stupid to not realize that she was the bad guy. There was-

**LAURA:** There were so many times in all three books where I'm like, "How do you not know that she's the bad guy?"

**JASON:** Yeah. It's just like you have to purposely go out of your way to avoid the clues that she's the bad guy.

**LAURA:** Yeah, she's not very good at it and they're just dumb.

**JASON:** No. Her villain persona, Nightmare, is known to be really good with tech. Her superhero persona is known to be really good at tech. They both have sleep based powers. She happens to join like, right at the same time that Nightmare kind of shows up and tries to kill Captain Chromium and then like things go missing. The pendant or whatever the vitality charm goes missing. The superhero comic books that Adrian wrote as a kid that were like the inspiration for his other persona go missing. The only other people that knew about these comic books were his parents and Nova and like no one's putting any of these clues together. Like it's just, it was so frustrating. It wasn't a huge deal in the first book. In the second book, I'm like "People, really, you should be figuring this out. Come on. For reals now." And in the third book we're really pissed me off was they finally figure out she's the bad guy. Dana, I forgot her superhero name. The girl that turns into butterflies. She knows. She's suspecting her. She follows her. She figures out she is the bad guy. They put her in jail and then someone impersonates Nightmare. "Oh no! I framed, I framed Nova. I'm the real bad guy."

**LAURA:** And they believed it!

**JASON:** Yeah! And they let her go. I'm like, "Oh my fucking god." I was so irritated because I was so happy that they put her in prison. Like finally thank god. They put him in prison. It was in the beginning of the book, of book 3. Fine. The





rest of the book can deal with all this. "Nope. Just kidding. She's back to being a hero again. We're dumb. I'm sorry I thought you were a villain. I don't know why I ever thought that."

**LAURA:** I got really annoyed in the third book because I was- They even have a conversation, like, "When, since when has Nightmare been able to travel through mirrors?" And they're like "Well, I don't know. Sentinel has more than one power." And it's like "Wha? What why would you believe this?!"

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** Why?

**JASON:** Yeah. What makes more sense, that the girl whose power is mirror travel can also put people to sleep or that the person who can put people to sleep can also not fall asleep herself? Like, which of those two combos, make more sense. And then also like, this might just be a matter of, we didn't see all the heroes in this universe. But the people that we were introduced to have very specific powers. Like, very specialized powers. There isn't a whole lot of overlap, which just leads me to be more frustrated at the fact that putting people to sleep and not falling asleep very much overlap,

**LAURA:** Yeah. You're right. You're right.

**JASON:** It's not a very common thing. Like people should have realized right away, like hold up. Ugh. Anyhow.

**LAURA:** And well and it's funny because part of me is like, well, they're kids. They don't got a lot of experience. One guy's in love with her. Like maybe they had some blinders on or something but then it was- it got to the point where I was like, no. These people are just dumb.

**JASON:** Yeah. Because even if it is this like there's the adult and the group. The council. They've all been around forever. No one sees this? Like-

**LAURA:** And this is another reason why I say this is very much a young adult series.

**JASON:** Yeah. Yes, Yes. Very much.

**LAURA:** Because things would be very different if this were... New adult? Or adult?

**JASON:** Things are just very convenient in this book just to drive the story that she wants to tell forward.

**LAURA:** Yeah. Another thing that I did not like and I was constantly confused about is throughout all three books, there's a sense of this is a dystopian age. You know?

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** But at the same time, there are multiple scenes where it's super high-tech.

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** And like, there's never really reference to them going to school or how they get education. There's references of like, "Oh, schools closed 30 years ago and been trying to get things back to normal" and I'm just like- What? I don't know what's going on in this world like I'm picturing super high-tech amazing buildings but then it's describing like, the slums-



**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** -or destroyed buildings and I'm like, I don't understand. I don't know what I'm picturing this world to be because it was constantly changing the description of their environment or the history.

**JASON:** I feel like it was dystopian in name only. Like, there wasn't a whole lot of dystopian elements to it. Like, yes, at some point maybe civilization kind of fell because of these villains but at this point like, things are seeming okay. Like there's television, there's news, there's societies still kind of going forward. Like it's, I don't know. I kind of feel like Marissa Mayer just fell into the young adult trap of making it a dystopian story when it didn't need to be dystopian at all. I don't think it really played-

**LAURA:** I could see that.

**JASON:** -into the story at all.

**LAURA:** Yeah, the story definitely could have still been told without that dystopian aspect to it.

**JASON:** Yeah. I don't know. Maybe she just wanted to mix it up and twist and, you know, the superhero concept that we, that we know but it didn't really do anything for me. It's just like okay, whatever.

**LAURA:** I think that is a nice segue into the next question. How successful was this trilogy as a superhero story compared to actual superhero comics?

**JASON:** Before I answer that, I do want to back up a little bit and say another thing I liked about this Trilogy-

**LAURA:** Okay. One more thing we liked.

**JASON:** -because I thought about it, as I was, as I was I griping about Nightmare. I loved Sketch's ability to turn his drawings that come to life into tattoos. That, I thought was awesome because there are characters who can turn drawings, you know, make them real. That exist. There are people who can have their tattoos come to life. I've never really seen someone who can make a drawing come to life and translate that into a tattoo, I guess? I just thought that was really cool.

**LAURA:** Yeah, no. That's a good point. I hadn't thought about that. It's funny, when I first started reading this and I was learning, we were learning about his power, I kept thinking of that one episode of SpongeBob-

**JASON:** I never really watched SpongeBob.

**LAURA:** -where he has- I can't remember the details. Somehow a doodle- It was just like a really simple doodle was made that looked like SpongeBob and it came to life and it like wreaked havoc.

(both laugh)

**LAURA:** But this kind of changed my perspective. (laughs)

**JASON:** I think there's a, there's that, one of the issues of, one of them is a issue. Sorry. One of the books in the Goosebumps series, I think dealt with a kid who's drawing came to life. If I remember correctly. I gonna have to go back and double-check that. But anyhow, sorry. Your question about how successful this was a superhero story?

**LAURA:** I actually- (laughs) We're gonna have to edit this.



JASON: Okay.

LAURA: I want to go back to what we did not like.

JASON: Okay.

LAURA: One of my biggest grapes is the ending. The literal very ending.

JASON: Oh. Oh, okay.

LAURA: From- I'm blanking on her name. The little girl.

JASON: I wanna say her name was Evie. Maybe?

LAURA: Her *other* name.

JASON: Magpie?

LAURA: Magpie.

JASON: Yeah.

LAURA: So, we find out, which I had already suspected forever ago. We find out that Magpie, this little girl. This annoying, rude little girl through the whole book- the whole series is Nova's little sister, Evie. They all think that she died, right?

JASON: Mhm.

LAURA: She didn't. That's her.

JASON: Surprise!

LAURA: But the whole explanation behind her surviving makes no sense!

JASON: Oh no. No, not at all. I read it-

LAURA: No sense! Okay, fine. She survived. Okay, fine. But then they say like, it says, like her landlords found her and like took care of her and said that she had a sister and all this stuff. Like told her what happened basically. They never, apparently never told the Renegades "Oh, by the way, this little girl didn't die that you just investigated her family being murdered" and they didn't tell her her real name. She's going by a completely different name. She knows, I think she knows her sister's name is Nova, right? I can't remember.

JASON: I don't think she knows that she know has a sister, honestly.

LAURA: No, it talks about it at the end of the book. She knows that her sister is out there, potentially out there somewhere.

JASON: Oh, they told her she had a sister cause she was too young to know that, right?

LAURA: Well, no. Whoever was raising her told her that her, you know, her family was murdered.



**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** And Evie survived but her sister was missing. So she knows her sister is probably out there somewhere. But it's like the landlords and her neighbors, they're all going to know everybody's name, especially the landlords. So I'm like, I don't understand how like, why is she going by a different name? How does she not know anything about her family? How does she not know that Nova's her sister? It was just, it made no sense to me. The bugged the crap out of me.

**JASON:** Yeah, no. Now that you bring that up. Yeah, that was I was very confused. It makes no sense. I had to actually look up- I Googled it because I needed an explanation. I needed somewhere out there to explain it to me. Like, how does this make sense? Because she got shot as a baby and was pronounced dead. Captain Chromium came and saw this dead baby. Like they pronounced her dead. She was dead. But just kidding. She's not dead. Like wait what? How does that- how does that make sense?

**LAURA:** Like, it doesn't really explain too how she survived. Like her power doesn't have anything to do with removing bullets.

**JASON:** It's magnetic. Her power is magnetic.

**LAURA:** Oh, is it?

**JASON:** Yeah. I had to look it up and according to like the officially Renegades Wiki or something, she has magnetic based powers, which I guess is- Okay like the metal, the bullet activated the magnet powers or something but I don't understand how like, you- Like okay, if she was shot and then immediately her powers were triggered to stop the bullet, I'd buy that. Okay, fair enough. It makes sense. There's a heightened sense of reality and she got shot and the magnet power stopped the bullet from going in or whatever. Fine. I, I could buy that but she was quote unquote, dead. So I don't know how she dies but stays alive. Like I don't know how her magnet based powers keeps her alive but dead enough that other people think she's dead.

**LAURA:** Right. She would have to have some kind of healing ability at that point.

**JASON:** Right. Uh-huh.

**LAURA:** Good point. Yeah this is a little weird.

**JASON:** Again, I think this plays into, like again, Marissa Meyer just had a story she wanted to tell and was going to make it work, even if it didn't.

**LAURA:** (laughs)

**JASON:** You know, like- And to your point of like, how does how does she not know her sisters out there? I think that can be explained a little bit of she was probably told that her family was murdered. She's the only survivor. So from her point of view, she's the only survivor because Ace Anarchy took Nova. So everybody else thinks that Nova's dead. But Nova thinks of her sister's dead. So they both know they have a sister out there. No, sorry. Let me rephrase. They both know they had a sister but that the sister died so they're not looking for each other.

**LAURA:** Hmm.

**JASON:** I think. Either way, you're right. That last part of the book made no sense.



**LAURA:** It still didn't make sense.

**JASON:** It's very frustrating. I felt like it was kind of thrown in at the end to be like, "Hey, I might write a fourth book and it'll be from her point of view, or they'll reunite. I didn't set it up that way, but I might write a fourth book."

**LAURA:** I'm honestly- You know, I did just say I really liked all the, a lot of the characters. Magpie was really annoying though. I don't know that I would want to read something about her,

**JASON:** She was very annoying. Yeah. I didn't understand why she was so annoying and until at the end. It's like, oh, you wanted to make her a bigger deal? But why does she have to be annoying.

**LAURA:** She's so annoying. She's so rude and it just like a stereotypical rude and annoying little girl.

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** I wanted to like her and there were times when I did but for the most part it was just like she didn't really- she wasn't really likeable enough for me to want to read more. Nor was I given enough to want to learn more. Like, with, with the Lunar Chronicles, Marissa Meyer did end up writing additional- I don't know. Was it a novella, short story about the villain? I'm blanking on everyone's names.

**JASON:** Levana, I think.

**LAURA:** Levana. Yeah. She did write like a book about her past. Like how she grew up and leading into who she isn't in the main story. I was interested enough in Levana to want to learn that because you could tell there was a lot more to her character. But with, with Magpie/Evie, I didn't get any of that. It just felt like she was just a little random Easter egg that was popping up every so often in all three books.

**JASON:** The more I think about the stuff I didn't like in this book, the more remembering. Which is weird-

**LAURA:** You just read them!

**JASON:** No, I know. I know but it's weird because I keep thinking about all these things like really annoyed me but I still liked it overall. Like it's weird. Like the parts that she did well, did really well. It was just certain decisions made that just were really frustrating. Like even after they realized that Nova was the bad guy and she was a spy and the traitor and she tried killing Adrian's dad, just basically Superman in this universe. Like, everybody kind of just forgives her because she turns and becomes a good guy at the end and stops her uncle. I was like "No. No. You literally tried to kill somebody, tried murdering somebody. You infiltrated the Renegades. Like, you can't just be forgiven." But "Oh, I love you, Nova. You know, like, I'm a teenage boy and, you know, it doesn't matter what you did. I'm going to love you regardless." I'm like ugh! Once again the romance element in a book is ruining it for me.

**LAURA:** It kind of took over certain things.

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** I could buy that to a certain point until his parents were like "There's no such thing as villains. It's okay." And I was like, "Yeah right, it's okay! For real?!"

**JASON:** (laughs) Yeah. Marissa tried putting a couple like ethic questions in here. Like, if you have the power to take someone's powers away, like who determines who can do that, right? Like do people in power- Do people who have the power get to make the decisions or not? And that's a really good question. I really like that she explored that. I didn't like



necessarily the way it unfolded but I like that she was trying to explore that and explore the whole idea of good or bad isn't so clear cut. You know? People are capable of both. There's a lot of gray. I totally agree with that. I think some of the best characters are a little morally ambiguous. I don't know. Like, so many things just fell flat for me and like the entire series at the end was kind of just ruined for me just because of that. Like I gave the first two books four, four out of five stars. And then the last book is kind of just meh. I gave it a three because there are things about it I like still, but...

**LAURA:** I apparently gave the third book a five star rating, but I don't know why.

**JASON:** (laughs) I saw that.

**LAURA:** I don't know.

**JASON:** I was very curious. Like what did Laura think of this?

**LAURA:** I'm gonna change that right now.

**JASON:** (laughs) Oh, no.

**LAURA:** I'll just put it down to a four.

(both laugh)

**JASON:** She writes very well.

**LAURA:** She's a great writer. Yes.

**JASON:** Yeah. The pacing of it was really nice and the dialogue was really cute and it had some like, tender moments and some funny moments and I like the relationships between people. Like there's a lot that's done really well it's just certain decisions kind of ruined it a little bit.

**LAURA:** And they were kind of big. They were big decisions.

**JASON:** I think the story that she wanted to tell wasn't a young adult story.

**LAURA:** And she tried to make it fit until young adult. I could see that.

**JASON:** And so, the romance kind of ruined it a little bit. You didn't really get to dive really deep into the moral questions and the ethical questions and really explore that. So, disappointing.

**LAURA:** That's, yeah. And that kind of connects to what my initial expectation was that? I thought this was going to be more of a darker, adult type book where I got to explore that villainous, morally ambiguous side. But that makes a lot of sense. The way you just said that in that she was trying to tell a story that just doesn't really fit in young adult.

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** Do you- going back, going to our question.

(both laugh)

**JASON:** That we have ignored for 30 minutes.



**LAURA:** Next question. How successful is this trilogy as a superhero story compared to actual superhero comics. Now I'm- before you say anything, I'm going to just be open in that I haven't read very many actual *superhero* comics most of what I read are indie. There's a little bit superhero there but I think you have a little bit more knowledge in terms of superhero comics. So what were your thoughts on that?

**JASON:** Well, I think it's tough to tell a superhero story in a trilogy just because by the nature of comic books their ongoing, right? So you get these long drawn-out stories that you can tell over multiple issues that carry on to the next story and so you have those really long arcs. You know, Superman, Batman, Spider-Man. They all have long history. So they evolve and they change and some things work. Sometimes things don't work. So it isn't just like, I have to get it right in three books or else it was a failure. As just a superhero story, it was okay for me. I wanted to see more of the superhero universe. Like if you took the superpower part out of it and just made it, like, a government organization or like people that had like tech, like more like Agents of Shield kind of thing, the story still would have played out the same. So I don't think the superpowers really did much other than maybe like Sketch. And Max, whose powers were really the focus of the entire story. Everybody else was just like, eh-

**LAURA:** You're right? Yeah.

**JASON:** They have powers but they don't really play into it.

**LAURA:** Yeah, some powers could, could be not there for the story to still move fluidly. So you're right. It didn't really lean too heavily on the actual powered aspect.

**JASON:** And then even like, superhero comic books as we know them, they have the superhero and a supervillain. The supervillain, like, usually always wants to take over the world, or, you know, kill the bad guy because they're aliens or whatever. The bad guy organization in this, the Anarchists- Until the very, very end, their whole idea was not like getting rid of the superheroes. It was just letting people with powers just exist. So kind of started feeling more, like, like X-Men. And X-Men-

**LAURA:** I could see that.

**JASON:** -while yes, it is a superhero story, I think it's more like a social commentary on letting people who are different just exist and be in their space and not like stopping them from trying to be themselves. I don't know, I'm just ranting at this point.

**LAURA:** (laughs) I think we've talked about a lot of bad, negative stuff.

**JASON:** Yeah, no. I feel weird.

**LAURA:** But I still want to say, I still enjoyed the series overall. (laughs)

**JASON:** If anybody's listening to this and they have not read this trilogy, they are not going to now. Like, we did not convince you to read this trilogy.

**LAURA:** I'm sorry.

**JASON:** I know. I will say if you like superheroes. If you like young adult. If you like mystery and if you like a romance, you will enjoy this series. I truly, I truly think you will enjoy the series.

**LAURA:** Yeah. It was still entertaining. It, it definitely still was.



**JASON:** What, what worked, work really well and I think there's more of that than what didn't work, are just so glaringly frustrating because they could have, I think, and I want them to work and they just didn't. So that's why it's more like frustrating and less like oh, I hated this book, it's so bad. It wasn't that it's just ugh. It could have been great but it just kind of was let down. Especially because I know the author is capable of it. *The Lunar Chronicles*, great. Like, I don't, I'm not normally one to say I like young adult or like, fairy tale retellings, but that's exactly what the Lunar Chronicles are and I love that series like it was awesome.

**LAURA:** I agree. Very much so. Um, was there anything more specific that we wanted to talk about? (laughs)

**JASON:** No, no, it's okay.

**LAURA:** Okay. Again, there's three books in the series. I think you did the math on the Goodreads combined average rating here.

**JASON:** I did, I was very curious as we gave it.

**LAURA:** So, the series itself has a combined rating of 4.29 stars.

**JASON:** Yeah, out of five, which is pretty good.

**LAURA:** Yeah. So I gave each of them, I gave one and two four stars and then I don't know why, again, I gave the third one five. I just change that to four though.

**JASON:** If I had to predict why you gave it five stars, I will say, except for the very, very, very end, which you've already talked about, like, the overall resolution to the story I think is pretty good. Like the whole idea of her discovering that her uncle isn't the person she thought he was and, and realizing that he needs to be taken down and kind of the idea of like where superheroes, where the superpowers came from and the, you know, the light that her dad made and I don't know. There was, the ending was pretty good overall.

**LAURA:** Yeah, I did very much enjoy that entire, the entire scene that happened at the church. So the fight between everybody, her deciding she does need to stand up for herself and go against her uncle, and all that stuff. It was, it was a really good overall scene and how it ended was interesting. I did not, I honestly didn't think that's how it was going to end.

**JASON:** No, that Max's sacrifice, Max's sacrifice was really good like he put on the helmet and amplified his powers and pulled everybody's powers away.

**LAURA:** Max was pretty cool.

**JASON:** Like I didn't see that coming. Yeah. So there's a lot that happened in the ending that I think turn the third book around. But I was already frustrated by that point.

**LAURA:** Yeah. You're right.

**JASON:** And then like you said, the epilogue was kind of like what?!

**LAURA:** It was kind of weird? It was a weird way to end it.

**JASON:** So I was like okay, yeah, okay.





**LAURA:**

And it just made me, made me irritated. (laughs) But this is also why I don't like- So I read all three of these on my e-reader. And I don't like that when you finish a book, it automatically labels it read and asks you for your rating for it because sometimes I don't know what I want to rate it yet and then so I'll just like click something and then I'll forget to go back and change my rating.

**JASON:** Yeah. I've definitely changed a rating after a day or two. Like I'll go back and like yeah, you know... Like think honesty, I initially rated the last book four stars like the other two because like I said, it kind of, the sacrifice went from Max and the characterization at the end of a lot of the heroes and the sacrifices that a lot of them gave, losing their powers and then everybody kind of getting their power back at the end. Like I really like the way the series wrapped up as a whole but then I sat with it for like an hour or so and like ah, you know, I just, it's so frustrating. Like it could have been better. Like I think it was just the three star book for me which is disappointing because usually you want the end of a series two to finish on a strong note but... It is what it is.

**LAURA:** Yeah, that a epilogue kind of did not help out. Epilogue, right. Yes. Okay I, I think that's probably all we've got to say on it for right now.

**JASON:** Yeah.

**LAURA:** Is there anything else to add?

**JASON:** Um, no. I think we covered all the big things. You know, I know it seems like we were griping on this this series and that wasn't our intention by any means. I think we both like it. Like we generally liked it.

**LAURA:** We did.

**JASON:** And I would recommend this series to people.

**LAURA:** Oh yeah, definitely.

**JASON:** I think I just held it to a high standard because like I said before, *The Lunar Chronicles* is great and I know she's capable of doing a really great series and superheroes, like again I will admit not fairly, but held it to a higher standard because of other superhero stories I've read. But if you take away those two biases I had against it, it was a really good series.

**LAURA:** Yeah. Definitely.

**JASON:** And I think people for the most part will enjoy it.

**LAURA:** I agree. I would definitely still recommend it and you know, I keep saying I still was very entertained and I had fun reading it, despite these glaring- these things that just bugged me (laughs) Well before we close out this episode, what other books would we recommend? If if people enjoy the *Renegades* series. I feel like obviously we would have to recommend Marissa Meyer's other series, *The Lunar Chronicles*.

**JASON:** Definitely. Yeah.

**LAURA:** That one has officially four books. There are a couple of like, half books or novellas, to fill in. But it's *Cinder*, *Scarlet*, *Cress*, and *Winter* and again these are young adult re-imaginings of classic fairy tale characters set in the future. There's like all kinds of different things in it. A lot of- there is, there is- it's definitely a fantasy, but also very much sci-fi at the same time. So, you get a lot of, a lot of, like, androids, cyborgs. There's some genetic engineering stuff



and there's hacking, space travel, they literally go to the Moon. And on top of that, there's some kind of fantasy type stuff to it as well like some interesting powered magical thing. I don't know how to say it without giving spoilers. (laughs) But it was, it was actually it was a very good read. I would definitely mark these as some of my favorites.

**JASON:** Oh yeah, I understand, I agree.

**LAURA:** Another thing that I was kind of reminded of while reading this was the Market, I think it's called *Market of Monsters* series by Rebecca Schaeffer. There's three books, *Not Even Bones*, *Only Ashes Remain*, and *When Villains Rise*. This is a little bit more towards what I was originally expecting from the *Renegade* series, in that it's a lot darker. It is more about- the main characters are more villain, kind of anti-hero, morally ambiguous. There's a lot of- kind of, there's a lot of things that happen in it that I don't personally, label young adult but I think this is considered a young adult series. It's also got some powered type stuff in it as well but it leans more towards like, more paranormal, supernatural. I think some people put them in under urban fantasy as well.

**JASON:** Oooo..

**LAURA:** I actually really enjoy it. I definitely recommend checking this one out, especially if you're looking for something that's a little bit darker.

**JASON:** I had not heard of that one but I think I'm going to put them on my list. That sounds pretty interesting.

**LAURA:** Yeah. Actually, it's funny. I discovered this series on Webtoons so I read a lot of Webtoons comics, the app Webtoons, and they are currently adapting this series to be a web comic. So I was reading, I started reading the first season, which is a retelling of the first book, and I got to the point where I was like, "I really like this, I'm just going to read the books." So then I jumped on the books and I jumped on a good time because the third book came out very shortly after I started reading them. So I was able to kind of read them all together. So yeah, definitely recommend that one. Did you have any recommendations?

**JASON:** Yeah, a couple of things came to mind when I was reading this series. The first two are comic books because of the superhero thing. The first of which is, I would say, the first three volumes of *Thunderbolts Classic* written by Kurt Busiek, and it's published by Marvel. This is about a group of villains who posed as a new team of superheroes. So very in line with kind of Nova going undercover. So they pose straight up as superheroes and then, eventually the series deals with the revelation that oh, actually they're villains but also some of these villains kind of want to redeem themselves and it's their path and redemption of actually maybe trying to become superheroes and can they? So it's really interesting kind of concept.

**JASON:** The second thing they came to mind as I was reading this was any of the stories involving *Midnighter* and *Apollo*, who are two superheroes published by DC Comics. Essentially where is in the *Renegades* we had *Captain Chromium* and I'm blanking- was a *Dread Warden* I believe who are kind of like the superhero and Batman of the universe and they're a married gay couple. *Midnighter* and *Apollo* are the same thing. They are analogues to Superman and Batman and they are a married gay couple. So if you like that element, I would definitely recommend checking out anything that involves them. I know that they were first introduced in the series called *Stormwatch* and there were part of the *Authority*. Both of those series are very mature. So just FYI, but they've been in other series that are a little more for everybody as well.

**JASON:** And then one book series that came to mind as I was reading this, was the *Checquy Files*. The first book in that is called *The Rook*. That's by Daniel O'Malley. If you liked the mystery element and the superpowers of *Renegades*, I think, you'd really like this book, it's about a woman who wakes up with no recollection of who she is, but she must follow the clues left by her former self to discover identity and track those who want to destroy here. And it also involves a shadowy government organization whose members possess supernatural powers. We eventually find out that she's one of



them. I'm not going to reveal what her power is, but also the organization like, gives people with powers roles of authority. If you don't have powers or not really cool powers, they don't really want you. So kind of in line with kind of the Renegades and we only want cool powers.

**LAURA:** (laughs)

**JASON:** You know. No origami powers allowed.

**LAURA:** (laughs) I felt bad for that guy.

**JASON:** I know. I know.

**LAURA:** Well, that book sounds really cool. I might have to actually add that one to my list, too.

**JASON:** Yeah. That one actually also got turned into a TV mini-series. I have not watched it myself so I can't speak to if it's any good. I think that was released like two years ago.

**LAURA:** Okay.

**JASON:** But there's two books in that series now. *The Rook* and *Stiletto*. And then I just found out that, I think, a third book is coming maybe this year.

**LAURA:** Oh, okay.

**JASON:** It's pretty fun. Pretty good.

**LAURA:** So potentially trilogy then.

**JASON:** Mhm.

**JASON:** Well, Jason, thanks for hanging out and talking about this series. Thank you for moving it up your reading list.

(both laugh)

**JASON:** You did me a favor because it has been on my read list for a while. I've been wanting to get to and I just kept pushing it back, pushing it, pushing it back. And it's like, alright, fine, I'll just get it done with. And yeah, it was a fun read. So thanks for pushing me to move it up.

**LAURA:** Of course.

**JASON:** And thanks for having me talk about it.

**LAURA:** I needed somebody to talk to about it. I didn't know if maybe like, The things that I was frustrated over or the things I liked were just me or not.

**JASON:** No, it's not just you.

(closing music begins)



**LAURA:** Cool. Well, thanks again. If anybody has read these and has anything to add to the conversation, please feel free to message us on our social media or comment. We would like to know your thoughts. You guys can find us online @shitweveread. And again, just send us your comments and stuff. Let us know what you thought. And if anyone wants to follow us individually, you can find me @aka\_ellebee. Jason, where would you like to be found?

**JASON:** Um... Under a rock reading somewhere, probably.

**LAURA:** (laughs) That would be really nice too.

**JASON:** But online you can find me basically on anything as @jricochet.

**LAURA:** Cool. All right. Thanks guys. We'll be back next month with another book to talk about.

**JASON:** Mhm. Thanks for listening, guys!

**LAURA:** Thanks! Bye!

**JASON:** Bye!

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**LAURA:** Thanks so much for listening!