



Waves of YA, Ep 19, Mental Health in YA

Transcript:

00;00;07;28 - 00;00;19;22

Chris

[CHRIS] Hello and welcome to the Waves of YA podcast. It is focused on young adult literacy. Brought to you by the Ocean County Library's Teen Literacy Workgroup. My name is Chris. I'm one of the Teen librarians at the Lakewood branch. Joining me today, we have...

00;00;20;05 - 00;00;23;12

Steven

[STEVEN] I'm Steven. I am the Children's and Teen librarian at the Upper Shores Branch.

00;00;23;20 - 00;00;25;17

Chris

[CHRIS] And we have a special guest...

00;00;25;26 - 00;00;31;08

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Hi, I'm Claire Legrand. I'm the author of several books for Kids and Teens, and I'm excited to be here today.

00;00;32;02 - 00;00;36;21

Chris

[CHRIS] We're super excited to have you. I love your book, Sawkill Girls, it's so good.

00;00;37;04 - 00;00;39;21

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh, thank you.

00;00;39;25 - 00;00;55;21

Chris

[CHRIS] Today's episode is all about mental health and YA exploring the shift in how it is addressed and its importance in YA literature. But first, we're gonna ask you a couple of general questions for our

listeners who aren't familiar with your writing. So, Stephen, do you want to kick us off with your first question?

00;00;56;04 - 00;01;02;18

Steven

[STEVEN] Sure. Yeah. So we're going to go right to the gate here with a really tough question. What is your favorite book that you've written?

00;01;03;02 - 00;01;06;18

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] You know, I don't know if you're serious or not, but that actually is a tough question.

00;01;07;09 - 00;01;16;29

Steven

[STEVEN] Oh, no, I am, I'm actually quite serious. Yeah, because I know that's always like so, especially someone who has so many, it's like, how could you possibly choose? I'm sure you have such a deep connection with all of them, right?

00;01;17;12 - 00;01;37;09

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I do. It's definitely a different relationship with each one of them. And I think for me and I'm sure for many other authors, if not all other authors, you kind of learn something about yourself through the process of writing each book. You learn about yourself as a writer and also as a human being. And so you become very personally attached to each book in different ways, I think.

00;01;38;02 - 00;02;21;03

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I'm not just saying this because I know we're going to talk about this book, but I think possibly my favorite book, tied with maybe Lightbringer, which is the third book in the Empirium Trilogy, which begins with Furyborn and then Kingsbane and then Lightbringer. I think my favorite book is probably Some Kind of Happiness because, and that is a middle grade book, they're written for kids ages 9 to 12. And out of all of my books, that is the one that is the most realistic. So it has a bit of a touch of magic because the main character writes these fantasy stories to cope with what she's going through. And those stories end up kind of reflecting what's going on and the actual book, but it is mostly realistic fiction.

00;02;21;03 - 00;02;40;15

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And so it's funny that that is the one that I love perhaps the most. All my other books have a lot of fantasy elements in them. I think it's my favorite for many reasons, one of which is that it's just super personal to me. It draws a lot on my own experience as a child and my relationships with various family members and my family as a whole.

00;02;41;00 - 00;03;12;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I put a lot of myself into that book, and I also find it very satisfying that it seems to have reached and continue to reach people who need it in ways that maybe people don't need my other books, not that they don't need my other books because I firmly believe that entertainment and escaping from real world problems and exploring your own issues, trauma, feelings, etc. through books, which is a very safe space in which to do those things, is very important.

00;03;12;26 - 00;03;27;07

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] But I think that Some Kind of Happiness in particular resonates with people in a way that I find very rewarding and humbling. And I also wish that I had experienced when I was a young kid. So that was a very long answer to your question, but that is the answer.

00;03;27;07 - 00;03;40;11

Steven

[STEVEN] Oh, that's amazing. And you mentioned that you found that you were drawing a lot of parallels to your own life when you were writing that particular book. Is that kind of what got you into writing in the first place, or was it some other kind of inspiration that made you want to become an author?

00;03;41;05 - 00;04;05;16

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I've always loved writing. I've always loved storytelling. Even when I didn't actually put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, storytelling and sharing stories with others and hearing their stories is kind of how I understand the world. It's how I dissect my own feelings and beliefs. And even from a young age, I loved writing, but I didn't know that I wanted to write professionally until after high school.

00;04;05;16 - 00;04;20;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] When I came up with the idea for a book that would end up becoming Furyborn, the first book in the Empirium Trilogy, I was going to be a musician and then I came up with the idea for that book and couldn't stop thinking about it. And so I changed my major and left music behind, at least professionally, and started writing.

00;04;20;02 - 00;04;52;26

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I. I had to practice. I had to perfect. Not that you can ever really perfect, but I had to work on perfecting my craft before I could actually get Furyborn published because that was a really ambitious book to try to get published. When you're 20 years old and you haven't really had any formal writing training, so I tried to get that published, didn't work out, and so I sort of stepped back and reassessed and started writing other books and my first published book was The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls, which is a gothic fairy tale for young readers, gothic, fairy tale slash horror, I guess.

00;04;53;08 - 00;05;09;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I wrote that because I wasn't able to get Furyborn published at that point in time. So I wanted to write something shorter, simpler, fun, something that harkens back to the classic horror and fantasy books I read as a kid. And then from there, I just kept going. I kept working on Furyborn among working on other books and getting other books published.

00;05;09;13 - 00;05;24;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I guess it was, is it 14 years? Yeah, 14 years after I first came up with the idea that Furyborn was finally published. So that was my journey to being a published author. But storytelling has been how I look at the world from a very young age.

00;05;24;02 - 00;05;45;23

Steven

[STEVEN] Yeah, I think that's good inspiration for aspiring writers because obviously publishing and writing can be a very difficult and competitive field. And even you said it took 14 years for that book to, from the time it was, kind of like, conceived to the time that it was finally published. And clearly that's a testament to you having a lot of patience and having a passion for something.

00;05;45;23 - 00;06;06;25

Steven

[STEVEN] So I feel like that's a very important thing for the listeners to this podcast, to know that just things might not always work out right away, but if you keep at them and keep up with your passion, your dreams, that eventually you get there. I do have to, before we move on to our next question, I do have to ask, what kind of musician were you? Because I'm a musician as well. So I'm just like, oh, great. That's, that's so awesome. So what what kind of music did you do? Or, do you still do?

00;06;07;07 - 00;06;42;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I don't really play anymore. In fact, I haven't played in too many years to figure out right now. But I was an orchestral trumpet player, so I wanted to play in a big symphony orchestra someday and I was pretty good, but I don't think I was really good enough to actually make it. It's hard to make it as a professional writer, I think it's possibly even harder to make it as a professional musician. And I did not, you know, you were talking about perseverance and really like believing in yourself and continuing to push for what, I mean, it sounds cheesy, but continue to follow your dreams. You know, if you want to be a writer, that's a huge part of the equation.

00;06;42;23 - 00;07;06;07

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And it is. And part of that is also stubbornness, just sheer stubborn determination. And I had that in terms of wanting to be a writer. I did not have that same fire in terms of wanting to be a musician. So thankfully I was able to figure that out fairly quickly and then was able to shift gears. But music will always be a huge part of who I am and and how I tell stories.

00:07:06;19 - 00:07:08;14

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Really quick. What kind of musician are you?

00:07:08;23 - 00:07:19;21

Steven

[STEVEN] So primarily now, I'm a singer. That's kind of like, that's my little, like, side hustle in addition to be a librarian. But in terms of instruments, I used to be a cello and clarinet player. Those were my two main instruments.

00:07:19;23 - 00:07:23;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh my gosh, you're a triple threat.

00:07:23;17 - 00:07:24;16

Steven

[STEVEN] Sure. Let's go with that.

00:07:24;24 - 00:07:25;09

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah.

00:07:26;27 - 00:07:29;06

Steven

[STEVEN] All right, Chris, you want to take it away with our next question?

00:07:29;22 - 00:07:41;18

Chris

[CHRIS] Actually, I would jump back to the music thing, though, on your website. Yeah. Your website has Spotify playlists for your books. Did you make the playlists or were they like fan made and you're just promoting them?

00:07:41;18 - 00:08:09;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I made all of this playlists. I really love listening to instrumental music when I'm brainstorming, outlining, drafting, editing, etc. And so as I go through planning a book and writing the first draft, I collect this huge unpublished playlist. I don't share these, just this huge depository of all of these pieces of music, usually from film scores that I think fit the atmosphere or the texture or the plot of the story.

00:08:10;01 - 00:08:26;21

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And then I whittle those down as I'm editing to the final playlist, which sort of instrumentally takes you from the beginning of the book to end of the book. And then I share those with

readers because I know there are a lot of people who also use music as part of their creative processes and whatever field they're in.

00;08;27;04 - 00;08;44;03

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So I like to share those and get my music nerd on. So I have made all of those. And yeah, if you check out my Spotify profile, which is linked through my website, you can explore my playlist. There's a lot of really good music there. It's a good starting point. If you want to build your own like writing playlist. I have a lot of really good music on there.

00;08;44;15 - 00;08;50;10

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, I saw that and I was like, No, I didn't know this existed. I could have been listening to it while I was reading.

00;08;50;10 - 00;08;52;03

Steven

[STEVEN] Well, you could go back and reread now.

00;08;52;04 - 00;08;53;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] There you go.

00;08;53;02 - 00;08;54;01

Steven

[KEVIN] With the supplemental music.

00;08;54;09 - 00;09;10;20

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] There you go. I definitely recommend, for this time of year, the Sawkill Girls playlist and the Extasia playlist. Extasia is my most recent young adult novel, both very creepy, atmospheric, like have on in the background while you're handing out candy to trick or treaters or whatever.

00;09;12;02 - 00;09;15;12

Chris

[CHRIS] It's great. I'm super excited to be able to use those playlists now.

00;09;15;20 - 00;09;16;28

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, I hope you enjoy them.

00;09;17;07 - 00;09;22;07

Chris

[CHRIS] Our next question is, is there anything that you would change about any of your books after they were published?

00;09;22;25 - 00;09;44;11

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] There actually is, and I don't want to give away spoilers for the most part. I wouldn't want to change anything, and I don't go back and read my published books because that is a recipe for spiraling into bad thoughts. Because they're published, they're done, and they were written at a certain point in my life, and I'm no longer at that point in my life, both as a writer and as a person.

00;09;44;11 - 00;10;00;24

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So going back and revisiting those stories is just going to make me criticize myself or judge who I was at that point in my life or any other number of not constructive things. So I don't really go back. I have little passages that I have marked for reading at events, but I don't explore the books really beyond that.

00;10;01;04 - 00;10;20;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] But I will say, and I again don't want to spoil things. So I have a young adult book called Winterspell, which is a retelling of The Nutcracker ballet. It's like a dark and twisted romantic retelling. And there's, I don't know that I would want to change this plot element entirely, but there is a pretty big element of the plot that I think would have been interesting to take a different way.

00;10;20;22 - 00;10;40;25

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And again, I don't want to spoil anything. It has to do with the fate of a certain character and the romantic coupling of a certain character. And I think if I were to go back, I might explore it a little bit differently. But other than that, I feel really good. And even with that book, I'm pleased with what the book is.

00;10;40;25 - 00;10;55;12

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] But it could be interesting. You know, it's like one of those, well, what if I wrote this like a Choose Your Own Adventure book? What if I went this way instead of this way? And what would that have looked like? For the most part, I really am proud of my books and I try not to go back and second guess myself because like I said, that's not productive.

00;10;56;19 - 00;11;15;06

Steven

[STEVEN] It's interesting what you said about how you've never gone back and reread any of your published books, and that's very interesting. I wonder how many other authors do the same thing, or I also wonder how many don't have the same thoughts that you brought up like, oh my God, like I like, can I change this? Like, do I need to do it like a rerelease? Like, but, that's very interesting.

00;11;15;21 - 00;11;38;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, I think it's true for a lot of creatives. You know, you hear about like actors, who won't watch the final movie that they were in or musicians who, like, they record the album and then they really don't want to listen to it again. So I think it just depends on the person. I will confess that sometimes I go back and read certain passages in *Lightbringer*, I mentioned that that is one of my favorite books of mine, just because I'm really proud of it.

00;11;38;02 - 00;11;52;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And there are some sections that are really pretty and even for books that aren't mine, I often go back and reread passages that stick in my mind as being really pretty and inspiring. And I do that with *Lightbringer*, but only little passages, I don't read start to finish.

00;11;52;18 - 00;12;16;15

Steven

[STEVEN] All right! So in the past, most middle grade books that dealt with depression, it seemed that it was always caused by some sort of outside event, for example, death in *Bridge to Terabithia*. But recently there's been more of a shift in middle grade books, such as your book, *Some Kind of Happiness*, where the protagonist actually struggles with having depression and anxiety as part of everyday life. In your opinion, what do you think has caused this shift?

00;12;17;05 - 00;12;37;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Well, first of all, I don't proclaim to be an expert on anything to do with mental health. I can only really talk about my own experiences with it because I do live with anxiety and depression disorders and I have from a young age, but I didn't realize it until I was much older. And I think that there is just sort of an overall shift with each subsequent generation.

00;12;37;02 - 00;12;59;01

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I feel like we get better as a society at talking about mental health. I think that there is still definitely a stigma. Lots of people get uncomfortable talking about it, lots of people don't understand it, but more and more we're seeing it talked about in media, in books and movies and TV shows, not as this thing that only happens after a really bad event in your life, which of course it does.

00;12;59;01 - 00;13;22;09

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] For some people, situational depression is certainly a thing. And even for me, who, I live with chronic depression. But it's something, if there is an outside factor that affects me deeply, it can exacerbate symptoms that already exist. But overall, I think we're starting to become more aware and educated as a society of what mental illness feels like for people who live with it chronically.

00;13;22;29 - 00;13;44;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I'm not sure that I can point to any one particular factor. I think that books like *Some Kind of Happiness*, and lots of other books that deal with discussing mental health challenges, the more we write those books and release them into the world, the more they become part of the conversation. And the more the conversation broadens to include different kinds of experiences and different challenges.

00;13;44;17 - 00;14;19;20

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So I think it's just this really messy process, as with a lot of things. And when it comes to, like, social awareness and social intelligence about certain issues, it's a messy process. It takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of people, creative people and people with platforms like talking about those issues, writing about them, telling TV shows about them, and just having it become less of a scary, unknown thing that makes people put up walls, and more of a thing that is part of the constant conversation and people feel more and more comfortable talking about it.

00;14;20;05 - 00;14;38;07

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I think there's been a shift, new people in my generation and people in the generations that are younger than me are really, you know, in social media, the rise of social media, people being able to talk about those things and find connections with people who go through similar challenges, which they may not have had access to those connections before social media.

00;14;38;14 - 00;15;11;29

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So again, it's just this really messy, like long process of people connecting with others in different ways and finding safe places in which to explore their mental health challenges and find comfort with other people who experience the same things. And also, it just becoming more and more slowly and slowly a presence in media. So, and I like to think that *Some Kind of Happiness*, I think I wrote it because of many reasons, one of which was, as writing often is, it was a selfish thing.

00;15;11;29 - 00;15;35;05

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] You know, I'm processing my own stuff and writing about my own stuff and wanting to write a book that 11 year old Claire would have loved and needed. But I am. I've been very pleased to see it resonating with lots of different kinds of people of all different ages. And, I think the more books like that that are out in the world, again, the broader the conversation will be, the less scary the idea of mental illness will be.

00;15;35;18 - 00;15;54;11

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I think in media for a long time there were these really awful portrayals of what it is to have a mental illness and I think people got it in their heads. This is a scary thing. This is something we

don't want to talk about. This means that you are broken or weird. This means there's something wrong with you.

00;15;54;22 - 00;16;07;25

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I'm glad to see that those misconceptions are being slowly and messily corrected over time. It's just a matter of trying to be patient and wait for everyone to catch up and, hopefully, books like *Some Kind of Happiness* help with that.

00;16;08;17 - 00;16;23;24

Steven

[STEVEN] I think you hit that nail right on the head with that one. I, like, literally, I had all those same thoughts. Like, when I was reading the questions ahead of time, I was like, yeah, that's what I would say. So you just, like, took all the words, like, right out of my mouth. Yeah, no. And I think that's so important.

00;16;23;24 - 00;16;50;27

Steven

[STEVEN] I think it's why it's so important to have this idea, this the conversation about mental health in younger literature, like middle grade and even like I see a lot of that being a children's librarian, I see a lot of the picture books that come in, like, even those are starting to tackle more of those quote, unquote, difficult conversations and realizing that, yeah, these are things that people live with, that they live perfectly fine, normal, healthy, productive lives, just, they just happen to be dealing with...

00;16;51;07 - 00;17;46;04

Steven

[STEVEN] And the thing that people need to realize is that mental illness is not very different from physical illness. Like, you know, in the same way that I feel, like in, I see it, there's a book that I'll talk about a little bit when we get to that question about, you know, talk about other books. I think also important to talk, to destigmatize the idea of medication for mental illness because that's another thing that we've seen in the past where it might be depicted as someone either struggling with having to like be on pills or something like that, or, oh, they're so bad that they have to be on a medication, like, I guess they couldn't figure it out. And I've been seeing more and more books where even things like that, it's just like, Oh yeah, like this is my medication that I take. Like, you know, it's like it's the same way that if you're physically sick with something, you would take medicine for it. So it's important that we have more of these authors including these characters, and these backgrounds into their writing.

00;17;46;04 - 00;18;08;16

Steven

[STEVEN] So it's great to see people like you who, you know, are not afraid to be so candid and open about it and include it in their writing. And, yeah, the point that you said about writing a book that your younger self could have benefited from, I think that's definitely a great way to approach writing for this generation and for future generations. So I completely agree with you 100% of everything that you said.

00;18;09;04 - 00;18;34;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh, well, thank you. Yeah, I really the fact that we're even talking about this so candidly in a podcast interview is yet another small sign of, I think, how the tide is turning and where as a whole we're becoming better at talking about this. And yeah, this is advice for not just writing about mental illness or difficult things, but just writing in general.

00;18;34;02 - 00;19;09;26

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I always think of my guiding light as, write the books that young Claire, Teen Claire and that adult Claire now would want to read. Like, I can't write books and be thinking about everyone who's going to read the book and what they want out of a book because you will drive yourself crazy trying to appease myriad fans and readers, but thinking especially when I'm writing for kids, especially when I'm writing about tough subjects for kids, thinking about myself as a kid, and what would have been too much for me and what would have been helpful for me. And then using that as my guiding light has been very helpful.

00;19;10;11 - 00;19;24;16

Steven

[STEVEN] I think that's so important. I'm sure there are plenty of current writers or aspiring writers who really should take that advice. Since you'd be surprised of how well that can inform your creativity and your writing. So that's really awesome. That's a really great way, I think, to approach your writing.

00;19;25;05 - 00;19;46;08

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, thank you. I think it's also a way of preserving your health and happiness as much as you can, you know, because writing is a very vulnerable thing. You're putting your soul onto pages and sharing them with people and keeping the focus on not how well the book is going to sell or what the hot books are, or what people will think and how people are viewed on good reads.

00;19;46;08 - 00;20;02;00

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I mean, you have to shut out all that noise and ultimately just think about, okay, I am writing this for the child that I was. That's all I have to think about. And I have to write the best story that I can for her. And that's a way, a tool that you can use to block out all the noise like I said, and just focus on what really matters.

00;20;02;03 - 00;20;04;05

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Writing something emotionally authentic. Yeah.

00;20;04;13 - 00;20;09;07

Steven

[STEVEN] Yeah. And knowing that, inevitably, you're going to connect with some group of people, like.

00;20;10;13 - 00;20;13;23

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah. And knowing that inevitably you won't connect with some people, and that's fine.

00;20;14;17 - 00;20;26;28

Steven

[STEVEN] Right, and accepting that, which is way easier said than done, I say it, like, so yes, just accept that, whatever. But, but yeah. As long as you can keep that focus, and keep that. Yeah, absolutely. I, I totally got that. Yeah.

00;20;28;04 - 00;20;32;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah. Oh, this, this is awesome. I love this conversation. I feel like we could talk for hours, but.

00;20;32;13 - 00;20;49;25

Steven

[STEVEN] I know I'm so, I'm so glad. I'm always down to to have these and do, and like you mentioned, like it's so nice to be able, in this day and age, to be like so candid and so open about this that, you know, these types of conversations need to keep happening. So, yeah, so I'm really I'm really glad this is happening.

00;20;49;25 - 00;20;52;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, me too. And, Chris, you were going to say something, I think.

00;20;52;18 - 00;21;15;24

Chris

[CHRIS] Oh, yeah, I love that. Like for Finley, she's like 11, like, which is young. And I know like there's a lot more with anxiety and depression for like the older age group, but like, kids still have anxiety and depression and I feel like it's so much easier just to be like, oh they're a moody kid, and just blow past. Like, what problems do you really have in, like, elementary school? Like, a lot. Like if you have anxiety, everything is a problem.

00;21;15;24 - 00;21;16;19

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Right, exactly.

00;21;16;19 - 00;21;17;09

Steven

[STEVEN] And you can just...

00;21;17;20 - 00;21;20;27

Chris

[CHRIS] Like, don't call on me, or don't make me speak in front of the class.

00;21;21;11 - 00;21;21;24

Steven

[STEVEN] Right.

00;21;21;25 - 00;21;44;04

Chris

[CHRIS] Like, while you're in school, there's so many things that, like, are tiny, but like if you have anxiety, you're like, this is the worst thing ever. Like when I was waiting, I was like, the first one in for this. I was like, please let everyone's technology work. Then I was, like, it's okay. It's fine, we can troubleshoot, but like kids all have, their small problems are still problems, and they're like getting to see it.

00;21;44;22 - 00;21;58;01

Chris

[CHRIS] And then, like, the kids reading it, get the tools to identify it, or if like, no one in their family talks about it with like this would be, like, we are talking about it, like they can then be like, oh, someone else feels this way.

00;21;58;01 - 00;21;58;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Exactly.

00;21;59;03 - 00;22;04;18

Chris

[CHRIS] And then like bring it up or like reading to be like, read this book, and like, hand it off to a parent and be like, this is how I feel.

00;22;04;18 - 00;22;05;09

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, absolutely.

00;22;05;09 - 00;22;10;03

Chris

[CHRIS] They don't have the tools because they're kids like, they don't know how to convey everything all the time.

00;22;10;25 - 00;22;14;14

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh, I mean, absolutely. I don't even know how to convey everything all the time now as an adult. Like.

00;22;14;23 - 00;22;16;05

Steven

[STEVEN] Right, I was going to say yeah.

00;22;16;06 - 00;22;16;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah.

00;22;17;05 - 00;22;17;29

Steven

[STEVEN] It never goes away.

00;22;18;05 - 00;22;32;24

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] No, no, I mean it, it gets better. But you know, I had my first panic attack when I was 11 years old, but I didn't know what it was until years later. I was able to look back at that moment, which just burned itself into my memory. And I was able to finally, years later, have the vocabulary to identify it.

00;22;33;10 - 00;22;50;27

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] But somebody can read Some Kind of Happiness or, insert book here, that talks about mental illness. If somebody can read Some Kind of Happiness and recognize the symptoms of their own panic attacks and the ones that Finley has, and then be able to identify that and talk about it and get help for it sooner in their life than I did.

00;22;51;19 - 00;23;03;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] That would be incredible. That's the ultimate dream, right? When you write a book like this is to, this was tough for me, hopefully this book can make it easier for other people. So yeah, I could go on and on, but I will defer back to you.

00;23;04;25 - 00;23;21;23

Steven

[STEVEN] Yeah, but, and that's and that's, just one more thing I'll say, that's so important because as someone who has had panic attacks that, you know, suffers from various chronic, you know, mental illnesses, they obviously they could be incredibly scary, especially at a young age when you had, like you said, you didn't know what was going on with you.

00;23;21;23 - 00;23;43;05

Steven

[STEVEN] And I, you know, I obviously wasn't, not you. I wasn't there, but I can imagine that that was just like a horrifying, like, terrifying experience, especially when you're like, I have no idea what's

happening. So, yeah, like you said, to be able to include it so candidly in a piece of writing can be like, Hey, this is something that could happen to you, but don't worry, it's going to be okay.

00;23;43;05 - 00;24;03;13

Steven

[STEVEN] Like there are ways to work through it. There are ways to get help. And yeah, that's why it's so important. We have to keep exposing kids, especially to this at a young age, to be like these are things that can and might happen to you, but it's okay. It will be okay. Yeah. So I just wanted to acknowledge that, I just think that that's so incredibly important, too.

00;24;03;24 - 00;24;24;01

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Absolutely. And again, I could keep talking about I could keep talking about that for hours. But I will just say that, yeah, anything that can make those moments less scary, you know, something is scarier when you can't describe it and you feel completely like this is the thing that you experienced and no one else knows what it feels like.

00;24;24;01 - 00;24;51;04

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Nobody knows what it is you can't talk about with anyone because I don't know how to describe it. So with books that talk candidly about mental illness and mental health and these quote unquote tougher subjects, again, books are such a safe place for especially kids to explore things like that. And if they can come away from a book with a little richer of a vocabulary and are able to use that vocabulary to ask for help, you know, that's the really important thing.

00;24;51;04 - 00;24;55;08

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And that's my hope for Some Kind of Happiness and from my other books as well.

00;24;56;05 - 00;25;10;22

Chris

[CHRIS] Speaking of your other books, the next one is actually relates to Sawkill Girls. In it, Marion struggles with the loss of her sister while also dealing with everything else that's happening on Sawkill Rock. I don't want to spoil anything about it, but there's a lot going on in Sawkill Rock.

00;25;10;22 - 00;25;13;07

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] There's a lot going on.

00;25;13;07 - 00;25;19;22

Chris

[CHRIS] Why did you feel it's important to include characters that struggle with mental health, while not making it the complete focus of your book?

00;25;20;08 - 00;25;48;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] That's a nice segue from what we were just talking about. You know, I think that it's very important to show, as Steven said, that you can have mental illnesses and still live a full life and still fall in love and still be the hero and still have friends and still write books. You know, you can do all of the things that you want out of life and maybe it may be different for you.

00;25;48;17 - 00;26;11;10

Claire Legrand

It may feel different for you, it may look different for you than it would for someone who doesn't live with mental illness. But it is definitely not only possible, but probable, especially once you figure out what tools you need to manage your particular mental illnesses, medication therapy, etc. I think it's very important to show that and I discussed this, actually explore this in my adult series.

00;26;11;10 - 00;26;27;06

Claire Legrand

It Starts in May. So in my adult series, which I know we're focusing on kids and young adult literature in this interview, but I just want to mention that in my adult series, it starts in May, each of the main characters in the series are struggling, and this is a fantasy setting. And I think it's important to talk about mental illness.

00;26;27;06 - 00;26;52;20

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] It's not just in realistic settings, but in fantasy settings as well, because some people don't read anything but fantasy books and they need to see characters who are struggling with mental illness as well and learning how to manage that mental illness and live fulfilling lives, nonetheless. The main characters in my adult fantasy series that starts next year, the first book is called A Crown of Ivy and Glass and all of the characters are dealing with various mental health challenges.

00;26;52;29 - 00;27;13;20

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] One of the characters has severe anxiety and panic attacks. One of the characters is severely depressed, and it manifests as anger, which is not something that you see or hear talked about very often, as the depression can sometimes manifest as anger. It's not just sadness. And then one of the other characters has depression, but it does manifest mostly as sadness and this great melancholy and this great loneliness.

00;27;13;20 - 00;27;51;16

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And despite having these challenges in their lives, these women still fall in love and save the day and wear fabulous dresses to parties and like have a good time with their friends and live these full, interesting lives, even though one element of their lives is a challenge that not everyone has to live with. So I think it's very important for people to see that because I still think as part of our collective ongoing education process, when it comes to mental illness, sometimes still many people

think that if you have chronic depression, if you have chronic anxiety, well then you can't be happy and content.

00;27;51;16 - 00;28;10;27

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] You can't have a good life, you can't fall in love. Nobody is going to want to love you, you're too difficult, etc., etc. But that is just patently wrong. And you know, I have anxiety and depression disorders. I see a therapist, I am on medication and I know that, you know, I come from a very privileged position where I can afford those things.

00;28;10;27 - 00;28;32;25

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And that's a whole other issue entirely. And it's still hard sometimes, even though I've developed the tools of which to manage my mental illness. But even when times are challenging, I am still able to work with the people around me who care about me, my therapist, my doctor, my partner, my family, my friends. And I'm able to live a life that is fulfilling to me.

00;28;32;25 - 00;28;57;20

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I'm able to write books. I am able to travel and see family. I'm able to go on a walk and appreciate nature. You know, I'm able to do all of the things that you would think a person would want to do in their lives and able to travel and able to work even though I have those challenges in my life and I make sure to speak about this very candidly when I talk with kids at schools, because I never got to meet an author when I was a kid.

00;28;57;20 - 00;29;13;08

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Like, I never got authors coming to my school to talk about books. I would have lost my mind. I would have flipped out. I would have thought it was the coolest thing ever to happen and I would have looked at the author as like, Oh, you're an author. You're like a god on a pedestal, you know? Like you write books.

00;29;13;08 - 00;29;32;28

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I love books more than anything. And if any kid in the audience that I'm speaking to has that perception about what an author is and then realizes, Oh, that author like writes books and I love books, but also that author is depressed and like she's okay and she's still writing books. That would have been a world opening revelation for me as a kid.

00;29;33;09 - 00;29;51;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And so I think, again, showing not just through my books, but through conversations with kids online, in person, and not just kids, but teens and adults as well, just talking candidly about it in

the same breath as. Oh, yeah, you know, I've been having kind of a tough depressive swing right now, but I wrote this chapter yesterday that I really love.

00;29;51;22 - 00;30;10;16

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] You know, like those two things can exist at the same time. And I think that's a really important thing for people to understand. And I hope, again, that books like mine and there are many others out there as well, who are doing this more and more, I hope that that contributes to the overall conversation and the overall trend toward it's okay to talk about these things.

00;30;10;16 - 00;30;27;02

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And also just because you are mentally ill does not mean you're broken or wrong or that your life can't be fulfilling. You can still be the hero of your own story. That's something that is really important to me to portray, and it's something I'm going to use as yet another guiding light as I continue to write books, for sure.

00;30;28;07 - 00;30;48;12

Steven

[STEVEN] I love this conversation. This is just so great. I've said, I'm just so glad that we're at a point in life where like we could just be. So I know we've all said it like so many times, but like, it's just so nice to be just so candid and yeah, just you never know who you're helping by just being candid, just being casual, too.

00;30;48;12 - 00;30;59;29

Steven

[STEVEN] And not just, you know, like we keep saying it, the world is not all doom and gloom with mental illness. Like, it's just one piece of you with all the other billions of pieces that make up you. It's just more just one of those, actually.

00;31;00;13 - 00;31;05;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, exactly. And I apologize for that answer going on and on.

00;31;05;22 - 00;31;09;21

Steven

[STEVEN] Please, no, absolutely. I was like, I was in! I was like, yeah!

00;31;09;21 - 00;31;10;03

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh, good.

00;31;11;15 - 00;31;14;03

Steven

[STEVEN] I got into like a whole TED Talk be like, yeah, I'm, I'm all for it.

00;31;14;03 - 00;31;38;24

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, thank you for coming to my TED Talk about talking candidly about mental illness and in Sawkill Girls, to bring it back to your original question, in Sawkill Girls, I mean, again, I want to avoid spoilers, but in that book, one of the characters, Marion, specifically, is dealing with feelings of grief and loss and sadness. Another of the characters.

00;31;39;08 - 00;32;04;08

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] In my view, she is experiencing some symptoms of depression as well, but it manifests very differently, and the character I'm talking about is Val. Both of those characters have endured and are enduring pretty severe trauma. And so I feel like if you could look at them and diagnosed them as having some depressive symptoms, I would think that in their case, it's more situational.

00;32;04;08 - 00;32;26;04

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I'm not necessarily sure that they have chronic depression, maybe, Marion, because I feel like I'm very much like Marion, and I have chronic depression. But I think that's an important thing too. As we were talking about at the beginning of this conversation, some depression is situational and that doesn't make it any less difficult to handle. It doesn't make it any less worthy of discussion.

00;32;26;17 - 00;32;47;10

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Does it make it any safer from stigma and situational depression, I think there's a Venn diagram of like chronic depression and situational depression and they overlap and sometimes one becomes the other and it's very messy. Mental health is a very messy thing, just as everything is in life and that messiness becomes less scary the more we talk about it, the more we show different kinds of depression.

00;32;47;10 - 00;33;18;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Here is chronic depression here, situational depression. Here's a character who is grieving. Here is a character who lives with anxiety and suffers regular panic attacks. And there are just so many different kinds of people out there who live with so many different kinds of mental health challenges, whether they're chronic or temporary. And, and so in Sawkill, I think that's a good example of characters who are struggling mental healthwise because of things that are happening to them, as opposed to Finley, who says many times in the book, Finley is the main character in Some Kind of Happiness.

00;33;18;22 - 00;33;35;09

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] She says many times, like, I don't understand why I'm sad. I don't have any reason to be sad, like nothing is happening. And I beg to differ a little bit with her because her family is going through some stuff. But overall, yes, she has a good life on paper, everything is fine, but that's the thing. On paper, everything can be fine.

00:33:35:09 - 00:33:39:21

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] In reality, everything is not. And so, showing that kind of depression, I think, is also important.

00:33:40:03 - 00:34:07:09

Steven

[STEVEN] But our final, final-ish question, because I'm sure this will all open up a whole other discussion is let's take this time to talk about some other books that also depict mental illness. So does anyone have a or, actually, I can go first cause I have one that I started to mention before, just because when I was thinking about this and thinking about books that, you know, depicted mental health, I was drawn to one that I had read at the start of COVID.

00:34:07:15 - 00:34:49:09

Steven

[STEVEN] It's called This Is My Brain in Love by I.W. Gregorio. And what I really thought, first of all, I just I like I was like I really liked it. It was very sweet, but it was a great example of how you can tell a story that includes elements about mental illness without it being A, the focal point, and B, without the book being just like a melancholy kind of this person, like, oh, isn't it so terrible what they go through? But it's like, I feel like it definitely drives the story, but it's not a book about mental illness. It reads more of kind of like an uplifting, kind of like rom com type of book, or it reminds me kind of like, of like, To All the Boys I've Loved Before.

00:34:49:09 - 00:35:09:26

Steven

[STEVEN] Like, it's like kind of in that realm of books, which is great. And that's kind of what we've been talking about, where like, is at its core and throughout, kind of like this lighter fare of this lighter story is inevitably about like two teens that do fall in love. But the thing that they're navigating is also one suffers from chronic anxiety.

00:35:09:26 - 00:35:32:11

Steven

[STEVEN] The other one comes to find out that she has been struggling with depression. That's kind of like infers that she's like, you know, doesn't really understand what's going on with her. But that I also mentioned that this was a great example of a book that doesn't, it kind of de-stigmatizes the idea of having to have medication to deal with a mental illness, which I think it's also like a really important element that does not get discussed a lot.

00:35:32:20 - 00:35:56:06

Steven

[STEVEN] So that was just one that I wanted to bring up because I feel like it was a great example of exactly to talk about a book that could depict mental illness in this kind of way. And this is also kind of what I brought up before about how I personally believe that it's important to destigmatize the idea of medicating for chronic illness, because it's something else that could be seen as kind of like, oh, like, wow, you're on medication for your like, whoa, stuff must be really wrong with you.

00;35;56;06 - 00;36;11;18

Steven

[STEVEN] It's like, no. And the same thing that we said before, whereas if you're physically sick, if you had an illness, a physical illness, you would take medicine for it. You would go to the doctor, get an antibiotic. It's kind of the same thing. It's like you have a mental illness and in order to treat that illness, here is a medication.

00;36;11;18 - 00;36;41;13

Steven

[STEVEN] So that's why I think a book like this is really important. It's like it's a it's a light book. It's a very like fun read. It's very sweet. And also it just happens to depict mental illness as well. That's why I want to bring this book up, because I felt like it tied in so well with what we were talking about, about, you know, how it's important just to make it a part, be candid and just make it a part of it without being the focal point in a way that depicts it as kind of just, you know, like if you have a mental illness, you're broken.

00;36;41;13 - 00;36;51;11

Steven

[STEVEN] So that's why I think it's a good, a good example, because I feel like this really pushes against those ideas, and those stereotypes that just makes it a very common casual thing.

00;36;52;19 - 00;37;24;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I love that! And thank you for sharing about that book. I also love when, like I mentioned earlier, when books of different genres tackle or address or incorporate discussions of mental health. So fantasy books, romance, mysteries, not just realistic fiction, but all different kinds of genres because it's all about providing, if you think about it holistically, as many different access points as possible for people to be able to find stories that talk about mental illness like this.

00;37;25;05 - 00;37;50;13

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So I think that's great that in your example, you know, it's a sort of a rom-com Jenny Han vibe, but also incorporates as part of that story these mental health discussions. And I think you can reach a lot of people that way. People aren't necessarily going to want to sit down and read a book about mental health, you know, because that sounds heavy and sad and maybe off putting to people who still don't understand how to talk about mental health.

00:37;50;13 - 00:38;01;16

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] But if it's oh, here's a rom com that is fun and entertaining and also this is part of it. I think that's the way to reach the most people. So I thought, I love that recommendation.

00:38;02;13 - 00:38;18;12

Chris

[CHRIS] I read, I love the like things that kind of have it as an element for the mental health. Because I read one book where the protagonist had anxiety and I was like, I already live in my own brain, I can't live in your brain with anxiety, too. Like, we can't both have anxiety because it's just the whole focus.

00:38;18;16 - 00:38;38;29

Chris

[CHRIS] A.S. King's book, *Switch*, which came out, like, right after the pandemic ended or kind of ended, I really liked because it just had that, like, weird, timeless feel to it, because time had stopped in that book, where it was just, time broke, and we just keep going along with time's not moving. And I was like, yeah, we just had like a year and a half of this.

00:38;39;13 - 00:38;59;07

Chris

[CHRIS] This is how we all felt. And I was like, like, yeah, it was also like, they're trying to solve the problem and like, find out how to fix this. She's also like, I can suddenly throw javelin three footballs field distance, like, I don't know why. So like, but the whole tone of it, also it's very misleading. Where, like, what it sounded like was like, hey, she's got this weird ability to do this!

00:38;59;17 - 00:39;24;12

Chris

[CHRIS] And then you start reading it. You're like, This is about the pandemic. But she wrote it starting in 2018. Like, well before anyone could have predicted this. And I just love the tone of like she has depression or she, I think she has depression, but like, her Dad definitely like, has like depression anxiety, like, it is, part of it is in the tone of the book, but it's not like the complete and total focus, but it's pretty heavy with what's going on.

00:39;24;12 - 00:39;47;09

Chris

[CHRIS] But it's short, it's like you're not like I am bogged down in this forever. I think the audiobook is like 5 hours. Like it was quick to get through. I really like that one. And then for like super casual, *The Rest of Us Just Live Here* by Patrick Ness. Yeah, the protagonist has OCD and anxiety, and it's like his sister has depression and is recovering from having an eating disorder and still struggling with it.

00:39;47;24 - 00:40;02;16

Chris

[CHRIS] And it's just part of it. Like there's monsters, and they have to, like, go solve this problem and like still function every day. And they're like, yeah, this is part of our life. Let's go at it. Like, their friends are just accepting of like, all right, this is not one of your better days. What can we do to help?

00;40;03;08 - 00;40;10;14

Chris

[CHRIS] And like joke, we got a whole thing about it. They're just like, Yeah, still my best friend. You got some problems, like, you're struggling right now. Let's keep going.

00;40;12;05 - 00;40;28;22

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I love that. That's sort of just casual acceptance. People need to see that too, because I think sometimes a lot of the time people hesitate to reach out and ask for help because they worry what their friends reactions will be, for example. So having portrayals like that of friends who are like, Yeah, it's you're not having a good day, are you?

00;40;28;22 - 00;40;45;15

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] That's okay. Like we'll adjust course and do something else or I don't love you any less because of this. I just know that this is part of who you are and that's cool. I'm still here. That's so important. I love those recommendations. I'm going to go really quickly. I have three. I'm not going to spend too much time, I promise.

00;40;45;24 - 00;41;13;20

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So one came out several years ago, it's called Rules for Stealing Stars by Corey Ann Haydu. This is a middle grade book. And both this and the other middle grade book I'm going to talk about are similar to Some Kind of Happiness in that the main character is using magic in some way, whether it's in Finley's case, she's writing stories that take place in sort of a magical parallel world, or, in the case of the main character in Rules for Stealing Stars.

00;41;13;20 - 00;41;41;21

Claire Legrand

Her name is Silly. She and her three sisters sort of create this magical world that's in their closet. So those kinds of literary devices, I think, are really effective when writing about mental health for kids, because kids do that stuff, they make imaginary worlds and they build blanket forts. And if you show characters who do the same things that they do, not only does it add a bit of lightness to the proceedings, but it also just helps the characters seem that much more relatable.

00;41;41;21 - 00;42;07;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And then maybe the readers will be that much more likely to ask for help or integrate this vocabulary into theirs. Rules for Stealing Stars is very, it's very sad. It's very lyrical. The mother in

this book is struggling with addiction problems and so the four daughters are dealing with that in various ways. And their father is dealing or not dealing with that in various ways.

00;42;07;26 - 00;42;50;01

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So it's a portrayal of a family that's going through a crisis that is not necessarily chronic, is more situational. But I think the way that Corey Ann Heydu, the author, the way she portrays these sisters coming together and the complexities of their relationships and how those complexities still exist, even though the Mom is going through these troubles and the family is struggling, they're still sisters, they're still girls. They're still going to have like, little petty spats and they're still going to make up imaginary worlds. Like, I think that's a really special and really sensitively drawn premise for this book. So Rules for Stealing Stories by Corey Ann Heydu, fantastic. I think it's a good read alike for Some Kind of Happiness.

00;42;50;01 - 00;43;19;19

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So if you have read Some Kind of Happiness and you want books that are like that, that one is a good read alike and also a good read alike is Zia Erases the World by Bree Barton. Again, using a magical element as sort of a literary device. The main character, Zia, she has depression, but she doesn't know what to call it. She doesn't have the vocabulary again, so she calls it the Shadoom and it's just this dark, shadowy presence that exists in her life. And she doesn't really know what to call it, so she calls it the Shadoom.

00;43;20;05 - 00;43;43;11

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Then she discovers this magical dictionary where if you erase the word from the dictionary, that thing is erased from the world. And so she starts to erase words that remind her of the Shadoom. And at first it's like great, but then, you know, unintended consequences. So it's a really interesting portrayal of how a young, fantastical mind might interpret what depression is and how they might deal with it.

00;43;43;11 - 00;44;03;10

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And through this really fun, like magical one, like a magical dictionary, that's cool. Like, that's something that a kid will be drawn to even if the book didn't talk about mental health. So I think that's another really good read alike for Some Kind of Happiness. And then the last book I wanted to recommend is a young adult book called When the Stars Lead to You by Ronni Davis.

00;44;03;24 - 00;44;31;23

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] This is a, not a rom com because it's not funny. I mean, it's funny, but it's not a comedy. It's a really beautifully written book about a teenage romance that isn't super healthy and how there are good things about that relationship and how there are not good things about that relationship. It also has really candid discussions of depression and suicidal ideation.

00;44;32;11 - 00;45;01;28

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] It's just really, really complex and sensitively drawn depictions of how messy and complicated and beautiful and poignant those experiences as a teenager can be. Really beautiful prose, too. This book feels dreamy and atmospheric and having that sort of beautiful atmosphere and a story that talks very candidly about depression and suicidal ideation, I think is really wonderful because just because you have depression again doesn't mean life is ugly.

00;45;02;04 - 00;45;20;12

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] It just means life is different for you than it is for other people and life can still be beautiful and you can still read beautiful books. And you can still, if I remember correctly, the main character wants to be like an astrophysicist and so she like wants to study the stars. And she has that ambition even though she's going through some really tough stuff in her life.

00;45;20;22 - 00;45;47;17

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So that's again, another example of this is a book about a character who is more than her mental health challenges more than the mental health challenges of the people around her as well. They are all more than those challenges. They are full, complex, not always great people. And I think that that is, as I've said a million times, a really important thing for especially young readers to see in books.

00;45;47;17 - 00;45;54;29

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] So that's Rules for Stealing Stars by Corey Ann Heydu, Zia Erases the World by Bree Barton and When the Stars Lead to You by Ronni Davis.

00;45;55;26 - 00;46;02;11

Steven

[STEVEN] Awesome. Well, thank you for those recommendations. I actually have not read any of those, but I, I was writing them down as you're saying them. I was like, oh.

00;46;02;11 - 00;46;03;05

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh, all right.

00;46;04;07 - 00;46;05;29

Steven

[STEVEN] I love I love that. Yeah.

00;46;06;03 - 00;46;26;07

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Well, I hope you enjoy them. Yeah There's, I think we are very lucky to live in a time where I think there is more discussion of this and more books that discuss mental illness and mental health challenges than there ever has been before. So I'm very glad that kids growing up have more of the sort of a collective reference of what this is and how to talk about it.

00;46;26;07 - 00;46;28;19

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I just hope that it gets better and better.

00;46;29;17 - 00;46;41;05

Steven

[STEVEN] Yeah, absolutely. Well, before we wrap up here, which I don't want to like like we've been saying, I keep going hours for this. I mean, we could do a special four hour episode. That's fine.

00;46;41;25 - 00;46;45;28

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] We could, like ,we could wear pajamas and make it like a sleepover kind of situation.

00;46;45;28 - 00;46;54;04

Steven

[STEVEN] Oh, my God. I would love that. But before we sadly wrap up, do you have any final thoughts, anything else you want to share with us or our listeners?

00;46;55;02 - 00;47;26;00

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Gosh, I think I have covered a lot. I do want to thank both of you for providing this space for us to talk about these things. Because, again, the fact that we can do that these days is wonderful. And I want this to happen more and more. And if this podcast touches even one person in such a way that they feel more comfortable in their own skin and more willing or able to ask for help, I mean, that would be that would just I don't even have words to describe how wonderful that would be.

00;47;26;05 - 00;47;50;23

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I write really long books, so that saying something, that is my sort of grace note on that. And then more professionally speaking, I suppose I just want to point everyone to my website. I'm not on social media, and that is a whole other story about how I had a mental health crisis a couple of years ago and getting off of social media was one of the things that my doctors and I decided I needed to do for the sake of my health.

00;47;51;04 - 00;48;14;00

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] And I haven't gotten back on and like, I'm okay with that. Like, I feel like it was one component of my treatment and it's been really helpful. Anyway, that's a whole other story. I digress. So

I do have a website though, and a newsletter. So if you go to Claire-Legrand.com, you can find links to all of my Spotify playlists there, as Chris mentioned earlier, and you can subscribe to our newsletter.

00:48:14:01 - 00:48:33:21

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] I do like exclusive giveaways for my subscribers. That's where I do cover reveals and announcements of oh, Furyborn as the e-book is on sale or whatever. So that's where you can the best and latest updates about my books. And then my next book coming out is an adult book called A Crown of Ivy and Glass, as I mentioned earlier. And that comes out in May.

00:48:33:21 - 00:48:35:14

Steven

[STEVEN] So exciting!

00:48:35:14 - 00:48:53:16

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Yeah, I'm very excited, I'm very excited. It's a good read alike for people who liked my Empirium trilogy, which is a on the very, very upper end of Young Adult as it is. This is a good crossover title, officially adult. So if you liked those books, you will probably find a lot to like.

00:48:53:16 - 00:49:07:24

Steven

[STEVEN] Amazing. Well, Claire, thank you so much for joining us. We are so happy that you agreed to speak with us. And thank you for an incredible conversation. And I know you said that, like, as long as you touch one person, I will say you touched me.

00:49:07:24 - 00:49:09:11

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Oh, I'm so glad.

00:49:09:22 - 00:49:14:19

Steven

[STEVEN] At the very least, we got something out of it. This has been a great conversation.

00:49:15:01 - 00:49:38:00

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] It really has been. Thank you both for your questions and for your patience listening to me and this was wonderful. It's such a wonderful conversation that I feel really lucky for your patrons that they have librarians who are as sensitive and open to these topics as you both are. I think that's invaluable. And you probably help more people that you know.

00:49:38:15 - 00:49:43:18

Steven

[STEVEN] Well, thank you. We try our best, but that's all we can do. We all just, just keep trying.

00;49;43;28 - 00;49;44;18

Claire Legrand

[CLAIRE LEGRAND] Exactly.

00;49;44;24 - 00;50;03;27

Chris

[CHRIS] Thanks for joining us today. Be sure to check out the Ocean County Library's website for more podcasts and our website's Calendar of Events page. All titles mentioned in today's episode can be found through the Ocean County Library, free with your library card.

00;50;04;05 - 00;50;07;01

Chris

[CHRIS] Till next time, happy reading.