



Waves of YA, Episode 45, Judging a Book by Its Cover

Transcript:

00;00;04;07 - 00;01;22;15

Voiceover 1

[VOICEOVER 1] Are you a student in 8th through 12th grade? Are you looking for a dress for your junior or senior prom? Or perhaps a spring formal or 8th grade dance? Then keep these dates in mind: this March and April, the Ocean County Library is returning with the 17th annual Prom Dress Giveaway. The Prom Dress Giveaway allows you to take home the dress of your dreams for free. Simply come to one of our participating branches. Find a dress and take it home. The giveaways will be from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Toms River Branch on Monday, March 17th, Tuesday, March 18th and Wednesday, March 19th. The Little Egg Harbor Branch on Tuesday, March 25th and Wednesday, March 26th. And finally the Jackson Branch on Tuesday, April 1st and Wednesday, April 2nd. For more details, check out our website at theoceancountylibrary.org, visit your local branch, or call us at 732-349-6200. We look forward to seeing you then.

00;01;22;18 - 00;01;34;26

Voiceover 2

[VOICEOVER 2] Hello and welcome to Waves of YA, a podcast focused on young adult literacy brought to you by the Ocean County Library's Teen Literacy Workgroup.

00;01;34;28 - 00;01;48;00

Summer

[SUMMER] Hello, everyone. Welcome to Waves of YA. Today we are going to be talking about judging a book by its cover. My name is Summer. I'm the librarian for teenagers at the Long Beach Island Library.

00;01;48;03 - 00;01;50;05

Chris

[CHRIS] I'm Chris over at Island Heights.

00;01;50;07 - 00;01;53;04

Casey

[CASEY] And I'm Casey at the Lakewood Branch.

00;01;53;07 - 00;02;00;02

Summer

[SUMMER] Okay, so let's get started with: do you guys ever judge a book by its cover?

00;02;00;04 - 00;02;01;21

Chris

[CHRIS] All the time.

00;02;01;23 - 00;02;02;27

Casey

[CASEY] Yes, every time.

00;02;03;00 - 00;02;25;07

Chris

[CHRIS] Someone got paid to make that to convey what's in that book. And they better have done a good job because I'm judging it. It tells you what genre the book is, hints what it's about. And if you're not doing a good job, or if you're doing a good job, I should know what's in the book of like, do I want historical fiction? Yes. The girl in a, like, old timey dress. Great. If you don't want historical fiction, that book is probably not for you.

00;02;25;10 - 00;02;44;16

Summer

[SUMMER] Totally. Right. And it's like one of those age old adages about not judging a book by its cover, which I think in general is meant to convey, like, don't judge a person by how they look on the outside. But when it comes to an actual book, you're right, the cover is there for a reason. Are there certain styles of cover that appeal to you guys the best?

00;02;44;19 - 00;02;52;06

Casey

[CASEY] I like really bright colors, like hot pink, bright purple, blue. Just it's got to catch my eye. It's got to be pretty.

00;02;52;08 - 00;03;09;28

Chris

[CHRIS] I like, kind of like gaudy stuff, but that's also just my taste in general of like, covered in sparkles and glitter. If you've like a lot going on in your book cover on like, well, what's what is going on there? Like there should be like a lot on there to convey, like what's in the book of how these pieces fit together or where does it come up in the book?

00;03;10;00 - 00;03;19;15

Summer

[SUMMER] Yeah, and I think books are really getting on the prettiness bandwagon, especially with special editions. Recently I've been seeing a lot of sprayed edges.

00;03;19;17 - 00;03;20;11

Casey

[CASEY] Those are amazing.

00;03;20;18 - 00;03;38;25

Summer

[SUMMER] They are really pretty. I think I agree, I like a bright cover and when the book is pink I will pick it up. I think pink is like one of those colors that just draws me in immediately, so I'll at least look at it if it's pink, which is so random, or if the cover is just really unique, you know?

00;03;39;02 - 00;04;06;25

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, something that's different is like, oh, I haven't seen this. And like, I work where the books are. So I've seen a lot of covers. I'm also a sucker for roller skates, since I play roller derby and spend so much of my free time skating in some format or another. So I'm like, oh, there's roller skates, I'm in. And then I get super judgy about like, how is roller skating being conveyed in this book? Because it's such a huge part of my life. But like, you want me to read a book, put a roller skate on it, I'm going to grab it. We're taking it home and going to read it.

00;04;06;27 - 00;04;10;10

Summer

[SUMMER] It's like the Portlandia sketch. Put a bird on it, but it's put a roller skate on it.

00;04;10;17 - 00;04;12;19

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah.

00;04;12;22 - 00;04;20;01

Summer

[SUMMER] On that same note, are there any things on covers that you guys avoid? If you see it on a cover, you're like, no. Next. Thank you. Next.

00;04;20;04 - 00;04;58;09

Chris

[CHRIS] The black void, the peak of it was like peak Twilight where it's like everything its cover was black void and one item and I'm like, you're just trying to be Twilight. Like I was a teenager. And I'm like, this is a rip off. I know what you're trying to do. I'm not interested in you just trying to have a cash grab of like, well, you like Twilight, please read my book. And I'm like, if you had something original to say, you'd have a better cover. I have always been super judgy about covers. Like not interested. I don't like it. I'm starting to get better about it. Especially with This Delicious Death where it's like a black cover with a bloody cooler. I'm like, I'm at least interested that's a cooler and not, like, an aesthetic item. I'm like, tell me more about the blood cooler.

00;04;58;12 - 00;05;08;21

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah, I just don't like boring stuff. I've seen like some covers that just have wording on it. Not a fan. Put all the stuff with flowers and people and all that jazz.

00;05;08;23 - 00;05;23;28

Chris

[CHRIS] I'm trying to think of anything recent, like, the classics I feel like always have boring covers. Unless it's like Jane Austen, then it's like the floral filigree. It's like it looks like a Jane Austen book. But like, just because it's classic doesn't mean you can't have a cool cover for it. Like make it updated and modern.

00;05;24;01 - 00;05;26;08

Casey

[CASEY] Exactly. Draw everyone in.

00;05;26;10 - 00;05;32;06

Chris

[CHRIS] Like the books are still like a classic. They're still being read. They're still relevant. Make the cover relevant.

00;05;32;09 - 00;05;39;10

Casey

[CASEY] Exactly. The younger generations will then want to read these books, because there's going to see just lettering like, "I don't want this."

00;05;39;12 - 00;05;58;12

Chris

[CHRIS] Like I think Catcher in the Rye has the worst cover where it's just like red gold lettering. Okay, I do not like Catcher in the Rye in the first place, but like every cover I see of it I'm like, "Why are they terrible? At least try and sell this." Like it was like the first YA novel, please do better.

00;05;58;15 - 00;06;51;05

Summer

[SUMMER] One thing that I really just like, and it was more of a trend I think back in like the 2010s, and instead of like an illustration of a person, it was a photograph of them. I remember an example was the Shatter Me series. There was the cool sci fi cover, but then the girl on the front was just a photograph of a model, and for some reason that just rubs me the wrong way. I don't like when it's a picture or a photograph. I need it to be some kind of illustration. But in the same way I do not like a lot of the MS Paint-looking silhouette illustrations you're seeing now. I feel like you see them a lot on like, contemporary romance books, YA or otherwise. It's almost like a silhouette of a person and not a full illustration. I also do not like that. So I guess we're all picky is what we're learning. We're all very picky.

00;06;51;07 - 00;07;03;19

Chris

[CHRIS] There's thousands and thousands of books that publish every year. You got to choose somehow. The cover's the fastest way to weed some things out. Are there any trends that you've noticed in YA covers recently?

00;07;03;22 - 00;07;13;00

Casey

[CASEY] I've noticed that they're putting like illustrated people on the covers again, which I'm here for. I love that, put them on there.

00;07;13;02 - 00;07;24;17

Chris

[CHRIS] Yes, they're a very similar style. It feels not quite anime but like very cartoony illustrated people. They're cute and they're fun. But I'm like, we have a variety in our illustrations.

00;07;24;19 - 00;07;37;13

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah, it seems like that's all it is right now, which I think is really cool because people can literally draw these things on iPads. I can't even do a stick figure on a piece of paper. So...

00;07;37;16 - 00;08;38;24

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, I'm seeing a lot of like there's like the LGBT color palette. Where, like, you don't need to know anything about this book. Like you can take the people off the cover and just on that color palette be like, this is queer, where it's like those pinks and blues, like maybe a splash of purple, and it's like every single one of them. I'm like, it's really good that you like, if you know what to look for, you know what you're getting and you can find it quickly of like, oh, I've had customers come in to be like, oh, I want this. And I'm like, hold on. And I just like, yank them off. How are you that fast? Like, it's the same color palette for every book, every single one of these books has the same color palette. But, like, you know what you're getting. No one's going to be surprised unless, like, they don't know the color coding on that. Or it's like, oh, I didn't expect it. Like the covers. So, well, this there's a couple like that are a different color palette and they're like, oh, what's this surprise? But like it's a pretty standard. Like if it's like especially like a realistic fiction LGBT romance one color palette.

00;08;38;26 - 00;08;39;21

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah.

00;08;39;23 - 00;09;27;04

Summer

[SUMMER] I do know that YA does have a wider variety within the cover art trends. I was just saying before that I think fantasy in general, I think more so, like adult fantasy, I'm seeing a lot recently of covers with really dark backgrounds, like dark blue, black or purple, and then there's a lot of filigree ornamentation and like small details, like a book or an animal or something else within the filigree. But I'm seeing and then like the, the title just embossed across the front, really big, which is pretty, but I'm

just seeing it makes everything look the same and nothing really stands out. And I think why I am seeing more detail as far as the illustrations of people on the covers, instead of just the title.

00;09;27;04 - 00;10;08;17

Chris

[CHRIS] I also like a couple years ago, I was like really feeling that like bright orange. It was like different genres too, that were like just bright orange, like, let's go. I was like, yeah, it's eye grabbing and attention getting because like, how many times do you see bright orange outside of a traffic cone. Or like Firefest chose bright orange to get people's attention. I'm like, well, what's this? And it's like not a great example. But I'm like, are these too leaves? Because like, that did work as advertising. Like how many things are bright orange? And like, books are so different than, like a failed festival where you could pull that color into your advertising for the attention because, like, Bones of a Saint, Prepped, they're two totally different genres and they're both bright orange.

00;10;08;19 - 00;10;55;19

Summer

[SUMMER] I also think it's good within, especially if your book is going to be a series, to have a sort of stand out style that you can repeat in your later books. Like there's the book What the River knows, and now the sequel is called What the Library Hides and you can tell like, oh, that's the sequel to that book, because they have a very similar style, repeated, similar to the book series. The new one, Wisteria, just came out by Adalyn Grace, and that's a YA mystery dark academia romance. What was the first one called? And the first one was called Belladonna. But they all have a girl's face hidden partially by flowers. And so you see the cover and you're like, oh, that's part of that series. So I think that's a really good tactic to use as well.

00;10;55;22 - 00;11;25;15

Chris

[CHRIS] Karen McManus's books are like that. I from a distance can tell you who the author is. They're not a series, but they're all similar, like, mystery books with like pictures of like, a photograph and something crossed out on it. Where you're like, okay, like someone possibly died. There's gonna be a mystery. We have to solve it. Like we know what's going on. It's gonna be realistic fiction based on that cover. And it's definitely Karen McManus, because she has, like, such a distinct branding of her covers.

00;11;25;18 - 00;11;35;11

Casey

[CASEY] What are some books with really great covers and they did not meet your expectations? And what are some books of really terrible covers that were great?

00;11;35;13 - 00;11;42;19

Chris

[CHRIS] Like we mentioned the classics already of like they have awful covers all the time, like even the YA versions and I'm like, why are the covers bad? Do better.

00;11;42;21 - 00;11;52;23

Summer

[SUMMER] Yeah. Like I honestly think a reason a lot of people don't like the classics they read in school is because they have terrible covers. I know that The Great Gatsby cover is iconic, but I don't like it.

00;11;52;26 - 00;11;53;17

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah.

00;11;53;19 - 00;11;58;18

Chris

[CHRIS] I like the cover because it has those eyes which reflect the eyes on the poster and the eyes of God.

00;11;58;20 - 00;12;12;29

Summer

[SUMMER] I think that like, I think it's because cut in the book when they reference the billboard, that's not how I imagined it looking, but I think it just doesn't match up with how I imagined it looking in the book. And so I was like that.

00;12;13;01 - 00;12;28;23

Chris

[CHRIS] Doesn't match the vibe. But like also the pupils in the eyes are like lace and like, look at the pupils of like flapper girls in the eyes and like it does convey what's in the books. I'm like, great job. Also like the cobalt blue is really striking as a color.

00;12;28;26 - 00;12;35;02

Summer

[SUMMER] Yeah, I'm blanking a little bit on books that had terrible covers that I really liked. Or the opposite.

00;12;35;05 - 00;13;01;07

Casey

[CASEY] This is maybe controversial, but I hated the Twilight covers. Like when it was all coming out, it blew up. I wasn't going to read it. I was like, the covers looked boring because it's that black void or whatever. And I especially like the first one. I was like an apple in a hand. This isn't doing it for me. But then I'll, you know, I succumb to peer pressure and all my friends are like, "You got to read. It's really good. It's really good. The movie's coming out." So I did, and at the time I enjoyed the books. But now I'm older.

00;13;01;10 - 00;13;03;13

Chris

[CHRIS] You're no longer the target demographic.

00;13;03;15 - 00;13;06;13

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah. So I'm like, okay, they're okay.

00;13;06;13 - 00;13;18;04

Summer

[SUMMER] They're coming back around again. Although I would be interested if Twilight got a cover reboot, I'd be interested to see how they did it. I think because they did sort of a cover reboot, but they didn't change anything. They just made the images all slightly bigger.

00;13;18;07 - 00;13;18;28

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah.

00;13;19;00 - 00;13;28;09

Summer

[SUMMER] I was like, why? But I would be really interested to see if they got some fancy new cover art with some sprayed edges. I think that would be - I would buy them. I'm a Twilight girly.

00;13;28;12 - 00;13;32;25

Chris

[CHRIS] What would you put as a different cover? Because like, their covers are pretty, they're so known.

00;13;32;25 - 00;14;44;03

Summer

[SUMMER] They're iconic. Yeah. I do think that there were some artists that were selling for a while, just book sleeves with their own independent cover art. You could buy the book sleeve, like for your hardback Twilight book, and I saw some interesting ones. I would like a cool illustration of the characters on the first one we have, like Edward and Bella. On the second one we have like Jacob and Bella. On the third one we have something else. Maybe we have, Victoria on the third one, or artistic rendering of the characters with a cool background. And then on the sprayed edges, you could have maybe a cameo to the old covers, like apples or flowers or whatever's on the old ones. Or you could even have the old covered illustrations on the end papers when you open the book. If it was a special edition of Twilight with a fancy cover, I would buy it, because Twilight was like when I was middle school, I was so into it. It was something me and my cousin shared. Like, we want to see all the movies together. So it's just special in my heart. I remember when Blockbuster was still open, when Blockbuster got the Twilight DVDs and they had their own little midnight premiere, where you got to, like, go to the Blockbuster and like, bring lawn chairs and like, blankets and watch it. And it was so fun.

00;14;44;06 - 00;14;45;12

Casey

[CASEY] That's so cool.

00;14;45;14 - 00;14;46;19

Summer

[SUMMER] I miss Blockbuster.

00;14;46;23 - 00;14;49;10

Chris

[CHRIS] I miss like midnight releases for books.

00;14;49;12 - 00;14;53;07

Casey

[CASEY] I did midnight releases for all of the Twilight books.

00;14;53;10 - 00;15;03;06

Summer

[SUMMER] I think I was too late for the Twilight book release midnight premieres, but I went to all of the movie ones. Are there any books that had good covers that you didn't like? That one's hard.

00;15;03;06 - 00;15;26;11

Chris

[CHRIS] Actually, Bones of a Saint with that, like orange, like the cover was cool. And it's like between the title and the cover, it wasn't what I expected it to be. I felt like I going to be more like magic-y supernatural-y. And I was like, what's going on? Like, especially with Bones of a Saint as a cover, like the title. And I was like, this is not where I expected this to go at any point.

00;15;26;14 - 00;16;25;04

Summer

[SUMMER] I think my problem is I don't read a lot of books I don't like. If I don't vibe with it immediately, I just don't read it. So I'm having trouble thinking of it. I will say to the point of books that have a bad cover that you did like, I wouldn't consider this a bad cover. I think it was just sort of underwhelming. One of my favorite books and series of all time is Daughter of Smoking Villain by Lainey Taylor, and those came out in like 2010, I think maybe even like earlier in 20, like 2008. And the thing they had was like these illustrations of women with like, masquerade masks on, which sounds really cool, but it was just all kind of underwhelming for me. I actually on point, took off the dust, and I don't like dust jackets very much how they feel in my hand. So I think I threw out the dust jackets, but then they got a ten year anniversary reboot for the covers, and those covers are really awesome. If you want to look them up, they have like this almost black light, glowy illustration and they're really beautiful. But again, the covers kind of underwhelming originally, but the books are so good.

00;16;25;07 - 00;16;27;24

Casey

[CASEY] I'm also struggling. Sorry.

00;16;27;26 - 00;16;44;04

Summer

[SUMMER] That's okay. I'll just say, I think what drew me into that book was the title, and at the time, Blank of Blank and Blank was not a title trend. That was one of the first books to do Blank of Blank and Blank that I was aware of. Now every other book is Blank of Blank and Blank.

00;16;44;06 - 00;16;50;03

Casey

[CASEY] I also struggle. If I don't like a book, I immediately - I have no problem putting it down like, nope, I'm a quitter. I'm done.

00;16;50;05 - 00;17;01;02

Chris

[CHRIS] I give people at work permission to put books down on a regular basis of, like, as a librarian, this is my job. I am giving you permission to stop reading the book you don't like, and we'll find you when you do. That's actually my job.

00;17;01;04 - 00;17;18;12

Summer

[SUMMER] And then, like, I avoid having any, like, mean negative thoughts about the book because if you force yourself to read a book you don't like, you're going to have resentment towards that book. Like, I have resentment towards one book, I think, and it's because I made myself read it because it promised something and then it didn't deliver it. But, it wasn't a YA book. I'm not gonna even mention it, but...

00;17;18;15 - 00;17;28;08

Chris

[CHRIS] I have, it was a recommendation from us, and I was like, what is this book and how did it sneak past me? I'm on this committee. And then I just didn't like, like...

00;17;28;11 - 00;17;29;15

Summer

[SUMMER] What was it?

00;17;29;17 - 00;17;32;13

Chris

[CHRIS] It was Pritty. P-R-I-T-T-Y.

00;17;32;16 - 00;17;33;22

Summer

[SUMMER] I don't know this one.

00;17;33;24 - 00;18;41;28

Chris

[CHRIS] The concept is so good. And it, like, reading people's reviews, like, it is like the book that they have bonded with. And I'm like, okay, look, I'm too old for this. Also, I don't think I need to be 400 pages

of like, I can see the good book in there, but it's debut novel and like, it just needs some polishing. You can trim some of it down and like, feel very fan-fic-y, Mary Sue, of, like, "all three of us tied for first place!" And I'm like, no, I hate this. There's just, like, things where I was like, okay, like, this is a cool concept, but you didn't commit to the concept. Like you kind of have like a mixed blend of things going on here. So I was like, I want you to be better. Or like, I'm hoping the author keeps writing because, like, there's good ideas that can be delivered better or like, interesting. It's so close to being good. Also, I was like, I kind of like when there's a mystery, I'm like, oh, what's the mystery? And I was like really invested in this mystery. And I'm like, I am less invested in this relationship drama. I was like, red herring, like, there's things that, like, plot threads just left places and I'm like, attach those. Attach those to something or cut that whole thing out. I just felt too long.

00;18;42;01 - 00;18;44;19

Summer

[SUMMER] I'm really trying to think of a book with a good cover that...

00;18;44;19 - 00;18;46;12

Chris

[CHRIS] Well, that did have a good cover, though. That cover was cool.

00;18;46;12 - 00;19;07;19

Summer

[SUMMER] Oh, okay. I'm really trying to think of a cover I didn't like. I guess I would say at the time I liked it, actually... I know one now. So this is not, first of all, I want to preface by saying, this is not me saying this is a bad book, or that the author is bad, or that anyone who reads it is bad.

00;19;07;19 - 00;19;29;12

Summer

I personally just did not vibe with the book. It did not deliver what I was expecting. That is all and is not a bad book. It is just my personal preference. But it is *Sorcery of Thorns* by Margaret Rogerson. Really, really pretty cover. All her books have pretty good covers and I just found the book slightly underwhelming for me. Of, like, personally, but...

00;19;29;12 - 00;19;36;12

Casey

[CASEY] I actually DNF'd that book. I tried and I put it down and it was a pretty cover, but I was like, I can't do it.

00;19;36;15 - 00;19;50;28

Summer

[SUMMER] I would try her other book. She has one called *An Enchantment of Ravens* that I will try as well because I did like her world. I found her world interesting. I just wasn't vibing with the story personally. But again, if you are interested in the book, don't let me stop you from reading it.

00;19;51;01 - 00;20;08;03

Casey

[CASEY] Also controversial opinion. I just thought about it. I loved the covers for the Shadow and Bone series, and I liked the beginning of the series. But towards the end I was just... I didn't like it anymore. I like had to push through those books. Did you guys read that series?

00;20;08;06 - 00;20;14;08

Chris

[CHRIS] No, I know I've recommended it a bunch of times.

00;20;14;11 - 00;20;24;14

Summer

[SUMMER] I know that is just so hyped up that I like, get nervous to read it. And I think actually, no, I think I did try to read it once and I kind of just was like, maybe not right now.

00;20;24;16 - 00;20;37;07

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah, it started off the first book was really good, and then it was just boring. And the second or third book, they just dragged.

00;20;37;09 - 00;21;18;05

Voiceover 3

[VOICEOVER 3] Hello adventurers. If you enjoy this content, please take a look at the Ocean County Library's new podcast, called Forge Your Imagination: A Guide to Immersive World Building. This new podcast is dedicated to helping creative individuals design their own expertly crafted worlds for books, games, Dungeons and Dragons, and more. Tune in on the first Wednesday morning of every month to learn more. Thanks for listening and safe travels, adventures.

00;21;18;07 - 00;21;22;04

Chris

[CHRIS] Our next question is how do you feel about books with movie covers?

00;21;22;06 - 00;21;24;20

Summer

[SUMMER] I hate them.

00;21;24;22 - 00;21;25;27

Casey

[CASEY] I agree.

00;21;25;29 - 00;23;45;01

Chris

[CHRIS] They don't appeal to me. I'd rather have the version with the original cover. I understand why publishers do it, because it's a good way to lure in non readers of like... You normally wouldn't read or, like, you're not into reading, but you watched the movie and you really liked the movie, so you should

try the book that it's based off of because it's going to be better. It's like I get why they do it. Like I understand from like advertising publishing, like commercial end of things, why they do it. But I'm like, but the other covers were so cool. Like I don't need the actor's face on it. Also I picture them totally different. Show me the cool original cover. [SUMMER] Yeah, I have such beef with movie covers and I get like, I get why they do it. But my problem is that very often people who make movie adaptations take a lot of liberties with changing the movie, and I'm totally okay with that. Like, I understand that a movie and a book are two separate pieces of media and they can be different. Like, I don't get mad when people change stuff unless it's like a really bad choice. But because of that, people will go into the book thinking it's going to be like the movie, and they're like, oh, it isn't. I have two big examples. One: a couple years ago, the Haunting of Hill House, a mini series, came out. It was a great series. It was really well done. However, it is absolutely nothing like the original book. 0%. The only similarity is that there is a house called Hill House, and the characters have similar names. Nothing else is the same. There's no family. There's no like flipping back and forth between ages. Entirely different. But they gave the book mini series cover and I was like, people who like the series are gonna start reading this and be like, why is it different? And they're going to feel robbed. And another example is very recently the new Wicked movie came out, and they're not replacing the book cover with the movie cover, but there are certain editions of it that have like the movie tie-in cover, and it's like, I haven't myself read Wicked, but I have heard a lot of people online talk about the book and how it is. So obviously when they made the musical, they broke it down to a shorter time frame and they changed stuff and people are going to read the book thinking, oh, it's like my favorite musical. It's not. I just feel like movie covers are misleading.

00;23;45;03 - 00;23;50;28

Chris

[CHRIS] It's a political analogy. It's very much about politics. Wicked, the book.

00;23;51;00 - 00;24;01;15

Summer

[SUMMER] And it's adult. It's not like I think people are going to, like, the whole thing is that like, people are like buying it for their kids because their kids love the musical. And it's like, no, this is not a book for children. It has a lot of adult content. Don't do it.

00;24;01;17 - 00;24;53;07

Chris

[CHRIS] I read it in, like, I want to say, like, I was a freshman, like it was early high school when I read it. And like I want to read it now as an adult because I'm going to get more of the political ends of things. Like, I'm like, I know that I definitely like kind of as like whatever, like the political stuff, because I listened to the musical soundtrack and I was like, I'll read the book. And I was like, definitely missing things. I know that. But yeah, no, that's going to be brutal. Like, I mean, they're going to find out, but like, yeah, very different. But I never saw The Haunting of Hill House movie cover. We got the YA catalog version like it's the same book, but some books live in different departments or multiple departments because they field a wide range. And we have like it's part of that neon orange group where it's like black with a neat, like black silhouette stuff on a neon orange background. And it was so cool and so striking. And I was like, ooh, I love that.

00;24;53;10 - 00;25;08;12

Summer

[SUMMER] I'm glad we got a cool cover for it and not - I feel like movie covers don't often last very long. They're only put out like during the popularity. I just don't like when people get misled because it's like you're going to go into that book thinking it's going to be like one thing and it's not, and then you're going to feel robbed, you know?

00;25;08;14 - 00;25;37;00

Casey

[CASEY] I also get really annoyed with the movie covers on the books, because I feel like it's disrespectful to the person who worked so hard on the original book cover. And at the end of the day, it all comes down to consumerism. We want to sell more of these books, so we're going to throw the movie cover on it. And I just really grinds my gears like this is an adult book. When they stuck Blake Lively's face on It Ends With Us, that just really filled me with rage.

00;25;37;03 - 00;25;59;29

Summer

[SUMMER] Yeah, and it also makes it during the period of popularity that usually the movie tie-in covers exist in, it makes it really hard to buy the original one. You usually have to like special order it because the bookstores get the popular ones in stock, which is understandable. They're just trying to sell books. But it doesn't last forever. But so yeah, we all have very harsh opinions about movie tie-in covers.

00;26;00;03 - 00;26;27;01

Chris

[CHRIS] I change the edition on Goodreads to show like the other cover. The only thing I didn't do that was with Holes because Holes like a rocket ship, like, took off. I didn't realize, like how close it was between published Caldecott movie. Like, I was a kid. I was just like, oh, that was like super tight. So, like, I couldn't get ahold of, like, the original cover did not appeal to me. That's one that I didn't like the cover because it was just like...

00;26;27;04 - 00;26;28;01

Summer

[SUMMER] It is a little boring.

00;26;28;06 - 00;27;17;25

Chris

[CHRIS] It's very color blocks, like purple sand, red hat and like did not appeal to me as a like elementary school student. But then I saw commercials for the movie, saw the movie, and like the Brick Plaza has the Barnes and Nobles in it. So I was like, we have to go buy the book right now. I have learned my lesson with the Harry Potter movies. The books are better. So like, I love this movie. I bought the book. It had the movie tie-in cover because that's all you could get. And I was like, yeah, this is a better cover than the original cover. And like between like being in the car and I get horrifically motion sick trying to read in the car and like, that's why I spent Easter doing was like, okay, cool, there's family, but I just got

this book. I have to read it right now. That book, I have no notes for. It's like five out of five, no notes, perfect book, cover terrible.

00;27;17;28 - 00;27;23;15

Casey

[CASEY] Have you ever avoided a book because of its cover, and did you end up reading it?

00;27;23;18 - 00;28;22;18

Chris

[CHRIS] The Daughter of the Pirate King series. The covers just looked cheap. They look bad. They look cheap. I was like, this is self-published. Like everything about it was terrible. And I was like, I'm not reading this. And like, I love pirates. So people kept being like, oh, have you heard about this book? Have you read this book? And I'm like, I don't need to read it. I've seen the cover. It's, I can pass this up. And then like by the third book, they started spending money on the cover. They don't have faith in this book. If they're not putting money into the cover. So like then it was like model the back of a model. I'm like, that's at least better by book three. So like I did eventually cave because I'm like, I think I read too many pirate books. I'm running out of options. And it was okay, like it was better than expected based on the original covers. And they've now done like two different sets of covers that are significantly better than the original one, where I was like, this is so bad, this is so bad. Who approved this? They're not like the best things I've ever read. They're fun, they're enjoyable. They're okay.

00;28;22;20 - 00;28;56;18

Casey

[CASEY] Yeah. I, this year I read this really good YA book called The Special Ones. It came out a while ago. It's older, but it's by Em Bailey. But originally I discovered it on Goodreads, and they had the original cover and I didn't like it. It was really weird and creepy, but not like in an enticing kind of way. And I wasn't going to read it, but I was like, oh, let me go look and our cover in the branch was the newer cover, which I like. So I did end up reading it. Originally I was like, like, the synopsis sounds good, but I really just can't get behind the cover. But I'm glad I read it. I read it in literally a day. It was so good.

00;28;56;20 - 00;29;00;21

Chris

[CHRIS] Are there any cover trends that you wish would come back?

00;29;00;24 - 00;29;43;14

Casey

I really like symbolism specifically for sci fi and fantasy, but speaking specifically about the sci fi, like I liked the original covers of Divergent and The Hunger Games, especially because like, the symbol tied in like that's the Mockingjay on the cover. That's the sign for being divergent on the cover. It was very like spot on. And you can either make it very minimalist if you use like, symbols that come from the story, or you can zhuzh it up with whatever you want. I feel like it's starting to come back, at least, like, with fantasy, you see a lot of the blank of blank and then it's all flowers and swords and stuff like that. So I really like that. I'm glad it's coming back.

00;29;43;16 - 00;29;57;19

Summer

[SUMMER] I really like fantasy, YA fantasy art from like the 90s and the 80s, where it kind of looks almost like an oil painting, and I like the vintage style. So I kind of, but I might be an unpopular opinion on that.

00;29;57;21 - 00;31;20;19

Chris

[CHRIS] No, I'm right there with you. I put down painted covers. I miss them so much. I love painted covers. They're just such like a mood or a vibe, especially for fantasy, where it's like, yeah, you're not going to get a photo of your mythical creature, like, paint that thing like L.J. Smith's Forbidden Game, which is part of why we have this as a subject, because, like, I love that series and, like, it doesn't get a lot of love because, like, Vampire Diaries, but they had, like, these gorgeous painted covers and then Twilight and The Vampire Diaries vampire craze, they're like, ooh, black void, part of a girl's face photo covers. And I'm like, I would never have picked that book up if that was the cover I'd seen when I was in high school. It was like, I hate it. I hate it so much. And the books are so good. And like Tony DiTerlizzi, who did Spiderwick Chronicles painted his own covers because he was an artist for Magic The Gathering originally. His stuff's always super cool. I think the painted covers are, like, really fun and like, also like, it's a way for artists to get a job that, like, is a little bit more stable than like, man, I hope someone buys my art. More jobs. Pay more people to paint things. I haven't seen anything painted in a while. It feels like other than like Brom, who's another Magic The Gathering artist that's now an author. But like, he's like adult stuff and like kind of gory, so...

00;31;20;19 - 00;31;58;23

Summer

[SUMMER] This is more middle grade, but I really like Brett Helquist's art style. He did like, A Series of Unfortunate Events, and he did a couple others too. He's done a lot. But I really like his illustrations as well. But I do think it is cool when books get a reboot. Like there's this middle grade series called The Sisters Grimm that recently got cover art reboot, and it does make it a lot more eye catching, I think, to kids right now, as opposed to the old one. So the next question, what is your stance - I know, Chris, you have a lot of opinions on this, so just go off - What is your stance on AI artificial intelligence-generated cover art?

00;31;58;26 - 00;32;03;24

Chris

[CHRIS] Do you or Casey want to say anything before I like pop off? Because I got like some feelings.

00;32;03;26 - 00;32;13;18

Summer

[SUMMER] I don't like it. Just my thing - very basic - I don't really like it. I think it's lazy. But you, Chris, you have much more eloquent things to say about it.

00;32;13;21 - 00;32;51;16

Casey

[CASEY] Okay, so what I will say is that I find it can be - hear me out - useful for self-publishing authors that maybe are just starting out. They can't afford to get a cover artist or they're not artistic. They can't do it themselves or what have you. That is the one thing that I'm like, okay, I could see how maybe this would be helpful. But when it comes to traditional publishing, stop again with consumerism and money. Stop cutting corners. Hire a talented, wonderful artist to do that book cover. And that's how I feel about that. So, Chris, take it away.

00;32;51;18 - 00;35;01;28

Chris

[CHRIS] I hate it, I hate it so much. It makes me so inherently angry. One: it's not art. Machines cannot create art. People create art because we use feelings, our emotions, our skills. Machines are stealing other people's artwork to create that image. It's blatant copyright violations. It's stealing someone's hard work and hard labor that someone put their time and effort into to spit out emotionless pictures. They're not art. It's an image. Also, I assume your company is cheap. I'm assuming you can't afford an artist. And like Casey said, like if you're self-publishing, you possibly can't. But if it's a publisher, you've got money, you're cutting corners. You don't want to hire somebody, you don't want to pay them what they're worth, what their time and effort is worth. It's fraudulent. Like I said, stealing. If you don't respect artists, writing is art. It's part of art. If you're not respecting a cover artist to create that art for the book, how much do you respect authors then? Because what they're doing is art as well. Also, you don't care about that book then because you didn't, you know, put the time and effort to find an artist to create something specific for the book. So I'm assuming the publisher is also not backing that book and doesn't have a lot of faith in the book because they don't want to put the money in it. So I'm like, well, how good is this book? You didn't even hire an artist. I would rather you just plain text it or, like, bare bones or like a photo, artsy photo at least is still art because someone took that photo. It just feels like nobody cares about it and, like, end results for it. That's my strong feelings of AI art. I hate it, it's soulless, machine, and it's terrible. And it takes away jobs from people and the end results are cheap. I just don't trust it. Like I don't trust anything that has like AI in it because I'm like, you're cutting corners somewhere. Like there's been so many scandals recently of like, oh, something was advertised with AI art and what the actual result was a sad warehouse with like, some jellybeans. There's just so many things to get advertised with AI art where I'm like, you don't have the funding to hire an artist or like, do it yourself. What is my end result gonna be? Because it's not going to be good. Those are my thoughts.

00;35;02;01 - 00;35;21;09

Casey

[CASEY] I think you mentioned before. You can look at the cover and be like, that's AI. I have a hard time being able to tell, but specifically, I feel like with AI for the covers, they're using that a lot for the covers that have kind of like a character art vibe cover, so I struggle.

00;35;21;12 - 00;36;23;29

Chris

[CHRIS] The one thing that's really easy to look at is hands. How many fingers do they have? Are their fingers passing through things weird? It's like the fastest way, like what's going on with those hands? And I've seen people post a picture of like, here's a picture of me with my hand in it. I'm a real person. My face just looks like this. So hands are a really good way to check. Are the edges blurry? Do the lines

meet correctly? You know how a corner should look and like your brain will fill in things to look correctly. That's why we can skip a lot of letters while we're reading, because your brain knows the shape of a word. But if you stop it like look closer at pictures, like do those lines intersect correctly? I have people that send me knitting projects of like, hey, can you make this? And I'm like, no one made that. That's an AI picture because I know how knitting is supposed to look. So like you have to kind of like look at the details. Also like the edges tend to be a little blurry. Where you're like, why is this fuzzy? But like those are some like quick easy tricks of like do the lines make sense? How many fingers do people have? Is their hand passing through something weird?

00;36;24;01 - 00;37;26;10

Summer

[SUMMER] I saw this quote once that was like, "I don't want AI to make my art, so I have more time to fold laundry and do dishes. I want I to fold my laundry and do my dishes so I have more time to make art." I don't know who said it. I saw somewhere and I was like, bangin. That's it. Slay the house down. Yeah, I feel like I'm not as up to date on the politics of AI, but I do know that when the computer is given a prompt, it's not like a machine that can think for itself and create art. It's a machine who's been programed to say, okay, make this image, and it uses the tools at the machine's disposal, the tools of which are other content on the internet. And so it takes content from the internet to create the prompt it was given. It's not creating anything new, it's taking pieces of other things. And I think a lot of people don't realize that. I think it's just a matter of not being educated on the topic. But then there are people in the publishing industries that should know better.

00;37;26;12 - 00;37;53;13

Chris

[CHRIS] I'm trying to keep track of it, because when I'm not working in the library, like just because I don't sell my art doesn't mean I don't make it. And like, I post on the internet, like I don't want to be afraid of posting like stuff I create on the internet, because then something's going to steal all of my labor and time and effort to then, like, smooch it into something else that's not what it was intended to be. And like all the people that write fanfics, anything that you throw into a prompt for AI is stealing fanfics.

00;37;53;15 - 00;37;58;06

Summer

[SUMMER] Because those aren't copyrighted, I guess, as those are easier to get because they're not quite as copyrighted.

00;37;58;06 - 00;38;12;25

Chris

[CHRIS] They're not copyrighted, but that's still someone else's work and labor. You write fanfics because you love it. And now all the machines are just going to take it and then, like, reconfigure and spit it out as something totally different. And you're like, I spent three years writing that fanfic.

00;38;12;28 - 00;38;28;19

Summer

[SUMMER] Although people can usually tell, especially when it's... right? I feel like it's a little hard to tell with images because you just kind of glance at it for a second. But I mean, like with book covers that you might glance at it for a second and then walk past it, but with writing, when you're reading it, you can tell something is off.

00:38;28;22 - 00:38;43;05

Chris

[CHRIS] The phrasing is like no human would say it that way and like kind of jumbling nonsense. Sometimes you're like, it's getting closer to human speech, but still not how a person would phrase things.

00:38;43;08 - 00:38;48;04

Casey

[CASEY] I've never use AI for anything. It just freaks me out. I refuse.

00:38;48;06 - 00:39;15;05

Summer

[SUMMER] There's this book that is on my TBR. It was written a little while ago, so it might not be like the most up to date, but it was a book about this woman who worked with AI and one of her jobs was to, like, feed it questions and see what it would respond with. And the title of it is You Look Like a Thing and I Love You. And I'd be like, that's the perfect example of like, AI just generating babble. It's just babble.

00:39;15;07 - 00:40;15;18

Chris

[CHRIS] It gives incorrect information because it's just skims and pulls and squishes together. So I've seen people talk about like examples, especially like publishing, like AI generated like there's a whole industry that's AI book how to like basically write a book without writing a book. And like this is where I stand on the internet. I'm like, tell me like weird things I'm missing out on of people are AI generating a book, hiring someone else to make a cover for like super cheap and then self-publishing on Amazon and just slamming out these not books to hope someone mistakenly stumbles across them on Amazon and buys a Kindle version for like two bucks. And like, some of them are like on things like foraging for mushrooms where like, if you are wrong, someone will die because the white mushroom that is like delicious and tasty and the white mushroom that could kill you are almost identical. And there's like not an expert on this. Like they're just hoping to just cash grab. So like there's going to be problems coming from this between copyright and incorrect information.

00:40;15;21 - 00:40;52;21

Summer

[SUMMER] The moral of the story is value other people's artwork. Value your own artwork. I think that is what we've learned from this. Someone chose robots to paint, although there is this very interesting at children's book, a picture book that just came out called ARTificial Intelligence, and it's about a robot learning to paint, and it's really cute and wholesome, but also about the idea of you need a soul to create art. But it's not AI as in like a computer as we know it now. It's a robot, like in The Wild Robot

from the Wild Robot Escapes, but it's very cute. And about this topic, if anyone wants to read a picture book about art and life.

00;40;52;24 - 00;41;38;04

Chris

[CHRIS] Yeah, well then that's because Google now, like the top result is like AI generated. And I'm like, this is why you need librarians. What are the original sources and what did those actually say of check your sources. Is there something reliable? Do they know what they're talking about? Like one of the examples I give with the school kids is, oh yeah, I can definitely tell you about skiing. I work at a ski resort and I'm like, yeah, obviously I worked in a kitchen. I know nothing about skiing. Like, who is this person? I'm like, all of you just immediately trusted me because I told you I worked there. I'm like, you have no proof. Also, I don't ski, I made sandwiches, so, like, check your sources to check who they are. Like, it's so important. And, like, I feel like we need to, like, go back to emphasizing that. Don't go for the quick, easy answer. Go for the deeper, correct answer.

00;41;38;06 - 00;42;10;08

Summer

[SUMMER] That was very thoughtful. A lot to think about. Before we wrap up, would you guys like to recommend any books with beautiful covers, or any books with terrible covers that you'd still like to recommend? One book that I recommend on every single podcast, basically, and I think has a really nice cover is House of Hollow by Krystal Sutherland. It's like a picture of a girl, and her face is partially obscured by flowers, but the flowers look kind of like spooky flowers. And I like that cover, and I think it fits in well with the book itself when you read it.

00;42;10;10 - 00;42;21;05

Casey

[CASEY] I'll recommend the book I was talking about before. The Special Ones by Em Bailey. It was a really good thriller cult thriller book. I think everyone should read that. It was really good.

00;42;21;07 - 00;43;02;02

Chris

[CHRIS] Wolfwood by Marianna Baer. It's a white cover with, like, a girl painting. And you see the paint brushes really cool, like sinister flowers. As she paints, she gets sucked into this world. She's painting and, like, has, like, all the mystery of, like, what happened when her mom was painting these. She's like, oh, am I hallucinating? What is going on? So it's like so good and like that cover like I was like, what is Wolfwood? And I'm like, admittedly, like, we know I love me some anime. So it's like, I love Wolfwood from Trigun. So like, I was already going to be sold. I'm like, what does this cover have to do? But it's so good. It has nothing to do with anime. It's just coincidental naming.

00;43;02;04 - 00;43;04;04

Casey

[CASEY] I'm looking at the cover now. It's really pretty.

00;43;04;10 - 00;43;07;22

Chris

[CHRIS] I know I was like, oh, and like something different. Like I'm like, I haven't seen this.

00:43:07:25 - 00:43:39:23

Summer

[SUMMER] One more book that I think has a really pretty cover and that I haven't read, but I'm excited to try is *Where the Dark Stands Still* by A.B. Poranek. And I think it's a romantasy, *Beauty and the Beast* kind of vibes book and I really like the cover. So it's on my TBR for this month. Alright, thank you all for listening to *Waves of YA!* We hope you've enjoyed this episode about judging the book by its cover, and hopefully you'll have some food for thought the next time you see a book cover that you love or really hate. That's all for now. See you next time. Bye.

00:43:39:25 - 00:43:40:17

Chris

[CHRIS] Bye.

00:43:40:22 - 00:43:45:14

Casey

[CASEY] Bye.

00:43:45:16 - 00:44:08:04

Voiceover 2

[VOICEOVER 2] Thanks for joining us today. Be sure to check out the Ocean County Library's website for more podcasts and events or titles mentioned in today's episode can be found through the Ocean County Library. Free with your library card. Until next time, happy reading!

00:44:08:07 - 00:44:33:22

Voiceover 4

[VOICEOVER 4] Are you looking for a blast from the past? Don't forget to tune in to *Wheeler Talk: The History of Ocean County*, a podcast brought to you by me, the local history librarian. Episodes of *Wheeler Talk* are released monthly right here on OCL Sound Waves. Learn about the rich history of Ocean County with topics such as shipwrecks, historic storms, Ocean County's role in the Revolutionary War, tales of local hauntings, and much, much more.