

# 2021 November

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**Erin** 00:28

Hello, everyone, and welcome to All Things Teen. This is Erin here. And today I'm really excited to have one of our very own teens, Natalie, join us. So welcome, Natalie.

**Natalie** 00:40

Hello.

**Erin** 00:44

So we'll really get just jump right in. Natalie, what grade are you in?

**Natalie** 00:49

So I am a junior in high school.

**Erin** 00:52

Excellent. And so, what are some things that you like to do outside of school? I'm guessing since you're recommending books you do like reading, but are there other activities you like?

**Natalie** 01:02

I do like reading. I also play soccer. And occasionally I'll do something like a puzzle or something like that.

**Erin** 01:11

That's super awesome. Yeah. I also like um, so I don't know if you listen to audiobooks, but I really like crafting while I'm listening to audiobooks. So, it's like your reading and crafting at the same time.

**Natalie** 01:24

Yeah, what I like to do is I love to like, listen to music and do a puzzle at the same time, because I need some sort of noise. But that's really, that's something I like to do.

**Erin** 01:36

Awesome. I'm really excited for your book recommendations. So, Natalie has five titles that she's going to share with us. But in general, what kind of books stand out to you? Or, or do you like, kind of look for that you're interested in reading?

**Natalie** 01:50

I read a bunch of different genres, like in this I have a couple of different genres, but one I like the most is probably fantasy, like that type of thing. I really like made up universes, I just find them really interesting.

**Erin** 02:05

Yeah, definitely. It you know, it's funny, because it also makes you think about like relation to how things work in our own society. And like, what's similar, what's different, but I love world building. I feel like that's such a way to show creative outlet. So usually those authors are like the most creative.

**Natalie** 02:25

Yeah, it's really interesting how they get to make like a world exactly how they want it to be, or kind of drawing attention to certain things in our own world. I think that's really interesting.

**Erin** 02:37

Yeah, definitely. Alright, let's jump in, what is your first title that you'd like to recommend?

**Natalie** 02:43

So, the first one is The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis. And probably the most popular book in that series would be The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe. And there's like the movie about that one, too. But my favorite one of the series would be The Horse and His Boy, which basically, it's very much an adventure book. So, this boy finds out that kind of who he thought was his father is actually going to like, sell him. And he meets this talking horse from Narnia, and they basically decide that they're going to escape back to Narnia. And it's just like, the adventures of that.

**Erin** 03:28

That's super awesome. I actually listened to all the audio books before. And sometimes with fantasy stories, if you get a really good narrator, they kind of really do a great job of like, bringing you into that world. So, they had a they had a really good narrator for that. So, have you seen the movies about these? I mean, there's...there's only two I believe, although there was like a, I think like a British-made a BBC show from long time ago.

03:58

Yeah, so actually, I've seen like, the newer ones, and the old ones. The old ones....it was interesting being able to see the books like actually happen, but the quality was just you could tell it was old.

**Erin** 04:16

Yeah,

**Natalie** 04:16

Like the animation was, especially after seeing the newer ones like the line looked like a stuffed animal. It was.

**Erin** 04:27

That's true. Yeah, the quality does get better, especially I saw I think fantasy movies now versus fantasies, you know, back in, like the 80s. They're just way...way different. Quality is better. That's awesome. I'm glad you brought this up, because like, it's been a while since those movies were made. And so, there are probably some,

especially younger teens that might not know about this series. So, I'm glad you recommended it. So, what is your next recommendation?

05:00

Yeah, so the next one, this is probably my all-time favorite series. It's A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket. And a series is actually in the title. So, it's a pretty long title. But I love, love this series, my aunt actually recommended it to me when I was pretty little. And I've read it multiple times. It's about three siblings who lose their parents, so they become orphans. And when their parents die, they begin to learn about this kind of like secret organization they were a part of, and they have to deal with kind of an opposing organization. And one character who's trying to steal their fortune, because they're orphans, and they're poor. But eventually they're going to be able to have access to their parent's money and their parents were rich. So, a bunch of like, really out there stuff happens to them. But they're each very unique. And they're able to deal with all the things that happen. And it's just very interesting.

**Erin** 06:08

Yeah. And who was that, that they like, live with at first? Isn't that is that an uncle or something?

06:13

So the first one they live with was a guy who pretended to be very distantly related to them. Olaf was his name, Count Olaf. And not...not the Frozen dude. But this is a different guy. And he's this. He's actually the evil one. So, he's the one who's trying to steal their fortune throughout the whole thing.

**Erin** 06:39

Yeah, I mean, like, there was a movie with Jim Carrey. And there's a series more recently with Neil Patrick Harris as Count Olaf. And like, I feel like even if you saw a preview, you would know like, he's the bad guy.

**Natalie** 06:54

Yes.

**Erin** 06:55

He like seems like he's up to no good. He seems like he doesn't actually take care of the kids at all. Like, he's a bad dude.

07:02

Yeah, they make it clear from the beginning that he is not trustworthy. There's never really like, even the way they introduce him. Like, I'm you're like, there's this very long, unclear explanation of how he's actually related to them. Which kind of shows that he's not actually. But the there's a new Netflix show about it. And it's really good. I really, like a lot of times, you know, you'll watch the movie, and it's just not as good. But in this case, I would say it did the books justice for the most part.

**Erin** 07:41

That's good, do they...yeah, sometimes I feel like they change like storylines. And that's disappointing. And sometimes I guess it makes sense for TV. Because certain things are hard to film. But it I don't know, it always rubbed me the wrong way. When I feel like there's something like an important plot point, and they leave it out of like, the TV or movie version.

08:01

Yeah. Um, they didn't. I don't think they did the whole series. Like it doesn't go all the way through, which stinks, because for me, my favorite one is actually the last book, but up to where they filmed it's fairly accurate, honestly.

**Erin** 08:18

That's great. So, I don't want to know, like, a lot of spoilers.

**Natalie** 08:23

Yeah.

**Erin** 08:23

But do you...things kind of get resolved in the final book?

**Natalie** 08:29

A little bit. So, the thing about the series, it's like, I think they mentioned it multiple times for like each question. They had answered, more questions pop up. So, if you're the type of person who needs the perfect, like, tied up in a ribbon ending, maybe this series isn't the best one. But it I think it's I think it's interesting that you kind of don't know what happens for sure.

**Erin** 09:01

Yeah, I like that, too. Like, I like it when it happens with books. Especially there's like a lot of characters a lot of storylines, so you can kind of imagine an ending for yourself. And then that way, you're imagining like, what's satisfying to you.

**Natalie** 09:18

Yeah.

**Erin** 09:21

Alright, so I'm really excited to see what's next. These two have been really awesome so far. So, what is your third recommendation?

**Natalie** 09:29

So, this next one is less fantasy? It's not. It's not real life, but it's more of like a political commentary book. It's very famous Animal Farm by George Orwell. You're probably familiar with it. So basically, the storyline is fairly simple. It's just a bunch of animals on the farm and what they're like, dealing with type of thing. I like the characters. I think that makes it more interesting cuz for me reading this book I wasn't super familiar with actual

like the politics it was based on at the time. I think it was based on like, rev...like a revolution it was based on Orwell's perception with the Spanish Civil War, and snowball like the main pig, he represented Trotsky. And he was a Marxist revolutionary and a communist. So, I wasn't super familiar with that, but just reading it, you can still kind of pick up on the idea. And basically, the idea is that revolutionaries eventually become as oppressive as the people they overthrew. And then another revolution happens, and it's a cycle. But like, the way it's done in this book, there's a lot of, you know, interesting characters and that type of thing. And it's a complex political idea displayed as like, an interesting children's book format, honestly.

**Erin 11:08**

Yeah. I like that about his work on all of his work has political commentary. So, another one really famous is 1984, of course, and that, I mean, it's a little slow to get through, but it's definitely worth a read. And that's all about how there's like a Big Brother, there's like, people kind of controlling everything that you do, and how society can control aspects of your life. So that one's super fascinating, too. I like that you can kind of you can make social commentary with a story and, and just kind of interweave it together. Because like you're teaching people about something that you might not know about. But it's not like dry and boring, you're learning about it in a really interesting way. I think more times, stories stick with me more so than if I were to read like a nonfiction book. You think that's true for you, too? Like you learn better from stories than just like reading a nonfiction by title?

**Natalie 12:20**

Yeah, for sure. Because with this book, if I had read this, like, the actual history that it was based on, I would have been so like, distracted by all the facts that I wouldn't actually be able to understand the point, which is like, the point that he's trying to make is that revolutions are...they don't work forever, you know, eventually, you need another revolution. But like, if I had read that as a history book, it wouldn't have been as interesting. And I might not even have remembered the point.

**Erin 12:56**

Yeah, it really makes you think it's funny, because in that instance, too, like, it's a really good thing to realize, like, even if you have a revolution, that if they become in power, that might not be any better than who's in power now. But then it also like, because that's what you know, they present to you, then you're like, okay, you have you, it really makes you think here's like, how could somebody successfully be in power? And I think, I think for me, the answer is that they wouldn't be corrupt. But I feel like, it's really hard to do when you go into politics, because you have people pulling you in every direction. And so, you know, at the end of the day, you if you're a politician, you might have to give on things that you don't want to just to kind of satisfy everybody. So that's really fascinating to think about.

**Natalie 13:55**

Yeah. Especially how like you think about, they have to make compromises that they don't want to make. And sometimes they will do things because it benefits them like it's very hard to balance power.

**Erin 14:14**

Yeah, definitely. That's awesome. I'm so glad you like, like, put in a classic in there too.

**Natalie 14:23**

Yeah, I would say this next one is fairly classic. This is a book that a lot of people have to read for school like Lord of the Flies by William Golding. I read it in middle school, and did not like it at all. Read it in high school again, and that time, like maybe the previous experience to it, like exposure to it helped, but the second time just thinking about it more critically. I really, really like this book, like it's just so interesting.

**Erin 15:00**

Hmm, yeah, definitely. For those that aren't familiar, will you give them a little synopsis?

**Natalie 15:06**

Civilized? Huh?

**Erin 15:10**

Sorry, I think I cut out there for a minute. Um, so for those that are not familiar with what Lord of the Flies is about, can you give like a little synopsis?

**Natalie 15:23**

Yeah. So, it basically starts off with this this group of British boys, and they are trying to escape like the danger of World War Two. So, they were put on a plane because they're all fairly wealthy, and they were going to leave to go to, you know, a safer place. And they have a plane crash, they get abandoned on island. And there are no, there's no real authority. There're no adults. So that's how it starts off. So, I don't I don't know how much I can say without giving too much away.

**Erin 16:09**

Yeah. Well, I guess I you could say, like, people fill certain roles.

**Natalie 16:16**

They kind of created their own mini civilization.

**Erin 16:20**

Mm hmm.

**Natalie 16:21**

And you can just say it didn't work great.

**Erin 16:27**

Yep. Yeah. It kind of reminds me of there's a pretty famous experiment where they just take a group of I don't even know how many with let's just say they take like 20 men, and they, they just get picked at random and they say, okay, you're going to be prisoners, and you're going to be jailers. And like, over time, they found out that the jailers became less empathetic, more disposed to, like, be mean to the prisoners. And it's just like the

psychology of oh, I'm in charge of you. And that is really interesting and fascinating to think it has a lot to do with psychology of, of a group.

**Natalie 17:17**

Yeah. I, the thing I found most interesting was, how it was a civilization. And it basically I feel like it sped up the timeline of a civilization almost like it was created. And then things fell apart, but like the setup timeline, made it way clearer. Like how things were falling apart.

**Erin 17:46**

Mm hmm. Yeah.

**Natalie 17:48**

Okay, it wasn't when you look at actual history, and it's a bunch of causes and effects and it's like, different and spaced out. It's harder to understand that way, I guess.

**Erin 18:00**

Yeah. So um, I actually just want to mention that there's kind of like a modern YA version of like, all girl, Lord of the Flies. Um, it's called Beauty Queens. It's by Libba Bray. And I'll just read a quick synopsis so, if you guys think it sounds interesting, you should definitely check it out. We do have it at the library. Okay, here we go. Teen beauty queens, a lost island mysteries and dangers, no access to email, and the spirit of fierce feral competition that lives deep in the heart of every girl a savage brutality that can only be revealed by journey into the heart of non exfoliated darkness. Oh, the horror, the horror. When a plane crash strands 13 teen beauty contestants on a mysterious island they struggle to survive to get along with one another to combat the islands, other diabolical occupants and to learn their dance numbers, in case they are rescued in time for the competition. So, it is you might have kind of got that it's also humorous. So, it is kind of Lord of the Flies-ish. But it's also kind of I think, like a dark comedy.

**Natalie 19:18**

Yeah, I think I've heard of that one before. It sounds very interesting.

**Erin 19:23**

Yeah, Libba Bray, is like a really pretty well-known author, but not as much now she was when she first started publishing. So, some of her books are just like really fantastic. And she's won like lots of awards for her writing is really is praised just for being like, just pretty irreverent and lyrical and just fun to read.

**Natalie 19:49**

Would you say it's kind of similar to like a Percy Jackson style like the humor in it?

**Erin 19:56**

Um, I'd say the humor is a little bit more sophisticated. Because I like I really like Percy Jackson. But like, it's clear when you're starting off the series that like he's 12. And so it's like a 12 year old sense of humor. Whereas this is like a little bit, you know, a little bit higher brow than that.

**Natalie** 20:20

Okay, yeah.

**Erin** 20:22

I am no way insulting Percy Jackson fans. I really like Percy Jackson too. But, you know, I feel like the older you get like, the more sophisticated your humor gets too.

**Natalie** 20:33

Definitely.

**Erin** 20:38

Not at all.

**Natalie** 20:39

Like going back and reading Percy Jackson though, it you like reading it when you're 12 versus when you're no longer 12, you can tell the difference.

**Erin** 20:51

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, it's really great when you become an adult, and you read all of your like, favorite kids books, and like, some of them really hold up and some of them don't at all. You're like, wow, why did I like this so much? Alright, do you have another recommendation for us?

**Natalie** 21:10

There is one more. It's A Little Princess by Frances Burnett.

**Erin** 21:16

So I don't know if this one I'm excited.

**Natalie** 21:19

Yes, this is a really good one, in my opinion. So, it's about this little girl who is put in this, like boarding school, and her dad goes back to some other country to work or something. But then he ends up passing away and she's left there, kind of by herself. And the main plot of the book would be probably how she was very kind to those around her before and after her father's death. And it's not...it's about how she like, dealt with the grief and the pain and she's left in poverty after he dies. Like she has no one to care for her and he lost his fortune. So, and it's it's basically about that. It's a pretty...

**Erin** 22:16

Oh, I've seen the movie. Okay...

**Natalie** 22:18

Yeah, there is a movie. I don't love the movie. It's, it's fine.

**Erin** 22:22

There's actually two there's one that I actually liked. And there's one that I didn't think was that great.

**Natalie** 22:29

Which one was the one that you liked?

**Erin** 22:31

I'm gonna, I'm going to look it up right now on IMDb. See which one. I'm kind of picky about that, too. Like, one of my favorites is like, The Secret Garden. And there's only like, there's 8 million versions of it. But there's only like one that I really like. Okay, so there was a little princess, the two that I'm thinking of. There's like, the 1986 TV miniseries, which I did not like at all. I actually liked the movie from 1995. There's a newer one, too, I guess. But I don't know. This might be modern. A modern version. Oh, no, it's just I'm sorry. This is it has the same title, but it's not actually the same story at all. So yeah, I like that. I actually like the 1995 version. That's directed by Alfonso Koran. We did like a couple Harry Potter movies. Cuz I liked the girl that they cast as Sarah. I thought she did a pretty good job.

**Natalie** 23:40

Yeah, I remember watching the movie but I I don't remember which one it was. So not sure.

**Erin** 23:49

Yeah, there was a also a miniseries that was on television too. And that girl, I guess. I'm just like the the girl that they cast as Sarah I just think she wasn't right for that role. But that's just me being super picky. I feel like with classic literature, and interpretations, you can be a lot pickier about it. Like I think the one Yeah, cuz I've been than I liked. Um, I'm gonna look it up, just so that I can tell you guys which one I think is good. But have you seen The Secret Garden like any of the movies or anything?

**Natalie** 24:30

Um, I don't think I saw any of the movies. I read one of the books. And the version I read was actually like, Barnes and Nobles had this, like, pack it like they have these classic books. And they're by different authors and stuff, but they're kind of grouped together, I guess in the store. So the version of The Secret Garden that I read was from that Barnes and Noble selection the same like section as the prin...like the little princess one.

**Erin** 25:04

Yeah. So there is a Secret Garden actually, that came out in 2020. And I did not see that. But I really and that has like an all star cast like it has a lot of like really famous actors in it. But I really like the one from 1993 were like Dame Maggie Smith was Mrs. Matlock, like that was really great. She was super great in that movie.

**Natalie** 25:29

Oh, I did watch that one. I remember. I remember her being in it.

**Erin** 25:35

Yeah. She's like the super strict like housekeeper.

**Natalie** 25:43

Yeah.

**Erin** 25:45

That's so exciting. Oh, my gosh. Do you? Is there anything you've been reading lately? Or recently? Do you try to read? I try to read like a couple of scary books on October.

**Natalie** 25:57

Um, I have read for like scary books. I think it's called Scary Stories to Chill Your Bones. Oh, yeah. It's like, it's like these Scary Story series. Mm hmm. That one, I remember reading it when I was much younger and being terrified not even getting through the first story. But, um, yeah, I read it recently. And they were creepy. But just like, you know, sitting in my room in the middle of the day reading them is not scary.

**Erin** 26:35

I think those stories are really fun to read, like in a group and like, you sit in the dark and you have like candles or whatever. And like, you just like, read the story and like, pass it around. And I used to do that with my friends were like that. We would do like a haunted picnic. And we would like tell each other creepy stories or read creepy stories to each other.

**Natalie** 26:56

Yeah, that's always fun, especially when you like, actually managed to get people scared.

**Erin** 27:03

Mm-hmm. Yeah, I know. It doesn't like things kind of can creep me out. But I don't generally have any sort of physical reaction. Whereas some people I know are like, really jumpy, but like when if I were to go into like a haunted house, like I'm not one of those people that generally like scream and run around or anything?

**Natalie** 27:24

Yeah.

**Erin** 27:26

That's awesome. Yeah, I'm trying to think oh, okay, so when I can recommend that I thought was good and creepy. And it's actually good for like sixth and up while probably fifth and up even. But its title is Thornhill. And it's really interesting because it's alternating between a character that's in modern day. And a girl who they're both girls, a girl whose lives in 1982. In this house called Thornhill. And the modern-day story is actually all told in illustrations. But and then the stories from 1982 is all told in diary entries. And so, you find out like this girl is being like horribly bullied. And she doesn't want to stay in his house and she like locks herself in our room to stay away from her tormentor. And the girl who lives from modern day like, like kind of hears the story about there were the girl that died there and she wants she's like, unraveling the mystery of like, who this girl was and

what happened to her. And it's really creepy. And it has an interesting ending to that I can't give away but I do recommend you read that if you want to read something a little bit creepy, and kind of scary yourself.

**Natalie 28:59**

Yeah, well, if we're speaking of like, kind of creepy stories, there's this one we read for literature called The Yellow Wallpaper. And it's not necessarily like a creepy story, but I definitely found it very creepy. I'm trying to find who it's by I think it's by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It's a short story. And it is basically about this woman who has probably it's like inferred to be postpartum. But they don't really know what it is at the time because this is this is like an older story. And basically the stories about how she slowly goes crazy. When it is no It's very interesting, and definitely it kind of gives you chills. Yeah. And it's a quick read. It's a short story. So, I don't know, I don't think it would take more than an hour to read.

**Erin 30:14**

That's awesome. I'm definitely gonna hunt that down. And that to my total amount, like 445 books and graphic novels for the year. So keep going.

**Natalie 30:25**

Oh my gosh. 400?

**Erin 30:27**

Yeah. I usually do like 400. But I was like, I want to do at least 450 this year, but maybe 500. But, you know, ever since the pandemic started, I've been able to read so much more.

**Natalie 30:41**

Yeah. Yeah, for sure. Wow, that's, that's like one, how many books per day? Do you read? Like one or two?

**Erin 30:52**

Um, yeah, that's mostly what happens is because it includes graphic novels, there are days where I can sit down and read 10 graphic novels in a day. So that's how it like works out. People are like, oh, you read a book every day. And I'm like, not always, like, over the course of the week, I'll have read like, you know, over, like, eight books or whatever, like, usually two audio books, and then some graphic novels, and then maybe, like, another fiction title on top of that, but yeah, I don't know. It's, it's a lot of reading.

**Natalie 31:28**

Yeah, that's, that's really cool, though.

**Erin 31:31**

It helps me keep up with, like, what's out there, because you're really fortunate that you're growing up now as far as when teen literature is because when I was growing up, there was like, very few options of what to read. And like, now, it's awesome. Because like, I feel like every teen can see themselves in a story. Like they have stories for everybody about every single type of teen there, it's like it's there's a huge push for diversity. And teen literature is actually the most diverse right now. Out of like adult teen and children's, so something that I

really enjoy too, because, like, I love learning different perspectives from different people. So I love reading, like a lot of cultural stories from people like that are from all around the world. And things like social justice about things that I don't know about. So

**Natalie** 32:27

Yeah, that's, that's really cool, because reading is a great way to just learn about a lot of things.

**Erin** 32:35

Yeah, definitely. Definitely agree. Yeah, totally. It's been a very much an honor to have you on our podcast today. And thank you for all your recommendations. So, we're going to actually have this caption so that if anybody listens to it, but wants to turn on the captions will be able to see all of the titles and authors that we've been talking about today. So, thank you so much for joining us today, Natalie.

**Natalie** 33:03

Thank you for having me.

**Erin** 33:06

And until next time, we'll see you again at All Things Teen podcast.