

LitTea Episode 17: Kristy Boyce & Carrie S. Allen

- Sabrina Hi friends! Welcome to Episode 17 of LitTea! I'm your host, Sabrina Lotfi, and today is another super special episode for me! I'm joined by my Pitch Wars co-mentor, Carrie S. Allen to chat with Kristy Boyce, our 2018 mentee, to celebrate the recent release of Kristy's newest book, *Hot Dutch Daydream*, a companion to her Pitch Wars novel, *Hot British Boyfriend*. Aside from being the best ever co-mentor, Carrie is also the author of *Michigan vs. The Boys*.
- Kristy Hi, everybody. My name is Kristy Boyce. I am a YA romance author. I live in Columbus, Ohio. I also teach at Ohio State at - in the psychology department. My first book is *Hot British Boyfriend* and that came out in 2021, and then, I have a new book coming out which is *Hot Dutch Daydream*, its companion novel, and it came out in April 18th, or on April 18th.
- Sabrina Yay. Carrie.
- Carrie Thanks. She just rattled that off.
- Sabrina She did really good.
- Carrie What's my name? Next time, I'm not going after her. I don't know. Ok. I'm Carrie S. Allen, and I am the author of *Michigan Vs. The Boys*. And I am also Sabrina's co-mentor from Pitch Wars.
- Sabrina That's my wife, y'all. Honestly, I'm letting y'all run this show. [All laugh.] Like, I'm not even here.
- Carrie Right off the cliff. [All laugh.]
- Kristy Well now, I have to ask, Sabrina, what is behind you? I see lots of pictures. Are these your new people? Your inspirations?
- Sabrina [Laughs.] That's my character wall.
- Kristy Wow, look at you. I don't do it. Do you do this Carrie?
- Carrie No, I don't. But I'm not very visual when it comes to my characters.
- Sabrina Okay. I do. I like a character wall. I actually start with a character wall, and I get my little people up, and I get all their...[photos] I don't know, like, I don't know, I know two people's names on this wall. But I know what they look like! Now. [Laughs.]
- Kristy I love it.
- Sabrina You do aesthetics too?
- Kristy I do. Yeah, I usually try to get, like, the main characters. just to have some kind of visual, and it does help me a little bit.
- Sabrina And then, Carrie doesn't start with anything, she just goes for it.
- Kristy Yeah?
- Carrie My wild pantserness.
- Kristy Okay, sure. So no outline, you just jump into the whole thing?
- Carrie Zero outline. Just a couple of plot points, ideas.

- Kristy And no ending in mind either, necessarily?
- Carrie [Laughs.] Not, I mean, I have a general idea just based on where I'm going, you know, like I always know. I maybe don't always know a plot of where I want to end up, but I know how I want the character to end up, which I think was so hard on this last manuscript that you guys know. It was just, yeah. It was like, I wrote three different endings for that, which I've never done before. I have always had an exact idea of where I want the character to end up. And, it just, somehow writing that character, I just needed so much more time to figure her out, before I could actually figure out what her ending was supposed to be. So, yeah.
- Kristy I was torn myself, because it's like I loved both of her lives and I could see her dream.
- Carrie Yeah. Which I think the answer is, when you have two different options, it's neither. The answer is neither. Yeah. When you're a writer and there's two different options, don't pick either one of them. There's my advice for today.
- Kristy Because then, yeah, as the reader you're kind of thinking it's gonna be one or the other. So it seems really fresh, so then how secret option C that you didn't know about.
- Carrie Yeah. Well and I like that as a bit of a message to your reader, too. Like, you may think that these are your only two options, but they're not.
- Kristy Absolutely, and there's being a teenager right there.
- Carrie Sure, absolutely.
- Kristy No, I love that. I'm excited. Good for you.
- Carrie Yay, thanks.
- Sabrina Okay. Kristy. So you got really shocked when you learned that Carrie is such a hardcore pantsner. So, you do make an aesthetic. Do you do that first? Is that really early in your process?
- Kristy It's early-ish. I can't make it too early, because then I don't know anything that's going on. So, I feel like I have to know a little bit about the character. It's funny how much it's changed over the years. Like, I feel like the way that I used to write was, I was much slower and I didn't make a synopsis. I did feel like writing a synopsis was laughable and ridiculous and also couldn't be done. Like, I didn't even know how to do that. And now, it's just, it's really only because I am forced to. Like, if I want to try to sell a proposal then I have to write the synopsis, and it's totally miserable doing it. But I can see - annoyingly - why people say you should write the synopsis because it forces you to think about things. And, I'm not saying that anybody else has to do that, because I think everybody does have a different process. But, I found that for me, at least writing these proposals, it's been really helpful. Because if I write the synopsis, as I'm writing about it, I don't have to figure out all the plot points, I can just say some general things that are gonna happen. But, it also helps me to, then, kind of know a little bit about the character. And once I have that, then I can do the aesthetics and then I kind of know the general sense of this plot. And I kind of know these main people. And then, I can do the aesthetic, and I have gotten a little, like, neurotic about it, where I have it taped by my desk. And, I don't really want to get started until it doesn't feel real until I have that, and I have it taped up. I also do kind of a weird thing, where I gather little things now that are associated with the book and I put them on my desk. So, like right now, I have like nutcrackers and things like that, or I would have, you know windmills, or what have you, so that when I get it all set up, I'm like, 'Okay. Now I can get started.' So, I'm kind of, I don't really do a full outline, and I kind of do the aesthetic a little bit like in the middle-ish, like well not the middle, but I have to kind of know a little bit about the book before I do the full aesthetic, if that makes sense?

- Sabrina No, that's fair. I told y'all I start with this, and I should clarify, like, I do this, typically before I start hardcore like drafting, but it's not, like, I don't sit down, and like, 'These are all the characters in my book.' And like I said, I don't know half of their names, but they all have a role, and I know who they are because I've been outlining and working on that kind of thing. It's, yeah, I didn't just pull a bunch of characters out of my butt and I'm like, 'We're gonna fit you into the story and go.' [Laughs.]
- Kristy Because you do a ton of outlining, right Sabrina?
- Sabrina I do a ton of chaos outlining. Like, I pretty much just jot things down and like, figure out the main character arcs. Some of the bigger plot points. I try to figure out some of the smaller, in the middle, but not too much. And I try to figure out who, like, my pivotal characters in the story are, and like, who's gonna? And honestly, some of that changes too, but like who's likely going to, like, have the most effect on my main character, and that kind of thing.
- Kristy Sure.
- Sabrina And I probably would go ahead and say that because I can come up with concepts, usually, pretty quick, like, a fun quick concept. But then, I'm like, okay well where's the meat of that? Like you need like the character arc and stuff. That's pretty much usually where I struggle. So I do a lot of character arc thinking. So, because of that, I probably think about themes pretty early too. Which again, all of that can change. I also do a lot of retelling so a lot of that doesn't change...
- Kristy That's true.
- Sabrina ...sometimes either, and that really just depends on the project, so.
- Kristy That makes sense. Yeah, I don't feel like I think explicitly about the themes all the time. Like, that's not one of like, the first... I think maybe I don't always know the theme. Sometimes I have to get to the end and then I kind of can reflect back on it and see like, 'Oh, it's about this. Good to know.' I don't always know.
- Sabrina I kind of tie those up in like the character arc. And I'm like, 'Oh, if this is the arc, then like, probably we're learning this thing,' you know? But yeah, I'm like, 'Okay, this is how you start. And this is how you end. Okay, well, these are probably the lessons that you're gonna get, in the middle, in order to go from your A to your B.'
- Kristy Yeah. So, that makes sense.
- Sabrina Yeah, it's not really like a solid line. I'm not sitting there like 'The themes of this novel are.' Yeah, jotting them down.
- Kristy Yeah, well that's what I start with, is just the themes, like, I'm all about the themes.
- Sabrina Is that what you start with Carrie?
- Carrie Yeah, all the time.
- Sabrina Oh, this is so interesting.
- Carrie Yeah. I just have these ideas of like, the themes, you know, the general idea. It's very general...
- Sabrina Okay.
- Carrie ...themes.
- Sabrina Okay.

- Kristy Yeah, it is so funny, talking to other writers and hearing, like, all the different ways that people do things. Yeah.
- Sabrina So I typically come up with... Well, I've been doing a lot of retellings, which are weird, so I and my retellings are very character focused. So, I've been, I shape other things around the characters. So like, I did that with both of my last retellings that y'all read. I like figured out their settings and that kind of thing, like, after I got to know the characters. My other projects that I'm doing that are a little freer, unless retelling where I don't actually know the characters yet. I have more of a concept of like a broad, like, where I'm like, 'Well, that tells you literally nothing about anything.' Then I probably start thinking about the character that I need for that project. But you start with themes. I want to talk about this more. That's really interesting.
- Carrie Yeah. But it's, a lot of it'll be like, you know, something family-related, and then sports-related, and then as you start working from these ideas, and a lot of it is premise, and a lot of it is purpose, because I generally have a pretty good idea of what I want to say before I start, as well. And I may get there in a different way than I saw at the beginning. But, I generally have a purpose, and an audience in mind when I'm starting, too. So yeah.
- Sabrina This is making a lot of sense with the way you give feedback as well, actually.
- Carrie Really?
- Sabrina Yeah. No, that's so interesting. Especially when you're like, kind of chatting through things.
- Carrie Well, I think that's a pantsner thing, too, is you take this character that you don't know anything about yet - you just have a general idea of her - and you plop her down in a - in a - in a world, in a setting, in a theme, and give her a little conflict and there's your promise and then. And then, I mean, you can't help but figure out their character when you throw them to the wolves, [Laughs.] so, yeah.
- Kristy That's interesting.
- Sabrina Okay, so I have a question for both of you. How are your voices when you first start a project? Like how developed are they, and like, how much work you put into those, and like, do they come super naturally like this is Sage, or this is, you know, Michigan or yeah?
- Kristy For me, it depends, I think, on the book. I mean really, I feel like *Hot British Boyfriend* was such a different part of that whole thing because, it was like, I had written books before that. But I feel like that was kind of the first book that I did the same level of revision on, and it was such a long process, I don't even, I can't even harken back to the beginning of that one. But like, if I think about *Hot Danish Daydream* with Sage, yes, but that... it's different because that's a companion book. So I'd already written Sage in a little bit, right, in *Hot British Boyfriend*. And so, I felt like it was actually such a joy to do that because usually I'm premise first. Kind of like you were saying, Carrie, how you kind of have this like concept, but I'm not character first. Like I don't really usually know the characters and so I don't have a good voice for them. But with *Hot Dutch Daydream* is an exception to that because I already knew Sage. So I was like, 'Wait, I can just write and I know who she is and I know her motivations.' It was so wonderful because usually with all my other books I'm like, 'What the hell are they doing?' And I don't know what they're saying. And so yeah, that the other books take a while and even just like the banter and everything, like 'How did this person relate to other people? How is she gonna relate to the guy?' There's a lot of figuring that out and it's real rough, very flat. I always get down on myself in these first drafts. Like, this is so flat and it's so so boring and I have to remind myself it's just how it is. And you just have to, like, get it out there and then you can revise and make it better. But yeah, I guess *Hot Dutch Daydream* was the exception.
- Sabrina But I did the same thing getting down on myself when I look at my very early first chapters of a new project, and I'm like, 'Whoa, those sentences', and like, 'Who is this character, like, that you're trying to portray here?' Like, I'm not entirely sure. What about for you, Carrie?

- Carrie I feel like I do have to do a lot of revision at the - when I go back - especially at the earlier chapters. And sometimes I even have to put in earlier chapters that I didn't know needed to exist, and things like that. So yeah, there's, it takes a little while to find the voice, but I think I also have very much a style of how I write and my characters all do sound a little bit like me. [Laughs.] So that helps.
- Kristy Yeah, I think we all do that though. Yeah, that's definitely me.
That's a good thing though, I think. I think that your readers, like we have readers, I think they want to be able to be like, 'Oh, this is a Sabrina book, this is a Carrie book.'
- Carrie That's true.
So as soon as it's not like, you know, copy and paste which it's obviously not, it's just it has that feel to it and that's why people keep coming back. So I like it.
- Sabrina That's so interesting to hear y'all talking about. So y'all do a lot of development, too. I feel like I do, too. And I'm actually trying to think back, because the most recent project I've been working on. I started and stopped this book at the same 80K mark four different times, and only this last round, like maybe a month before anybody read it. So last like, 20K, got it in there and done like...
- Kristy Oh my gosh.
- Sabrina ...that's like the first time I got it on paper ever. Like I knew, mostly, what I wanted there but I was having a hard time. And I'm trying to think back on how the voices were in that, and I do think that they were at least in their ballpark of where they ended up. Like that first Estella chapter, like it got tweaked but it was pretty much Estella voice, but some of that, I feel like some of that I would really love to do a compare to the very first draft to see what did and didn't change?
- Kristy That would be interesting.
- Sabrina Yeah, I don't know. Now, I'm like, sitting at, looking at, some like blank shit, where I like, have like a sentence idea on them and I'm like, 'Oh God! How do you start new things?' [Laughs.]
- Kristy Exactly! It's so hard!
- Sabrina Like, please just tell me.
- Carrie Just get an inciting incident, and throw your character into it and see what you have.
- Kristy Carrie has it all figured out.
- Sabrina I know. Carrie has it so figured out. Really. I mean I really like an outline. I'm gonna just play with Jessica's idea, probably, and like, I need to just go sit down and write better outlines. [Laughs.]
- Carrie Although, I don't think I could do, like, when she was talking about the IP projects where they give you that much detail and they're like, 'Write a book,' and I don't know if I could do that. That's so not how I function.
- Sabrina I think I could murder that and love it, if I like, really resonated with it.
- Kristy You could do that, yeah.
- Sabrina Yeah. Like if it - if there was something that, like, I wasn't feeling, I don't know. But yeah, like, if I was feeling the project, so then I would, I would love that! Oh yeah, please, just give me the characters and the plot line, and I'll go write the shit out of it, ya'll. [All laugh.]
- Kristy I can see you. I can see you knocking that out!

- Carrie By hand, no less. [All laugh.]
- Sabrina By hand.
- Kristy I do that too, though. Not all the time. But sometimes I like, I gets stymied if I'm, like, trying to type and sometimes I have to just get away from the computer and then I can. Things just kinda come out, and like, flow easier if I'm writing by hand, so.
- Sabrina Yeah.
- Kristy It's good. I used to write everything by hand.
- Sabrina I can write faster by hand in my shorthand than I can type because I get distracted by my typos. And when I'm typing too fast, especially if my nails are longer than, like, this, and then I get like, I have so many typos and then I'm like, 'I don't even know what the fuck you just tried to write, because literally that doesn't make sense.' It's just, like...
- Kristy Yeah.
- Sabrina ...not words either. I can, at least sort of understand my chicken scratch. And like, what I was trying to put there.
- Kristy That make sense.
- Carrie Did I tell you guys that sometimes when I want to draft, and I am getting caught up looking at the words, I make my font white so that ...
- Sabrina You're one of the white font people! We've gotta talk about this.
- Carrie Well, I will say in general, that drafting is hard for me, if I'm just gonna sit down and write, because every time I write a sentence I'm like 'Oh but that's a bad sentence,' or 'Oh, I can say this a different way,' and I like I just have to shut that off and like, get the words out. So I used to, and sometimes still do, go for walks and dictate into my phone. And that, I really liked doing that. I don't know why I don't do that as much now. I think maybe it was just really cold and icy, or something anyway. So I was like, 'Well, what else can I do?' And I'd seen on Twitter. I can't remember who, I can't give credit to whoever it was, but they were saying, 'Oh, there's this really chaotic thing you can do where you make your font white,' and I was like, 'Well I'll just try that,' just to see. And it is chaotic and ridiculous, but I kind of love it, because words just come out, and I just like typing, and you know how there'll be the little red squiggles when you have a bad spelling. It's just like there is a wall of red squiggles, it's so bad. But I can't see what they are. So, I'm just like doo doo doo, and I could, like, get so much more done. and then I go back and I, like, fix it all. I know. It's totally ridiculous.
- Kristy Okay. Like I'm amazed. I'm amazed. I think it's the coolest thing but like my anxiety is not gonna allow me to do this.
- Sabrina I know. I mean I haven't actually tried it. I kinda - I don't know, maybe I'll try it one day. I guess if I hated it, I could always stop and like, change the font back to a different color.
- Kristy But, what if it's not there? Or, your hands were in the wrong spot and you like, just typed gibberish? I don't even know. [Laughs.] If you can't see it, how do you know it's there?
- Sabrina That's why I have a hard time with it. I don't trust my typing when I can see it. I certainly wouldn't trust it when I can't.
- Kristy I mean, sometimes I forget to put - I don't forget to put the spaces in, but like I won't or something will happen, and then I have, like, this string of words, or I don't even really do, like, quotation marks and stuff. I'm just kind of putting all the words. I know it's very, very chaotic.

- Sabrina That's why I do my notebook because I don't need any quotes. I just - I don't even have paragraph breaks. It's literally just from top of the notebook, I get to the end of the side, I go to the end, I go to the end. If there's three people talking in one line, then that's fine. And if they're not full sentences, and nobody's name is in it. Like, if your name is Estella, you have an E. And if there's an Eddie in there, then you have Ed because I already have an E, you know? And I don't. Yeah, it's usually shorthand dialogue, shorthand thoughts and then, like action notes, that are usually like bracket action bracket. Because I can I can usually typically early on have a feel of, like, the pacing of how that's going. And I'm like, 'Oh, you need to pause here,' like pretty instinctually, but yeah. It's - it is - it's like 'Do something,' and then sometimes I'll like do stuff, and I'll have a little note, that's like next to it, like, 'But better.' [Laughs.]
- Kristy I just put asterisks in and, like, 'This is bad *.' Then I can just search for all the astericks. I'm like, 'Oh God, there's so many', but just to let myself know that this is, or I do all caps, if I have to like come back and do something, so...
- Sabrina Okay.
- Carrie Yeah, I do the asterisks, if there's something that I'm, like, I need to research this, or fact-check this, or something, because I find a lot of those, you know, scheduling or whatever. You know, go look, cyberstalk the place that this happens at, and describe it, or whatever. So, yes, the asterisks.
- Sabrina I do brackets a lot, and I do brackets for everything. So, I have one book that I've got a few chapters in, and I have - haven't actually named anybody yet. So, like, everybody's got, like, a little, every time they show up and talk or, like, have a dialogue tag, it's got their bracket with their description. So, like, a lot of these are like BFF one, BFF two, and I'm like, 'I'm gonna name you once I know who you are, I promise. Like, I gotta get a feel for you first, like, hang on.' [Laughs.]
- Kristy We are a crazy bunch, all us writers.
- Carrie Oh, my goodness.
- Sabrina Okay. Carrie, you were talking about making changes in first chapters and, like, even rewriting new scenes, and that reminded me. So, Kristy was our 2018 Pitch Wars mentee, and we worked with her on *Hot British Boyfriend*, which came out a year ago. Just a little over a year ago, at this point.
- Kristy 2021, so that's two years ago.
- Sabrina Two years ago. Okay.
- Carrie I was gonna say it felt longer, okay?
- Sabrina Okay. Two years ago.
- Kristy I thought I lost some time there.
- Carrie What is time?
- Sabrina Well, I remember, we added a chapter to your beginning. Do you want to talk a little about, like, Pitch wars? Whatever you wanta share, Kristy.

- Kristy My goodness. I mean, I could say all the things I have to, first, say just how much I love Sabrina and Carrie for, for all the help that they gave me. I would not be here, like, literally, or doing any of the writing, without them. So, I mean, yes, I could start lots of places. But I mean, where *Hot British Boyfriend* had originally started, for anybody who hasn't read it. It's about a girl who studies abroad in England. So when it originally started, I'm pretty sure it started when she arrives in England. So, it's been so long ago, but I'm pretty sure what we, what you guys read was that's where she's getting to the manor, and she's walking in.
- Sabrina It's the car, Chapter 2, I think.
- Kristy The car going up to it. Yes. And so that's how it always started. I just was thinking because, you know, you get so much feedback about, like, how to start these first chapters. There's so much pressure, and I will say that I absolutely hate, and still hate, writing first chapters. It's not, it's very stressful to me. And so, I just heard when you should start, like, with the inciting incident where everything changes and, you know, the new world and so I was like, 'Well it seems most interesting if we start in England.' and so then that I mean, to kind of get into the querying of it. I had finished that novel and I had queried it and I got some requests for, you know, more pages, or what have you, but it wasn't going anyplace. And, I was feeling, honestly, fairly despondent about the whole thing. So, again, thank you so much to Carrie and Sabrina for seeing the, the gem inside of all the issues. But so, you guys were so helpful to me because I mean, you can give your two cents on it. But now, when I reflect on it, I feel like one of the big issues is that, when you start with her in England, you don't know her. And you don't have any empathy for her or why is it important to be in England? What's going on behind the scenes? It's just like, 'Oh, here is a girl who has this, like, dream life getting to live in this manor.' And so, what we did is you guys had me push back the timeline to when she was in America. Like, why is she coming to England? What happened that would, like, you know, what's that motivation to get there? That's not just like 'Ooh, England's fun.' And so then we had to brainstorm about like, what? Because I honestly, I knew something bad happened, but I don't think I really had a clear thing.
- Sabrina You - I was gonna say you had it in there. It was quick though, and...
- Kristy Quick?
- Sabrina Yeah, it wasn't on the page in like, a full scene, but you had. I was like, I was actually going 'Wait! You didn't know what it was?' Because, like, I feel like you knew what it was...
- Kristy But I didn't.
- Sabrina I feel like I knew what it was. [Laughs.]
- Kristy So, I remember distinctively, because we didn't have a lot of phone calls in Pitch Wars. Mostly we went back and forth through email and DMs and things like that. But there was one time, Sabrina, that you and I were on the phone, and I can distinctively remember standing in my bathroom talking about this. And, I was, like, I knew that there was a boy, and bad things happen with the boy, I think maybe at the beginning it was... At one point, it was a breakup and then later, I changed it to 'I don't want her to actually have a boyfriend previous, so it's just gonna be like a crush that, like, rejects her,' but I didn't know how the rejection happened. And I was talking to you on the phone. I was like, 'Wait. What if it's at a party, and what if she thinks that he, like, likes her and really it's somebody else? I was, 'Oh, it's so mean,' and I was like, 'Ooh, I have to do it.' Which I will say that some people, like, have explicitly told me that that Chapter 1 is really hard for them to read. I wouldn't be surprised that there's some people out there who picked up the book, tried to read Chapter 1, and were like 'The cringe factor is so strong in Chapter 1' that they're like, 'I can't do it.'
- Sabrina No, it's so good. It's the perfect amount of awkwardness to make her run away. Which is exactly what she needed to do.
- Kristy Right.

- Carrie That's right.
- Kristy Because you needed to see, like, why would she run away? And feel that, like, she had the empathy and that's what I didn't have at the beginning.
- Sabrina Well, and that scene carried you through a lot of her arc and everything. And a lot of plot points went into the story. Like, we had that moment fleshed out that, like, you could see. 'Oh, well this is this is why she's thinking these things this way.'
- Kristy Right. It's so easy, like, to look back and be, like, 'This is obviously the thing to do,' but it's funny when you're in that moment of trying to write it, that sometimes it's hard for you to see it. Like, I, as far as I was concerned, I had done as much with *Hot British Boyfriend* as I could do, like, I didn't know where to take it. I was gonna shelve it. And then I needed to have fresh eyes, and somebody to say like, 'No, you need to back up the plot. You need to do x, y, and z.' And so, now I can look at it and think, 'Oh, of course, I should have done that,' but at the time, I obviously, I had no clue.
[Laughs.]
- Sabrina No, that's like everything, I mean, we do that all the time with our readers, at every stage. We write it, we take it as far as we can get it. We send it to somebody else, and they say one freaking sentence and just blow your mind with their brilliance, and what your story needed, and you're like, 'Hey! Let me go back and revise.' So I think that happens to every level. and then we - we take it as far as we can. And that's what I always give, as far as writing advice goes, is 'Get your book as far as you can take it by yourself, with the readers and community that you have. Like, utilize your people to get it.' That's that's all we can do. Like it's amazing. You know that if you're getting a lot of feedback from multiple people of the same thing, then you know it's not quite there yet. Like, go fix those things, but once you've done it, as far as you can take it, like no. It's time for a next level.
- Kristy Yeah, right. There will be some times when I am lazy, and I'm like, 'I think that probably this is a problem but I don't want to fix it.' So I'm going to send it to my beta readers and we'll see if they call me out on it. And then they do and I'm like...
- Sabrina Oh! Oh, totally.
- Carrie Yeah, yep, guilty.
- Sabrina It's interesting. There's times where like, even after I get a whole bunch of feedback from people, like, there's times where I'll still be lazy about stuff, where once again, you know, you get one person's feedback on something that's 'Change this one thing,' and everybody else is like, 'I love that one thing the way you wrote it.' So, sometimes I'm like, 'Ooh, that was a really good point' and like, 'But I'm gonna leave it for now' and keep this piece of paper as like a 'Here's an idea to come back to, maybe.' I do that a lot.
- Carrie There's an art to that, man. I mean, like, that's a whole other podcast, like, thinking about how do you take that feedback, and what do you listen to, and what you don't listen to. It's hard to know those times, so yeah.
- Sabrina It's super hard.
- Kristy Yeah. Well, I was just thinking that too, even when you were talking about inciting incidents, because there are so many, you know, blogs or craft books, or whatever that are like, 'Don't start with this, this, this, this this.' But then, there's always the, the counter to that, 'Well, so and so did and they're a best seller' or whatever. Well, you have to get the action moving right away, but you also have to show them in there, you know, before, you know. And so yeah, that's all of it. It's the feedback you get, but it's the, the initial baseline information that you have, too. It's yeah, take it all, look at it, and then individualize it for you.
- Sabrina Right.

- Kristy And that's okay. And I will also say that it does change from book to book, in the fact that like you, like, you think you figured it out for one book. I was like 'Okay cool. I got it. I did *Hot British Boyfriend*. I know how it works.' And then, I went to write *Hot Dutch Daydream*, and I was like, 'Well this is how it should be. So we'll start here in America, and we'll get the thing, and we'll move over there,' and I turned it in and then my editor was like, 'No, we need to start her in Amsterdam.' And I was like, 'God damn it! We already tried that.'
- Sabrina I do remember that.
- Kristy 'Why are we now going back?' And I'm like, 'Okay, somebody please tell me how to start my books because I don't, I clearly, I don't know how to do it,' so it's just, I don't know, but it all works out in the end, but I don't think I have a clear idea yet.
- Sabrina That's so funny. Well, it's like, it's what we keep saying, all books are different. And I mean, what works for one isn't necessarily gonna work for another. I've heard of a lot of pantsers, too, later, they have to plot for whatever reason. I've heard of, you know, hardcore plotters, who are like 'This one time, I just sat down and wrote the whole thing,' and like also awesome.
- Kristy Because you've gotta be easy on yourself and be flexible, as much as it's possible to be flexible about things. But yeah, if you get too dictated by one way of doing things that might end up, making it harder on yourself. Yeah, I don't know.
- Sabrina How do you all decide what feedback to use?
- Carrie I think a lot of times if, if I read something and it doesn't resonate with me, I have to step back and say, 'Well, I was trying to do this, and clearly it didn't work because Sabrina didn't get it,' you know. So what did I, where do I back up and make it more, you know, it may not be that that specific minor incident in the book doesn't need to be there. It just may mean that I needed to do a little more background first, or I needed to frame it differently or something. You know, somebody and it's... and I, again, I don't take every single piece, but I realize that the reader didn't quite get what I was doing there. And so maybe I need to go a little deeper with that, or help them get there for that. So it doesn't necessarily mean that it was wrong. I just didn't get where I was going.
- Sabrina You know, you bring up a really good point. I keep talking about the most recent book I just did, because I just got feedback on it, and was just doing this. But that is one thing that I remember doing a lot of is, because I got a lot of feedback on world-building early on. And then, I had questions throughout the novel that I made some really interesting... I made some decisions on some feedback later because I was like, 'Okay I think I took care of most of these issues when I reworked these parts.' So I'm gonna trust that I did that...
- Carrie That's a good point.
- Sabrina ...and not ignore these, but these kind of got fed into these other ones, and I might tweak a little bit here because of those comments. But yeah, that's really interesting that you said that.

- Kristy I guess I would also add that sometimes, if I'm getting feedback, and it's again, it's not resonating, because that is the first thing, is Number One, that sometimes I'm kind of expecting certain feedback, and so it's, if I'm getting it, then 'That's great. This is exactly what I was thinking and yes, I was being lazy about it.' I'll be, like, 'Great. Okay, fine. You called me on it.' But then if I get some other things that I wasn't expecting sometimes I also think about, like, who is it that's reading it? And not for you guys in particular, but kind of early on when you have people that you don't know as well. No, I'm not. [Laughs.] But like early on when you have, like, you're kind of trying out people, and, like, trying to figure out who your readers are gonna be. Sometimes they are wanting to write a book that's not the book that you want to write, and they don't quite get what you're trying to do. And so I think that, kind of again early, earlier in the writing is important to figure out like 'Are we all on the same page? Do we all understand what I'm trying to do? And maybe it's not the book that you love, or that you would write, but I need to have feedback that's going to be helpful for this particular book.' And so, that kinda goes more to the people that you share with, as opposed to which feedback you take. But, I guess it all kind of ties in together. But anyway, this was just something I was thinking about.
- Sabrina Yeah, I feel like I remember another thing we did. We were talking, we were giggling about this, Carrie and I always giggle about this. But we also made, we made Jenny kind of character. We also made you kind of character. And we cut Hannah, didn't we?
- Kristy Oh right! I forgot.
- Carrie I did!
- Sabrina For the record, I would just like to clarify, by 'made', we did not actually make her do anything.
- Kristy That's true. It was always in my court. You guys were just mentioning some things I could think about, but now you might have to, like, remind me about. So this was the, like, friend...
- Sabrina She was a rival, maybe a frenemy?
- Kristy And she was on the trip, right?
- Sabrina She went on the trip.
- Carrie Yeah, she went on the trip.
- Kristy Oh my God, you guys! This is like a...
- Sabrina She was.
- Kristy Yeah, she was the mean girl, best friend.
- Sabrina The main mean girl. I thought she was the main mean girl. I thought she had a lot more, I feel like.
- Carrie Well, she was very mean. Yeah. Maybe.
- Kristy No, now that you guys are saying this, I'm totally remembering this. How ridiculous is this, is that this is a book that I wrote and I'm like, 'Is this a thing?' I don't even remember now.
- Sabrina No, that makes perfect sense, but also I mean we were, this is 2018, as well, so...
- Kristy It's been a little bit now. I think I might have blocked some of these bad things, not bad, but some not so good drafts from my memory. I just, I like to have, like, my nice finished memories of how the book is now.

- Sabrina I do the same thing reading y'all's books because I'll read them and I'll be like, 'Wait!', and I'll remember other things and stuff, but it's so fun to get to see all the different levels and how it's so funny. It's even really fun to see, like, what you brought to us at Pitch Wars, what we went out to agents with, and then what ended up on the shelves. Like, that's so incredible to me. It's so incredible to me.
- Kristy Well, I want to give a shout out to you guys, because some of the things that you guys wrote for, like, the query and the synopsis, like, those things are there. Like, those lines, like, the way - I'd have to pull the book to, like, look for the exact things, but there are certain things that they used that to pitch it in Acquisitions. They used it to sell the book, and I don't think it changed very much, and, and that, that was not me. That was you guys helping me, because you guys did such a great job helping me with my synopsis and my query. So hats off to you both, because it's a lot.
- Carrie It's true what they say though. We've heard a lot of writers say that, is that, you know, something that they came up with in their query package, makes it all the way to that final book cover.
- Kristy Yes, absolutely. I think it catches people's attention. Well, and also the title right? Like so that, lots of us talk about titles changing, but that title... I think you guys had said that title stood out to you, and then it never ended up changing.
- Sabrina So yeah, we would not let you touch that, when we went to Showcase. I don't even know. Did we even talk about changing it? I don't remember talking about it.
- Kristy I don't think we did.
- Sabrina I don't know why we would talk about that.
- Kristy We talked about changing almost everything else in the query, but no.
- Sabrina Like, we wanted to request it pretty much, but I was just like, 'Oh cute!'
- Carrie Based on title, yeah.
- Sabrina I mean, I didn't request just on title, I mean we actually read your query, and all the things. And, I was a big synopsis reader. I don't think Carrie was big on synopsis, but I loved the synopsis. I read all the things. I read all of y'all's words, and I still love all of y'all Pitch Wars people who submitted to us, if you're here. Yes.
- Kristy Well that's yeah. I can't say enough about Pitch Wars. I'm sad that it's no longer with us. I understand why it kind of, had to end, but I just feel so blessed to have been a part of it. Because meeting wonderful people. And again, I just, I couldn't have written that query. I didn't know how to start that book, and it wasn't just you guys helping me with the beginning. I mean, obviously, we went through the entire thing line by line, and made so many changes that made such a huge improvement. I mean, the end changed a lot, too. And then, it changed even more.
- Sabrina The end changed a lot, too. It did. I forgot, I forgot about that. That's funny.
- Kristy Because I think that she was gonna go to a hotel. There was like... and like she was...
- Sabrina She did go to a hotel!
- Kristy Right!
- Sabrina She certainly did.
- Kristy Yeah, she did.

Carrie And Will was there, and he was grumpy.

Sabrina Will was there.

Kristy And Dev. I know, right? That was a whole thing. Did we take all that? I can't even remember, you two.

Sabrina I can't remember either. I know. It was so long ago.

Kristy Because I had to revise it a lot at Harper-Collins, too. So I'm like, wait. At which level, at which time did I do all this? That is all gone now, so... Like I said, this book has been on a journey. *Hot British Boyfriend* went through a lot of changes.

Sabrina Well, I know the named characters, that are me and Carrie, were a surprise, and we're in the novel. So everybody go read us be teachers.

Kristy That is true. I was gonna tell you guys, I didn't know if you were gonna read it again, or not, and I should tell you, but I was just gonna put this in as an Easter egg, and it's cool. I wasn't gonna be mad if you never read it.

Ginny [Dog barking.]

Carrie Oh, hi!

Kristy Hi!

Carrie I forgot what I was even saying now, but...

Sabrina Ah, dang it. I've been so good at this.

Kristy Oh, the named characters. Yeah, you two being the teachers.

Sabrina Oh, us, us! We were talking about us.

Kristy I was talking about you two, of course. [Laughs.]

Sabrina How could I forget?

Kristy That was just like a fun thing. I wanted to put both of you guys in it, and I had some others like names, because I have all these teachers I have to name anyway. I was like, 'Why am I not gonna put all my friends in the book? I can just do it.' The readers who don't know, don't know, and that's fine. And, if you do know, that was just a fun little, extra little thing. Which hopefully this isn't pulling too much out of the book, but yeah.

Sabrina No, they're just names. I, yeah, I, like, have a terrible time with names. So, I've always just like, 'Who's my friend?' ... then I run out of friends.

Kristy So, I definitely do the baby named thing, and I don't wanta have too many names that start with the same letter, or something. We already have a Greg, so I can't do, whatever. Yeah. It's a struggle.

Sabrina I'm watching this show, right now, that has, like, a character named Lou, who's, like, a staple character. And they just brought in this new character, who they, like, brought on a lot more regularly named Luke and I'm like, 'Why would you do that to anybody? Why would you do that?'

Kristy Not Lou and Luke.

- Sabrina Exactly. I know. Every time they talk, too, I'm just like, 'Who did they say? Which one are we talking about...?'
- Kristy That's hysterical.
- Carrie I struggle with last names. I cannot come up with last names, and then I'll be sitting at my desk, and I'm looking around and I'm like, 'You know? So if everybody's last name's end up in my books [laughs] or I'm just going through, like, hockey rosters, because I, like, can't think of any.'
- Kristy Oh, that's hysterical.
- Sabrina I do the same thing. Then, I get to the point when I'm doing revisions and stuff, and I'm like 'Do you need a last name...'
- Carrie Sure.
- Sabrina ...on the page?'
- Carrie True.
- Sabrina ...'Or can't you just be Bob?'
- Kristy Madonna or Cher. Look, if you're important, you don't need a last name.
- Sabrina You don't need a last name. We don't need to know.
- Kristy I don't think everybody does need a last name. I mean, some characters obviously do, but yeah, I think it's all good. But it is a fun game to kind of slip in some Easter eggs, until the book says you can't.
- Sabrina Okay. So, we talked about Pitch Wars some, and we talked about some revisions we made through that. Did you want to talk about your querying journey?'
- Kristy Sure. Absolutely. So, I mean, it kind, well let me go to the very beginning. So gosh, let's see. I started, really trying to seriously write in 2008. I mean, I kind of wrote throughout my life but that was when I was like, 'Okay, I'm gonna actually try to get published.' So I wrote a book, it was called *The Elemental Princess*, and I probably never told you guys about this. So, in this princess novel actually was kind of based on a kid's, like, a book I wrote as a child. So, I tried to query that. I actually did get, like, hysterically, I got two people, two agents. Legitimate agents, who requested the full. Which is so funny because the book was a complete mess, and I must have just like hoodwinked them with the query. I don't even know how that happened, because then they immediately, like, read it, and they're like, 'Oh no, no, no, no, thank you.' That's very fast rejections. And then, just as an example of how, like, honestly ignorant I was about the way that publishing works, is I queried at first, I think, as a Young Adult novel, and then when I ran out of options. I was like, 'Okay, I'll just switch it to Middle Grade and I'll just change the YA to the MG and I'll just send it out again, because it's, it's interchangeable, right? Like no, there's no difference between Young Adult and Middle Grade. So, that was the beginning of my journey...'
- Sabrina Oh, that's great!

- Kristy ... and you can see how that went, and obviously did not go well, and I then I told myself I was gonna quit. So I said 'I'm done, I tried it and I'm not gonna, whatever...' So, I took a break, had my son, wrote another book, which I guess... So, here's the issue with this next book, is I never knew what genre it was. I still don't know what genre it was. It was, like, a kind of Greek mythology type book, about a girl who's descended from one of the three Fates and it was, it was fun and like people would be like, 'Yeah, oh that sounds cool.' But they didn't know how to market it. The agents didn't know what to do with it. Is it contemporary fantasy? It's not really a retelling. It's it wasn't really anything. I distinctly remember sitting in SCWI conference, like one of the small ones. and having a agent review it, and she was like, 'Huh, well these 10 pages are interesting. I'm intrigued, but I don't know what I would do with this. I don't know how I would sell it.' And then, she turned to the person next to her, and she's like, 'Hey look at this.' Like, to the next agent, 'Do you think that this could do anything? Do you know how to market this?' And she was like, 'No, I don't know what to do about that,' but they're just, like, 'Okay, bye.'
- Sabrina I hate that. Why do we have to...
- Carrie Oh, my God!
- Kristy So, I remember it was definitely not disheartening at all. So, I did try to query that. I think I got four agents who requested the full, which was more than the last time but it was, you know, and I do distinctly remember kind of, you know, because you know when you have those fulls out, you're like 'Maybe. Maybe this will be the time.' And then, I kind of, you know. And then, rejection. rejection. I had one last one out, and then I was actually at a writing retreat with a friend and I... This is a sad story, but I'll go ahead and share it. So, I got the rejection, and it all ends up happily, right, so it's fine. But at the time, it was sad. So I got the rejection. It was, it was clearly the end of the road, right? Like I had queried everybody. I'd gotten all the rejections for the fulls, and I didn't want her to know. So, I was crying, but trying to silently cry, so that she wouldn't like, come into my door, and be, like, 'What's going on?' I was like, I gotta gotta suck it up. So, you know, there's definitely ups and downs in this whole publishing. you know, journey. So that was that. And then, I... You know, and the other thing that's funny about that is this first two books were fantasies, and that's what I always loved growing up and what I wrote, like as a kid, and then it took me a surprisingly long time to kind of think, 'Well maybe there's other genres, maybe there's something else I should do.' And the way that I switched over to contemporary romance was actually cuz I got inspired by a class I was teaching. And, that kind of, like, I just had this idea for the study abroad book, and I was like 'Well, that wouldn't make sense for fantasy. That has to be like, you know, a contemporary modern novel. And that, I think, in some ways made all the difference, because I kind of, finally figured out, like, where my voice was, and... And in retrospect, again, it's one of those things where you look back and you're, like, 'Well, obviously this is what I should be writing. This is what I love and I love rom coms, and I love all these romantic movies.' And now, I can point to all these things in my life and think, 'Oh, everything was leading to me writing these kinds of books.' But again, at the time, it didn't dawn on me. And so, that's when I started writing *Hot British Boyfriend*. So, that's so, basically, two books queried, and nothing happened. And then *Hot British Boyfriend*, wrote that, went to the Highlights Whole Novel Workshop, which is very helpful. That's where I got the title, *Hot British Boyfriend*. It had a different title before that.
- Sabrina Do you remember what it was? Sorry.
- Kristy I do. Shoot. It had. Well, I said I do as if I actually did, and then now I'm squinting, squinting trying to remember. But it was the *British Course*. I can look. I'm sorry. This is not gonna be helpful.
- Sabrina No, no. That's okay, I'm sorry. I ruined your momentum, too. You were on a roll.
- Kristy No, you're totally fine. It was, it was, so I, I kind of like, like a BBC type of thing, but it was something about, like, *British Course Companion*. It wasn't good. It was throw away.
- Sabrina Okay.
- Carrie Oh, that actually is pretty cute.

- Kristy Yeah.
- Sabrina Especially in that way it ties to HBB.
- Kristy The way that that title came about is, well, you guys probably already know this, but for everybody else, I already had the words, hot British boyfriend, written into the book. So like there's a chapter where she's thinking to herself, 'Ooh, I'm gonna get over this guy. What I really need is a hot British boyfriend,' and that's the end of the chapter. And so, it was Nancy Werlin, who was my mentor for the Whole Novel Workshop. And so she was, like, she pointed to that, and she's like, You know this is your title, right?' And I was like 'What?' And she was like, 'That needs to be your title. This is so catchy. You've got to do it.' I was like, 'Okay, whatever you say Nancy.' And so I think I made it the title. And that did make a difference, I think, with the querying because I did get more requests. I mean, every time I did it, you know, I got a little bit more requests, which let me just also say that this was, that was probably 2017, or maybe the beginning of 2018. So, obviously, you know, times have changed, and I know the querying, like, experience is different, I think.
- Sabrina This is right before you applied to Pitch Wars, right?
- Kristy This was right before, well like, I would say, maybe six to nine months is when I started. Because I gave it, because you know like, querying is such a slow process. You have to wait so many months to hear back from people. So I had started a good ways before Pitch Wars, and I basically, kind of, you know I did all the things. I made out the list of the agents, and I got it sent out in batches, and all the advice that I was getting. And I just, again, I was hitting walls, like people were liking it, they were requesting it. And then, ultimately, they were rejecting it. And, you know, I, I was never a person who got, like the good rejections that people talk about and, and maybe that was just my...
- Sabrina Personalized, and stuff?
- Kristy Yes. Like people, I remember talking to other people, they're like, 'Well, you know, you're getting close when you get the good personalized rejections.' I was like, 'Well, I'm not close.' But I think it's just, you know, I mean agents are just getting busier and busier. Everyone's extremely busy. So, I mean, I kind of knew that like the, like, having these really personalized rejections. I just think that's more of an almost, a historic thing at this point. Like, I just don't think a lot of Agents have time for that.
- Sabrina Yeah.
- Kristy So, yeah. So I was, basically, I was doing all that. I wasn't, you know, I would get rejections that were, four rejections that had my name in it and it was, they were nice ones, but I mean, I could kind of tell, like, it wasn't anything special. And I did, maybe, have the book still out with, like, one or two people that had kind of sat on it for a little bit. And, but really in my mind, I was like, 'Well I'm gonna apply to Pitch Wars.' This was not my first time applying, but, 'I'm gonna apply again this year, and I'll send in *Hot British Boyfriend*, and we'll see how it goes.' But you know, I mean publishing had taught me not to get my hopes overly up and then I always like, 'Well, if that doesn't work out, then this book is gonna go...' Actually I'd already started a middle grade fantasy. I was gonna completely change gears, and nothing ever happened with that. But yeah, so that was what had happened. And then, I guess I could talk about querying after Pitch Wars, too.
- Sabrina Oh, yeah.
- Kristy Well, no. Granted, for some reason, I feel like the, my memory, I think the memories are more like burned into my skull for the pre Pitch wars, because it was so much more instant, like dramatic, or...
- Sabrina Oh, that's interesting. I probably still have email records of all of your Pitch Wars requests, at least, since I was handling those and I delete nothing, but...

- Kristy And I did actually see in my Inbox that I still have a folder of all my *Hot British Boyfriend* queries. What do you think? It would be fun to go back and look at those but actually, it's still fairly traumatic. I just, I don't like going back and seeing it. It's still plenty people who rejected it. So, it's not like the best, but... So, yeah. Well, I mean, with Pitch Wars, obviously it's a kind of a different beast, right? Because it's, there's a Showcase and so you have your little pitch up there, and you have an amount of agents who request from that. So I don't remember how many. It was, like, eleven, something like that? It was obviously more than zero. It wasn't, like, this killer amount.
- Sabrina I thought you did great. None of that mattered, and none of them that got zero are bad either, like those. I've seen a lot of those that got zero Pitch Wars requests, and still went on to get an agent, and probably get published, so...
- Kristy Absolutely, I think so much of that just goes back to certain books need to be sold in different sorts of ways, right? So some books, you can sell on that really fast pitch and even, that's actually something we could talk about. I don't know if it, how helpful it is, but if you guys remember we didn't really do, like, the quick little pitch for *Hot British Boyfriend*.
- Sabrina I was just thinking about that.
- Kristy Because I was like, it was hard to kind of, like, to get the concept or, to get it to be, like, as hooky as we wanted to be. So we had to do a little bit more, if I'm remembering correctly.
- Sabrina I remember that everybody was doing short pitches and longer writing samples. And I remember we made the decision we were gonna spend more time, and almost do like, not a full-on query. Your query letter was definitely more involved than that. So we definitely, and I think we only had maybe, like, a paragraph of a writing sample.
- Carrie Yeah. It was real small.
- Kristy It was different from some of the other pieces in the Showcase. And I remember feeling confident that that was what we needed to do, but also feeling like 'Oh, I wonder what the agents are gonna think, because they don't have as much of a writing sample?' And you just can't predict right? Like how you know who's even gonna be in the Showcase, or what they're looking for? So I was really, I... Of course you never know also what to expect. I mean that was my first time. So I was very happy that I had agents requesting. I was joyful. I also remember teaching and then I wouldn't look at my phone in the middle of teaching because I teach at college so, like, I'd have like a 55-minute class and then I was, like, 'Okay now I can check my phone and see if Sabrina and Carrie told me that anybody else requested.' I was like 'Oh, yay!' and then I'd go on to my next class so it was, I was lucky that it ended up being. I know for a lot of people it was - There was a variety of different emotions obviously going on with that, and I was lucky that it was mostly a joyful experience. So, so yeah. So I had all those agents and then I also had other agents that I wanted to query. So, I had kind of three groups, and I remember even querying in different groups. I had, like, the Showcase agents. I had kind of, like, my cold call agents, I'd never, you know, they didn't have any connection with them, but I'm just gonna send it to you anyway. And then I had a like, a third set which were people that had, I had, like, like maybe they'd asked for the full of my like, *Fates* book, or they'd asked even for the full of *Hot British Boyfriend*. I think there's a few people where I sent it back to them. And I said, 'Hey, you know, you saw this before, but it's not been through Pitch Wars, and know, would you be willing to look at it again?'
- Sabrina I think we did do that, yeah.
- Carrie Yeah, I remember that. Which group was Tara in?
- Kristy Tara was in the Showcase group, actually.
- Carrie Okay.

- Sabrina Yeah. So I think, I think EMLA forever, for the longest time has been referral only, and like them, so most of their either comes from a referral, or from contests, like Pitch Wars.
- Kristy Right. And Tara was a very young agent, and I mean, she, I was not her first client, but I was maybe her third or fourth. So, the way that she was, and I think still to now, the way that she gets her clients is through referrals or through, either Pitch Wars or some of the other like DVPit, and things like that.
- Sabrina Yeah, there's a lot of other pitch things happening.
- Kristy And she also has an open call. Open, open submission policy for anybody from a marginalized community or, you know, always open to looking at. But mostly she's closed to submissions. So, I did have a, like, a referral because I had one of my really good friends is with Emma. So I did have a referral that, like, maybe kind of helped? I don't know. But anyway, yeah. So I was querying all three different kinds of groups. And it wasn't like, obviously, it worked out well because I got an agent. But it wasn't like some people in Pitch Wars, where it's, like, a feeding frenzy of agents, and they get, like, 50 billion requests immediately, and they're trying to, like, sort through and figure it out. Like I think a few months went by, you guys might have to jog my memory on that.
- Sabrina You were a little slower. I know you were nervous.
- Kristy Yes.
- Sabrina But, you know, it worked out.
- Carrie You don't know how it's gonna go.
- Kristy Yeah, so it was, I got obviously full requests from some people. Definitely still got plenty of rejections. I ended up having three book requests, but actually it was a Tara who requested, or who offered first. It was another agent who offered first, and then at that point I was able to go back to everybody. You know, how you get to do, it's always a fun, like, 'Hey, I have an offer.' So, so then I got to go back to everybody else, and then Tara and a third agent also offered, and so that was a fun. Well, it was an amazing time, obviously. It's the dream for that to happen, but then you have to kind of figure out who's the best fit. So then, you know, phone calls and feeling angsty, honestly. I had a lot of angst trying to choose between agents, but Tara and I obviously have had a great relationship and been successful, so it all worked out.
- Sabrina That's actually something I love asking people about on this, because that is a really hard thing to do. And a lot of the advice, and I still use it, is go with your gut, which is super hard. Do y'all have any tips on things to weigh? Carrie you have such a great list of questions. I'm not gonna make you go through your entire list of questions, but, like, things to weigh when you're considering multiple offers, and like, how you make that decision when they all look so good.
- Carrie Oh my gosh. I wish I had thought to look at that ahead of time because now I can't remember any of them. I, I do think gut was a big one, and, and you know what, we say this a lot when we would talk to people, and when we would give advice through Pitch Wars, is finding... It's not that you are going out and getting an agent. You're, it's a mutual thing. It has to be a mutual thing. So, you have to find out, think about yourself and what you need from an agent. Not just can they sell books, you know. But think about what you need from an agent. Do you need an editorial? Do you need a hand holder, etc? And, looking at where their strengths lie, are they somebody who manages a lot of debuts really well? Or, do they have a lot of already established people who really know the business already? So, that maybe, you know, maybe walking a newbie through it isn't one of their strengths anymore. Maybe they walked all of their debuts through it 10 years ago, and, and that publishing changes fast. So, you need somebody who's up on what's going on now. So, just remembering that it's not just getting an agent that likes your book and wants to sell your book, but that is a good fit for you, too. Like, you get to interview them, as much as they're picking you.

- Kristy Absolutely. Yeah. It's so hard to do that, right? Because it just feels like that power differential is not there. You have to suddenly switch gears to be, like, 'Wait I'm interviewing you now.' Like, this is so weird after years and years of just desperately wanting an agent...
- Sabrina And desperately sending your book out. Yep.
- Kristy I mean, for me, I think one of the things - because it was a really hard decision and everybody had amazing strengths. But for me, when I talked specifically about *Hot British Boyfriend* with them, one of the things I end up coming back to is that the other agent just... I didn't feel like she kind of got the book in the same sort of way, like, the revisions she was asking for. Well, I guess I'll just say this. So, she asked for these revisions, and then I distinctly remember her saying, 'So based on those revisions we might need to change the title, because I don't know if *Hot British Boyfriend's* gonna make as much sense once we make these revisions, because I don't know if it's gonna be as much about that.' And I was like, 'Oh. Well I love you as an agent, but and I think we could work well together, but I think the vision that you have for this book is not the vision that I have for it.' And I just felt like I couldn't move forward with her at that point. And again, it's easy now to say, like, 'Oh, that worked out well.' It did. But I really struggled, and went and forth about it, because there was wonderful other reasons to have gone with her. So yeah, it's a great position to be in, of course. But sometimes, it's.. It is - because suddenly it's all on you, right? Like now you have the choice, but if you make the wrong choice it's like, 'Oh God, it's all on me and I only have myself to blame.' So it can be stressful as well.
- Sabrina That's a really excellent point. And that, I think that's really important when you're - especially if you're getting different feedback from different agents as far as what they want to do. Moving forward, that's probably one of the most important things that you should consider. Because, at the end of the day, it is still your book with your name on it. And like, are you gonna be happy with the finished product? And I think that goes back to what Carrie was saying, too, about the feedback. How do you know which feedback to take? And when do you decide if it's working for you or not? And, that was for readers, but the same thing goes for, with agents. I mean, that can be harder probably especially if you only have one offer but just know what you want to put out there.
- Carrie Right, and it's easier to ask that during the interview process if you're, if you're willing to try some revisions, but you're not sold on it, you need to know, you know, what's gonna happen if you walk away. What is the timeline like for going back out there? Because, honestly, once you - once you make those changes, and put your book out into the world, that's it, you know.
- Kristy Yeah.
- Carrie Your name will be on it, so..
- Sabrina What you just said, I think that's another really good point. Have that conversation if you're iffy about, you know, some feedback that you're getting from an agent before, before you sign. Like, have that conversation with them. Like, ask 'If I tried these and hate it, like, are you still going to want to work with me?' Like, 'Are you gonna be flexible on that?' And because sometimes they aren't, and a lot of times they are, so I would just have that conversation, also. Which can be scary, too, I'm sure.
- Kristy Oh gosh, yeah.
- Sabrina I mean, because we all wanta get our book picked up. But, make sure you're getting your book picked up, and not somebody else's book picked up.
- Kristy Absolutely.
- Carrie Amen.

- Kristy Because, it also kind of dictates what's gonna happen next. Because that debut, it's not like it's your, only your debut, but you've just kind of set the stage for what's coming next. So, if you end up that first book being a book that you - yeah you got it published, that's amazing. But it wasn't really the book you wanted to write, then probably people are gonna ask you to write other books that you don't really want to write. Or, it could also be that like, they're sending it to publishers where, like, the whole idea of who they're submitting to, in terms of editors, is not - you're not on the same page about that either. Because again, they're seeing it in a different way than you. And that was, that was another thing that kind of had come up. I, I did ask all the different agents kind of what they saw in terms of editors, and houses, and where they would send it, and they had really different answers. And I thought it was kind of illuminating to kind of pick up on that. And it wasn't like, I had, like, the answer. Like, this is the correct answer, but I was like, 'Okay, I can see different trajectories.'
- Sabrina Oh, that's super interesting. How are y'all guys doing?
- Kristy Well, I might have to leave in a little bit. I don't know.
- Sabrina I know, we've been on here...it does not feel like we've been on here, but I just looked at my thing, and I'm pretty sure we've been chatting for two hours, at this point.
- Carrie That sounds about right.
- Kristy Which is very fun. But I think my husband, at some point, is gonna be, 'So, you coming back down?' We haven't had dinner, or anything.
- Sabrina No, Kristy lives here now. She's ours, she's ours.
- Kristy I did lock the door, so no one can get in.
- Carrie We're having a little post-traumatic Pitch Wars, where he's like, 'I lost my wife, and can not find her.'
- Kristy No, he's, he is a big fans of you guys. So, he loves you both, because, again, I give so much of the credit back to you guys for all the things you've done to help me. And he's very grateful because I'm a happy wife.
- Sabrina He's been really supportive of you, too. He's been really, he stepped up and been a good author husband.
- Kristy He has been.
- Sabrina I've been impressed by him. All of our babes have really supportive...
- Carrie That's why they write such cute romance.
- Kristy Well, we are high school sweethearts, so...I always say that, because I talk to, well, this is kind of my when I talk to my undergraduates, but sometimes I'll say like, 'Oh I write, like, you know, young adult romance or you know, high school romance.' And they're like 'Oh, I would never, like, want to be with anybody from high school.' Which I get, because sometimes the high school boyfriends or girlfriends, or whoever, did not work.
- Sabrina They kinda suck sometimes. Yeah.

- Kristy But they do. Yeah, it just happened to work out that, that was not the case for me. And so I always kind of say, 'Well that's why I write it, is because I had like actually have the high school sweethearts thing that worked out and we got married. And so I always envision all of my characters that they actually do stay together because I'm like, 'It's not impossible.' I know it's not common but I, actually my best friend is also with her high school sweetheart. They're also very happy and I know a few other people, so I'm like, 'Okay it could happen' And so, anyway, yes, he has been great. He's gotten me all these things back here, and he keeps getting little, like, things in the mail that I can't look at. And he's like 'He he he,' and then he goes and hides things. And he has, like, *Hot Dutch Daydream* stuff that he wants to give me. So, I'm curious to see what it's gonna be.
- Sabrina I am too. I look forward to photos of them.
- Carrie Me, too.
- Kristy He said it's different stuff. He's like, 'It's not the same kind of thing.' So, we'll see, we'll see.
- Sabrina Oh cute, that's so cute. Okay, well, since we are talking about, would you like to tell everybody about *Hot British Boyfriend*?
- Kristy Sure. *Hot British Boyfriend* is about Ellie, who gets publicly rejected by her crush. And so she decides to escape America and go to England on a study abroad program in the hopes that, if she goes over there, she can rebuild her self-esteem and reputation, and also, maybe, get a hot British boyfriend in the mix. Because, of course, life is better with the hot British boyfriend. But then, things don't quite work out, as you might imagine. And, she kind of starts having to lie a little bit, and maybe not be her real self, to be with this British boy. And so, you know, shenanigans ensue, and then she has to kind of figure out if she really wants to be with him or not.
- Sabrina And it's so good. Every draft of this baby has been so good. We love it.
- Kristy [Laughs.]It - it will always be my first child, right? So I do love, I have a soft spot in my heart, always for *Hot British Boyfriend*.
- Sabrina And Carrie and I are characters in the novel.
- Kristy Right. So, I would technically say I think I changed it. At one point in time, I was actually a character, because I gave myself, like, the professor name. I just used my maiden name, my maiden name is Brian, so I was like 'Oh, like it could be a Doctor Brian.' To be honest, I can't remember.
- Sabrina I can not remember either. I just know that me and Carrie are in it.
- Kristy Yes, that's what's important.
- Carrie I love it. It's like, it's like having a cameo in your own movie, right? I love it.
- Kristy In my mind, I'm there teaching us, as one of those professors.
- Sabrina I love it. And then HDD - *Hot Dutch Daydream*. This is a companion novel, everybody, to *Hot British Boyfriend* and I'm going to let Kristy tell you what it's about, because I cannot talk.

- Kristy All right, so *Hot Dutch Daydream*, companion novel. So *Hot British Boyfriend* was about Ellie. Ellie's roommate in *Hot British Boyfriend* was Sage, and they're like polar opposites. So, this book is now, with Sage as the main character, and Sage is very science STEM academic focussed. She's just graduated from high school. She has big plans going pre-med and she really wants to go to this very, like, prestigious research conference in Europe, but she can't afford it. And so, she ends up making this deal with her mentor, her research mentor, that she will help to foot the bill to go to this conference if she can also kind of be an au pair, or like, a nanny, for her child over the summer. So she says 'Absolutely.' So, she goes to Amsterdam, thinking she's gonna spend the whole summer, just nannying and working on research, and then lo and behold when she gets there, the little boy's older brother has decided to surprisingly come back for the summer. So now, she's living with this boy in the same house. He's very flirty and he's also totally forbidden because her mentor has said, 'Under no circumstances can you date this boy.' So of course, what's gonna happen? Because when parents say don't do something usually teenagers want to do it. So it's, you know, it's a slow burn book, but is about Sage kind of coming to see that she can have all of her dreams but it's also okay to have somebody in her life who's gonna be a support to her.
- Sabrina And it also, so then I know this because I got the inside track to the Kristy book.
- Kristy You guys get to read everything early, so you get to go.
- Sabrina I'm still really excited to see the finished products when it comes out. I'll probably audiobook it. Let's be real.
- Kristy I want to audiobook it, actually. I haven't gotten to hear it yet and I'm so excited.
- Sabrina Did you get to do the auditions, or hear any of the...
- Kristy I did. So, I did get to hear, like they gave me three kind of people to audition, and so that I heard. But, like, the actual finished product I haven't gotten to hear. So I already have - actually Mike, my husband, already bought it or preordered it on Audible. Because he wants to listen, he's probably gonna do the audiobook, too. And then my plan for release day is to drive around and listen to the audio book. And I'm gonna go to some bookstores and sign books. So, I'm excited to do that.
- Sabrina Oh, cool.
- Carrie That's cool.
- Sabrina I have a question about audio books actually, because I've heard a lot of people and I've never actually asked this before. I've heard a lot of people say that they get a couple people randomly, typically, it's usually three I feel like. And I'm wondering if those are, like, the top choices, if they have more. Do you know? And if those are the top choices once it gets to this point, and do you have the final say on that, or do you just get to give your opinion with everybody else, as you don't actually have final say? Do you know?
- Kristy So, I'm sure that there was a bigger mix at some point. When I see the three, those are the final three. So it's definitely you're, you're not, so you're ranking them.
- Sabrina Okay.

- Kristy And to be honest, I don't know that there's 100% transparency in all this. So I know they, I know that the person that I chose in both cases is the person who they ended up going with. Now, I don't know if that's because there was a whole committee of people, and they all ended up just happening to be on the same page, or if it really was, 'This is who Kristy wants. and this is who she gets.' I never actually asked them one way or another. I just, you know, kind of gave my two cents about it. But at the same time like it's really splitting hairs. Like, uh, everybody who, all these audiobooks narrators are just unbelievably amazing. Like, the things they can do, the accents, like, I couldn't go wrong, right? So honestly, it's a hard decision, because, like, 'Well, everybody sounds great, and I don't really know, so I guess this person.'
- Sabrina Okay.
- Kristy Which is, you know, not to say anything. I mean, the people who I chose are amazing, but just also to say that, as a group, they're all just very, very talented. So, it would be good no matter what.
- Sabrina That's so cool. How was the audition? Do you just get it, like, a snippet of, like, the first chapter? Or, because there are a lot of books that sometimes have other languages and other accents. Do you get kind of a sample of all the different, or how does that work?
- Kristy So now, I would say to take this with a grain of salt, because I'm almost positive that it's a different group for different publishers, maybe for different houses, maybe even for different books within a house depending on, I don't know, whatever. So, for me, I don't know how it always works. So for me, I actually don't... The auditions are not auditions with *Hot British Boyfriend*, or *Hot Dutch Daydream*. The auditions, are them, yeah. So, what they do is they say 'Here's three names, here is links to books they've already done. Go, listen to those books and decide who you want.' So it's, I think, I'm almost positive that there's other authors there who do get to hear their own book being written, or read, and then they can choose from that. So, I don't get as much flexibility, but I do get to go to a lot of their different books. And it's also interesting that a lot of audiobook narrators do a lot of - wide variety of things - so it's adult sci-fi and adult steamy romance and middle grade. And so, you kind of can kind of pop around. But, the nice thing is, you can hear, like, all the different accents they do, and how do they do the male versus female voices, and all those things. So, in that way, I get a lot of data, if you will, or a lot of, like, snippets, and then I kind of try to choose from there. And I do, also, ask some other people. I always ask my father because he's a huge audiobook person. He has strong opinions about audiobook narrators. So I always kind of want to get his feedback, as well, but...
- Sabrina That's cute.
- Kristy It is. It's a different way of doing it than sometimes. Did you ask another part of the question that I forgot?
- Sabrina Who knows? [Both laugh.]
- Kristy Oh, I think you were asking about accents, so...
- Sabrina Oh yeah.
- Kristy Because what I was gonna say was it's kind of like, at least again, my experience with it, is that it is interesting, and a little like eye-opening to listen to the audiobook for the first time, because I haven't heard it until it goes out to the public. Like, for instance, I remember with *Hot British Boyfriend*, the narrator, like one particular character, she gave him an Irish accent. And in my mind that person did not have an Irish accent. I didn't mind. I was like, 'Oh, this is interesting,' but it's, like,

it kind of has, like, the separation. It's like, I've written this book, and now the book is kind of gone to a level that I don't get to control. There's now other artists involved. It's kind of like writing a picture book, and then the illustrator comes in and kind of brings their own art to it. That's how it feels like with audiobooks, where it's like the audiobook narrator comes, and they do things, or they give an intonation, or they say something in a way that it wasn't quite the same as what I had in my head. But sometimes it's way better. And I was like, this sounds egotistical, but at some point I was laughing at the book, and I was like, 'Oh but it's because she did such a good job with it' that I was like, 'Oh this is so cool how you did this.' So, I'm excited to have that happen for *Hot Dutch Daydream*, but having said that no, I did not get to hear any like Dutch accents or anything.

Sabrina Okay.

Kristy So yeah.

Sabrina Okay. I've seen some websites of, like, voiceover actors and stuff, and then they'll sometimes have, like, a list of, like, 'These are the accents that I can do.' But I've seen before, I don't know why I ended up with, I think I just went down the rabbit hole, because I was like looking up narrators and stuff where I got really into the roles like, 'Well, this is really cool,' Like sometimes too, if I really like a narrator, I'll go see what else they've narrated. And, I find new authors that way, as well.

Kristy Oh, interesting. I will say that some people ask me 'Oh, are you gonna get the same narrator for *Hot British Boyfriend*?'

And my answer to that, which is just my, again, my own personal opinion, was a kind of adamant 'No.' And the fact that, for me, they're two separate characters, and when I had the same literal voice doing both of them because they're first person. It would be different if it was a third person book, but they're both first person, present tense. And so, to me to have the same person doing both Ellie and Sage I was like 'I can't do it.' And so, and Harper Teen was totally on board with that. So, I can see as a reader, that would be nice. But just, from the author perspective, I wanted to have two separate people.

Sabrina And you did, you got two separate people?

Kristy I did get two separate people, yeah.

Sabrina I just finished *Lola at Last* by Jenny. I just finished the audiobook. And, it was really good, and I really like the narrator, and I have not done the *Being Mary Bennett* audio in a long time, in like a year, pretty much.

Kristy Yeah.

Sabrina But I want to say it was all so different, and I thought that was interesting. Yeah. Okay.

Kristy And it just makes sense, particularly for Jenny's books, because it's two sisters, right?

Sabrina Yeah.

Kristy So, you wouldn't want to have the same person. I mean they might sound similar but no, you want two different people, in my opinion, so.

Sabrina You know, I don't think that they sound similar, and I'm saying that with a year apart. But, I do remember when I got onto the Lola one and started it, like, I remember being, like, 'This is a different narrator,' and I don't think I would have been able to do that if they were really similar, so...

Carrie Right. Sure.

Sabrina ...it's probably the same person. I probably got that wrong. [Laughs.]

- Kristy So, with you to Jenny's, like, as a testament to Jenny, those voices are so different, right? Between those two books, the characters could not be more different, so it makes total sense that you like immediately, like, 'Oh, this is a totally different situation.'
- Sabrina So, all I meant, are your books, they're so good.
- Kristy Let's see. Little babies together was fun because, oh, Jenny and I got to do an event together. We had our whole little books together, and it was just kind of fun.
- Sabrina Remind me where that was. Was that in Ohio?
- Kristy It was, yeah. So she had done an event in Michigan I believe, cuz I think her family was originally, or is, from Michigan. And then, she, I think it was her husband, had some connections in Columbus, Ohio. She knew I lived here so she reached out, and luckily we found a library that was willing to do things. And to kind of, kind of go back to some stuff we were talking about before. We got to meet, they call them the Volunteens. It's like the teenagers who are the volunteers of the library. So, we did, like, a pizza party with them ahead of time. And they were, oh my God, they were so cute. They were so into it. They had so many questions. But also they were all so young. Like, when I envision my readers, I'm thinking, I don't know, high school students, and they were more like, maybe freshmen but maybe also some Junior High. And so I was like, 'Oh, these are some of my readers and they're just they seem so, like sweet little babies. And so, like, kind of, like, 'Oh my gosh, the readership is wider than sometimes I imagine.' But anyway, it was a great event with Jenny, and so fun to get to hang out with her.
- Sabrina That is so fun.
- Carrie Both of your books and both of Jenny's books are the same cover artist, too, correct? Did Jackie do her second?
- Kristy Jackie did not get to do her second. I think Jackie was already, had a prior commitment, so she did get a second, a different person. So if you look at Jenny's.
- Carrie Oh, okay, yeah, but okay.
- Kristy Three out of the four are all the same person, Jackie.
And Jacqueline. So, my *Hot British Boyfriend*, that's the very first book Jacqueline ever did.
- Sabrina Oh.
- Kristy Yeah. So, I'm like the kind of the first for a lot of things.
- Sabrina You really were. You were our first Pitch Wars. You're Tara's first sale, too, aren't you?
- Kristy I was Tara's first sale, yeah. And then I was Jacqueline's first cover ever. So, I think, just on multiple levels, really meaningful for, like, all of us. I don't know. It was just because everybody had, like, a hand in it. And I mean, I'm sure for Jacqueline, like, you know, it's just the same as you or I getting to see our book on the shelf. That's how she thought she was, like, 'This is my art on the books for the first time,' a dream of hers. And so, she's been amazing to work with, and she's so incredibly talented. I love, love, love my two covers, and the way that she was able. Well, she and the art directors, and everybody at HarperCollins, the way they were able to, like, have the books be distinctive, but also, like, look so pretty together. Like, the colors workout, and yeah. So, I can't say enough about all that. And then, Jenny's books as well.
- Sabrina You had her design your swag, too, right? Your, your bookmarks, and all that?

- Kristy I did. And, I also had her make, because this was during the pandemic, and I just, I was trying to find, like, places to, I don't know, to have a bit of joy, because I didn't get to do some of the things I was originally gonna do. So I was like, 'You know what, I'm gonna commission her to make portraits for my three main characters in, or, like, little love triangle in *Hot British Boyfriend*. And then, because I did that, and they're so beautiful, they're hanging up on my wall, I was like, 'Well, I've gotta do that for *Hot Danish Daydream*.' So now I have portraits for that. And so I have, and I made stickers as swag. And then, she also did the bookmarks, which looks so, well, they are professionally done, and they just look so great. And I take zero credit because she did all of it, but I'm just so grateful to have these beautiful bookmarks and things, too. So she's - I was very, very lucky to get to be partnered with her.
- Sabrina Those portraits are so good. I'm actually literally looking at this *Hot British Boyfriend* behind you and I always forget that they're not just stills of the cover. Like, you - they're actually different, completely separate from the cover.
- Kristy Right.
- Sabrina Character works of each of them and they are, they're really good. They're so good.
- Kristy She did such a great job with it. And it's so fun, because, I mean, I think we'd said something earlier about how sometimes it's hard to visualize characters fully. And, I'm just somebody who, I have a set like, okay, they have brown hair. Although, I will say that... Sabrina, are you laughing because you already know what I'm gonna say? [Both laugh.] So, I'm just thinking back to Pitch Wars, and what did you ask me for? Like, you wanted to make an aesthetic? And you're like, what does Ellie look like? And I was like, 'Hell if I know. Does she have brown hair? Blonde hair? Who knows? You get to choose,' Like, I just didn't, I had no visuals.
- Sabrina I do remember that.
- Kristy You were trying to pull pictures, and I was not very helpful. So, I try to give some some feedback. By the time *Hot Dutch Daydream* came around, I did have an aesthetic. And, I had a little bit more of an idea, so hopefully that helped Jacqueline a little bit. But, but yeah again. She can do it in a way that I never can so that I can. I look at it. and I'm like 'Oh, that's Ellie. Oh, that's Dev.' But I didn't see it until she drew it.
- Sabrina So, the Dev one, especially, because he's, like, he's not even on the cover of the book.
- Kristy I know! And I was like, I did see a few complaints where people were like, 'Where is Dev? We need Dev on this cover,' and I'm like, 'Yeah I see it. It is cute with the two people.' And, I get it, it's *Hot British Boyfriend*, so it makes sense. So yeah, put the British boyfriend on the cover. But yeah, I was glad to have a portrait of Dev because otherwise he doesn't get any love, so.
- Sabrina You also have *Dungeons and Drama* coming out very soon. Would you like to tell everybody about it?
- Kristy Sure. All right, so *Dungeons and Drama*, another YA romance, is coming out with Random House in 2024. I don't know the exact date yet, so this is my fun fake dating book. I've always wanted to write a fake dating book. So, it is about a girl named Riley. She gets in trouble with her parents and she has to go work at her dad's gaming shop, and she actually is not a gamer, knows nothing about it, but she gets kind of pulled into playing a D&D game. And when, as that happens, she also makes up the scheme with one of the other boys at the game shop, and they decide to start fake dating to make sure that her ex knows that she's totally over him, and maybe to get the attention of another girl, who's a gamer at the shop. But, you know how fake dating books go. So, as they start to fake date, they might realize that they have some feelings for each other that they're not going to admit, but learn a little bit more about that through the dating game.
- Sabrina It's so cute! And remind me, you, have you done the cover reveal online?

- Kristy I have not.
- Sabrina Okay...
- Kristy So, it's not out yet.
- Sabrina ...because I was gonna be like, 'And the cover is so cute,' but I was, like, 'Wait, have I just seen that or has it actually been shown?'
- Kristy Yeah. So it's, I don't know. It's been kind of crickets. Like, I think they had, they did the whole cover thing, and now they have all their schedules. So, at some point, the next season will come out, and they'll do the covers. I still have to do Pass pages for that book, too, so, it feels like it's done, but it's actually not done. So yeah, it's... I'm in such like, *Hot Dutch Daydream* mode that I haven't thought much about that book, so.
- Sabrina That's fair. Okay. Where are we? Y'all need to go. What are you reading?
- Kristy So, I have two book recs, that I'm gonna be a little bit mean, because they're not out yet. So, they'll be coming out soon. But if you're looking for another travel romance, there's a book by Becky Dean. She's with Random House, and the book is called *Picture Perfect Boyfriend*, and it is a travel romance. It's a fake dating romance that I blurbed, and she does - So, it's set in Hawaii, and she does the best, like, descriptions. I literally felt like I was in Hawaii. I was like, 'Well, I don't have to go there anymore because I've already been to Hawaii now, just from reading that book.' So I, yeah, it was really fun and again, wonderful if you're trying to do some - a little traveling through books. And then, the other book that I read recently that I really loved - this one's coming out with HarperCollins - Harper Teen - is called *Bellegarde*, if I'm saying that correctly. Jenny Lilac is the author, she's a debut. It is such a fun book. It is unique. It's - I have to describe it, to kind of make sense of it. So, it's like *My Fair Lady*. So can the premise of *My* - there's been so many retellings of *My Fair Lady*, and even, whatever. But you know, basically the idea of the girl who is, you know, maybe not the most beautiful and most popular girl. And then, the rich guy makes the bet, 'I bet I can make her into the new popular girl,' right? So, it's that premise, except it's set in Marie Antoinette's time frame of France, except that the voice is modern. So, it's, like, imagine a voice that you or I would write, but it's France, but it's also these tropes, and it's, like, it is so cool. I don't know. I just, I started reading and I was just like, 'I can't stop reading this now. I just have to keep going.' because it was just such a weird juxtaposition I - maybe I should say weird - that sounds bad. It was just unusual and cool. And so, like nothing I had read, and so I just really loved it. It has all the, like, kind of big ball gowns, and the, you know, the sweeping romance, but it also has this really fun, modern voice. So, anyway, two very different kinds of books, but if you like, kind of, YA romancy types of things, those could be good ones.
- Sabrina And they're both YA?
- Kristy They're both YA.
- Carrie That makes me think of, yeah, that makes me think of 'A Knight's Tale' where It's like...
- Sabrina Yes!
- Carrie ...very relatable and fun, but, like, historical setting.
- Kristy That is a great, yes, that is a great, like, connection back to - if anybody's seen 'A Knight's Tale'. I love 'A Knight's Tale,' so, maybe that's why I like this book so much, too. So I'm - very, very cool.
- Sabrina Those both sound really good. Okay, cool. You said they're not out yet? Neither of them are out yet?
- Kristy No. And I don't, um...

Sabrina That's okay.

Kristy They're both coming out this summer. So, I would say sooner than later, they'll both be out.

Sabrina Okay.

Kristy Maybe sometime between May and July. I'm sorry, I didn't write the dates down.

Sabrina That's okay, I do the same thing. I, honestly, that was just for me. So, I want to know when to look out for them.

Kristy Right.

Sabrina Okay, cool. What about you Carrie? What are you reading?

Carrie I'm reading Christine Sinclair's *Memoir* right now, which if you don't know who she is, she is one of the best soccer players in the world. The leading scorer of international goals, men or women, in the world. She's a Canadian. It's really cool. Great voice in her *Memoir*. But I, right before that, I finally finished. Finally read, finally finished, *Margot Mertz For The Win*. And you know how I feel about Margot Mertz.

Sabrina Yes!

Carrie And, the second book, I still feel for Margot Mertz. I love her, I love her, I love her. I need them to write, like, I don't know, 12 more Margot Mertz books.

Sabrina 12 more. I know, I'm with you on that. Please, please. Hi Carrie! We love you!

Carrie Yes, they are amazing. They are just so delightful. So, um, I have, sitting on my TBR for next, the *Next New Syrian Girl*. Which I am gonna try to say her name, and I'm not great with names if I haven't heard them before, and I have not heard her name before. For so Ream Shukairy (S h u k a i r y) So, that's sitting on my nightstand, and I'm really looking forward to, Oksana Masters just came out with a memoir, in February. So, that is also gonna be my like next, next up. And she is just this incredible... Like, I love good sports memoirs. And we're finally, I feel like, we're finally getting - I don't, I don't read the, the, you know, football, white boy, memoirs. Sorry dudes. Nobody's surprised by this.

Sabrina No one.

Carrie So, we're getting, like, all these amazing women, and all these voices we haven't gotten here before. I'm really looking forward to her's, so.. If you know anything about me, that's what I read. I read YA, and I read under-represented sports memoirs.

Sabrina I love it.

Carrie Yay.

Sabrina Okay, I wasn't actually gonna jump in with this, but Carrie just got off memoirs, and also HBB. So I, it has been on my holds list, like, in my holds for, I don't know, like two months now. I had one thousand people in front of me. Do you know what I'm reading right now?

Kristy I think I know.

Carrie I can guess.

Sabrina And I'm almost done with it. Have y'all done it yet? Have y'all done *Spare* yet?

Kristy I haven't read it, no.

Sabrina Okay, I got it. I'm there. I'm on it. I'm doing it.

Carrie Is it interesting?

Sabrina It is. First of all, I -probably this should not be my first of all, but it's narrated by Harry. He's such a good narrator. My - I was like, 'Can you hire him to do ?? narrations?' He's a really good narrator.

Kristy And he could do the British accents.

Sabrina He's got it. I don't know. Yeah, I don't know if he's good with any other accents. I don't know how much casual voice training he has. Probably he's not for hire. But yeah, no, it is. It's really interesting. Yeah, it's... I don't usually do memoirs, but I've definitely...

Kristy I don't usually do much either.

Sabrina ...been sucked in. What's really interesting is to, like, hear how things went down from his point of view, versus, like, what I, as an awful person who looks at...

Kristy I do that, too. I'm also guilty.

Sabrina I'm really sorry. Anyway, do you want to tell everybody where we can find you Kristy?

Kristy Yes, you can find me on Twitter and on Instagram, similar hashtag or similar name for both. So Kristy L Boyce. L for Lynn, and then, I think it's all lower case for Instagram, kristylboyce. And for Twitter, I think it's the first and last name are capitalized, but... And then, my website is kristyboyceauthor.com.

Sabrina And Carrie, do you want to remind everyone where we can find you?

Carrie I am still, I know I said during our Jenny episode I'm kind of hiatusing on Twitter, and that has been a good move for me. So, I'm not on there very much. I just go on to, like, stalk sports, basically. And so, the best place to find me... And, I'm not on Instagram, like, don't don't look for me there. It's too much, too much, like Tech whatever. But I do have a website, which is carrieallenauthor, and there's a spot on there if you want to contact me, if you need to contact me, or anything like that, so...

Sabrina Yay! Oh my gosh! I had so much fun doing this with y'all.

Kristy Yay! We haven't gotten to have a conversation, like a chat like this, maybe ever. So, this is pretty cool.

Carrie Yeah.

Sabrina Okay friends, that's it for Episode 17. As always, you can find this Episode's Content List and all the Kristy and Carrie links in the Show Notes page of my website, linked below. Thanks so much for joining us! Okay Ginny, say goodbye!

Ginny [Ginny barks.]