

Date: 6/30/23

Name of Podcast: Read. Return. Repeat. A ReadICT Podcast.

Episode Title and Number: Yaaaas (Siren) Queen (Season 3, Episode 5)

Episode Summary: In this episode, co-hosts Sara Dixon and Daniel Pewewardy celebrate Pride Month by doing a deep dive into category 8: a book featuring a LGBTQIA+ protagonist. Joining them on the podcast is author Nghi Vo, who has authored multiple books featuring queer characters. She discusses her most recent novel, *Siren Queen*, which tells the story of a Chinese American actress in an alternate Hollywood during its Golden Age, featuring monsters both real and imagined. In this novel, she explores themes of mythology, power dynamics, colorism in Hollywood and the importance of support networks in marginalized communities, and how this impacts us today just as much as it did during the time period in which the novel was set.

Guest Bio:



(Image credit: CJ Foekler ©2021)

Nghi Vo is the author of the novels *Siren Queen* and *The Chosen and the Beautiful*, as well as the acclaimed novellas *Into the Riverlands*, *When the Tiger Came Down the Mountain*, and *The Empress of Salt and Fortune*, a Locus and Ignyte Award finalist, and the winner of the Crawford Award and the Hugo Award. Born in Illinois, she now lives on the shores of Lake Michigan. She believes in the ritual of lipstick, the power of stories, and the right to change your mind.

(Source: Macmillan Publishers)

Topic Index:

Nghi talks about *Siren Queen* 1:48

The appeal of the Golden Age of Hollywood and inspiration for the book 2:50

Character inspirations 4:58

Luli and likeability 11:50

Luli's (non-romantic) relationships 14:44

The theme of monsters in the book 17:55

Mythology in *Siren Queen* 25:54

Support networks in the novel and in real life 28:59

Themes of homophobia, sexism and racism in the book 31:15

The importance of queer characters in historical fiction 35:23

Advice to writers of marginalized communities 38:10

Upcoming projects 40:25

Books recommended in this episode:

Nothing but Blackened Teeth by Cassandra Khaw

White Trash Warlock by David R. Slayton

Like a Love Story by Abdi Nazemian

Lie with Me by Philippe Besson (translated by Molly Ringwald)

The Extraordinaries by T.J. Klune

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid

The Guncle by Steven Rowley

My Policeman by Bethan Roberts

The Lesbian's Guide to Catholic School by Sonora Reyes

Catch by Kris Bryant

Survivor's Guilt by Robyn Gigg

All of Us Villains by Amanda Foody and C.L. Herman

Pageboy: A Memoir, by Elliot Page

Special Thanks to our reading community on Facebook and callers to our book review hotline for sharing their recommendations!

Resources & Links:

About Nghi Vo

[Nghi Vo's website](#)

Instagram: [@Nghivowriting](#)

Twitter: [@Nghivowriting](#)

Books by Nghi Vo

[Novels](#)

Siren Queen (2022)

The Chosen and the Beautiful (2021)

[Novellas](#)

Mammoths at the Gates (coming September 2023)

Into the Riverlands (2022)

When the Tiger Came Down the Mountain (2020)

The Empress of Salt and Fortune (2020)

[Short Stories](#)

What the Dead Know (Amazon Originals, 2022)

Five Stories on a Monsoon Night (Fireside Magazine, 2019)

Boiled Bones and Black Eggs (Beneath Ceaseless Skies, 2019)

Twelve Pictures from a Second World War (Strange Horizons, 2017)

Ghost Years (Podcastle, 2016)

Dragon Brides (Lightspeed, 2016)

Lotus Face and the Fox (Uncanny Magazine, 2016)

In Chains Lighter than Air (*Airships & Automotons*, 2015)

A Memory of White Flowers (The Future Embodied, 2014)

Neither Witch nor Fairy (Long Hidden, 2014)

Pompilid (Journal of Unlike Entomology, 2013)

Ghosts of Emerhad (Icarus Press, 2013 and *Wilde Stories 2014: The Year's Best Gay Speculative Fiction*, 2014)

Dinner at Majak's (Innsmouth Magazine, 2012)

Dreams of Steel and Iron: Automaton Liberation in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century by Sirin JRK-298 (Eggplant Productions, 2012)

In Shadows Cast by Moonlight (Crossed Genres, 2012)

River Bride (Expanded Horizons, 2012)

Tiger Stripes (Strange Horizons, 2012)

Which is Sebastian? (Penumbra Magazine, 2012)

Gift of Flight (Strange Horizons, 2007)

Irezumi (Trumpeter, 2006)

Foxes and Gifts (Trumpeter, 2005)

Lucifer Looked Up (Alien Skin, 2005)

Other Resources

[Marlene Dietrich](#)

[Collider.com: "What is the Sewing Circle? When Queer Women Ruled Hollywood."](#)

Book: *The Sewing Circle: Hollywood's Greatest Secret: Female Stars Who Loved Other Women* by Axel Madsen (1994)

[Far Out Magazine: Marlene Dietrich: The Iconic Bisexual Leader of the Liberating Hollywood 'Sewing Club.'"](#)

[Anna May Wong](#)

[Maylia Fong](#)

[Ramon Novarro](#)

[GoldenGlobes.com: "Forgotten Hollywood: Ramon Novarro, A Bona Fide Silent Movie Idol."](#)

[Rita Hayworth](#)

[Smithsonian Magazine: "How Margarita Cansino Became Rita Hayworth."](#)

[AmoMama.com: "Rita Hayworth was Forced Drastic Makeovers to Change Her Appearance to Satisfy Hollywood: Inside her Transformation."](#)

[FolkloreThursday.com: Skogsrå and Huldra: The Femme Fatale of the Scandinavian Forests](#)

[Greta Garbo](#)

[Vanguard of Hollywood: She Wants to be Alone: The Mysterious Greta Garbo](#)

[Mythologysource.com: The Wild Hunt](#)

[A Little Bit Human: "Tam Lin is a Progressive Scottish Ballad That's Still Very Much of Its Time."](#)

[The Legacy Project – Chicago](#)

[Association of Paranormal Study: "Mediums, Spirits and Ectoplasm...Oh My!"](#)

[Simmons College – Library and Information Science: A Guide to the American Spiritualist Movement](#)

Full Transcript: https://wichitalibrary.org/BooksMore/podcast/Pages/rrr_s3e5.aspx

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Wichita, ReadICT category name, title and author of book and a few words of why you are recommending the book.