

Episode 2.5 FUN!

February 16, 2018

Hannah (host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Thanks so much for the fantastic feedback I've been hearing about Baharak's episode last week. It seems like the idea of bringing your whole self to work really resonated with a lot of folks, which is always heartening to hear. I'm so excited about next week's episode. I know I say that about all the episodes, but honestly have steered you wrong yet? But for now, why don't I tell you what my secret feminist agenda is this week. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

I want to talk about fun. Now. I want to tread carefully with this topic because the fun thing that I'm gonna to talk to you about is one that is, by its very definition not available to everyone, and so I want to be really careful to sort of not universalize something that isn't universal, but I just had the most fun two days in a really long time and it was a little bit revelatory. So let me give you some context, as most of you know, because this is how most of you heard about this podcast in the first place, I make another podcast with my very dear friend Marcelle called, *Witch, Please. Witch, Please*, for those of you who don't know, is a feminist Harry Potter podcast that we started three years ago this month. It started off as a Harry Potter reread podcast and then it really ballooned into something much larger and remarkably rewarding for both of us. But as Marcelle and I have gotten busier and our lives have gotten more complex, I moved to Vancouver and started a tenure-track job.

She moved into the dissertation writing phase of her PhD and also acquired herself a baby who is now a toddler. *Witch, Please* has become really hard for the two of us to maintain. We love it so much, but it's also work. And it's work that, while we value it, often doesn't fit into the other kinds of work that we're doing as academics. You know, Marcelle's got to finish her dissertation and I've got this podcast and about 400 other projects. Oh God. Ugh! Mmm. Anyway. And it can get tricky and we've considered just ending it, and then we didn't want to end it because we love it. And all of this is to say that recently a number of just incredibly generous and wonderful listeners donated money to send Marcelle and I to Orlando to visit The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. And of course I felt so grateful and so honored and so excited to get to see Marcelle, but to be honest, I wasn't looking forward to this trip that much. Not because I didn't want to do it, but because I've been so goddamn tired and mostly just getting through things. Mostly just sort of white-knuckling my way through the good things and the bad things. The part of my job in my life that I like and the parts that I hate it, they all just, I, I, I got so busy and so stressed that they stopped really differentiating themselves in my life. And I would say things to people like, "oh my God. I have a, have a month of travel coming up and I'm going to, I'm going to Paris and I'm going to Dublin. Oh, can you believe it?" And people would look at me and be like, "no, that's, that's great. Like you get to

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

travel to Europe to do your job, you get to go and visit with your friends, you get to see amazing things.

Why are you talking about it Like it's a hardship?" And frankly I think it's because for me, when I get really, really stressed and really, really overwhelmed, it can be kinda hard to remember how to have fun. And visiting Orlando with Marcelle and with Elliot and with Elliot's Nana and with a handful of dear friends was fun. Like simple fun, straightforward fun. We're on vacation doing something really special and hanging out with friends kind of fun. I think there was something in particular about the theme park that kind of unlocked that in both Marcelle and my brain's and I don't want to tread too far down that path here because we're going to do, you know, one to 14 episodes about The Wizarding World and our experiences of it. But we had this conversation at the end of our second day about how much we have both been struggling just with, you know, with adult life, with adult life and all the things that entailed.

And how overwhelming it can seem alongside of the really, really dire and depressing political climate, you know, both American politics and the kinds of, the kinds of really shitty things happening in the world of Canadian literature as well, which, which we kind of both have to directly think about a lot of the time. And all of this, you know, it just, it can just weigh on you until it feels like the best thing you can do is these kinds of maintenance-level forms of self care. That's actually a term from my friend Erin Wunker who has, who has talked about, you know, the difference between self care practices that are just maintenance. Like, I need to do this so that I don't walk into the ocean. Those aren't her words. That's, those are always my words that the tempting briny deep. But that maintenance sometimes is like, "this is all I can manage." I can manage maintenance and I can manage my life. And that's it. And honestly, if that's what you can manage, I mean, bless you, you're doing an amazing job. If, if you are maintaining yourself, that is incredible. That can be really, really hard and you are doing amazing. And you know what, even if you're not maintaining yourself, like even if, even if you're self care isn't at a place where you're doing all right, that is also absolutely okay. As a delightful screen printed patch I have says, "it's okay not to be okay." But goddamn, fun was fun. Like it was, it was really fun is the thing, and as I was coming back to Vancouver, I was thinking to myself, "well, if the only form of fun that I can find is a trip trip to Orlando, Florida, that's not sustainable. And it's also not recommendable." Like, "Hi dear listeners, I've got a suggestion for you. Fly to Florida." And then I thought, "Wait, but I had, I had a comparable kind of fun quite recently, actually, for a much shorter period of time, but in a way that felt really, really similar. And that was a few weeks ago, actually, the afternoon right before I recorded the episode with Baharak, I went on a hike with my friend Sophie and we sought out a bog, Burns Bog. We thought it looked like an interesting hike. And upon arriving we realized that the bog was flooded. You know, I was gonna say it should have occurred to us, but like, I don't know, neither of us are from Vancouver. We don't know how anything works. It was flooded. It was very, very, very wet, and we decided to just do it anyway, to just go ahead and walk through this super flooded bog. And when I say flooded, I mean at times we were thigh deep in very cold water, but

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

we had decided to do it anyway and somehow rather than it being sort of bleak and humorless death march through thigh deep icy cold water, it was hilarious to us. Cuz the hardest I've laughed in a really long time, as we contemplated the degree to which our feet had entirely lost all feeling. And that was that particular excursion was free of charge. All it cost us was that afternoon. That's also not accessible to everyone. I mean, there is no one thing that's accessible to anyone, and so I don't want to say my secret feminist agenda is go for hikes in thigh deep water or go with one of your best friends to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Those, those are the fun things that I've done. Those are the fun things that gave me kind of an "Aha!" moment of "Oh, this is the difference between just getting through and have a really good time." And there is a difference, and I personally need to figure out how to have more fun and do less just making it through so that I can remember that difference and I can remember what fun feels like, and I can seek more of it out, cuz it makes me a lot happier. And to be honest, I think it makes me a more enjoyable person to be around. I also have a suspicion that the more fun you have, the more fun you're capable of having and that as I keep prioritizing fun in my life, I might find that more things that I was kind of white-knuckling my way through are all of a sudden going to be fun. things that I can really, really enjoy. And gosh, I really liked the idea of finding the fun in my own life again. That sounds pretty great to me. So I'd love to hear from you. I'm not as active on Twitter these days, but you can if you follow me on Twitter, you can get in touch there, or just in the comments on this episode and tell me some of the things you've done lately that have been fun. They can be big things or little things, but I think it would be nice to just talk about fun for a little while. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Speaking of fun things, let's go talk to Kaarina. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Kaarina:

Hello and welcome to Kaarina's Cozy Self Care Corner. Today I'm thinking about kindness and tenderness and care. And I'm thinking about them in terms of the media we consume. So I watch a ton of TV. Sometimes I feel bad about that. Not Today. I watch a ton of TV. It's one of the ways that I interact with the world. And I often give people TV recommendations and I've been told that I give really good TV recommendations. And people will come to me to ask me, "Okay, I finished that. What am I, what should I watch now? I always trust your recommendations." And one of my baseline criteria for TV shows that I watch and recommend is that the characters in the show love each other and that they treat each other with kindness. And this will serve you so well because the world is so, so cool of dark, horrible behavior and sometimes we need to seek out content and worlds and stories where that is not the expectation and that is not the standard. And sure I've missed out on some pretty major television shows because I know that they do not set the expectation and standard of kindness and care, but that's okay. And today I started watching the reboot of *Queer Eye* that just came out on Netflix. And let me tell you, I never in my wildest dreams imagined that there could be such a tender, loving, caring show in the world. It feels like the *Steven Universe* of reality TV, and it is just so lovely. And just to see men, men of different sexualities, but men who I see around me struggling so much to accept help and to express love and to be open and to listen and to acknowledge kindness and care and connection when it happens to

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

them and when it is offered to them, to see men having these kinds of conversations and getting these kinds of results and expressing their appreciation of each other on this level, it is so healing. I just, I just feel so full of love and full of hope when I watch this show. So Self Care Corner recommendation for the week, if you have access to it, watch an episode of *Queer Eye*. Tell me who your favorite of the Fab Five is. And remember that it's a trick question because every single one of them is perfect in every way. And yeah, let yourself consume tender content. You deserve to receive love and to receive care and you deserve to see care and love and kindness in the world around you. So have a good weekend. See you on Netflix. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Hannah (host): Guess what, you can always find show notes and the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* and the sound of my madly skittering cat on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor. You can follow Kaarina @Kaarinasaurus, and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. And you can rate and review the show. You can do that every day. The world is your rating and reviewing oyster. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album *Chub Rub*. You can download the entire album on [free music archive.org](http://free.music.archive.org), or follow them on Facebook. Kaarina's theme song is "I Will" by Mitski. That's it for now. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]