

Layla Saad:

I'm Layla Saad and my life is driven by one burning question. How can I become a good ancestor? How can I create a legacy of healing and liberation? For those who are here in this lifetime? And those who will come after I'm gone? In my pursuit to answer this question, I'm interviewing changemakers and culture shapers, who are also exploring that question for themselves in the way that they live and lead their life. It's my intention that these conversations will help you find your own answers to that question too. Welcome to Good Ancestor Podcast. Welcome, good ancestors. Today I'm speaking with the American novelist of one of my favorite fiction books of 2020. Kylie Reid. Kylie is a graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop, where she was the recipient of the Truman Capote fellowship. She's the author of The New York Times bestseller, *Such A Fun Age*, which explores the relationship between a young black babysitter and her well intentioned white employer. If you're anything like me, you'll find yourself laughing, cringing, crying, and cheering when reading her book, as it explores racism in the awkward and uncomfortable ways it shows up in everyday life. *Such A Fun Age* is currently in development by Lena Waithe Hillman Grad Productions and Sight Unseen Pictures. The novel was long listed for the 2020 Booker Prize, the finalist for the New York Public Library's 2020 Young Lions fiction award, the VCU Cabell first novelist award, the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding literary work by a debut author, and the Mark Twain American voice in literature award. Kylie's writing has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Playboy, December, Lumina, where her short story was the winner in the 2017, flash pros context, and pluff shares where her short story was the winner of the 2020 Ashley Leybourne Prize for fiction. Hello, everybody, and welcome to Good Ancestor Podcast. I'm your host, Laya Saad and today I am here with the author of and I know I always say this every time I interview an author, but truly is one of my favorite books. *Such A Fun Age* by Kylie Reid, I have Kylie Reid in the house. Hi, Kylie.

Kylie Reid

I'm so happy to be here. Thank you for having me.

Layla Saad

I'm so happy you're here. I was preparing for our conversation today earlier. And I was like, Wow, it's really, you know, you set the intention. I was reading your book earlier this year. And I was like, I have to interview her. Like I have to dig in. I have to know. So, it's such a delight to have you here on the show with us. And it's been a big year for you. So how are you now? Where are you at the moment?

Kylie Reid

I am in Philadelphia. And as you can probably see, I mean, there's two good zoom places in my house. This is the second best only because the best has this glaring sunlight because it's noon right now. So, I can't use that one.

Layla Saad

Uh huh.

Kylie Reid

I'm just here at home. I'm working. I feel like you know, we were just talking about our schedules earlier this year, you, and I both go in January for a book tour. I think we did. I did 19 cities in January, and I went to London. And then as soon as the pandemic hit, it was just very much grounded. Again. And so, I feel that with the circumstance, the fact that I got had to, you know, got to connect with readers at all, yes, such a pledge, because so many authors are doing their entire tour virtually. And so, I've had a little bit of both, but you know, the fact that I stay at home and try and stay safe. I'm good.

Layla Saad

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I'm right there with you. I remember coming back from my, so I did the US, and I did the UK came home. Within a week,

we're in lockdown. And I remember being so grateful that I had the chance to meet readers in person beforehand. And my heart really went out to the authors who I know, you know, their books were coming out right at the beginning of COVID. And the world hadn't yet adapted to being online. Now we're pretty adapted. But even for a super connected world, you know, especially the publishing world didn't quite know how to move, but we got it. But you know, the podcast has been running all this time and having these conversations and so I'm really excited to keep the conversation going with you here. Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. Yeah, so our very first question that I ask each guest, who are some of the ancestors living or transitioned familial or societal? Who have influenced you on your journey?

Kylie Reid

Oh, man, I thought about this a lot. Too much to say. But it's all a little bit jumbled. So, bear with me. I think that when I think to who I want to look to who's come before me, and who inspires me on a number of levels of people who really stand out, tend to do three things. And that's one they, they have a version of the leftist politics that I seek to have of keeping humans and working class people first. Second, they're amazing writers, and just blow me away with their prose. And third, they have a presence that you cannot look away from that it's almost just a chemical thing happening, that they are meant to be speaking on these things. And the three people that I really thought to about This was Fred Hampton, James Baldwin, and Martin Luther King, James Baldwin in particular, you know, when I'm writing, sometimes I need a little bit of a break. And I always go on YouTube and look up speeches from people. And he's one that I that I always come back to his presence is out of control.

Layla Saad

right?

Kylie Reid

He's just controlled, but blasé' yet genius, yet, not polemic. There's so many things he's achieving. And his writing is amazing. And something I think that his writing does. His writing is not, you know, a preachy, no, just telling the truth. And yet, he is very outspoken in his politics. And I really like that categorization. I try to have it in my own life. So, I would say that those are three people that I really look to

Layla Saad

Oh, I love that. Yeah,

Kylie Reid

How can I try? He's done that better.

Layla Saad

Well, I love that, especially how you've described James Baldwin because you're right. He's simultaneously very passionate and clear and has a strong belief in what he's saying. And almost has a detachment to it, as well. And, you know, it really makes you wonder, like, inside Who is he processing? How is he processing feeling so strongly about these issues? And at the same time, it's almost like he doesn't hold an expectation that things will change, but still is pushing for change. Yeah, yeah, yes, there's balance for both. And I feel that I can know the person who even after I come out of my favorite movie, I'm like, you know, what was a little bit weird, they could have done this a little bit better. And I'm always like, kind of poking at the things I think could be better, too. But when I see things that are broken, and could be better, that actually inspires me to do things, I don't think it's coming from a negative place. It's just like, this is the place where reward can jump and go. So, I think that he really totes that line of, you know, not going away from the truth does not look like saying things are better than they are and also presenting it in a way that makes them think it makes them really curious. And that's definitely what I try to do my fiction. Yes. And it's so interesting, because usually, when I ask guests about the ancestors who have influenced them, I can see a link between what they're saying about that that ancestor and the person

that I know, right, the person that I'm seeing in the work they're doing in the world. And what's really interesting is that, on the surface, you are very different to the people that you've just, you've just highlighted, but the thing that sticks out for me specifically when you talk about James Baldwin, is your writing. Like, I remember reading it and sort of being like, oh my god, she's saying it, you know, it's like, cringey and awkward and it makes you feel uncomfortable, but you want to keep looking at it. Talk to us about First of all, for people who have never heard of Such A Fun Age who I don't know, we're on a different planet this year, I guess and didn't see it everywhere. set us up with the setup of the book, and then we'll talk about what we're talking about the crunchiness the awkwardness? Yes, those are all my favorite things. Yes. So, my book, Such A Fun Age , starts on a Saturday night in September in 2015. We meet Emira Tucker. She's a 25 year old recent Temple University graduate, she is a babysitter. She's an African American woman. She also works part time as a typist. She's at this place in her life where she doesn't know what she wants to do. She's, you know, making the same crockpot meal four nights a week. She's always a bit broke, and she doesn't have this driving passion that she was looking to. So, she's trying to figure it out. And one night she's hanging out with her girlfriends, they're partying, they're having a good time. When the woman she babysits for Alix Chamberlain calls her and says, Emira, we've had an emergency. Can you please take our three year old to the grocery store, please? I'll pay you double. She's like pay you double. Yes, I'm coming right now. She goes and takes young Briar to the grocery store. They're laughing they're dancing Nait Houston until a customer in a security guard upon seeing a black woman with a white child accused her of kidnapping, and it becomes a very familiar situation where someone pulls out their cell phone. She's very upset, tensions are raised. And yet, it's not one of the more violent situations that we see on TV often. And I would say from there, it turns into a comedy of good intentions, and really questions ownership and what it means to be family and what it means to do the right thing for the wrong reason. Yeah. So, while I was getting ready for our conversation, I was chatting with my husband and telling them about you, and about this

book and giving him the setup. And he was like, Wait, did this happen in real life? Just because it sounds like something. But what happened in real life? I said, No, it's a fictional story. But it sounds like it would. But I said, actually, what's notable about the story isn't so much that incident, it's the slow burn that happens throughout the whole rest of the story, where there are so many different dynamics. And I want to make sure that this is a spoiler free zone. So, I don't want to give people you know, I want them to read the books, so go get the book.

Kylie Reid

Everything is only in the first chapter and only in the first chapter

Layla Saad

that isn't even the most interesting part of this book. But there are some key dynamics that show up in this book that are like I said, those cringey awkward parts of the way that race, class, friendship, right relationships, all of these dynamics show up. And it's so real. And it's so uncomfortable. What makes you write that way? Like what do you enjoy because you seem to really enjoy it. Too much. like too much, I enjoy it. You know, I think from the time when I was little I love being a bit uneasy when I'm reading something from a very basic standpoint of I loved those goosebumps books by R.L Stein. I hated them. Oh my god.

Kylie Reid

They take all of your time. They were my favorite. I even love the shows like are you afraid of the dark, or something about books that made me have a little bit of a sense of unease. But it wasn't pure Gore. And that wasn't really my jam. There's something about you know, when a story sets up a world and the etiquette of that world and the culture and then a little tiny glitch happens, and everything seems a little off. That's where I'm really interested in especially how culture and language work together and showing those glitches and, and how manners often take the space of actual propriety for human life.

Layla Saad

right?

Kylie Reid

In some cases, and so I love dialogue, that sounds exactly like it happens in the real world. There's something really magical and you're like, Oh, my gosh, I know this person. I've seen this person; I can hear them say that. And so, I like trying to get that dialogue really perfect. And I also really love a page turner, that makes me have that what's going to happen feeling at the end. But I also do think that incidents like Emira's where, you know, no one got hurt. I don't think that the trauma is gone.

Layla Saad

Right?

Kylie Reid

I think that she has to think about what she's doing for the rest of her life when she walks into a grocery store or a number of other white spaces,

Layla Saad

right?

Kylie Reid

Absolutely. And I think that's something happens, the same way that capital tried to make you think is that what did you do wrong in the situation? What can you do better, there's a moment where a Emira tries to let him know that she can talk in certain way to try and protect herself. And so, I think what happens with these events, and the way that work and culture happens is you say, Okay, well, next time I go out, I'm not gonna wear this, I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna do this when you're not the problem.

Layla Saad

right?

Kylie Reid

Cop call wasted. The problem is that people see other people in this way. And so, it's been a really interesting ride. Because you know, some people will read this book and say it was so cringey I loved it. Some will say it was cringey, I hate it.

Layla Saad

It was too real. I respect both sides, I completely understand it. But the things that I'm gravitated towards are things that are so real that they're almost a little bit haunting. Yes. So, before we hit record on this conversation, I was telling you that when I was on tour for my book, earlier this year, every bookshop I went to site, I pre-signed my books, so they would bring in, you know, my books and I would always see another, another load and it's all Kylie's books, just Kylie, Kylie, Kylie. And I was very excited every time I saw the book, but it's very interesting being a non-fiction writer who writes about white supremacy and you being a fiction writer who is, in one part writing about white supremacy and obviously, other topics and themes as well. I was recently asked in an interview, do you think that for people who have white privilege who are wanting to learn about racism, that non-fiction is more helpful, or fiction is more helpful or both. And I said to both, and poetry and poetry to that as well, right? All aspects are important because there's something that fiction can reveal, and the nuances and the complexities that non-fiction cannot, I believe, I wanted to ask you about as well. you feed into other modes, because for me, especially the beginning phases of writing something nonfiction is imperative to me looking into what, you know, the experts have already provided this whole heap of work for me, and how my character's feed off of that. I'm curious if fiction works the same way for you. So, I'm not a fiction writer. And so, anytime I meet a fiction writer, I'm like, you're magic. You're a wizard? How do you make How do you make characters? How do you make plot like, I want what you have to be able to do that. But I remember reading it and being able to link very small like those cringey

moments, right? Very small, minor behaviors or dialogue or exchanges, that I could say, oh, that links to white saviorism in my book that links to tokenism, right, that links like all of these little things, and it's weird to say this about such a hard topic, but it was very satisfying making those links to each other for me, because if you were able to put it together in a way that did speak to the subtleties. And I think so often people think about white supremacy and racism as that event that happens at the beginning of your book, only, and not as the daily interactions, the daily microaggressions that happen between people who are not necessarily enemies, right, people who work for each other with each other are in relationship with one another. And it's always there in the background. And I feel they're always there is often harder to deal with than the moment that happens. Something that has happened on tour, which I completely understand is, is people often ask me Have you had a big event like this in the beginning that you were feeding from, and I think every black person has had a moment where they were really afraid, at the same time when I don't love to talk about like to personal events, but to I feel that me sharing something like that takes away from how I feel, actually human behavior operates. Because what happens is, you know, in these instances of very blatant racism that is captured on the cell phone, I call it cartoon racism, because there's a person to root for. There's someone who's saying the N word and who's so outrightly, insane in big word. And that's very harmful in its own way. But it's often presenting a black woman who is ready. She's had enough. she's right. but she had time that day. And that is it. And listen, I wish I were there all the time. But I'm not. And like I am the person who's like, two days after someone says something. I'm like, Hey, can we talk about this? And you said, like, I need a little bit of time. And a mirror is the same way. She's not gonna say the perfect thing in these moments. And so, I do wonder if sometimes these videos are setting black woman up to perform in a satisfying way, that's something that we shouldn't have to get good at. Yeah, what I found really interesting about Emira, it was that one of the things I found interesting about her was that somebody was taping this interaction that happened, and she really didn't want it shared. She

didn't want it out there. She didn't want that. And I think so often, and we've seen it this, we're recording this in 2020. We've seen it this year in a big way with the murder of George Floyd. And that if it's on camera, and we've seen it, that there's proof, then we can give our sympathies, then people who have white privilege or who are not black can say what a terrible thing that happened. And to what extent to do even stop participating in our own traumatization of saying I have to show here's the proof, it happened to me. Right? There are so much bigger instances where it is impossible to show. How do you show the proof of a doctor not listening to you? Or how do you show the proof of you know, a housing application not being accepted? Because of your last name when your other friend which there are so many issues of huge white supremacy and racism that are so ingrained in the systems that they came from, it's impossible to show that proof. And so just saying, Oh, look at this film, you know, I'm not sure if that always sets us up properly to see racism for what it is. That being said I would pull out my phone if I felt scared too. Sometimes that's the only job that you have right?

Kylie Reid

Or wonder about what that's doing to other issues.

Layla Saad

Yes. And you speak about and I've heard you talk about this in interviews that while that incident at the beginning of the book, and even so the personal interactions, maybe things that we can point to that we can say, Oh, that's a behavior. That's something that was done that was wrong. What's lying under the surface is actually the underlying systems of classism and racism, institutional racism that Emira is having to face on both fronts, right? Can you speak to why it was important to not only speak about race, but also class as well? Yes. I mean, I could go off on this. Yes, this is all my favorite. So, I just feel it's a moot point to talk about race aside from class, because I think that they feed into each other, I think they come from one another. And I think that at the end of the day, money is power. And so now we are

in an area where it's very, very easy to point at systems that have helped the black bourgeoisie, an elite also operate in white supremacy as well. So, in that I can just for example, in that first scene, so much of a Emira's incident is because she's a very dark skinned woman, but also there's her hair, there's her clothing, there's the way that she speaks. There's her friend that she's with all of those things are a little class indicators that dictate how people treat her and what they feel she's deserving of as well. And so, I would say that Alix, the woman that she works for, doesn't have a problem communicating with black people who are in the same class solidarity, I think that she has a problem dealing with a low income black woman who is depending on her for a number of reasons. One, she doesn't have that many people low income in her circle, but two she's faced with the fact that not only does she rely on a mirror, but a mirror relies on her, she doesn't like our shirt, and she's like a, let's be friends, you're not my employer friend in a very awkward way. And I think that what happens is, when you are denying your employer role, and then you don't see the benefits that an employee should like, you know, I had a lot of service jobs. And the best ones were the ones where my boss was saying it's five o'clock go home, right? You know, you need this, make sure you're taking your time off. But when someone like Alix is saying, Oh, do you want to have a glass of wine? Do you want to hang out? for brunch, end up with this young woman who thinks I don't want her to think that I'm like, not a friendly person and right,

Kylie Reid

I don't want this job. And that's where more emotional labor comes in

Layla Saad

The relationship between Emira, the young African American, 25 year old woman, and Alix, her white, middle class, employer is one of the most interesting things that I've ever read, simply because I think I know that, you know, not necessarily because I've been a nanny working for a white woman, but because of the ways in which Alix was doing mental gymnastics to try and figure out how to get this young

black woman to like her and be her friend. Yes, that was one of the joys of book tour in January. Many black woman coming up to me and saying, I'm gonna give this to my coworker, Amanda, because she needs it. Because I mean, I feel that this is a familiar person to a lot of black women, especially domestic workers in white spaces. That person whose compliments hurt a little bit that person who you can tell that they feel if I can get this person to like me, that means I'm doing a good job. I need that person for my validation. And yeah, Alix, she makes a lot of mistakes in that department. Oh, it's the worse. You know, every time you read a book, there's always a moment that you read a certain passage, and then you have to put the book down and then re-read it a million times over right? And the passage in the book, and I can't remember the exact word that was used. But there was a passage where Alix and Emira are having a conversation and Emira uses a word that Alix didn't expect her to use. I can't remember what the word was. Can you remind me? connoisseur, right connoisseur, and Alix inside of herself registers that, Oh, I didn't know that she knows that word and then checks herself. Why would I expect her not to know that word? And it made me read it and read it again. I think I shared it on my Instagram stories, because it was just it was so good. Because when I did the mean white supremacy, Instagram challenge, and we did the day on black women. There were so many revelations from white people, white women, especially on presumptions they have made about black women and about how educated we are or how able to express ourselves articulately in quotes, and so I read it. And I was like, this is real. Like, I know it's real because I did the challenge, and I saw it. But here it is in a fiction story. So many of us are experiencing these daily interactions of people undervaluing or under expecting from us. And yet, we're also expected to work twice as hard, does it?

Kylie Reid

Connoisseur Precisely and it's kind of astounding that it works so easily with the under expectations. And then the over expectations. right, it's out of control. And I can't tell you how many podcasts I've done in

presenting this book where we get done. And a white woman says, you are so articulate, thank you so much when I think about it, I'm a writer, it's my job, my job. You know, if you were interested in interviewing a scientist, I would say you are not so scientific. That's right. It's just so strange. And yeah, Emira and Alix, Alix is really dealing with all these emotions in real time. And she is like a math game like saying like, Okay, well, how does a person who listens to this music also know, right, this word, and it doesn't make any sense to her. But I think for a lot of black women, it's so simple. This is my work life, which is our whitespace. And this is my home life where I get to do whatever I want. And I really seen how that home life is seen, especially releasing a book because I have to tell you, I had not the ones that I chose but I had agents and editors saying to me, Hey, can you make this book a little bit blacker? Or hey, can you pull back on the blackness? And for so many people, I think it was impossible for them to hear black woman speaking in the way that they do at home, having fun, and also see this book as literary

Layla Saad

Wow,

Kylie Reid

when those things are not working against each other.

Layla Saad

Yeah.

Kylie Reid

And so, it was a really big lesson. And, again, just telling the truth, and hoping that the people who are also looking for that truth will understand it. And I'm happy to say that my agent editor really understood what I was trying to do. And I'm also glad you're urban anything up?

Layla Saad

Yeah, I'm so glad. code switching is a real skill that we have to develop. And I'm thinking about what you were saying about, I think in another interview we're talking about this is also like one of the oldest stories of time, which is black women being domestic care workers for white women's children. And it was the same then right of when you're caring for the child and you're in your employer's place, whether they were paying you or not, you had to be one type of person. And then when you go home with your own family, you're a different type of person. What do you think that does? Because we can talk about how it's a skill, right? And it's a really, it's a cool skill to have, but it also is doing something to us?

Kylie Reid

That's a great question. It's 100% doing something and I'll tell you, there's a little interaction that I had that this reminds me of, I think, you know, I used to be a nanny for a long time. And I was with a little girl for four years, I was very close to her family, but in the beginning, I think she would be three years old and we spent a lot of time just one on one just the two of us. And we would play this little like pillow fighting game. This is so silly, but she loved it. Oh, fighting game where you know, I would say to her, come on, girl. What's up what you got what you got? And she would hit me with the pillow, and I'd fall over, and she thought it was hilarious. Okay, so that was just our little game that we play in private. I take the girl to a playdate. And I hear her playing a pillow fight game with her friends. She's white. And she says to her friends come on girl. What you got what you got? And I heard it. Yeah, I want her parents are going to hear her talking like that. And they're going to say, what is that? Where did you learn that and they're going to get mad at me. And when I think about that, that is heartbreaking. Because that is me at my best. Playing with your child, she's safe. We're having a good time. I'm making her laugh. But I think it's also a familiar feeling of a lot of black women have we got too comfortable? A little bit. I need to make sure that my language is something that these parents are going to be okay with hearing their child say to their friends and so I don't think that that's a good healthy reaction. I don't

know sociological, you know, place what that's doing to me. But I think that division is, is harmful, especially when it comes to domestic work. part of your job is loving someone, and you can love someone better when you're really comfortable. Yeah, and I remember that moment of feeling like Okay, you got too comfortable, you have to be cool. You can't talk to her like that. That is really .

Layla Saad

You know, we're not talking about how we have to show up at work professionally. This is not about that. This is about actually masking who you are, right? This is about being afraid that who you are, is dangerous to other people and will be judged in an inferior way. I often think about the amount of energy it takes, you know, that we expend to categorize ourselves in this way for our own safety and just not having to deal with white supremacy, right, not having to deal with all the stuff. But where does that energy go? And what can we do with it is just something that I think about a lot, and I think about Emira is she is in her early 20s. So, she's in that part of her life. I wasn't, I was such a mess.

Kylie Reid

When people at book readings be like, can you give me advice? I'm like, no. I should not. I get it now. She's in a hard place.

Layla Saad

She's in a hard place. And what was interesting for me with her was that, you know, I'm somebody who took me a while to figure out what I was doing. But I always knew that there was something right, I always knew that there was something that I was supposed to be doing, I'm supposed to be helping people in some way. It just took me a while to figure out what that was, with Emira, what's really interesting is that she's still figuring it out, right? There's nothing that's really tugging or pulling at her in that way. And I think I noticed as I was reading, I noticed my own frustration with it.

Kylie Reid

Like what

Layla Saad

you want to be doing?

Kylie Reid

Yes, I think that we are conditioned to want her to be better in systems that weren't made for her,

Layla Saad

Oh, yes.

Kylie Reid

He need me to say Emira, like, you shouldn't be able to just have this job for the rest of your life. But I'm letting you know about the systems that we live in, and you're gonna want help you know what I mean? It's so easy to get wrapped up in that and say, a mirror, like, I need you to do this. And it's so easy to point at her instead of like, this is weird, why doesn't she just have health care, like human being, and she should just be able to go to the doctor, you know, whenever she wants. And I also like you like I knew I wanted to write. And so, it was easier for me at the end of a hard day where I was like, Okay, I can pay my rent, I can keep writing, it's fine. But I do think that there are many 25 year-olds like this, who were like, I don't really know what I'm trying to do. And I feel like there were so many jobs that I didn't even know existed until I was 28-29. And now that I'm 33, it seems a little crazy to me that like you turn 18 in the States, and they're like, pick a major, right?

Layla Saad

Do that. Do that for the rest of your life.

Kylie Reid

Right? Yes, crazy enough. I feel like I was such a different person, then then. And my skills were different in a mirror is just kind of a paramour

of what that looks like when someone doesn't have this extreme passion, which is very normal. Yeah.

Layla Saad

Right. And I'm thinking about how there's this expectation as well, right for us that we need to get it together earlier, there isn't the space to be figuring it out for longer, both because, like you said, the systems are not made for us to thrive. And because there is so much that is put upon black women to be everything to everyone. So, if you don't have it figured out, you know, where do you fit? And I definitely as I was reading it, and tracked that within myself and being like, Well, why can't she just be figuring out? Why do you need that to happen? So that was really interesting for me, and there was a black woman character in the book that also mirrors that back to her as well, that was really interesting. Reading that interaction between the two of them.

Kylie Reid

I feel like black women in particular, have a strong reaction to Tamara. And usually they're like, this is my mom's friend. She exists. And it's so funny, you know, this year, I'm sure that you feel the same way. You can control how people relate to your art and you can't control what people to your art. And sometimes what brings people to your art is the death of a man who shouldn't have died who was murdered on camera. And people say what do I do? Let me grab some black art. And that's what brings them there. And so, through that, I think that what happens often is sometimes white people say okay, I'm going to use this fiction book as a pedagogical tool. So, whatever this black woman, Tamara is telling me to do that.

Layla Saad

That's it.

Kylie Reid

Right? No mam. black people come in all sorts of respectability politics and classes and opinions and harmful thoughts and Tamara is I think,

for many black woman, a familiar character of someone who's a bit pushy, who feels like they're helping you someone who's very polished in a very particular academic way.

Layla Saad

I could see her as I was reading it, I was like, Oh, yeah, I know. I know this person.

Kylie Reid

Everyone's like sat next to someone like that at a wedding where you're like, Okay, yes, you're very find and you're Very smart. But I don't know about this. And so, I think from a writing perspective, I was very excited to put someone like Emira in a room with Tara. I loved it,

Layla Saad

I loved it. And then the other major dynamic that I want our future readers of this book to look at is the dynamic between Emira and Kelly.

Kylie Reid

The big one, right, yeah.

Layla Saad

So, who is Kelly?

Kylie Reid

Kelly is a young man who films Emira being interrogated by the police at the grocery store. And he's white, he's very tall, he went to Penn State. And he's very adamant that Emira should seek justice and should turn this, you know, video into a new station, or write an article about it. And she's, she's not really into that. And so Emira and Kelly see each other a week or two after the event, and they start fooling around. And then they eventually start dating. And Kelly, you know, my goal for him was that I wanted the reader to kind of date him with Emira, right? Figure out what he is about, you know, from dating someone who's white, who hangs out with a lot of black people, and you're trying

to figure out what that means. And sometimes Kelly really nails it. Sometimes he's really funny. He really likes her, right? They're attracted to each other. And that part is great. And sometimes he messes up. And I wanted it to just feel so real those moments when white people mess up, and you don't know what to do. And you know, then they're like, Okay, well, I'm at work, I want a promotion, I'm going to pretend like I didn't hear that, or you know what, we're at a restaurant. I want to finish my entree, I don't want to now, right? And so, we're definitely has a few moments of like that with Kelly, for sure.

Layla Saad

And with Kelly and Alix, there is this dynamic of them wanting to guide Emira in a certain way or have ownership over her in a certain way or feel more connected to her than the other does. And it's like Emira becomes the site of a battle between a white woman and a white man.

Kylie Reid

She does for sure, yes, I think what can happen and in fiction and in real life, is that tokenism and ownership can come really harmoniously with affection for someone and Kelly and Alex really do care about Emira., I think that they think she's very special and funny. But, you know, I wish that racism worked in this way where you could easily see, like, every racist, I'm gonna stay away from them.

Layla Saad

Right?

Kylie Reid

That's it. But it comes with a lot of love and support and other ways too, which I think makes it even more scary.

Layla Saad

Yeah.

Kylie Reid

Just to figure out like, Okay, what are you getting out of this relationship? And when you tell the story of how we met? How performatively Are you telling it? What are you getting out of this? What does it say about you? There's a lot of questions she has to work through. And she's also 25. She's like, I'm not going to get married, like right now. Like, let's just right, let's go. This guy's pretty great man out, right?

Layla Saad

Like, what I really appreciate is that you're speaking about these really tough topics, these microaggression behaviors. And at the same time, we get to see, especially with Emira and Alix, who are the two, and we get to hear it from both of their sides, like their humanity as well. Why was that important? I mean, I know writing characters, they have to be realistic. But we kind of had Alix as the as the villain. I did, right?

Kylie Reid

Yeah. You know, when I teach undergrads, we do an exercise where my students have to show two different characters who are exact opposites from each other, doing the same activity, like baking or golfing. And they have to show them being completely opposite doing it and no one's allowed to be good or bad. Because the fact is, as humans, we're all good at things. We all have strengths and weaknesses. And I feel that when you're writing fiction, your character who does the most damage, you have to give them a win. At some point, you have to show what great handwriting they have. Or if they offer to give someone a ride to the airport, or if they have an embarrassing moment, you have to humanize them, because then those worst moments hit even harder. You also just think that, you know, I've known a lot of Alix's too, and they can be really delightful. You know, especially when you're paying and trying to advance in your career. There's a lot of people who like even if their attempts at helping are not exactly only for you, they can end up helping you that's just the reality of how it works. And so, it was really important for me to not just

poop on Alix the whole time. Also, because when you're writing a book, you're writing it for like three years, so you have to like the people.

Layla Saad

Right. So, this is a great part for us to segue into your journey as a writer. Now, your debut published novel, but not your first book. And I feel like this is really important to say because when you hear Oh, this is their debut book Right, this is their debut novel, it makes it seem like oh, Kylie just woke up one day and was like, I'm going to pen, a best-selling book.

Kylie Reid

Thank you for saying that, because I know it's, it's my first published book, it's maybe my eighth or ninth novel. This is just the one that need it. And I it sounds trite. But I truly believe that those bad novels that will never see the light of day are forming my writing now and helping me understand my obsessions and my tendencies and my bad habit not to get rid of those. And so yes, this is the first good novel is what I like to say,

Layla Saad

in those first eight or nine novels. What were you working through? And what were you discovering about yourself and the way that you like to write?

Kylie Reid

That's a great question. I think part of it comes with learning about what you like to write is also what you love to read. So, I think that as I was learning about what I like, as a writer and trying to imitate the writers that I love, it's one a ton of dialogue that is so realistic, that you can hear it, there's a rhythm and a science to the words that you're putting on the page. I didn't understand that I was interested in writing about class until much later, when I was in graduate school have the time to read nonfiction and the experts who were doing a lot of the work for me, I realized that structure was really important to me, even though

those class issues are so important, but that thriller element is really, really important to my read as well, you know, that like, Okay, I'm just gonna do one more chapter feeling is really important to me. Yeah. And so, something I work with my editor on a lot that I've gotten better at a structure, and where you deploy information, and how you keep the reader going and satisfy them and pull them all of those, those little things for sure.

Layla Saad

Hmm, learning the craft of writing itself. But also, I guess, how you translate that craft?

Kylie Reid

Oh, yeah, yes. I didn't understand what style was until much later. And I do kind of think that style find you a bit. And I think that you, structured assist your style is, is really important. I have to ask the same review and how you learned your style.

Layla Saad

Oh, gosh, I think it's the same thing I remember, a couple years ago, when I was like, Oh, I think I think I'm gonna be a writer. I think I can do this; I really want to do this. But looking to everyone else, right? How did they write? How do they do it? How do they do it? And I'm thinking that if I could just take the best parts of the way that I see my favorite writers show up and mash it all together, that I'll make something that is me, right. And it just, it just doesn't work that way. I think so much of it is the internal work of self-discovery, self-acceptance, self-love. There's an energy that shines through on the page that comes from a deep connectedness with yourself. Like, obviously, you know, your editorial team, and everyone helps to shape it and make it this masterpiece, right? They have to work with the material that's there. And the material that's there is not just the words.

Kylie Reid

Yes.

Layla Saad

So, the blocks that you built one on top of the others to build this foundation of who you are.

Kylie Reid

Yes.

Layla Saad

And thankfully, we keep getting better. Because we keep building that foundation, we keep growing.

Kylie Reid

That was something that I never thought about while writing a book, how magical it is to find people who want and understand the spirit of what you're writing and to have to meet you where you're at and make that the best that can be wherever it is. Yeah, it's very difficult. But then it's really magical. At the end,

Layla Saad

I'd love to speak about especially for our listeners who may be writers or aspiring writers, especially who may be people of color, about your journey as an author, as a black woman, a person of color, how do you advocate for yourself to make sure that you know, your boundaries, your vision, your voice is respected, and that you have the best team for you. Because building that team is also important.

Kylie Reid

I never knew how important it was now I'm like how I thought I could do this by myself that is so I think I have the same thing as you were in my 20s I decided that I want to be able to do this and even if it can't work, at least I want to teach because I just want to be involved in the literary world in some way. And so, I started writing short stories more seriously and submitting them to contest and literary journals was

around 23 to like 26-27 and I think during that time I tried to count the other day I think it was something like 150 rejections

Layla Saad

Wow.

Kylie Reid

And I did get some acceptances and then sometimes there were what I call good nose which is No dear author. So sorry and blah blah but this one almost made it Yes, this is the day. And I'm just going to live off of those comments for a very long time until I decided to go to graduate school. I had one of those moments where I was like, I want to write, and I don't even know what I don't know. I need some help me. And so, I applied to graduate school, and I was working as a receptionist at the time. And I got rejected from every single school. And it was heartbreaking. I was like, what do I do? And so, at the time, my then boyfriend, now husband had a job opportunity in Arkansas. And he said, do you want to go have a reset? It's really cheap to live there. You can try again. And let's do, let's go to Arkansas, Arkansas, beautiful. I don't know if you've been it's really, really pretty, it's quiet. It's cheap. I got a job as a barista at a coffee kind of bodega shop, I got another job at a very scammy website that I should not have been working for. But I was very broken. I kept writing. And I applied to graduate school again. And the second time I got into nine schools. Oh, wow. That space just to think, yeah, you know, all of the difference in my writing. And so, I had about 100 pages of Such A Fun Age then. And I took them to graduate school. And I was kind of crazy about finding my readers, I just wanted to find people who would be my readers for the rest of my life. And I'm so happy to say that I have three women who are just wonderful. And they do not tell me everything I write is great. Sometimes I like the sight it, you know, or right now I'm writing something where I have a character who's kind of like me, but her humor is not like me, and my friends constantly like, this is you, this is not her like you need to pull back. So, it was really, really important. And then connecting with two professors who really helped me with my

writing, I think graduate school is wonderful. If you can do it, I don't think anyone should go into debt doing it. That was my hot take, I think someone should pay you to do it. But graduate school is really wonderful. And from there, it's just having friends who keep you accountable. I feel on keeping yourself accountable. I feel that vague. Goals don't really work for me, I know I say write more this year is a little too vague, I think it has to be I'm gonna get 500 words on the page every day, no matter just numbers, numbers are really, really important. And from there, I mean, just trusting the experts, feedback is so important. You really can't write by yourself; you need to make sure what's happening in your head is what's happening on the page.

Layla Saad

And I think that's often the hardest part, right? Because you have this vision of what you think it should be. And people are saying no, maybe it should be this way, or I don't like that. How do you build up the resiliency to hear that and to keep moving forward?

Kylie Reid

I mean, it's such a tricky balance between one trusting your gut and writing what you're obsessed with, and to finding people who are going to serve the story always. And believe it the best thing is like when someone says like, oh, why don't you just have her come in the left door and you're like, Oh, I'm an idiot, of course, I should do that thing that they're telling me. But sometimes they're like, I don't think you need this part. And I'm like, No, I'm hilarious. Like, I have a balance. But then if someone else tells me I'm like, Okay, I have to cut this. It's such a balance of give and take. And I think that I've gotten better at it. I think that I know who to go to, for what, I have a friend who's really good at structure, I have a friend who's really good at grammar. I have a friend who's really good at finding patterns in my work. Oh, it's using all of their strengths to my writing. But honestly, I think it's what you were saying before, the more you're writing, the more you know, the spirit of the thing.

Layla Saad

Yes.

Kylie Reid

trusting yourself. Yeah, over and over again. Which is not easy.

Layla Saad

No, it's not. But I love that we're having this conversation around, you know that it's not just Kylie, you know, yes, you are the driving force behind it. You're the one who laid the words down, you're the one who visioned the characters and molded them. But without the people around you who are your support network, whether it be personally or professionally, such a fun age wouldn't exist in the way that it does. And so often, when we think about good ancestors, especially those from the past, who we see as these icons, these trailblazers, we see them as one individual, like this iconic class or this pioneer, this leader who just stood apart from everyone else and we discount or we don't highlight, celebrate appreciate everyone else who is making sure that they are able to do what they are doing. Those behind the scenes people are so crucial to all of it. Yeah,

Kylie Reid

Yes. 100% like, and I also feel like I'm someone who when I'm not writing I like working behind the scenes too in those jobs are very, very fruitful when you feel like you're part of a community. So those roles are so important. And yeah, there's so many you know, it's I don't know if you've been listening there's so many lines that I can point to in my book. I'm like, dude, that would have existed. If I hadn't heard this thing. I wouldn't exist. This person. It's just touching. I remember one time my husband came in the room and said, did you know that George Washington's teeth were made from slaves tea? I said, I had no idea right and inspired a short story that ended up getting me into Iowa. Just journey. I think we each other. I mean, it sounds so cheesy. But community makes art. It's so important.

Layla Saad

Yes, I love that. So, where you're at right now you have, like we said, it's your debut book, not your first book, but your debut published book. But this year, you were really thrust into the limelight in this huge way. And I presume have been on this massive roller coaster? Are you comfortable on the roller coaster? Do you feel that you're driving the roller coaster? Somebody else is do you want to get off the roller coaster. Wow

Kylie Reid

What a fantastic question. It depends on the day, I will say that my publishing team, I want to work with them again. And again. They're so lovely. And just hear me and understand me, you know, from the very beginning, know, when we were talking about black people doing you know, twice the work, right? Which I think happens in publishing. When I came into my first meeting with my publishing house. I was like, Listen, I want to make sure this book gets into the hands of black people, I want to make sure that I launched a black on place. And even though that's extra work that I did, they were like, done, done, done, what else can we do? Let's go. Let's go. And so that has been wonderful. And I feel like they're on the roller coaster with me for sure. on another level, you know, writers are used to being by themselves, I set on. And I said, Okay, what are my boundaries? For me? You know, I don't tell super personal things about my family, because they didn't write the book. Like, they didn't ask for any of this. I don't particularly like sharing things about my home or my space, which I think you know, I will definitely click on like, Oh, this writers desk or whatever. But I'm just not really into showing that for me, I kind of like to pretend like I have a mascot hat on. And I don't like to take it off and have anyone like see me smoking a cigarette backstage?

Layla Saad

right?

Kylie Reid

What are what am I doing here? And so, I'm the kind of person who I like categories. And I do like setting up boundaries. So, I don't feel like they're restricting. I feel like they're almost like liberating.

Layla Saad

Definitely, yes Yeah, I think having those that I mean, I'm huge on boundaries. So, I'm right there with you. But I think being thrust into the limelight by something that you want it to happen, you've poured so much of yourself your energy, or your creativity into this book, you want it to do what it's doing in the world. And there's always this tug of like, but I also just want to be in my hermit cave writing and being alone.

Kylie Reid

Oh, good. I also think something that's interesting for fiction writers to is, you write a book, and then readers come to you and say, okay, so you talk about themes of domestic work, which means you're an expert on domestic work, I'm going to ask you that. And it's like, no, this book shows that I'm interested in it. This is a thesis project. But that doesn't mean that I am an expert. Like, let's connect with other people who actually are experts on this. And so, I am happy that that's led me to work with the domestic workers National Alliance, which has been a highlight of this year, and people who actually know what they're talking about. And I'm happy to be a spokesman when I can.

Layla Saad

That's awesome. Do you find that particularly with the book coming out this year, and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement this year, that people have only been wanting to talk about the race aspect of things, or trying to sort of pigeonhole you just into being a black writer who writes about race? Or do you find that people are giving you the freedom to be all of the things?

Kylie Reid

Yes, I mean, I feel that I feel that black women are very good at you know, going into an interview. The second they're like, tell me about

your black trauma like the worst. I'm talking about my book. Yeah, right. very obvious, I feel. And so yes, I do feel that for many, they're using black artists as a self-soothing mechanism trying to quote around, do the work and ask black people about their experience. And I just as a fiction writer, I come from the place of you know, other people are much more interesting to me. Language is much more interesting to me, and so are elements of class within that, which I think race is included in all those things as well. And so, I think I've gotten good at using those boundaries and turning the conversation back.

Layla Saad

I love that. Do you find that people are sometimes maybe frustrated that there's no clear conclusion that that the whole thing wasn't resolved, right that the messy characters we didn't have a hero and the villain at the end because that's the Oftentimes, when people think about racism, that's the terms that they're thinking of it in is the bad people, the good people. And justice is about the good people winning and the bad people being punished when we're so much more complex than that.

Kylie Reid

That's an excellent point. And you actually, that reminds me of is so many of my students, when we would talk about storytelling, they would say a good story tells you the lesson at the end. No

Layla Saad

No

Kylie Reid

Right away, and yes, that does happen all the time. I was in Savannah, Georgia. And a white woman asked me in a Q&A, like, what do you want us to do? What do you want us to do? And I, I said, I want you to enjoy my fiction.

Layla Saad

That's not the answer I was after. Tell me how to be a good ally.

Kylie Reid

But then two hours later, I'm sitting in the hotel ready to go out and she comes up to me and there are tears in her eyes. Oh, wow, I just gave you a platform, I just want you to tell me what to do. Tell me what to do. That is not my job. It is not my job at all. I'm an artist and maybe it's something that you should look into that you are desperate for an answer in this world. And I think, you know, her reading of it is just as legitimate as everyone else's. And I love that it left her with that. But I have to I think I have to be strong and say that's not my job.

Layla Saad

Wow

Kylie Reid

I just can't help but think of you were putting labor on me?

Layla Saad

Yes That's absolutely not your job. I think the amazing thing that this book does is it takes such a not simple story, but it really is it's in the nuances. It's not these like big, massive plot twists and action story and all of this, it's these everyday interactions, but exposes them in ways that you can't turn away from even though you want to. And then people are left with Okay, so where to from here. I mean, as a black woman reading this, I remember reading it and like I said cringing, but also thinking, wow, these interactions from well-meaning white people, the people who really want to do the right thing, are so exhausting. so exhausting, that it leaves you feeling like where do I go from here? What am I supposed to do? How do I interact with the well-meaning white people in my life, let alone the people who are proudly racist, right? The people who don't even know that they are and want to do the right thing. But that's for me to figure out that's not for Kylie to answer for me.

Kylie Reid

Yes, yes. It's like, you know, when I'm teaching, I'm like, I'm your teacher. I'm not your friend. That is my role here. And I feel now, as you know, a storyteller, I'm a writer, I'm not your mom. Like, I'm not you. That is not my job. And I have to say, like, I've had maybe one or two instances like that. I feel like, you've probably had hundreds

Layla Saad

I'm very good at boundaries. So, people just don't ask me. And we don't leave space for it. And I think that's part of the teaching. I think part of the teaching is saying it's actually up to you to go curate the information, right? go learn, go study, whether it's non-fiction fiction, poetry, documentaries, podcasts, whatever it is the news, like, whatever it is, and then you go figure out from everything that you're learning, what am I supposed to do here? Yeah, because we can't do that. And like you said earlier, is like people, people of color. We come in multitudes; we all have different opinions. Kylie might advise one thing I might advise another person might advise another none of us is the authority on what it means to you know, show up in antiracism for each and every single person, but yeah, I imagine that's a burden that oftentimes people want to put on you. And I'm so glad to hear that you give it right back. say that's not mine.

Kylie Reid

Boundaries, so is not mine. I also just think that the second that I give into that responsibility, I take away from the enjoyment of storytelling. If you are reading my book, thinking, Okay, how do I do this? Oh, my gosh, I had this woman, DM me and she said, I'm really trying to learn, and I picked up your book and I saw that the white woman in it had divider plates for her child. And I said, Okay, it's time to learn so I threw my divider plates out. I was like, What? Like, the white woman's bad because of everything. That's not a way to read a book. I think that when you were approaching black art as art just to see how this affects me. Let me see how I feel on page maybe also different on another

page. Yeah, you know, maybe rooting for someone one time and not the other. Yes, what your experience it

Layla Saad

I love that you said like black art, the art because I think so often it has to be more, right. There's this expectation that it should be more and therefore black artists don't have the space to be artists in the same way white artists make it to be artists. with fellow black artists, how are you cultivating a community of you know, honor our humanity? let's not give into the expectations placed on us.

Kylie Reid

Right? You know, someone so much of it is just venting. Coming together, yeah. Are you getting? Are you getting this? Okay, how are you answering this question? Okay. Well, when you get this question, how do you do it? And then kind of doing what we were talking about James Baldwin is taking certain things and saying, Okay, how can I make that work? You know, I've talked to black artists about certain questions and certain questions that we will be answering anymore. Yeah. You know, for me earlier this year, when I got nominated for the Booker Prize, which I was so excited about, I got asked, how does it feel to be nominated to this prize that has a very strong tie to slavery and sugar selling and exploitation? Oh,

Layla Saad

wow.

Kylie Reid

I don't think that I've ever heard a white writer asked how they feel to be expecting award from many corporations that are built upon by slavery and exploitation. And so, until I see other writers, white writers dealing with that history, I just don't think that I'm going to do the same.

Layla Saad

Yeah.

Kylie Reid

For me, as soon as I hear someone say something, I try and do the same thing, in my own words. And so, I think I mean, other black artists right now. We're just trying to come together and keep the art first and feed off of each other in a way that we're going to be able to be graceful and respectful, but also be able to go to sleep at night.

Layla Saad

That part. so, you've mentioned a couple of times that you teach students, what age of the students that you teach.

Kylie Reid

By the time I was in Iowa and it was undergrads and I loved it. So, they were around 20 to 21. But they were students who were not trying to be writers. They were just trying to get their art credit, and just like wanted to pass School, which I love that place. Uh huh. Or like, I'm bad at this. I don't read and it's just like, Okay, great, let's do this. But then next, this coming spring, I'll teach a class in the MFA program at Temple, which will be wonderful. because Emira Tucker in my novel, went to Templeton So happy, American spring?

Layla Saad

Yeah. What do you love most about teaching? What does it give you that you don't necessarily get with writing?

Kylie Reid

Oh, my goodness, I think teaching one I just, I love it. I just love the performative aspect of it. I did get a BFA in drama in college. And so, I'm glad that my degree is like going somewhere. For students, I feel that the challenge for me to keep students interested in craft challenges me to look at mediums a different way. So, I use text, I use poems, music, videos, television commercials, I love being able to learn from different mediums, but also I just love the progression of students learning that they have a voice in art, I don't believe that you

have to have written a novel to have big opinions about it. And so, I feel like my students come in saying, I don't know anything. I'm not good at this. And by the end, they're like Kurt Vonnegut, no, he's dumb. I don't like that. I love seeing those opinions on our grow. And just seeing students who usually don't read realize that they have a space in art too, that part is really special.

Layla Saad

I love that. I love that so much. So, with your students knowing that you are a bestselling author, nominated for the Booker Prize, I mean, does that ever get in the way of them being able to just fully absorb what you're teaching?

Kylie Reid

No, they don't care. I love it. I've had the opportunity to teach this year, which has been great. It's kind of this great, humbling thing, like they do not care. They're like, what do you have to offer me, and it challenges me, you know, to give Yeah, I don't know if you feel this way too. But after coming off of the high of your book, when you go back to students, and when you go back to writing, it is so humbling, very

Layla Saad

humbling. It's very humbling. It is very humbling. You're like,

Kylie Reid

this is trash. And what do I put it like brings back all of those things I love about writing is that it takes patience, you have to treat it like doggedly and bring your hand gently back to the page, make it better and better. And so, I'm happy that students haven't cared yet because I think I need that.

Layla Saad

I love that you brought this up, though, because it's so true that you were in the cave writing the book, right? You, you worked with your

team to make it into the book that you want it to be you publish it, and then you go from internal behind the scenes to suddenly splashed everywhere, doing many, many, many interviews, and many, many, many features. And I think there comes a point where you stop believing your own hype, you forget, oh, like the process that craft is grueling, and it will demand from you and you need to put in the work. And so, coming back to whether it's teaching or writing again, brings you back down to earth and reminds you know, like this is where the real work is that what I do afterwards talking about it is just the aftereffects, but this is where it Really, really counts.

Kylie Reid

The parts that you think about, oh, this is where writing happens. You think it's going to be the public parts, parts where you're by yourself, and you're going over that sentence one more time, or stressing out about a character's name, or whatever it is. And it's hard to remember that when you're in the peak of things, but then you come back, and writing will remind you very quickly.

Layla Saad

So, before we close out, and before I ask my final question, I have one more question, which is, when I read this book, I was like, I want to read every other book that she writes from now on now.

Kylie Reid

Yes, yes, from now on,

Layla Saad

not the eight or nine that have been, which are now locked in the vault and will never see the light of day. But from now on, is there a project that you're working on at the moment? next book,

Kylie Reid

I am working on novel number two, which means a lot of reading, for me a lot of holding up interviews, which is fuels me for sure. So, I'm

interviewing a lot of people right now. And slowly working on that. I don't see myself ever writing anything that doesn't dive into issues of class and cringey moments. And so, I think there will be some more of those. And I just love writing about characters who identify as women as well. So, I think that both of those will be making appearances. But I'm also executive producing a film adaptation

Layla Saad

How can we not mention this. This is becoming a film.

Kylie Reid

Yes. At the same time, you know, everything is shut down because of COVID right now, and so I have no idea what that means for the immediate future. But my team is lovely. And I'm so excited to see what we can do with this on screen for sure.

Layla Saad

I love it. And it's Lena Waithe that bought the film option rights, right?

Kylie Reid

She did, it's her Hillman Grad network, as well as another team sight unseen. And it feels like everyone just has skin in the game. Yeah, really real. Which is really, really nice. Yeah,

Layla Saad

I saw that you will be an executive producer on the movie.

Kylie Reid

Yeah.

Layla Saad

Did you ever think that this would be something, did you ever dream?

Kylie Reid

dreaming? I remember when I workshopped my novel, in Iowa, I was in a novel writing workshop. And so, you turn in the whole thing. And you just like, pray and deep breathe. And I remember coming back. And one of my girlfriends said to me, okay, I cast your whole book, do you want to know who she played? And so, I thought, okay, maybe this has like a fun cinematic fan but never thought real life. I think the goal for most fiction writers is let me write a book that is successful enough that I can do it again. That was the goal. The fact that this is happening is wonderful because I really love film. And I'm excited to see they do.

Layla Saad

well, I'm so excited for you. I definitely saw it as a film, when I was reading it was very excited to know that it is becoming a film cannot wait to watch it. and can't wait to read more of your books as well. Kylie, thank you so much for this conversation. Thank you for this book, which was just such a delight to read after my tour and is something that I'm definitely recommending to people. I really enjoyed this conversation as well. And just hearing about all of these different dynamics of the characters, but also your journey. As a writer, I know that there is so much more to come from you. And I'm just going to be there on the sidelines cheering and asking for advance copies of every book you read.

Kylie Reid

To have your eyes on this is really lovely. And it sounds crazy. But it's really, really nice to talk to another black writer about things like boundaries in a way that is hopeful and positive and showing all of you know the benefits of those things. This has been really lovely.

Layla Saad

Thank you. All right, my love. Our final question, what does it mean to you to be a good ancestor?

Kylie Reid

I thought about this part. This might sound crazy, but when I thought about being a good ancestor, there was something I thought about all of my days of being a nanny with children that I became really, really close to. I do not like bugs at all. Like if I see a spider, I will scream, I don't want to see it like I just don't. And there was a weird loving feeling that I experienced when I was with children, where I did not want them to see me be afraid of something and loving a child. I thought I don't want them to have the same setback that I have. And I'm going to use my love of this child to be brave in this moment. And so, I thought about for me, you know, being a good ancestor might be not passing on my fears and using my care for someone to be brave in those moments. And so, a spider is a tiny example. You're ones where you know using your care for someone to not pass on your fears. I love that so much. Thank you so much, Kylie. Thank you so much. Thank you for having me.

Layla Saad

This is Layla Saad and you've been listening to Good Ancestors Podcast. I hope this episode has helped you find deeper answers on what being a good ancestor means to you. We'd love to have you join the Good Ancestor Podcast family over on Patreon, where Subscribers get early access to new episodes, patron only content and discussions and special bonuses. Join us now@patreon.com forward slash good ancestor podcast. Thank you for listening. And thank you for being a good ancestor.