

**Audio Title: Layla F Saad**  
**Audio Duration: 0:38:06**  
**Number of Speakers: 3**

### Transcript

**Rebekah Borucki:** Hey, friend! I heard you were looking for our spot and I'm here to help you.

So, you're going to go past the corner bodega and down the block from the fresh cuts barbershop, and there you'll find a brick row house at the intersection of Literature Place and Social Justice Blvd. That's where you will find the stoop.

Our host Amanda Lytle will be there to welcome you to the conversation. *The Book Stoop* is the place for the hottest takes on book culture, nerd culture, current events, with best-selling authors, change-makers, and risk-takers, our favorite kinds of people.

I'm Rebekah Borucki, President of Row House Publishing, and this is season two of our podcast. Thank you for listening.

Now, I'm going to let you get to Amanda.

**Amanda Lytle:** Thanks Bex. Hey friend. Let me be the second to welcome you to our spot, *The Book Stoop*. I feel incredibly honored to be the host of this podcast and I'm so grateful to have you here.

Today on *The Book Stoop*, I'm speaking with Layla F. Saad. Layla is an author, speaker, and teacher on the topics of race, identity, leadership, personal transformation, and social change.

She is the New York Times and Sunday Times bestselling author of the groundbreaking book *Me and White Supremacy*, the host of the Good Ancestor Podcast and the founder of The Good Ancestor Book Club.

In the conversation today, we hear about Layla's latest reads and what reading rituals look like between reading for work and reading for the podcast and book club.

Layla shares her desires and drives to celebrate Black authors and authors of color from all genres and how reading sci-fi can help offer support when the world feels like it's falling apart.

Layla tells us about her podcast and what the experience in the creative process of writing the young readers' edition of *Me and White Supremacy* was like.

Before we jump in, I want to invite you to share *The Book Stoop* with your community. If you're loving this episode, grab a screenshot and tag us on Instagram, @rowhousepub. Every share, five-star rating and written review helps us find more listeners and climb the charts. So we're super grateful for your help.

We start our chats on *The Book Stoop* with a rather fitting question, “So what are you reading these days?”

**Layla F. Saad:** OK. Can I tell you what I’ve just finished reading and what I’m about to start reading?

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh, yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yeah? OK.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** So I’ve just finished reading *The Good Ally* by Nova Reid who is a UK Black British antiracism educator and author, and this is her first book and it’s a fantastic book. I highly recommend especially for those who are wanting to understand white supremacy and antiracism from a strictly British lens. Fantastic book.

The other two were recent picks in the Good Ancestor Book Club. We have *Don’t Let It Get You Down: Essays on Race, Gender, and the Body* by Savala Nolan and *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love* by Valarie Kaur.

So that’s what I’ve just finished reading and I have three books. So those are three I finished, three that I’m about to start. Two are advanced copies. We have *This Here Flesh* by Cole Arthur Riley who’s the creator of Black Liturgies and *Women Talk Money*, which is an anthology, or a collection of essays edited by Rebecca Walker and then one which has already been published and which I’m so excited to read is *Shoutin’ in the Fire: An American Epistle* by Danté Stewart.

**Amanda Lytle:** That’s a lot of incredible content to be consuming.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, big time. So now just as a book lover and as a reader, what does a reading ritual look like for you? Do you get up, you have a cup of tea, or a coffee and you read or is it a big, cozy couch or on a deck or what does that look like?

**Layla F. Saad:** Well, it’s really interesting now because when I started the podcast, The Good Ancestor Podcast, initially it was some authors, but it was a mixture of different people. Some guests were authors, some were not. Now we have transitioned and are transitioning to strictly interviewing authors. So reading is now not only just a hobby for me. It’s actually my work, right? Which I love.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, like homework.

**Layla F. Saad:** Uh-huh. So I approach it in that way, right? So I often need some sticky tabs, a pen to underline. Sometimes I make notes on my phone. I like reading at night when everybody else is asleep. That's the best time because I can then just get lost in it. I don't have to apologize for not doing anything else, right?

There's nothing else that needs me and it just – I can just enjoy it. So that's what my ritual looks like. But sometimes when it's like I'm prepping for a podcast, as you know, right? It's like, OK, sit down and just get down to it.

When I'm reading books that are more – like when I'm coming from a space of I really – I'm seeking some answers for something right now. So this particular book that I'm wanting to read, it has nothing to do with the podcast. It has nothing to do with anything. It's just for me. That is when I have like that warm drink and I'm sitting on the sofa, and I have something cozy or I'm sitting in the bed. That's when it's spiritual nourishment for me.

**Amanda Lytle:** Right. Spiritual nourishment, I hear this. Yeah, and I also feel like some of the conversations that I've been having for *The Book Stoop*, whether it's pre- or post-recording or even during, we talk a lot about how a lot of things feel heavy and that there are certain genres of books that kind of help with that escapism. So is there a specific genre of book that takes you there?

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes. I would say sci-fi books take me there.

**Amanda Lytle:** Interesting.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yeah, sci-fi written by Black authors, like that whole genre, that is my escapism for sure and it's interesting because I think being a Black author and an author of color, oftentimes that racial lens is always going to be there. Maybe it looks a different way because you're in a different universe or that it's a different world. So I appreciate it being there because I think if it wasn't, it would just feel too weird.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** But it often – I find with sci-fi that it often answers questions around like how do we actually get through this heaviness? Like what hope is there if everything really does fall apart? What do we do? How can we survive? So I find those books to have a sense of escapism, yes, but they also give me a sense of like possibility and hope that there are ways to survive in worlds that we don't think we can survive in.

**Amanda Lytle:** Right. Well, that's a beautiful perspective. Yeah, thank you for sharing that. You had mentioned earlier your Good Ancestor Podcast and I would love to really highlight the back story to that and your intentions moving forward as you had mentioned that it's going to switch. So tell me all about your podcast and the book club.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yeah. So this idea of becoming a good ancestor is one that I really clung to not very long after I started talking about white supremacy and writing about antiracism because I very soon found myself very burned out and I needed something, an image or something to hold on to, that would give me a sense of hope and again a sense of possibility when the anger takes over and feels all-consuming, when the fear feels like it will never end, that there's actually something to work towards.

So this idea of becoming a good ancestor became like my personal mantra, my personal thing that I held on to and then I was looking around me and saying, you know, there are so many incredible people right now living who are doing this good ancestor work and I would love to be in conversation with them.

So that's how the podcast started. I think that was back in the beginning of 2019. That's when I launched it. Like I said, we've had a mixture of different people on the podcast, authors, activists, healers, scientists, poets, you name it.

But more and more what I became interested in is speaking to people who are authors. I'm really interested in having conversations with people who have a body of work that we can read, that we can study, that we can learn from, that we can refer back to again and again and again.

That – you know, I know that especially after the 2020 Black Lives Matter protest, books by authors of color suddenly were everywhere, especially by Black authors. But oftentimes it was restricted to antiracism books like *Me and White Supremacy*, right?

But those aren't the only books that we should be reading. Those aren't the only books that can teach us. Those aren't the only books that can lead us back to our humanity. So I am really interested in centering and celebrating authors of color, Black authors, writing across a range of genres. Whether it's sci-fi, romance, antiracism, right? Whether writing about colonialism, motherhood, whatever it is, it gives us a more fuller picture of our humanity, I think.

You know, I grew up like many of us, not reading many books by authors of color, not reading many books by Black authors. I feel very robbed of that. So I often feel like I'm rushing to make up for it now and the amazing thing about it is that there are so many, right? There are so many books to read and so many books coming.

But we are still very underrepresented in the market, right? So it's really important for me to use the platform that I've built to uplift those authors, to say, "Hey, read them. Preorder their books. You know, support their work. Join their Patreons," whatever it is, because they have something important to share that we can all benefit from.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, that's a really neat way as well to start highlighting authors that are just jumping in that may not have had a platform beforehand, you know.

**Layla F. Saad:** And that's exactly what we do.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** That's actually what we do. So I know that there are a lot of book clubs. I also know there are a lot of podcasts. We make it – we have a very specific mission of uplifting BIPOC authors who are on their first or second book.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh.

**Layla F. Saad:** Right? Because – yes. Right? Because I don't need to highlight Ta-Nehisi Coates as much as I love Ta-Nehisi Coates because Oprah Winfrey is going to highlight him, right? I don't need to highlight somebody who already has access to those larger platforms because they're already going to get that light shone on them.

What I'm thinking about is the authors who are just coming up, you know. I know when it was with my first book *Me and White Supremacy*, I was so grateful and still very grateful to the people who said, "I have a bigger platform. I have a bigger audience. I'm going to introduce them to your work," and so that just – it's just so inspiring to me and I just want to do it all the time.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah. OK, this has led me into a question about I've read the word "heavy" on a lot of the books or the reviews, sorry, that talk about the content in your book that it is heavy but it's freaking important, right? So like you're writing about, yes, of course heavy content. So this is a two-part question.

**Layla F. Saad:** OK.

**Amanda Lytle:** So in this space where you are – you're working to find people and to uplift and to do such. I'm curious about Black Joy and what the term "Black Joy" means to you. Also because a few weeks ago, I had a conversation with Myisha Hill and it was about a book that she and I had both recently read and it was *What Happened to You* by Oprah and Dr. Bruce Perry and she got me on to the thought of the fact that there are so many of these authors that are just new and up and coming and that the word "heavy," I'm coming back to the word "heavy" is the fact that a lot of this content is so crucial. It's so important and it is such high value.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** But the heaviness is often offset by the books that increase your sense of joy.

**Layla F. Saad:** That's right.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yes. So what does the term "Black Joy" mean to you?

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes, this is a great question and I completely get what it is that you're trying to say. I will start by saying I've written *Me and White Supremacy*, the young readers or young adult edition and I will now never write another antiracism book ever again because it is so

heavy, because it does take so much from you, because it requires you to tap into so much of your own trauma and so much collective trauma in service of uncovering truths that need to be uncovered, right? In service of people being given the opportunity and the invitation to do the healing work that needs to be done so that we can have the world that we want.

It is necessary work, but it comes at a great cost and it's not something that just as a person as me Layla, it's not something that I'm willing to do to myself again and it's also – I also don't think that it's the – I don't think that it's the aim of this work that we should stay at that stage. Like antiracism isn't the end goal, right? Honoring the fullness and the beauty and the worthiness of our full dignity and humanity. I feel like that's the end goal. Liberation is the end goal.

So antiracism is that important first step and many people stay in just that first step for their entire life and that's OK. But I don't feel like I was made to just stay there, right? Because it does take so much from me and I often – I remember in 20 – it would have been 2017. I had written an article that had gone viral called “I Need to Talk to Spiritual White Women about White Supremacy”. That was how I first started talking about racism and white supremacy.

Like I said, I got very burned out. One of the questions that I was asking myself was I know that I've been called to do this. But if white supremacy didn't exist, what else would I be doing, right? And what would so many activists and authors from the past be doing? What would they be creating? What would they be writing about? What would they be making? What would they be spending their time doing?

It wouldn't be antiracism because it doesn't exist, right? We won't have to think about it. So I want to give myself the opportunity to go beyond just that first step of mind all the trauma that you can in order for White people to learn and really tap into joy, really tap into liberation, really tap into humanity because that's – I often think about the little Black girl within me. That's what she deserves and that's what my kids deserve.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** Right? They deserve to see me not burned out, not in a constant state of trauma, in a constant state of grief and it is something that pulls us. It calls to that expanded possibility of humanity that's within each one of us that says actually I'm inspired to be more and to be better and to be more connected with other people and to see other people's humanity because I can see my own.

So that's the work that we're doing within the podcast and the book club. I feel like that is that piece, right? That we have people reading books and some of the books that we have – because we're talking to authors of color. There are themes in there that are heavy. There are themes in there that are challenging but there's also joy. There's also love. There's also connection and that's what it means to be human.

**Amanda Lytle:** OK. So I am going to come back to that heavy part only for the – the kind of the second part of the question.

**Layla F. Saad:** OK.

**Amanda Lytle:** I was curious if after such a success with *Me and White Supremacy*, if you felt pressure to continue writing in that genre.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yes, OK. Yes! Oh, yes! OK. So yes, keep going there because then my second kind of – I guess third part of that question was going to be avoiding that or like avoiding the pressure of feeling like you need to continue writing in that genre to explore an area of writing that brings you joy.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yeah. So I have a tendency to get really fidgety when other people have expectations of me, of what they think I should do, right? And I know it makes sense when you've built let's say a level of credibility or expertise in a particular area to just keep drilling down on that, right? To just go deeper and deeper into that.

That isn't my natural setting though. I'm a naturally curious person. I tend to get really interested in something for a few years and then when I feel like I'm complete there, I will move on to the next thing.

There's always a thread that connects them. There's always this thread of healing. There's always this thread of making myself a better person, helping other people to be better people, helping the world to be a better place. That's always going to be there.

But the idea of just staying in a very narrow field of expertise just because you've built that credibility goes very much against my own just sense of Layla-ness, right? It's just not me but it's interesting because I recently gave a TED Talk. So my first TED Talk at TEDx Vienna and when I was approached to speak there, I think they approached me thinking that that was what I would talk about, right? *Me and White Supremacy* essentially and I made a very deliberate choice not to do that.

I made a very deliberate choice to give a talk that was about again centering and celebrating authors of color, my journey as a reader, what I've learned from reading from Black authors, why there are these huge disparities in the industry, why we need to uplift and support these authors and yeah, I mentioned a little bit about the fact that I did write a book about white supremacy. This is what white supremacy is but that wasn't what the entirety of the talk was about because I knew if I go on to a TEDx stage and give a talk about *Me and White Supremacy*, I'm now locking myself in to this.

I don't have to – I just don't have to do that, right? The work that I'm doing with the book club, podcast, anything else I do in the future, is its own form of antiracism. It just isn't coming at it from the perspective of centering a white gaze and centering what White people need to hear.

It's what about me. What about us, right? What do we need? And I feel like if people with white privilege are on that journey, they will recognize that there's a lot of value they can get from that, right? That it's not – just because Black and Brown people are being centered doesn't mean that they can't get something of value there.

But it's – yeah, it's just – I'm just not going to center that. But I think that idea of I should do this, I should continue along this way, I think that's very drilled into us. We have to really resist it.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** Hey friend. We are coming straight back to *The Book Stoop* after a quick break.

**Amanda Lytle:** So just a moment ago, you mentioned your journey as a reader and I'm curious about your journey as a reader but also as a writer, as a creative in this space. So you got into writing with the article and things kind of started moving from there and then this book has really taken off. So can you share a little bit about the creative process journey?

**Layla F. Saad:** I was speaking to a friend about this yesterday actually, about – well, what I will say is I think that writing an antiracism book, a book that is specifically for a white gaze, has its own very specific creative process that is different to one where you're centering your own gaze or you're centering a universal gaze because you're trying to do two different things.

The creative process with *Me and White Supremacy*, it is intense. It is really intense. OK. So from a writer's perspective, what you're trying to do is to create a tool that is understandable, right? That walks people through a process, that doesn't just throw them into the deep end but leads them from A to B to C and so on.

So I was very intentional about and very strategic about what that walk needed to look like, that journey needed to look like and intentional about selecting examples of white supremacy in action and reflection questions that could help take the learning deeper.

So it's very much like a teacher process, right? But then the emotional process is one that, you know, you – I as the author, I'm not separate from the subject matter. This is my life experience. So throughout, you know, I'm thinking about my experiences as a young child, things that my parents have told me, things that friends have shared with me, things that I've experienced as an adult, things that my children are experiencing or that I fear that they will experience and looking at it both from the – like again the trauma but also – OK. So what can I draw from that to explain this?

It's an interesting process because on the one hand, you have to be quite clinical so that you don't get lost in it. But at the same time, if you're too removed, then you're not doing the work, right?



So it's an all-engulfing process. This is what I guess I have to say. It was also really interesting when I was writing the adult version, doing so much research on other books on these subjects that I read.

One of the things that really struck me was, wow, there are endless books on these topics. Just on and on and on and so many more. I mean I know that we feel that now in these times. But I'm talking about books that I've read from the '70s, '80s, '90s, right? Like that era.

And we're still having the same conversations. So on the one hand, I felt very like, oh good, there's a lot of source materials that I can draw from. But on the other hand, it was very depressing because why is there still so much and we're acting today like if this is a brand-new conversation. Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah. In this space, like you said, just the book that you had written and put so much emotional, mental, and spiritual labor into would have required so much rest at the same time because you are putting so much energy into it.

**Layla F. Saad:** Right.

**Amanda Lytle:** So I'm curious about what nourishing yourself looks like in that process.

**Layla F. Saad:** So my writing process, I tend to – I don't write every day. But when I know I have a writing project, I have to seal myself off from everything. So it kind of becomes like a – it's very regimented. Like I will start writing and writing at the same time every day and I just can't be there for my family in the way that I usually am. I can't be – like I can't even be messaging a lot with my friends in the way that I usually do. I need to not talk to anyone in that time.

So I usually take maybe four weeks, maybe six weeks and it's just like go time, right? Before that, I may have been reading, I may have been thinking. I may have been just reflecting and playing with some ideas. But when it's like it's writing time, I'm completely cut off from the rest of the world. I go into my writing cave and I'm very grateful that I have family and friends who can completely understand my process and don't feel offended.

They're just like, "How can we help? How can we take a load off for you?" After that is when I rest. I can't rest in that period because now my brain is like go, you know. So I wake up. I'm writing. When I go to sleep I'm thinking. When I'm dreaming, I'm writing in my dreams, right? I wake up in the middle of the night, grab my phone and start writing things on my phone. When I'm done with it, don't ask me to do anything.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh, yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** Don't ask me for interviews. Don't ask me to do anything. I am off the grid. Like I'm not available because again, I don't feel that it is a job of Black people to sacrifice ourselves at this altar of whiteness so that White people may learn to do better.

Like I need to take care of myself. So the kind of agreement that I'm making with myself in that moment when I'm doing the work is I know why I'm doing this. I'm doing this in service. I'm doing this in service of my little Black girl inside, my children, other people. So I consent, right? I agree. I am doing this work. When it's done, that's it. I'm done. Yeah. So having those like internal boundaries of knowing when I'm on, I'm on, when I'm off, I'm off has been really helpful for me.

**Amanda Lytle:** I would love for you to share the importance behind in your perspective and in your opinion with the offering of the young readers' edition that's coming out speaking to the importance of having something like this available for that age group.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes. So what's really great about this book is it's different to the adult version because it's for kids of all races, kids of all identities. So the process of writing the young readers' edition, at first I will tell you was really, really hard. I think it tapped into a lot of inner child stuff for me that I just hadn't opened that door yet. So it was really hard and then there was the process of how do I write this for kids. Am I going to damage them? Is this going to be really hard for them?

But when I was finally able to connect the pieces together, it actually became a really inspiring book for me to write because I kept thinking I wish I had had this book. This is the book I wish I had had. I wish the White kids in school with me had had. I hope, you know, is read and taught at my kids' school because it's telling them what they need to understand, things that are either not explained or they're given very oversimplified explanations which then leave them feeling confused.

But at the same time, it's very actionable. It's very practical. It's very much about, you know, you can be a change maker. This isn't about – it's different with adults because when you look back on your life, you have to think about all the racism, all the racist things that you did that you probably didn't even realize were racist, right?

So you start looking back at your friendships, looking back at your relationships, looking back at everything. Kids are not looking back. They're looking forward. So as they're looking forward, I hope that this book is helping them to think about who can I be. Who can I choose to be going forward with these tools, with this understanding?

The idea of giving kids of different races the ability to have conversations with each other that are not tainted by fragility, by defensiveness, by rigidity because they're open, they're young, they're open, they want to do the right thing for the most part, right? They want to be good people for the most part. That is really inspiring for me.

I really hope that this will be a book that first will add to the canon of books that already exist in this area for young people but one that will help to really change how kids think about themselves, their own identities, and other people and that we are able to raise these young people who just know it's OK. You can have a conversation about race without completely falling apart. Like it will be OK, right?

And these are the ways which you can begin making change within the institutions, within the systems. It doesn't have to be like it was, right? Like it's not just now about your relationships with your friends, your relationship with your family. We're talking about you're going to grow up. You're going to become teachers. You're going to become engineers. You're going to become pilots, whatever it is, healthcare, whatever industry you end up going into. You can create change within there. That is very exciting to me.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh, so exciting. That makes me think of the first time that I had heard about your podcast and the title of it, "Good Ancestor". It can almost be taken two ways and I'm not sure if that was intentional. But the way that I had interpreted it first is almost like the love, appreciation, and value of the good ancestor that you've had but also the value in the process of becoming a good ancestor.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** And that's why I didn't know that before we had started talking about how that's what this switch is going to turn into is becoming. So I would love for you to speak about that change.

**Layla F. Saad:** Absolutely, yes. So we've had Good Ancestor Podcast, Good Ancestor Book Club. We previously also had Good Ancestor Academy where I was running antiracism virtual classes, which again I've chosen not to do that anymore. So we've shut that down. But the "become a good ancestor," I really wanted to put that emphasis on the – I'm talking to you, right?

Like this is a call to you, right? This is a call. This is something that you can become and the word "good" is actually really important to me as well because it's not become the best ancestor. It's not become a perfect ancestor, right? It's good and good is – I feel like it encompasses the trying and the stumbling and the failing and the winning and all of it in between, right?

But that calling of bringing it altogether and like I said, our emphasis now is specifically going to be around authors and talking about authors as good ancestors because I feel like even when I interview guests on the podcasts and I will ask them, "Who are the ancestors who have influenced you on your journey, whether they're your blood ancestors or societal ancestors?"

There are always the relation ancestors. My grandmother and my great-great so and so, but then there's always authors. This author's book taught me this. This author taught me that. Books are our ancestors as well, right?

That's why I get so excited. Like when I think about what it means to me to be a good ancestor. One of those things is I want to leave behind a stack of books for people to be able to – like way after I'm gone, that they can still access something, that they can still connect to my essence but also a legacy of work that is about healing, that books themselves become the ancestors. That is what is exciting to me.

**Amanda Lytle:** Now when you're talking about this stack of books, looking forward, I know that next year is going to be a big one too. But moving forward, is there ever a style of book or a genre of book or a storyline that you could see yourself diving into and publishing one day?

**Layla F. Saad:** So I've been thinking about everything and every day I'm like saying to my husband, "You know, I think I could write this. You know what? I think I could do this." I think there's a lot of things that I would be interested in. I'm also really interested in stretching myself and seeing what it is that I could do and just trying, right? And just seeing like what could I write that I don't think that I can, that maybe I can, right? I didn't think that I could write the young readers' edition of *Me and White Supremacy* because I didn't think I could write a book for kids. Like it just – my brain – I couldn't get my head around it. But I did it. I'm actually really proud of it, right?

**Amanda Lytle:** Of course.

**Layla F. Saad:** So some of the things that I'm thinking about are I love the style of – I shared at the beginning the book *See No Stranger* by Valarie Kaur, which is part memoir, part manifesto and I really love that because I think at my core, I am a teacher. So anything that I share, there's always going to be a lesson there. If I pull stories from my life, I'm not just telling them just to tell them. It's because I want to help someone connect the dots to understand something about themselves or about the world.

So I love that like memoir manifesto or memoir essays, like that kind of genre. Writing the young readers' edition also got me excited about the possibilities of writing for young people and exploring what that could look like and maybe – because I've always – my whole life, I've always thought I don't understand how people write fiction books because it just seems like magic to me.

It just seems like how do you pull out characters from thin air and plot lines and make it all make sense. So I'm not that type of a writer. But if I wanted to explore fiction, it would probably be experimenting with kids first, right?

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Layla F. Saad:** I could keep it a little bit more simple, right? And exploring that way. So that's another genre that I would love to explore and maybe see if – you know, I spoke about my love of sci-fi, you know. Maybe see – if I wanted to write fiction, what if it had a sci-fi bend to it, you know? I don't know. Like ...

**Amanda Lytle:** Well, the sci-fi element of it, like you're saying, when you're pulling out characters and stuff, the cool thing about sci-fi is that it's almost expected to just break norms and break ideas of what you would actually think is reality. So there's so much freedom I think.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yeah, yeah, there's a lot and I really wanted – you know, coming off of the back of *Me and White Supremacy*, which has been this incredible success that has had this huge impact, I really want to give myself permission not to have to follow up with another book that is that big because it's not in my hand. The same way *Me and White Supremacy*, having the success that it has had has not been in my hands. It just happened to be the right book at the time that we have now, and I think if I set myself up to say, "I need to follow it up with the same or something bigger," then I don't give myself the freedom to explore myself as a writer, as a creator, right? And see what could I play with and what could it be and how could it be

So I think that's really important as well and I think it's – I think it's important for all creators but especially for Black creators and creators of color because again, we are so underrepresented in the industry that it feels like if we're not hitting it out of the park, we don't get any attention, right? Only a few of us get selected, right? And that you have to be at a certain level of either just complete like impeccability or it's a book that only centers the white gaze.

So it's only relevant for the market because it centers the white gaze. So I'm grateful for *Me and White Supremacy*, absolutely, but I don't want to trap myself in that going forward. I believe I have the right to explore other ways of creating and other ways to see myself and however it does, at the end of the day, I want to get to the end of my life and have that stack of books since I wrote these.

**Amanda Lytle:** Heck, yeah, and you're going to have it. This is so exciting. Layla, I've loved this conversation. I've got one more that I've got for you and that is offering an opportunity for a shoutout.

**Layla F. Saad:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yes! An account, a person, an organization, disruptor, activist or change agent. Who would you love to give a shoutout?

**Layla F. Saad:** So I would love to give a shoutout to the Mama Glow Foundation of which disclaimer, I am a founding board member. The Mama Glow Foundation was founded by Mama Glow. Mama Glow was founded by Latham Thomas, and it is an advocacy platform that is working for birth equity in the United States. They focus on supporting doulas, supporting the arts, really highlighting birth workers of color in that space and the inequities that exist there as well as helping to protect mothers of color and Black mothers who suffer from the rates of post-birth death and all of those things related to maternity.

It's just so much greater for parents of color than they are for White parents. So that is the organization I would love to shout out. Go and support them. Make donations. Support their events. It's incredible work. It's really important.

**Amanda Lytle:** Fantastic. I will have that linked.

**Layla F. Saad:** Thank you.

**Amanda Lytle:** Thank you so much for being a guest on *The Book Stoop Podcast*.

**Layla F. Saad:** Thank you for having me, Amanda.

**Amanda Lytle:** Thank you so much for being with us. Please be sure to follow us on your podcast app and leave a rating where you're able. Written reviews help us reach more listeners too. Be sure to check out the show notes for all the links and share *The Book Stoop* with your community. Talk soon.

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