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Reading Podcast

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ZBITNEW: So Chelsea, I know you like writing. That's one of the things that you do, and I was just going to ask you when you started writing stories. How old were you when you started... First started writing stories?

CHELSEA JONES: I started writing stories at a very young age. But I wasn't very consistent about it because I thought that as a kid, I could just write a novel. I thought you just sat down and did that and then I would become very discouraged when that didn't happen.

ZBITNEW: Oh, really?

JONES: Yeah. It was too bad. So I would write these sort of long stories that never had endings and then it wasn't until I was in school and I had teacher's guidance around writing that I began to understand it as a process.

ZBITNEW: Oh, interesting. Jennifer Chatsick, do you like to write stories?

CHATSICK: Um, I like the idea of writing stories and I will often think of stories in my head, but I don't always put them to paper.

ZBITNEW: Interesting. So Jason, when did you start writing stories? When did you start?

JASON: I think I started writing about... I think it was during high school?

ZBITNEW: Okay.

JASON: During high school. And I have about... I don't have all of them, but I have about... How many was it? Seven. Seven. Going on eight books right now.

ZBITNEW: Wow! And when you were in high school, did you have a class about writing or did you just start writing them?

JASON: It just started out as a hobby for me. Just something I could do while I'm not in school or anything.

ZBITNEW: Cool! Hi, Ermel! How are you?

ERMEL KABANGU: Good.

ZBITNEW: Good! We're just talking a little bit about story writing and asking some questions and so I wanted to ask you when you started writing stories? And if you could talk into your microphone a bit? Make sure we can hear you.

KABANGU: Probably when I was a little, little kid. I started liking what's in movies and TV shows and interesting stories like Star Wars and Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter and Narnia. It happened when I was growing up and I liked to watch stories ever since.

CHATSICK: Those are all my favourite stories too. I love Lord of the Rings and Narnia and Harry Potter.

KABANGU: Yeah. I really like Star Wars. Star Wars is my favourite one. Yeah.

ZBITNEW: That's a good story. When you write stories, do you write them with a pen on paper or do you type them out? How do you write them?

KABANGU: I write it in pencil.

ZBITNEW: Okay.

KABANGU: Yeah.

ZBITNEW: And Jason? Oh! Sorry, Ermel. Did you have more to say?

KABANGU: Yeah. And I like to draw my own characters as superheroes. I like to the superhero Stan Lee that made a bunch of the superhero universe.

ZBITNEW: Cool.

KABANGU: Yeah.

ZBITNEW: And Jason, when you write stories do you type them out or do you write them in a book or a piece of paper or do you do both?

JASON: Well, I first write them in a book. I have one here. It's just a regular journal-like book, but other times when a laptop is available, I re-write the stories I've already written onto a laptop.

ZBITNEW: And do you have favourite stories that you would... Did you like Harry Potter or did you like Narnia books? Do you have favourite books?

JASON: Not really. I didn't... I don't think I had a book that I read much. Those... There were some classic children's flip books that I used to read. I used to read those way, way back.

ZBITNEW: Okay. Chelsea, did you have any questions before we get into doing some reading that you'd like to ask Ermel and Jason?

JONES: Yeah! I mean, one thing I was wondering about is if either of you had any advice for people who might be listening who might want to get into writing?

JASON: Let's see. Well, for me, finding a quiet place where you can focus your mind on writing works.

JONES: And what kind of place is that for you?

JASON: Well, back in the... Most of the stories I wrote was back when I was still in the Philippines. And back home in the Philippines, I used to go upstairs to a separate room because when we were at the Philippines before, me, my brother's room and my room were upstairs. So that's usually where I wrote my stories before. Just to help me focus on what I'm writing.

JONES: Okay. And Ermel? How about you? Do you have any advice for people who may be interesting in writing?

KABANGU: If you feel like writing, if you feel like something is coming to you, towards you, and you feel like writing it on paper or in a book, you should go for it! If you've got, like, something that you imagined. Yeah.

JONES: Thank you. Thanks.

ZBITNEW: Jennifer Chatsick, did you have a question that you'd like to ask?

CHATSICK: Do you try to... How often do you try to write?

JASON: Well, for me, as soon as... Well, for me, I have to write as soon as I get a story plotline in my head or else it's going to go away pretty easily. I have to write it immediately or at least bullet points on what that idea was. I have to write it down so that I don't lose it.

JONES: Yeah. Kind of catch it while it's fresh.

JASON: Yeah.

CHATSICK: How about you, Ermel?

KABANGU: I write when... Same like Jason. I write when I have an idea or when I feel like it.

ZBITNEW: Good.

KABANGU: Yeah. It's best. It makes me in my own, like... It keeps me calm. It keeps me calm by myself in my own soul.

ZBITNEW: Cool. So why don't we start... I don't know who wants to go first? You can decide and maybe you can tell us a little bit about the story that you want to read and then you can read it out loud.

JASON: Maybe I'll go first?

ZBITNEW: Okay, Jason. So just make sure you're talking right into your microphone. So if you want to give us a little bit of information about the story? Maybe when you wrote it or if there's some information we should know and then you can start reading it.

JASON: Okay. So, yeah. This book is actually number... Book number six in my stories. This is the sixth one and it's mostly a love story, almost. And when I write my stories, I usually pick out a specific holiday to revolve around it. This one and the other one that I'm writing right now is mostly revolving around Valentine's Day. And, yeah.

Characters are planning and doing stuff for a Valentine's party. That is essentially what this book is about. Okay. My titles are very long, by the way.

ZBITNEW: That's okay. (laughs).

JASON: So my prologue is titled Love Is In The Air: Councils, Trials... Councils and Trials for Relations. So I'm mostly speaking in third person in most of these stories. So as we start book six, we'll start at the season of love. The council having celebrated their great, big foundation day celebration in the last book. They notice how time moves so fast and now it's Valentine's Day so the council planned to have a romantic Valentine's Day ball where every council member and student can have a fun and giving... Can have... Every council member. Having fun giving lover's chocolates for one another. Having noticed about the holiday, the girls of the council planned to make chocolates to give to the guys. Character dialogue. Ms. Lera: "Hey, ladies. I'm going to call a meeting. Meet me at my classroom and we'll talk privately." Student Lisa: "Miss Lera? Am I included in this meeting?" "Sure. Lisa. We'll use... We can use your help with what we're planning." The mother of the main character: "Okay. Okay, Miss Lera. What was it you want us ladies to talk about?" "Well, ladies, haven't you noticed the date recently when we finish our anniversary?" Ms. Yeel, a new character: "By that you mean... Oh! I get it." Lady L: "Miss Ellie? What was it, Miss Yeel? What's this meeting about?" Lady Zellie: "We'd like to know too. We'd like to know as well, Miss Yeel." The mother of the other main character: "Wait, Zellie, I think I also know the reason. Isn't tomorrow Valentine's Day?" Another student: "Then that means... Yes, Lera. Okay, everyone, here is what I have in mind. So Miss Lera will talk to all the female members of the council and assign different tasks to each and every one of them while also keeping the details of their meeting a secret." So the romantic Valentine's Day party was just planned. And that was it for the prologue. Then... Can I keep going?

ZBITNEW: Sure! If you want to keep going.

JASON: Chapter one. Attraction. The first step to falling in love. Since our book is now on a deeper setting, the author will now focus on developing relations from character to character. So, last time, we heard the meeting of all the female warriors in the council. Now we'll hear what the guys will be planning for this lovely, once in a lifetime occasion. The main character: "Hey guys! Any of you know what season it is today?" The best friend: "Huh? That's a weird question. Isn't it summer? I'm not talking about actual seasons (indiscernible)." The cousin: "Huh? Then what were you talking about? What were you referring to, cousin?" "Well, have any of you... Have any of you noticed what date it was when we celebrated our anniversary yesterday?" "The date? If I remember correctly, it was the 31st of January. Huh? Wait. That means... Yes, (indiscernible). It's that season here and now." "Okay, guys. It's February and all of you know what's on the ladies' minds when this season strikes." The cousin: "You're talking about..." "Well guys, what do you say? We all should buy the girls some stuff they might like as exchange." "Yeah!" So all the male

members of the council also got busy on their own on how to surprise the girls of the council. And that's the end of chapter one. My stories are very short!

ZBITNEW: (laughs). How short are your stories?

JASON: It's mostly just beginning statement, dialogue, and then ending statement. That's how short it is.

ZBITNEW: So how much more do you have left in that story that you're reading now?

JASON: This one in particular is... How long is this one? It's about 99 regular chapters and 10 epilogues.

JONES: Wow! I love a short story. Are there other people... Other short story writers that you like to read or that you like to learn from?

JASON: Not really. I just really picked up the hobby to write stories one day. Just to keep myself busy every now and again.

JONES: I have a couple questions for you, Jason. Do you mind if I ask you a few things?

JASON: Uh, yeah!

JONES: Okay. So I want to ask you the same thing I asked Ermel, is where do you get your inspiration for this kind of story? Because it seems there's almost sort of a Sci-Fi element to it. You know? Sort of this other-worldly element. So where do you get your inspiration for the story?

JASON: Where was it? Well, it's mostly from watching some... Because back in the day, I used to watch a lot of... A lot of drama. Mostly Filipino dramas back in the day when I was still in the Philippines. We used to watch those. And yeah. And I got a lot of stories from that one.

JASON: The adventure part of it I guess is from my gaming side, I guess. The gamer side of me. I don't know.

JONES: Yeah. Can I ask a follow-up question?

JASON: Yeah, sure.

JONES: Thanks. So I was just thinking, you just mentioned a soap opera that you used to watch when you were in the Philippines and earlier, you mentioned a writing space that you had when you were in the Philippines. Is there a difference for you between writing in Canada and writing in the Philippines?

JASON: Not much. I think I just really need a quiet place where I can focus on writing and just as long as I can keep the plotline in my head going, I can write as long as I want.

JONES: Nice. Thank you.

ZBITNEW: Why don't we get Ermel to read a little bit now and then maybe Jason, we'll come back to you if you want to read a bit as well. Would you like to do that?

JASON: Sure!

ZBITNEW: Okay. So, Ermel, would you like to first of all tell us a little bit about your story and then you can read it to us.

KABANGU: My story... I did it in high school with my teacher and it has multi-point stories in it. Yeah. So the story is called *The Mystery of the Missing Goldfish* by myself. Can I start reading? Okay. The day started off just like any other. The sun rose in the sky. The school buses ran on time. The sweater Frankie wanted to wear was once again stolen by Ermel. The breakfast Dylan ate before leaving for school was two eggs and two pieces of toast just as he had every day. That is of course, unless he had human flesh instead. Mr. Hawes greeted the students in the front hall on their way to class, the way he does on any other day, by stopping to tell each and every student what he had for dinner the night before. Last night was rice and fish. Most importantly, just like any other day, the students were all in attendance and on time for Ms. Ellem's class in room 306. Something however, some one thing was not quite right. Caylin was the first to notice. "The fish are missing!" she screamed. "The goldfish are missing!" The class had been keeping three very lovely little goldfish in an old tank by the window. The fish, though new, were very popular. Perhaps even more popular than Kenneth and Kenneth was very, very popular. Everyone turned and looked immediately at the now empty tank. Everyone, Ermel noticed, but Ms. Ellem. "Come on class," said Ms. Ellem. "We have a lot to do today. There is nothing different about this day, so let's get going." The clever students of room 306 knew that this was not the case. The students, however, were not only clever but also very polite. Not one student said anything more about the missing goldfish, but not one student was prepared to forget. Because no one said anything, the class continued as if it were just any other day. Jesse answered the question about the movie and Jesus did another great job of drawing. Lucas got all of the homework correct and everyone cheered, "Yay!" Even though things seemed, on the surface, the same as any other day, the missing goldfish were never far from anyone's mind. Just when Brittany was about to correctly answer yet another question about the story they had read, the class phone rang. Ms. Ellem picked up the phone but because it was a very old phone and the person on the other end was speaking very loudly, all of the students could clearly hear what the voice said. "They have been taken care of. They have all been taken care of." Ms. Ellem put down the phone and looked around the classroom and then quickly at the tank. It was clear to the very clever students that the call had something to do with the missing goldfish. Moments later, there was a loud knock at the door. Ms. Ellem walked over to answer. It was Mr. Swan with water all over his shirt. Kenneth thought that this was a strange way for Mr. Swan to be dressing. If it had been Keith, he would not have questioned it, but this was Mr. Swan and he was always dry. Ms. Ellem asked the class to be quiet and explained that she needed to take care of an important

matter. The class, because they are a very good class, did just that. Ms. Ellem, however, made the mistake of only asking them to be quiet and not still. So Caylin snuck over and put her ear up to the door and listened. It was easy to hear through the door and so she called the rest of the class over. One by one they crowded and pressed their ears to the door. Soon all of the 11 bodies, attached to all of the 22 ears, now understood what had happened to three very lovely, very popular goldfish. And then there's multiple stories from every one of the students. This story is from Dylan. My classmate in high school. The students all hear Mr. Swan and Dylan and Lucas talking. Dylan said, "Thank god we got rid of Ms. Ellem's stupid fish." Lucas said, "Yeah. They were so tasty but there is one more thing for us to do and that is killing one of the girls." Mr. Swan said, "I know the one we're going after first." The next day, everyone arrived in class except for Caylin. Ms. Ellem asked Dylan and Lucas where Caylin was. Dylan and Lucas said, "Don't worry about Caylin, Ms. Ellem. You will be joining her soon." Ms. Ellem screamed. "Dylan and Lucas are the reason the fish and Caylin are missing!" Mr. Swan said on the PA, "All of the kids in Ms. Ellem's class are to come down to the main office except for Dylan, Lucas and Ms. Ellem." Dylan and Lucas got up and walked up to Ms. Ellem. Ms. Ellem said, "If you guys hurt me, you guys will get an F on your report cards." Dylan and Lucas said, "You won't get a chance to write our report cards." Ms. Ellem screamed from the top of her lungs. This ending is from Brittany and Caylin. The fish are not dead. Someone took the fish. Just then, Mr. Hawes came in to talk to the class about the missing fish. Mr. Hawes said, "Who took the fish? Where are the fish?" Then Mr. Hawes walked out of the classroom into the hall with blood on his shirt. Caylin, Brittany and Jesse asked, "Why do you have blood on your shirt?" Mr. Hawes said, "It is ketchup." The kids knew he was lying to them and asked a question to Ms. Ellem. "What happened to the fish? Please tell us." And she said, "No, kids." And Mr. Hawes came back to the room and the kids said, "You killed the fish and on your shirt it is not ketchup, it's blood!" Mr. Hawes said, "I killed the fish and I ate them. I would have got away with it if it wasn't for you meddling kids!" The cops came to the school to get Mr. Hawes. "Bye bye, killer," said Caylin. "Bye," Brittany said. This ending is from Randy. Mr. Swan said, "My shirt is wet because I found the fish in the basement so here is the fish." Randy said, "Get out of my school." That's one of my short stories. This ending is from Lucas.

The 11 bodies and the 22 ears heard Ms. Ellem, Dylan and Mr. Swan talking about the fish. Dylan said to Mr. Swan and Ms. Ellem, "They are dead." Everyone in the class started to cry. Then Lucas said, "Let's get vengeance." Randy said, "What should we do?" Lucas said, "Gather books and we will get them back." Everyone in class ran out with books in their hands and surrounded Mr. Swan, Dylan and Ms. Ellem. Lucas came out of the pack and said, "Why did you three kill them?" Mr. Swan said, "We are getting paid three billion dollars to kill them." Lucas said, "Attack!" This is my ending now. The fish were dead and Mr. Swan had blood all over his shirt. Mr. Swan had blood all over his shirt because he helped make the fish dinner for Mr. Hawes. Caylin and the students came running to see Mr. Swan and

Mr. Hawes and they saw the blood and the fish everywhere. They ran back to class to tell Ms. Ellem. They started to scream about who killed the goldfish and Ms. Ellem said, "One at a time!" Mr. Hawes knocked at the door and Mr. Hawes said, "Is everything all right?" Ms. Ellem said, "Wait. The students were just about to tell me what happened to the goldfish." Mr. Hawes took a step forward but myself tripped him. The students ran past him and down the stairs to call the police. Mr. Swan snatched the phone and said, "What are you kids doing?" He was looking grimmer than ever. Then Dylan took the office chair and bumped it on his head and Mr. Swan fell instantly. The students called the police, but the phone was not working so they all went outside and Dylan said, "I can't run. My legs are too tired." Then Frankie said, "I may be small, but I can run fast." But someone from the darkness grabbed Frankie and Frankie shouted, "Oh no!" Ermel ran to the telephone outside and dialled 911 and then he said, "Quick! This is an emergency. I need your help, pronto!" Then the police came screeching across the street. Meanwhile inside, everyone was tied up. The police asked myself, "Where is the killer?" Ermel said, "Inside." The police took them to jail and they went to jail for 355 months and they were not allowed to have fish ever again. And this is Jesse's ending. Just then, Jesse and Ermel heard Mr. Hawes and Mr. Swan say they buried the goldfish out back. Jesse and Ermel told the class what happened. The class was shocked at what happened. They wondered why they buried the fish. Then Jesse and Ermel went to Mr. Swan's office and asked Mr. Swan, "Why did you bury the goldfish?" Mr. Swan said nothing. Jim took Jesse and Ermel to Mr. Hawes's office. (indiscernible) says in a squeaky voice, "Mr. Hawes will see you guys in a minute." Just then, the door opened and Jesse and Ermel went in and Mr. Hawes wasn't there. Jesse and Ermel looked around but Mr. Hawes wasn't there. Ermel saw some dirt on the floor leading to the washroom but the door was locked. Ermel said, "Move over!" and kicked the door open. Then they found some dirt and a cellphone. Ermel said, "What is that cellphone lighting in the washroom?" Ermel and Jesse went back to Mr. Swan's office and told him what they found in the washroom. They asked Mr. Swan where Mr. Hawes was because he was not in his office. Then Mr. Swan started to cry and said it was his whole plan to bury the goldfish and put the items in the washroom in Mr. Hawes's office. Ermel and Jesse asked where Mr. Hawes was and Mr. Swan said that he had to kill him too. Frankie and Ms. Currie's ending. The student told the (indiscernible) of Mr. Swan outside of the classroom. Mr. Swan was whispering to someone. He said, "I took care of the goldfish. (indiscernible) I delivered them to the secret location so they should be okay." Mr. Swan was whispering too, because the mystery person knows where the fish are located. Frank and Randy went to the washroom, but actually they were wandering the hallways of Eastdale. Then they saw Mr. Servos and Ms. Currie laughing in their classroom. Randy and Frank stopped and looked at why they were laughing. The teachers were feeding the fish healthy food and making them doing tricks. So the boys went to their classroom to tell the secret location of the fish. The students ran up to Mr. Servo's science class. They asked Mr. Servos, "Why do you have our fish?" His response was, "The fish are my best friends and I liked to talk to them every day.

They make me feel so happy. So students, you are welcome to come and visit them everyday in my class.” Okay. The end.

JONES: Thank you for that story.

ZBITNEW: Thanks, Ermel!

JONES: I got quite worried about those goldfish for a moment there.

ZBITNEW: Yeah! (laughs). It sounds like a good ending, though, in the end.

KABANGU: Yeah.

ZBITNEW: Ah, that’s great. Thanks, Ermel!

KABANGU: You’re welcome.

JONES: Ermel? Can I ask you a question? Is there anything in particular that inspired that story?

KABANGU: Yeah. Because in high school, in my class, we had the goldfish in our English class, and we were at the computer and we all decided to write our different stories about the goldfish in our class.

JONES: Awesome.

KABANGU: Yeah.

CHATSICK: I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed both of your stories. I don’t know what I was expecting but I didn’t expect there to be, like, murder and intrigue and all kinds of things like that.

ZBITNEW: (laughs). Yeah.

CHATSICK: It was really great. Thank you.

ZBITNEW: Yeah. And Chelsea? Did you have any last words before we let them go?

JONES: My last words are mainly thank you. It was so nice to sit here this afternoon and have two stories read to me. It was just such a nice way to spend the afternoon and thank you for sort of filling my imagination with the goldfish and the school and the people in other dimensions. It’s just so refreshing to think about these things so thank you both for your writing.