

Wilder Girls Transcript

Welcome to Reading the Rainbow, brought to you by the Dauphin County Library System. For the book curious looking for their next good LGBTQ+ read. Listen in as queer library staff discuss the Own Voice stories they've been reading.



Em: My name is Em. My pronouns are they/them.

Dani: Hello, I'm Dani and I go by they/them.

E: Today we are talking about *Wilder Girls* by Rory Power. Just a little bit of an introduction: Rory grew up in New England where she lives and works as a story consultant for TV Adaptation. She received a master's in prose fiction from the University of East Anglia and is the New York Times best-selling author of *Wilder Girls*, *Burn Our Bodies Down*, and *In a Garden Burning Gold*. She is represented by Daisy Parente at Lutyens and Rubinstein and Kim Witherspoon and Jessica Mileo at Inkwell Management. *Wilder Girls* is Rory's debut novel released in July 2019.

D: Alrighty and now for the book description: It's been eighteen months since the Raxter School for Girls was put under quarantine. Since the Tox hit and pulled Hetty's life out from under her. It started slow. First the teachers died one by one. Then it began to infect the students, turning their bodies strange and foreign. Now, cut off from the rest of the world and left to fend for themselves on their island home, the girls don't dare wander outside the school's fence, where the Tox has made the woods wild and dangerous. They wait for the cure they were promised as the Tox seeps into everything. But when Byatt goes missing, Hetty will do anything to find her, even if it means breaking quarantine and braving the horrors that lie beyond the fence. And when she does, Hetty learns that there's more to their story, to their life at Raxter, than she could have ever thought true. Content warnings for: graphic violence and gore, character death, parental death, and animal death, behavior in descriptive language akin to self-harm, and references to such as food scarcity and starvation, amnesia, a scene depicting chemical gassing, suicide and suicidal ideation, non-consensual medical treatment.

E: Yeah that's like kind of a laundry list of...[laughter] well no and honestly, like, I found this— I pulled that directly from the website which, I wish I had seen, like, had done my due diligence like I usually do and researching a little bit better before I read the book for the podcast which— I'm glad that we read this book because it's really, I mean, it's really good! I thought it was very gripping in a horribly grotesque way, but... So I listened to the audiobook, so I don't know if the content warnings are listed in the book itself, which I always appreciate when authors do that, but I did appreciate that like when you go to the author's website those content warnings are on the page where the book is being described and advertised. That being said, I have listened to audiobooks where they do, you know, list the content warnings at the beginning of the novel and I think like, yes the description is like, it doesn't shy away from the stuff that you're gonna get into in this book. But it gets, like, worse than you could ever expect at times, and I feel like I would have benefited from everything that goes on, at the top before I got into it, you know?

D: Yeah, oh my god it was so good! Okay, funny story: So, I tried to read it when it first came out, and I like dnf'd it. And I was looking at my goodreads, like, dnf comment and all it said was "it went too slow." And I don't know what I was going through then but I liked it this time.

E: I mean, to be fair there is sort of like, a creeping anxiety that, like, the beginning is a little bit slower. And I think maybe if I were reading the physical book I might feel the same way. But like—I talk about this all the time—I've made the transition into audiobooks and some sometimes, like, the narrators—and full credit to the two narrators who read the version that I listened to, which— Actually, let me look that up really quickly.

D: Yeah, because I listened to this, to the same audiobook I think. Really liked it.

E: So yeah, the narrators are Eileen Stevens and Jesse Vilinsky, and they write the characters Hetty and Byatt who we'll talk about in a little bit. But they are two of the main characters, and the perspective switches back and forth but you don't hear from Byatt until probably like halfway through the novel, and then I think that's—at least for me—it starts picking up before then, as you get clues to what's going on, like, at the school and on the island. Like the girls are kind of privy to, I mean, like—the tox hit, a lot of people died like immediately. And so they're kind of living through this without really trying to understand, and then you as the reader get a lot more context once you switch to that other narration perspective. And I could totally see how, like, it might drag if you weren't listening to it. Which isn't to say "don't pick up the book and read it," if that's your vibe. Yeah, I'm a little bit of an audiobook fiend I suppose.

A: But yeah it's like more of a slow burn. Like not everything hits you at once. if that makes sense.

E: No definitely. We can—I guess we can start talking about the characters now. Because that—it's kind of a good transition because I think that's what really drives the novel, is the relationships between like the three main girls which are: Hetty, Byatt, and Reese. And they all attend the Raxter school for girls on Raxter Island, which— Remind me, is it off the coast of Maine? I'm trying to remember like where specifically.

D: Yeah, I think it was Maine.

E: Okay, yeah. So Raxter Island off the coast of Maine. The school, it's a school for girls. It's like a preparatory school, and they have K-12 basically. And they are affiliated with the United States Navy, because it's Navy territory. And Hetty specifically— is it Hetty's dad who's in the Navy? Obviously I read this too far previous to—

D: It was Hetty— Sorry.

E: No, go ahead!

D: It was Hetty's dad that was in the Navy, but then it was Reese's dad—I believe who worked on the island with them.

E: Right. And then Byatt is kind of just like, is going through some things and her parents sent her to a boarding school, basically, on this remote island off the coast of Maine, that we

come to find out is plagued with a horrible toxic malfeasance [laughs] for lack of a better way to describe it. Because, again, like, that's kind of a huge part of it too is, they don't know what the tox is they just know that it kind of came in and wiped everything out. It's pretty harrowing honestly.

D: Yeah. Like, just the thought of being on a school on an island away from everybody else sounds terrifying. I don't know why you would want to do that to yourself. But then you add in the element of this virus? No. No thank you.

E: Yeah. Just the idea of boarding school seems so isolating. And when, like, they're *really* isolated. And that's a big, sort of, driving factor for Hetty is when she is tasked with the responsibility of helping pick up supplies that the Navy drops off the coast of the island itself. It's really, I mean, being a teenager is tough, and then also you've got this crazy toxin that is just wreaking complete havoc on not only the people there but the ecosystem, right? Like a big factor of the tox is that it sort of gets into the ground, it gets into the animals. The girls are cordoned off from the rest of the wildlife, right? The island is this forested area—pretty thick forest, which gets even thicker because the tox is just feeding wild growth, essentially. And something specific about Raxter, which is kind of a clue that we get early on, sort of, as to what's going on, is: the Raxter Island blues, which are these very particular crabs that only exist on Raxter, and they have developed to be able to breathe on land and also in the water, right? Like, they have evolved such as to have two sets of lungs, basically. And when they die they turn jet black. Like, in the process of dying they turn black, starting at the very tips of their little claw appendages—I don't know what crab legs are, I guess crab legs—at the tips of their little legs—yeah, claws—they turn jet black. And nobody really knows why that happens, they just know that it's this incredible ecological thing that they have evolved to be able to survive. And there's, like, something wrong with the crabs. And they know that the tox started affecting the other wildlife, and the animals start going crazy, they get huge, like, they get very, very large and incredibly violent too. There's a scene in the book: the girls are running through the woods and somebody shoots a deer. And there's another deer that eats the carcass of the first deer, and has these razor-sharp teeth. So it's this terrifying disease that has taken hold of the wildlife, and then also, like, immediately killed, I think, probably like three quarters of the school, right? They said like 75% of the school or something, like, that died right away and the only teachers that are left are: there's Headmistress and then there's Welch which is— Well, again, we'll talk about them in a second. And Dani, I'm gonna let you talk all about the characters, for like five minutes straight if you want. I just— This book was so compelling to me. Specifically, like, I don't want to say I love a dystopia, but a situation where the stakes are so dire and the narrators are confused, and you are trying to figure out what's going on alongside the narrators, and it's just, like, you're so glad that you are not in their situation but you can't help but keep reading to find out, like: okay what are they—how are they going to get out of this, what are they going to do?

D: About the crabs: I didn't realize that they're, like, parasitic until like 75% through the book. I don't know why. But there was a part—I don't want to like completely spoil it—but one of the main characters, she kept on, like, eating the crabs and I'm like, “oh I don't think that's a good thing.” Do you know who I'm talking about?

E: Wait, no. Is it Byatt?

D: Yeah, yeah Byatt! She kept on eating the crabs. Like, there was this one scene where she kept on talking about, like, crashing the crabs', like, skulls and then, like, cooking them.

E: Oh, I missed that. I knew—because there is a scene where, like, she crushes it in her hand and, like, watches it die, but I think I probably missed the part where she was also, like, eating the crabs. Yeah, geez.

D: I was like: maybe that's why she got sick suddenly.

E: Well I mean, it wasn't— She didn't suddenly get sick, right?

D: Yeah, yeah, not suddenly.

E: They all assumed that they had the tox. Like, they knew there was— There were certain points in the book where they were talking about, like, “Yeah, we all know that we're sick. We're all just kind of waiting to die,” essentially. They all know they're sick and at certain points they get sick again, right? Like they talk about the tox coming in seasons. So, like, a girl will get sick and then they know in X amount of months she's gonna get sick again, and it's gonna be her second flare-up, and it's gonna be worse. And then, by the time she's like 17-18, she's gonna get her third flare-up. And most girls go up to the infirmary after their third flare-up and they don't come back down, right? Like, they're so sick that they die. And they all know that they have it, they all know that they have it, it just affects them in different ways. And those different ways are completely altering their biological chemistry, right? To the degree of physical deformities, or I guess physical—I don't want to say deformities, but it's like they mutate, right? Like they literally mutate. It really is a tough read, but I don't want to dissuade people, because if you're into, like—

D: Body horror?

E: Yeah, well it's like, I'm not even into body horror and it was kind of— That was kind of tough for me, honestly, I will say. Like, there are some bits that I probably tuned out a little bit. And that might be, like, I might have tuned out the little bit where Byatt was like talking real gross about eating the crabs, right? Because there's some gory stuff. There's this, there's a scene in—oh gosh—I want to say chapter 16 or 17. I meant to look it up specifically so I could give, like, a specific trigger warning. But you kind of know that it's coming. Byatt is realizing some things. She's in her year of realizing things. And I had to skip because she— it's something for me that is, like, personally triggering that I was like, “oh, I think I can— I think I know what's going on, I can just like skip over the next, like, minute or so.” But yeah, maybe we can talk about the specific things that each of our main characters, like, what happened to them with the tox.

D: You were talking about like different mutations and you wrote down this one quote from Hetty, about her eye fusing shut and, like, it growing like a third eyelid. That was so gross! Because she kept on having to open it whenever it got all pus-y and everything.

E: Yeah it's really nasty and that, like—oh, god, there are scenes when, like— Byatt and Hetty are extremely close, to the point where, when Byatt gets sick Hetty's complete goal is to, like, find out if she's okay. Because when girls get that sick, Byatt's had her third flare-up, maybe like a third of the way through the novel, and she goes up to the infirmary. And most of the time, if not all of the time, when girls go up to the infirmary you cannot see them. And a lot of times you don't see them again. So Hetty feels really, really compelled to go, like, see if her friend's okay. And part of the reason they're so close is because Byatt literally sews

Hetty's eye closed for her when it, like, opens up. Like, it's—that was another scene where it's like: Rory Powers is really, you know, she's really writing it!

D: Yeah.

E: Yeah, Hetty loses her right eye entirely and—well, I think she goes blind first and then, like, the next day her eye's, like, completely fused shut, and it opens up sometimes and it's—yeah it's gnarly.

D: I was gonna say I read a lot of, like, gory splatterpunk stuff. So I was going into this thinking that it was just going to be like your typical YA horror, with like some cheesy lines or whatever. You know, like—I don't know—*Five Nights at Freddy's* type of horror. Something that's not that scary.

E: Like a little campy.

D: Yeah campy.

E: No, this book is gnarly. And, like, I'm very anti-censorship, obviously. I would not recommend this book to like a 13-year-old, you know what I mean? Like, this book, if I read this book I would have nightmares. And that's just me, but I feel like this is an older read, in my honest opinion. Like an NC-17 read, you know I mean? Like...

D: Yeah, I don't know. Because I was reading like Stephen King at 15 and, like, looking back—

E: Sure.

D: Because some of his themes were like more mature, aside from the gore and the horror. So I feel like this is a good, like, starting point for teenagers who are into horror on that level.

E: I think to some degree I may have seen this and just been, like, terrified. Just, like, because of what it is. But if it's— It's all about exposure, right? And if you're interested in these kinds of stories... It's hard to—I don't want to say it's hard to advocate for, like, gore—but if sort of “the creepy” interests you... Right? Like, if those sorts of things in a narrative compel you, then yeah that's a good point, I think this could be a good stepping stone. Especially because, I mean, the relationships in the book— I really appreciate some of the discussions that they're having about... or I guess, the thoughts that it compelled me to have about friendship, and jealousy, and commitment, and loyalty, and how far those things can drive us, and what those things can limit us from realizing, I guess, or accomplishing. Especially when the stakes are very high.

D: But yeah, I feel like it's very YA, aside from, like, people's eyelids falling out.

E: For sure.

D: Because the relationships are very YA-coded. I don't know why I came up with that term right now. But they're very realistic for, like, teenagers.

E: Yeah, definitely. It's like a—I don't want to say it's a love triangle, because that's not exactly what it is. But it's like, when you have three friends, and two of them are really close and... So, say you've got a triangle. And the left bottom-most point and the top bottom-most point are best friends. So much so to the point that, through this very traumatizing experience that they've, shared they are sleeping together in the same bed at night for comfort. They hold each other's hands, like, wherever they go. It's not—

D: Are you sure? Because there was a part—

E: Yeah [inaudible]

[Laughter]

D: Because there was a part where Reese was like, to Hetty, she was like, “I don't want to be friends like how you and Byatt are friends. Like, I don't want to be that close.” And I was like, “[groans]”

E: Oh, so I read that as like, Reese doesn't want to be friends like Hetty and Byatt are friends, because Reese wants more than that. Like, Reese sees that there's an intimacy there that is purely platonic. It is very deep, but it's not what Reese wants. Like, she wants something more romantic. Which isn't to say that there aren't elements— I mean it is YA-coded in that way, you know what I mean? Like it's very... I think it's nuanced. It's tough to tell whether Hetty realizes or even understands how she feels about Byatt. She realizes how she feels about Reese, or she kind of thinks she knows, and Reese for sure knows how she feels about Hetty, but we don't get a lot of Byatt—the narration we get from Byatt's perspective is less about her relationship with those other characters, and more about what's going on with her. And I think that that adds a level of, sort of, confusion also about what these relationships are, right? We definitely know that there's tension between Hetty and Reese—romantic tension—and we know that Hetty and Byatt are very, very close, and we can sort of imagine that Hetty has this feeling for Byatt, in a way. But the way she talks about Reese is so different that it kind of like, I don't know— and that's a big part of the conflict, I guess, the sub-conflict. Because the main conflict is obviously like the tox, and then within the context of, like, a love triangle at a girls' school which it feels like it's, you know, taking a lot away from what the book actually is. But yeah, I'm sorry go ahead.

D: I was gonna say it's also very queer-coded. That's like—

E: For sure.

D: Such typical like feelings that you're having in that situation: “Do they like me? Do they like me not? I have no clue!” And you're just completely oblivious to everything else going wrong around you.

E: Yeah very queer-coded. Yeah and Reese is sort of painted also as this, like, loner, right? Because, we mentioned this earlier, but her father, Mr. Harker, he is the caretaker at the school. So she doesn't really, like—you either have to be very wealthy or have a military parent to attend Raxter, but Reese gets free tuition and lives, well, she sleeps in the dormitories but she spends a lot of time with her father, and she knows the island very well because she's lived there for quite some time. So she has this connection to the place, but not so much to the girls, except for Hetty and Byatt, right? So she certainly doesn't want to rock

the boat in terms of the trio that they have, but— And same with Hetty too, right? Like, there's this sort of unspoken, like, “will they”/“won't they,” like, “what are we feeling? What is this other person feeling?” and nobody really wants to say anything. And then Byatt gets sick, and then Byatt goes missing, and then Reese and Hetty are forced to confront not only, again, this horrible situation with this disease that's completely sweeping the island, but also with their feelings for one another. Which I think is, I don't know, it's an interesting way to explore relationship dynamics, right? Like, under the most intense strain how do you also talk about what you're feeling, you know?

D: Going on about like the main characters: boat shift and gun shift. That's absolutely insane to me how they're just, like, trusting these girls to go out with these weapons and, like, stay on the roof with their guns, their rifles and everything. Which, I mean, I see why. Because, like, desperate times call for desperate measures, but that's so crazy to me.

E: Well, and I was trying to imagine myself in this situation and I don't know what I would do if I didn't just die immediately, right? Like, I don't have the best immune system. I've got some health problems. I feel like the tox would probably take me right away. But if you're one of the, you know, 40 people that is left surviving as people start dying off, you're forced to survive, you know? We could explain boat shift and gun shift a little bit more. The girls all have different jobs around the island, and it depends on how old you are. They have girls, at this point I think the youngest are like 13, maybe like 12 or 13 is what they said. Which kind of puts into perspective how long this has been happening, if you think about, like, okay the youngest girls who would have attended this school would have been much younger than that, so they have to sort of divvy up responsibility. And the gun shift girls are generally like 15-16 year-olds. All of the older girls are required to do shooting practice. Like, every girl over, I think, the age of 17 is required to know how to shoot a gun, how to load a gun, how to clean a gun, how to reload a gun, like you have to know. And some of the girls really don't like practicing that, but too bad, you have to, you're trying to survive. And so the gun shift is this rotating shift of girls that's entrusted to watch over the school grounds and, like Dani said, they're usually stationed on the roof building and they are armed with rifles and they're supposed to shoot any moving figures that they spot in the woods that seems a little bit spooky surrounding the school. Which is— They've got this big wrought iron gate that's old and it's, you know, it's keeping the darkness at bay for now, but who knows how long they'll be safe? Something particularly harrowing for the gun shift girls is that all of them are taught how to crack open a bullet and swallow the gunpowder poison, in the event that an animal comes across them and they need a fast way to die. Which is just so... I mean, again, like you said Dani, putting into perspective: these are like 15 year-olds, you know, 16 year-olds.

D: Yeah.

E: Yeah, it's— oh man. And then, the boat shift girls are—it's three of the oldest girls, and they accompany their teacher, Miss Welch, to and from the beach to collect the supplies that are sent by the navy. These shipments are only sent periodically, and they are not enough. They are not enough to feed the girls, they're not enough to clothe the girls. As we mentioned in the content warnings, these girls are starving and they're fighting over food. That's, like, one of the first scenes in the book is Reese, I think, punches Hetty in the face because there's an orange—a fresh orange.

D: Yeah.

E: And it's, like, the strong survive, literally. They fight over food, and they certainly don't let other girls starve, but it's like: you get what you get, and there's only so much. And something particularly special about the boat shift girls is that they're the only ones who are allowed to break the quarantine of the school grounds. And these are regulations that are set by the navy and the CDC, because they don't want— like, they know that there has been an outbreak, there's a lot of sick people on Raxter Island, and they want to keep them quarantined, and they're actively testing and trying to figure out like— Okay, what's going on? Can we cure this? And so the boat shift girls are the only people who are allowed outside of the school. And they're only allowed outside of the school with Welch, and they are— the gun shift girls are not allowed to keep their guns outside of gun shift, but the boat shift girls are allowed to keep a knife on their belt at all times. And so, yeah it's, again, a lot of responsibility for teenagers, and the stakes are really high. The book opens and, sort of, the main conflict, well not the main conflict, but a conflict that gets things going is that Reese's father, Mr. Harker who, again, is the groundskeeper at the school, he got the tox and progressively got sicker. And then, one day, just disappeared into the woods. And Reese has not seen him for several months. She doesn't know if he's alive. She desperately wants to be assigned boat shift so, at the very least, on the route to the beach to pick up the supplies she could stop by her father's house, or see if the house is even still standing. So she really, really wants boat shift. And somebody has recently stepped down from boat shift, and there's only three spots, and Reese thinks she's going to get it. Hetty thinks she's going to get it. Byatt thinks she's going to get it. Or at the very least, they all hope she's going to get it. And then Hetty gets assigned, and Reese kicks the shit out of her. She bleeds her up. And it's not Hetty's fault, and then it creates this conflict, and then Hetty learns a bunch of stuff about the shipment drop-offs that put her in a lot of moral conflict, and it just gets worse from there, guys. It really just gets worse from there.

D: One thing that I wanted to touch on was: the tox, it affects males differently. It affected Reese's dad differently, and then one of the male nurses that was attending to Byatt, it just was crazy, because, yeah...

E: No, yeah, that's a really good point. And it's the fact that you would, like, have to live through that, just, your body mutating and knowing that you're gonna get sick again, and knowing that people are just dying around you. And there's so much anxiety in this book about, like, are we actually getting help? What's really going on here? And Hetty finds out that, to some degree, resources are actually being withheld from the girls. And she doesn't understand why that can be the case, because they are starving. They're dying. And they're just—they're doing their best and they're also trying desperately to figure out, like, okay what is actually going on? And yeah, what a biological horror. What a biological horror! I want to read, really quickly—Reese, specifically, this is from page six of *Wilder Girls*, and this is sort of a description of how the tox first affects Reese: “She was one of the last to get sick. I thought maybe it had missed her. Maybe she was safe. And then they started. The scales, each shifting, sort of silver, unfolding out of her skin like they were coming from the inside.” So Reese, her whole—I want to say it's her right, I'm pretty sure it's her right hand—because that's one of the reasons why... Reese is a good shot, but she's not allowed on gun shift because she can't properly hold a rifle. Her hand is completely mutated into this, like, claw. They call it a claw all the time. Like, I think she still has five fingers—I could be wrong—but she's got these razor-sharp scales that actually she uses as a tool a lot in the novel, which I think is kind of cool. But, like, in terms of some of the other stuff that happens to these girls: Byatt grows a second spine, right? Like, Byatt grows a whole other spine that erupts out of her back and is incredibly painful, and her voice, her vocal cords, she loses her voice entirely

and she has a lot of difficulty speaking. Especially after her third flare-up, it completely takes away her voice and she also gains this, like—well, I'm not gonna spoil it. Something happens crazy, with her voice, that they never really explain. And I actually want to ask you how you feel about that, Dani, because there's a lot that's presented. Like, obviously this book revolves around mutation, and something that's affecting people and the environment. How scientifically accurate do you think that is? Like, how realistic did you feel this book was in terms of, like, biological health scare?

D: I guess it's realistic. If you look at things like what happened in Chernobyl, and then relate that back to this book, I guess it could be realistic. You can have mutations like that, right?

E: Yeah, for sure. I thought Power did a really good job of writing on the line of, like, scientific accuracy but also speculative fiction, to a gruesome degree. It reminded me a lot, honestly, of—I don't know if you read—*What Moves the Dead*, which I talked about with Annika on a previous episode.

D: Yes I did!

E: Yeah, and it reminded me of that, right? Where something takes hold and then changes so fundamentally, like, in your DNA. And then, just terrorizes you from the inside out. It made me scared! I don't know. I was just like, Oh gosh! I hope this doesn't happen to me!

[Laughter]

D: in the discussion questions at the end of the book, somebody compared it to *Lord of the Flies*. They called it like a queer, female *Lord of the Flies*. How accurate do you think that is?

E: Yeah, I saw that description too. And, I think it's a little bit accurate. But the thing that changes it for me is that, for *Lord of the Flies*, they're like literally marooned and stranded. And there's only these little kids, and I think the oldest kid in *Lord of the Flies* is maybe 15 or 16, right? And these girls, obviously, are not much older, but we have 18-year-olds. With the kids being older, and then also, there's adults, right? Like we do have Headmistress, and we do have Welch, and Mr. Harker was there for a little bit, and there were other teachers and administrators—but I think a lot of them died off very quickly. But they're not entirely left to their own devices. And Welch and Headmistress are in direct contact with the Navy and CDC. So it's not like they are, again, entirely stranded on their own, and having to come up with this make-shift governmental structure, or like, societal structure, right? So I think, yeah, it's definitely similar. It gives off the same vibe of “we are trying our best, we should be dead but we're not, we are the survivors, and we know it's gonna get worse and people are starting to get angry about things.” And the resources are slim, right? Like it's certainly—it feels similar to *Lord of the Flies*, but there are aspects of this, for me, that don't make that necessarily the best comparison. I think it's like *Lord of the Flies* in a modern context, I guess. I don't know. The medical and governmental intrigue of this, that's also an aspect that we haven't really talked about. I mean, we've touched on it a little bit. But the navy and the CDC do play a big role in, like, why things are the way that they are, and why they could be better and they're not quite. Like, there's stuff going on, there are puppet strings sort of being pulled that do not exist in *Lord of the Flies*, if that makes sense.

D: I think the comparison is true, because even though there is adults, they are dying off in the book. Spoiler! But by the end of the book, the two teachers do die off. So, I think that would be like the beginning morphing into *Lord of the Flies*.

E: Yeah, as you were talking I was thinking that exact thing. I was like, you know what? It would be *Lord of the Flies*—

D: Eventually.

E: —at the end, if what the ending suggests, doesn't happen to all the rest of the girls, right? I think it could easily morph into a *Lord of the Flies* situation. Especially after the adults are completely gone. Yeah, I amend my point.

D: Do you wanna wrap it up there?

E: Yeah, I think that's good. I do just want to mention, I have not read it but there is a prequel to *Wilder Girls* that takes place in, like, the year before the tox hits. On Rory Power's website, it's a free PDF download. I don't remember how many pages it is, I don't think it's more than like 20 or 30 pages, it's rather short. But, if you liked this book, and you want to know what happens leading up to this book, and you maybe want to see the girls a little happier, definitely check that out.

D: It's called *What We Did While You Were Gone*. Totally didn't look that up on Goodreads.

E: Oh, did you read it?

D: No, I didn't, but I just marked it as "want to read."

E: Well we will have to both read it. We'll both read it, and then maybe we can exchange some emails about it.

D: Okay!

E: Well, that wraps up our discussion of *Wilder Girls* by Rory Power. Join us next time as we discuss *Camp Damascus* by Chuk Tingle.



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