



Season 4, Episode 20: An Indie Bookstore Road Trip

Mon, 12/13 • 42:23

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:11

Hey readers. Welcome to the Currently Reading Podcast. We are bookish best friends who spend time every week talking about the books that we've read recently. And as you know, we don't shy away from having strong opinions. So get ready.

Kaytee Cobb 00:24

We are right on the chit chat, heavy on the book talk and our descriptions will always be spoiler free. Today we have a very special episode for you.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:32

I'm Meredith Monday Schwartz, a mom of four and full time CEO living in Austin, Texas and I firmly believe that the right books find us if we're willing to help them out just a little bit.

Kaytee Cobb 00:42

And I'm Kaytee Cobb, a homeschooling mom of four living in New Mexico and to me, a great indie bookstore is more like a place of worship than a place of commerce. This is episode number 20 of season four. And we're so glad you're here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 00:55

Oh, Kaytee, I love that. I love your bite size intro. That is so good.

Kaytee Cobb 01:00

I have to credit, our bookish friend Candace gave me that phrasing. And I was like, "Oh, Candace, I am so using that on the show. I'm so excited about it." So I'm excited to tie that in.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:10

We gotta do a mug or we are a tote or something based on that. That's fantastic.

Kaytee Cobb 01:15

She should just take a small percentage of royalties.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:18

Sure, a small percentage of a small percentage should be getting. Yeah.

Kaytee Cobb 01:23

Alright guys. So we do have a very special episode for you today. We gave you homework a few weeks ago and today we are visiting indie bookstores virtually around the country to learn about the magic that they make inside. We do want to let you know that this is our last episode of the year, because we are taking the next two weeks off for the holidays. But we will be back in your ears very first thing in 2022 with our yearly "best of" list, and I'm really excited about this episode in particular, and getting all your voices in our ears. So before we get started with that, we have one more announcement. Meredith, you want to tell everybody what we're so excited about this week?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 01:58

Absolutely. You know, we all year long. Of course, we have had indie bookstores on the brain with the Indie Press List, which you guys have heard us talk about. But we've had a lot of new listeners join us recently. So we want to let you know that the Indie Press List is a piece of content, one of the several pieces of content that we do for our Patreon subscribers. So for \$5 a month if you're a Patreon subscriber, on the first Thursday of every month, we release an episode called the Indie Press List and every month we have an independent bookstore that we have partnered with who has really spent a ton of time and talent to come up with five fantastic books, some backlist some brand new, some paperback, some hardback, and they press those books into our hands. You guys buy them directly from that bookstore. And it really, really helps bookstores all over the country. We debuted that in March of 2021. So we're just finishing up the first calendar year of Indie Press. We are super excited to tell you guys that we as of yesterday, we have completely locked down our calendar for 2022. Every month in 2022 is going to be filled up with an amazing, independent bookstore. We have bookstores from all over the country who are joining us, you guys. You know them, you love them, you are going to be discovering them. You are going to be so excited about the independent bookstores that are on our roster for 2022. So if you've been on the fence about joining us for Patreon, this month is a great time to do it. Because you can spend the next two weeks, the dark days where there are no currently reading episodes, binging all of the indie press list episodes from 2021, they're all there for you, and then everyone will be primed and ready for the first Thursday of January, where we will have our first Indie Press List episode of 2022 with Fabled, our anchor store, and they will be giving us a fantastic stack of books.

Kaytee Cobb 04:01

We're just thrilled. I feel like every time we got an email confirmation from an Indie Press List for this upcoming calendar year, we were messaging each other doing happy dances, just thrilled about the caliber of stores, the variety of stores the variety of locations, just I cannot even with how excited I am for this coming year. And it feels really good to have all those stores lined up in a full year's worth of docket for all of 2022.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 04:26

Exactly and I should say I did just say that in January we're going to have Fabled. Fabled is only going to join us for January this year. So if they are a favorite store of yours get in in January because that is going to be their month going forward. That is the month to get in for Fabled. I know we have a lot of Fabled fans and for the whole rest of the year we're going to be introducing you guys to I mean,

honestly some of the stores that we're going to be working with, I have been like they're bucket list stores for me. Yes. So I am so excited about them. So that's why we have bookstores on the brain. Kaytee, this is something that when you and I started the podcast, this is something that meant so much to us, creating community around books, and then making sure that we were all supporting the independent bookstores that are the backbone of what we do here in the industry. They are the one of the great places for us to find great books. And on today's show, you're going to be hearing some examples of that from stores all over.

Kaytee Cobb 05:24

You absolutely will. And I think, I think you're gonna be really pleased and you're gonna be really excited to hear from some of your fellow listeners of Currently Reading because these people know books, and they know what they're talking about. And they have great bookstores and books to tell you about today. So before we get started, we're going to do at least one little thing like we normally do, which is start with our bookish moments of the week, Meredith, and what have you got for us this week?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 05:48

I have been thinking about something. And as I talked to different my different book friends, and we obviously in the bookish friends community on Facebook, we always are talking about slumps. And it happens to every single one of us, right? This is one of the true bookish problems that we have. Here's what I've been thinking most recently. What if slumps are actually not a bookish problem Kaytee? What if slumps, reading slumps are actually the bookish universe preparing you for your next great book, because think how many times you go through what we are terming a slump, where you're like starting books, you're starting books in audio, you're starting books on you know, in print, you just can't find something that's working, and you're setting them down for later, because you just know they're not right. And then pretty soon you start to get more and more frustrated. But then you tap into that book that just you're like, This feels really, really good. This feels really, really right. And oftentimes, my theory is that that book ends up being really the right book at the right time. When I looked back on my slumps this year, almost every time I did that, I came up. And the next book I was able to settle into was one that made a real impression on me for the year. So I started talking to other people, and they started looking at their slumps, and then what came next? This is my working theory. What if slumps are actually the book universe, saying, I'm clearing your chakras for something great. So then if that's true, we can then relax into a slump and be like, "Okay, I'm just waiting. I'm waiting because there's something coming" and just instead of being frustrated, I'm gonna know that something good is coming. And I'm just gonna keep trying things and setting them down, but not in a bad way. Just in a "Okay. That's not it yet." And then you'll find it. This just happened to be on audio, which is weird, because I really have a hard time DNFing on audio. Yeah. And in this case, I do have three audio books in a row. I just couldn't get into it. And then I started a book, A Conspiracy in Belgravia, the second in the Charlotte Holmes series, which by the way, I had started a few times. I had started two times before and it didn't feel right to me. Well, all of a sudden, I started listening to it. And it was exactly right. So my theory is I was supposed to kind of be going to that slump, because that book was supposed to be delivered to me at that moment. So just noodle on that.

Kaytee Cobb 08:26

Okay, you are blowing my mind a little bit here. I want to tie this even more into a very Meredith thing. Yesterday, I started reading *Wintering* by Katherine May. And you are making me think of the way that she talks about wintering in our lives. And maybe a slump is wintering for your reading life. Right like that slow down. Yeah. And that preparing. I love that image.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 08:26

No, exactly. I really am so excited about this notion. Because all this year for me and you're we're going to talk about more of this at the the first episode of the year where we talk about 2021, it's really been about recognizing that it's not the book. It's really just the wrong book at the wrong time. Because again, *Conspiracy in Belgravia*, I had picked up multiple times, and it just wasn't doing it for me. So I think I need to get out of this notion that books are like, not for me. They're just that book just wasn't for me right then.

Kaytee Cobb 09:26

Well, there are books that aren't for us though, too.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 09:28

Well, exactly. But what I'm saying is like forever, I thought that *A Gentleman in Moscow* was a book that was not for me. I very much thought that. Well, guess what? That was completely wrong. It just wasn't for me then. Right? Right. You know, so slumps, I feel are maybe a part of us clearing the way to be able to find the right book at the right time, but sometimes they feel like we're so worried about filling our ending our slump or filling our reading, that we're willing to kind of angry read? Or like, you know what I mean?

Kaytee Cobb 10:04

Sometimes that's very satisfying though.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:06

Well, there's hate reading but I mean, like angry read or like mediocre read where you're like, like how many times do I hear these comments? Yeah, right. "I'm powering through this book. I'm sloggging through." Don't do that. Don't post about it in a book group. Just set it aside, that doesn't mean the book's not good. It doesn't mean you're not a good reader. It just means that the book universe is trying to clear your chakra for something else right now. Yeah, you know what I mean?

Kaytee Cobb 10:34

Yeah, this is a very intuitive start to our episode. I like that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:38

Right. Yeah, It's been on my mind a lot.

Kaytee Cobb 10:40

I think we can roll this into the indie bookstore thing. And we say like, if there's a voice memo that comes up here, y'all and it really speaks to you on a gut level, maybe that's your indie bookstore, and maybe the universe is trying to tell you, "Yeah, I think we can go with this bookish intuition."

Meredith Monday Schwartz 10:56

Exactly. If and also, you know, if you're an indie, if you're a Patreon subscriber, and you're listening to the Indie Press episodes, and there's an episode where you want all five books that might be your store, you know what I mean? So it's yeah, it bookish intuition. I feel like we all need, I just personally, I need to continue. This is something that Roxanna and I have just agreed this year that we are going to hold each other accountable for our bookish intuition. If something about a book is just not feeling exactly right, after 20-30 pages, 15 to 20%, an hour, whatever, however you're measuring, set it aside to be finished by a future version of you potentially, or maybe never again. But let's not get mad about it anymore. I feel like there's a lot of like, we put a lot of drama into that element of things. We as an entire community of readers. Yeah, right. Exactly. And so like, instead of just just being like, "It's okay, for right now. That's okay." There's so many books, that might potentially be right.

Kaytee Cobb 12:01

I love that. That is very ephemeral, and a little bit spiritual. So I'm going to, like swing us the other way, and go completely nerdy and stats driven for my bookish moment, just so we can make sure to capture the whole population here.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 12:17

Absolutely do it.

Kaytee Cobb 12:18

So today, I was updating my reading tracker for November. I love this day, I love to set some time aside on my calendar, really dig into the stats for the month. I usually just do it once a month and it's before I post a little picture monthly roundup of what I read from the previous month, I get to kind of revisit old friends, as I think about where I got things from. I get to sometimes dig a little deeper onto authors and where they're from or what their heritage is, or you know how long the book is on audio versus on print, all that kind of data goes into my reading tracker, as well as my recommendation sources. And I love that I have this really nerdy data driven thing that I get to dig into once a month. And then it constantly is updating. So every month, I can go back and I can look, you know, what was my percentage of own voices reads this month? How many books did I read that were above four stars for me? How many books did I read and I have broken down recommended by Meredith, recommended by Katie Proctor, recommended by Mindy. What were the star rating averages for each of those recommendation sources? And I can really dig into what's working for me in my reading life, and things that I want to be aware of for the following month. And I mean, it's a bookish moment every month, but I really wanted to take time to highlight it because I think it's so useful to not just get to the very end of the year, and say, "What did my year look like overall," but to every month sit down and say, "How did this go for me? If I had a slumpy month, can I attribute it to something? Was it clearing the way? Was I super busy? Was I sick? Did I have to travel a lot? What can I attribute those things to rather than over the course of

the year I had 20 fewer books than last year. Why is that?" Month by month, it's a lot easier to take stock of what's going on in my reading life and make changes as necessary and kind of course correct if I need to. So just being able to use that reading tracker and really dig into the stats and look at the charts, y'all I love a chart. It is so great. But all of that is just so satisfying to me. And it's so great to see it in black and white on the screen. Really take the heart feeling out of it and and know what's true in my gut instead, and be able to look at the head section of it as well like all three of those, that whole triad of head, heart and gut and be able to really understand myself as a reader better through the numbers. So, again, that's something that we do give to our Patreon subscribers every year, and a lot of people really love it. If you're a nerd, if you're a book nerd, this is a great bonus that some people really love and it's something that I really love as well. So that's my bookish moment this week.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 14:59

And Kaytee, we both fully realize now because we never know each other's bookish moments, we don't know, you know, we kind of just get behind the mic, and we go, it sounds like we purposely are throwing a lot of focus on our Patreon, right? I really just, honestly not our intention, I mean, not our intention but there's a lot of stuff that we're doing there that we think is pretty cool. So it's bubbled up into the big show, Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 15:26

It happens sometimes. That overflow is bound to happen sometimes. All right, so those were our bookish moments. Now we get to give you guys the good stuff. The meat of this episode, you are going to hear from person after person talking about bookstores that they love, and the books that were pressed into their hands, either by an employee or a shelf talker, or even by social media, and the ways that indie bookstores really can deliver on a promise. They are hand selling, because they're great at it. It's not an algorithm. It's a human. And we can't wait for you to take listen to these voice memos. We're gonna play them all in a row for you. So get out your pencils, you've got the shownotes handy, and take note of where you want to go, who you want to visit on social media, and which books you want to pick up. And we will be back at the end to tell you about some of our favorite indie bookstores and the books that they pressed into our hands.

Becky Clark 16:17

Hello, my name is Becky Clark and I'm from Stowe, Ohio. The bookshop I would like to press today is called the Learned Owl in Hudson, Ohio. It is 10 minutes from my house and it's a female owned business. So double yay. Kate, the owner is an absolute delight and has hand sold me *The Epic Adventures of Huggie and Stick* and *The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors* both by Drew Daywalt. For those of you who don't know, Drew is the author of the well known children's book called *The Day the Crayons Quit*, which is an absolutely adorable picture book for kids. Kate partnered with our local library and brought Drew in to do a reading of *Huggie and Stick*. And it was here that I learned that Drew is actually a former Stowe resident and a friend of Kate's. My kids and I got to meet him and we got the books we purchased through the Learned Owl signed at the event. It was fantastic.

Katie Chapman 17:08

Hey, readers, this is Katie Chapman, calling in from East Troy, Wisconsin, a rural town that's about 30 minutes southwest of Milwaukee. It's close enough for Mary to come down for a visit. So I would highly recommend that. Today I'd like to tell you about my favorite local indie bookstore, that's called InkLink books and it's located in East Troy, Wisconsin right on the town square. And it is a magical place. Go check out the website InkLinkbooks.com and see the beautiful pictures. It is so charming and magical. And just a beautiful little gem in our small town. And we are so fortunate to have it. I've gone there several times. I've taken my two nieces there. As a Christmas present, they were able to pick out any book that they liked and at the time, they were both in middle grades, and Kayleen, the book curator, as she's called, picked out the most perfect book for us and pressed it into our hands. And it was *The War that Saved My Life*. And all three of us read it and all three of us absolutely loved it. It was such a great pick. And it was a wonderful bonding experience for my nieces and I to all you know, buddy read the same book and then discuss it after the fact. So I highly, highly, highly recommend InkLink books in East Troy, Wisconsin to everyone and please go check out the website because the pictures are just breathtaking. Thanks.

Karen Geiger 18:39

Hi, my name is Karen Geiger. And I live in Oakland, California and an indie bookstore that I love to support is A Great Good Place for Books and it's located right in my neighborhood in Oakland. And the book that they pressed into my hands was *The Dreamers* by Karen Thompson Walker. And they hosted a lovely book event where I got to meet the author and get a signed copy of the book, which I ended up absolutely loving.

Dana 19:06

Hello Currently Reading friends. My name is Dana and I live in Louisville, Kentucky. I am coming to you to plug Wild Geese Bookshop in Franklin, Indiana. It's about 90 minutes from me so it's not my local indie but I absolutely love it and recommend it. So Tiffany Phillips is the owner so it is a female owned business which we love. And the first book that she sold me I tend to get her recommendations via Instagram stories, but it was *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times* by Katherine May, which is just a really lovely book for this time of year so I highly recommend it as well. But I recommend the Wild Geese bookshop in Franklin, Indiana. It's incredibly inviting. She has a huge front porch that just makes you want to get a cup of coffee or hot tea and sit on it and read for the afternoon. And she's just really curated a wonderful section of books. Her bookstore is in a house and so she utilizes the rooms really well. For instance, in the kitchen, she has cookbooks and it's just so completely lovely. So I hope that you check out Wild Geese bookshop in Franklin, Indiana, and the whole town is really just adorable. So great coffee shops, cute toy store, good pastry at Norma Jean's, so check it out.

Susan Hilbert 20:37

Hello, my name is Susan Hilbert. I live in San Diego and I'd like to talk about my local indie bookstore, Warwick's in La Jolla, celebrating its 125th birthday this year and the indie bookstore I grew up with Chevalier's on Larchmont Boulevard in Los Angeles, the oldest independent bookstore in Los Angeles. I hope it's not cheating to nominate two bookstores, but they are linked, which you'll see. During our years living outside of California, my husband and I satisfied our yearning for our native Los Angeles by

reading books by Michael Connelly about LAPD detective Harry Bosch, and his half brother, The Lincoln Lawyer Mickey Heller. Connolly is a master at evoking the many layers and complexities of Los Angeles, from the sunbaked beaches to the gritty streets of Hollywood. We've been back in California for 20 years now and we're always on the hunt for similar books to Connolly's. Warwick's in La Jolla recommended IQ by Joe Ide, a book about Isaiah Quintabe, a brilliant student forced by tragic circumstances to leave school and scrape together living by solving crimes the police department doesn't bother with. In the first book of five, IQ is hired to solve a crime related to a rapper with an unhinged ex wife and a terrifying pitbull. Joined by a cast of characters from his neighborhood IQ solves the mystery. He's a modern day Sherlock Holmes, situated among sundrenched palm tree lined streets of Beverly Hills and the dusty streets of East Long Beach. Joe Ide, like Michael Connelly, really evokes the feeling of living in Southern California. I rely on Warwick for recommendations but also Chevalier is the store from my childhood where I bought my first book and converse with Mr. Chevalier himself on everything from Nancy Drew to Charlotte's Web to VC Andrews a couple of years ago a bookseller at Chevalier's told me about Steph Cha's novel Your House Will Pay, a book that also evokes layers of Los Angeles not evident to outsiders, the racial tensions that simmer below the surface in what is one of the most diverse cities on the planet, the city that brought you the Watts riots, the Rodney King verdict and the OJ Simpson trial. The book centers on two families, one Korean American, one black, their lives intertwined by a crime committed 25 years in the past and a new crime brings them together again. The city of toleration, and the John Birch Society of liberal Hollywood politics and racial unrest comes to terms with its many layers of complexity, through the crime and through the two families and their interactions. This is a page turning book that also evokes Los Angeles as natives know it. Cha lives in Chevalier's neighborhood, as does Abbi Waxman, who based the bookstore in Nina Hill on Chevalier's. Warwick's in La Jolla and Chevalier's in Los Angeles were both saved this year by reader investors who pooled their resources to buy the building in Warwick's case and arranged for the bookstore to move across the street in Chevalier's. I recommend both of these bookstores as great places to get book recommendations And also IQ by Joe Ide and Your House Will Pay by Steph Cha.

Erin M. 23:36

Hi bookish friends. My name is Erin McLaughlin and I live in York, Pennsylvania. Sadly, we don't have a local indie bookstore here, so the bookstore that I want to highlight is one that's near and dear to our collective bookish hearts through the Currently Reading Indie Press List, and that's Fabled bookshop in Waco, Texas. After Meredith introduced us to Fabled and their wonderful book buyer Elizabeth, I started to follow Elizabeth on Instagram, and found out about a series of amazing online events that Fabled puts on at the start of each season. Elizabeth and co-owner Allison host a Zoom chat free for anyone who pre-registers and they take turns sharing books that are releasing in the upcoming season that they loved. For the fall event, Elizabeth talked about a book called Travels with George subtitled "In search of Washington and His Legacy" by Nathaniel Philbrick. I had not heard of this title before the event, which is harder and harder to find given the hours I log in bookish podcasts. But as beautifully described by Elizabeth this nonfiction story about Philbrick, his wife and their dog, retracing Washington's journey across the US is the absolute perfect Christmas gift for my hard to shop for brother in law. Fabled offers a discount code for anyone who participates in the online event. So this book and Empire of Pain were my First Christmas presents purchase this year, thanks to Currently

Reading for introducing me to this amazing store and giving me an opportunity to adopt a non local indie.

Kim Burgett 25:11

Hi there. My name is Kim Burgett. I'm from Marietta, Georgia. And as a side note, I have a mobile bookstore called Bookin' It. You can find me on Instagram and I would love it if you would follow me. I love this challenge of telling about a book that a bookseller put in my hands because this is something I typically do when I travel. My most recent incident I can think of is when I was traveling from Atlanta to Dallas, Texas, and about the halfway point in Jackson, Mississippi is Lemuria Books. They have a wonderful mural outside the store with a fabulous Eudora Welty, quote. I only had five minutes, we were running late, my family was anxious. And I ran in and literally asked the young girl working to please point out a book to me that was either written about the area written by someone in the area, or exhumed something about the area fiction or nonfiction. Like I said, I do this often when I'm traveling and visit local bookstores. The bookseller did not hesitate and handed me a book by newspaper reporter Jerry Mitchell. This is a nonfiction book. After he had watched Mississippi Burning in 1988, he decided to write a piece that separated fact from fiction. That piece turned into a book. Not only did he solve some aspects of that cold case, but he went on to help solve for others, all having to do with unsolved race situations. The book is shocking. They were cold cases and now he's able to help those families put the stories to rest. I loved this book, because it exposed things that I was not familiar with highly recommend it again. This book is called Race Against Time by Jerry Mitchell.

Alex Cox 27:11

My name is Alex Cox, and I am from Paris, Tennessee. My favorite indie bookstore is Parnassus books in Nashville, Tennessee, which has been co-owned by novelist Ann Patchett and her business partner Karen since it opened in 2011. The first book that was pressed into my hands at Parnassus bookstore was Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders. And it actually was a signed copy by the author.

Shannon Logan 27:44

Hi, this is Shannon Logan and I'm from Bellingham, Washington. And my favorite indie bookstore is Munro's, in Victoria BC. They hand sold me Curve of Time by M. Wylie Blanchett. And it was the perfect book, because it's this amazing journey of a mom and her five kids through the Gulf Islands, on a boat by herself. And the writing is beautiful. So thank you very much.

Megan P. Evans 28:14

Hi, guys. This is Megan, the helper for the Currently Reading podcast. I live in Nashville, Tennessee. And one of the bookstores here that gets the most hype is of course, Parnassus. It deserves all the credit. However, there is a really great bookshop in East Nashville called The Bookshop and their Instagram is @thebookshopNashville. And they haven't hand sold me on a particular book. However, I have been hand sold to one of their blind date with a book. So what I love about it is that you can get one book and choose to order the blind date with a book for that month, or get a subscription to it, which I think is totally awesome. So I have actually gifted this subscription to a couple people, you can do three months, six months. And I think that's a really great gift idea. I also love that you can do it individually if you want to. And so the way that they have sold it and the way they have marketed that I

have just loved and so that is what I have picked as my book that I'm hand selling. The other thing that I just wanted to touch on that I love about them because I'm not bringing a specific book is that they're very intentional. They're very intentional with their ordering and with their marketing and you know making sure that they have diverse books and talking about Indigenous books and telling you that it's not just a day it's all year round, and I really love them for that. So check out @TheBookshopNashville on Instagram and their website if you're interested in ordering from Nashville.

Shannon Logan 29:58

Hi friends. This is Mary Heim I am so excited to talk about a book that was pressed into my hands by my beloved local indie bookstore Boswell Books here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The book is Murder at the Mena House by Erica Ruth Neubauer. I've brought this to the show before but I don't think it can be said enough how much I loved this book. The author is a local author, so she was really championed at the bookstore. The owner of the bookstore himself was shouting this book from the rooftops all over social media. It is a really lovely, one of my favorite genres, which is like spunky heroine in the 1920s solves murder with a like devilishly handsome starts out as an enemy maybe turns into something else companion at her side. This book takes place in 1920s Egypt. The setting is just so lush, and gorgeous and so much fun to read about. It's this dripping socialite community, where everything is just a little bit scandalous all of the time. There is a murder. It's really fun to read. The female characters are so strong and so vibrant. And just so rootable. I just want to root for them so much. And I really really loved this one. It's the start of a series. It is for all of my fellow fans of the Veronica Speedwell mysteries, the Lady Sherlock mysteries. I just love this one. I think that so many of our bookish friends will love it too. And it is all thanks to Boswell Books that it got put on my radar.

Mindy Brouse 31:36

Hi, y'all. I am Mindy brouse. I live in the mountains outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico. And I would like to recommend Page 1 Books in Albuquerque. This is my go to indie bookstore when I am looking for a new release or I'm looking for some backlist books especially or when I just want to walk around and look at new shiny books and see what's out there. I tend to lean towards going to buy something that I read and I already loved. Page 1 Books always has that for me. I've gone in before looking for Candace Fox's new book and they helped me find not only that, but they found another one of her books that I didn't have and hadn't read. So I was super excited about that. It's a nice size so you don't feel like you're being watched the whole time. Or making it awkward because you're looking around. It's really nice and big. But it's also really easily laid out which I also love. My last favorite thing about Page 1 Books in Albuquerque is that they have a shelf for used books that are new, so somebody might have just bought a new book and read it and they just want to give it right back. I've gotten some great deals there. So there you go. I recommend that you head out to Page 1 Books in Albuquerque.

Kaytee Cobb 32:39

Meredith, that was so fun. I love getting to hear from our listeners.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 32:42

I love hearing their voices. I love hearing about all of these stores. It just the whole thing makes me so so happy.

Kaytee Cobb 32:50

I do want to point out here that we only shared one voice memo talking about Fabled, but we did get three of them. So listeners, if you've sent one of those in, we love you anyway, we just didn't want to spend a whole episode talking about Fabled, but know that there was a lot of love being thrown their way. Alright, so with that in mind, Meredith, where is an indie bookstore that you've been to that you loved and what kind of books did you pick up there that they pressed into your hand?

Meredith Monday Schwartz 33:15

I had the most memorable trip with Johnny had to have been in 2008. Because we went to Mendocino, which is up in the very northern part of California actually where *When the Stars Go Dark* is where that Paula McLain's book is set. It's absolutely beautiful. It's like rugged, cloudy coast. It's my favorite kind of California coast town. And it has this wonderful little bookstore called Gallery Books in this really quaint downtown. And we went into Gallery books, and we must have been in there for two hours. It was just we were just Johnny and I on vacation so we got a chance to really spend a lot of time. One of the things that I was struggling with at that point in my life was that at that point, my nine year old was my son Paxton. And he had always been not at a not reluctant reader, he'd always really wanted to read. But as he got to about nine years old, he started becoming more and more reluctant. So I went into the store bought some books for me and the shelf talker on the shelf of Gallery Books, was talking about *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, which back then I don't remember if it was brand new. I know I did buy a hardcopy, and back then that probably was the only thing available to me. So I think it might have been new. But it was new to me that day. And there was the shelf talker and it actually said, if you have nine and 10 year olds who are reluctant readers, hand them this book, and so I just I barely even looked at what it was about. And I just pulled it off the shelf, bought it took it home to Paxton and said, "Tell me what you think about this." And he read it within like two days. He just drank it down. And he said, "Where can I get more of this?" and it actually couldn't have been read new because there was, you know, it's a first series now, but there was at least one more out at the time. And then he went on, in the successive years reading the entire series. We own all of them now. And so he just, it was an impact and went on to be my most readerly child in childhood. And so I credit *The Mysterious Benedict Society* and Gallery Books for their fantastic, very clear shelf talker that was speaking to this very frustrated mama. And it absolutely helped me so much.

Kaytee Cobb 35:41

I cannot believe this has happened a second time in this episode. Okay, I'm so excited to tell you about my own indie bookstore experience and exactly exactly what you're talking about here. So when I started thinking about this, I started thinking about how I am actually a lot better at browsing the shelves for my children at an indie bookstore than I am for myself. Because as I mentioned, in my bite size, intro, indie bookstores are like a place of worship for me, I love to walk in, and it's like communing with my old friends when I get to see someone considering a book that I loved. Or when I get to see the staff readalikes table, "Oh, if you loved this, pick this up," and I've read a bunch of those. And then I'm excited that somebody else is going to discover something else I loved. Or maybe I'm there to pick up a copy of a book that I borrowed from the library, but I really want to have it on my shelf. So a lot of times I'm if I'm buying, I'm buying things that I've already read at an indie bookstore. If I'm paying full price for

for a really nice book, it's probably because I already read it. However, I do not hold my children to that standard. I am happy to let them explore and I'll spend out on them. And I have no problem with that. So I'm going to talk about a newer to me indie here in Santa Fe, that I've brought as a bookish moment a few times. It's Garcia Street Books. And I took my kids and with me one day, and Levi was browsing the kids section and an employee approached, "Hey, do you guys need any help? Are you looking for anything in particular?" and I kind of empowered him. I said, "Why don't you tell this person, what you like to read and what you've enjoyed in the past," which for him has mostly been graphic novels. And he also loves being read aloud to read but he doesn't pick up chapter books often on his own. So he told them, "You know, I loved being read Harry Potter and I loved reading Raina Telgemeier books, and I love Dog Man." And this employee so astutely handed him, *The Strangeworlds Travel Agency* by L.D. Lipinski and Levi, took this 100 Chapter 400 page book and he read it within three days. He asked me to call the bookstore to order for him the second in the series, because he knew he wanted to continue. I asked him today, "What was it about that book that you love so much?" and he said that "It had so many of the things that I already loved in it, like traveling between worlds, and magic, and kids getting to do something big with their lives." He got teary telling me, he's a pretty emotional kid. So it's not unusual for him to tear up. But he was just so excited to talk about this book to talk about how thrilled he was when I brought home the second in the series for him, and we never would have heard about it and we never would have known about it if it weren't for this employee at Garcia Street Books. And that the magic, right? Like it's the same thing. Those eight and nine year old boys, you're not really sure. Are they going to keep reading the way they were? And this bookstore employee did it for him. And he's thrilled. And I'm thrilled.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 38:40

I mean, it really really is the the very best part of indie bookstores because when they create tables, when they create, you know, tables of books, readalikes or books that they love or whatever theme that they're putting together that unlike at Barnes and Noble and don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with shopping at Barnes and Noble. I don't I don't have any bone to pick with Barnes and Noble, but in Barnes and Noble, all that shelf space is paid for by publishing houses. Whereas in indie bookstores, they're able to create all kinds of displays, all kinds of curated collections, as well as their shelf talkers, as well as being able to staff the store so that someone can walk up to Levi and say, "Tell me what kind of books that you've liked in the past and I'll help you find another one." That's what you find. And I know we're preaching to the choir here. We don't need to convince any of our listeners that independent bookstores are amazing, right? But it's just to me the most important thing that we do that we throw focus on them, not just in theory and sort of the concept of the independent bookstore, but in really specific and that's what we've really decided to devote our time and talent to and I'm so glad that we've been able to do that in this episode, and with everything that we do on the Indie Press List.

Kaytee Cobb 39:53

So with that in mind from this point on when you guys click on an affiliate link in our show notes, you will be taken to bookshop.org. And that's because we really want to make sure that the dollars that you're spending for books, if you come through our links are going back into a place that is good and useful in the world. So we do get a chunk of those again, but the rest of that affiliate income goes into a pot that goes to independent bookstores. So it's benefiting both of us to shop through those links. And we're

excited that moving forward, that's where you're gonna get in our affiliate links for Currently Reading and for all of these episodes, and it really just, it aligns so much better with who we are as a team who we are as a podcast. So we're excited to roll that out for this episode, as well.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 40:36

Lots of fun announcements that we've had with this very, very special episode. And I think it's,

Kaytee Cobb 40:42

It's like Christmas,

Meredith Monday Schwartz 40:43

It is like Christmas. And it's the perfect way for us to cap off what has been a really amazing year for us at Currently Reading. It's been a year we never could have expected and we are just so grateful for every single one of you who've listened and downloaded and subscribed and shouted us out on social media. We say that at the very end of the episode all the time. But you guys, you have helped us get to where we are and we never thought we'd be here.

Kaytee Cobb 41:09

Not in 10 million years. It's astounding.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:12

All right. That is it for this week. That is it for this year. As a reminder, here's where you can connect with us. You can find me on Meredith at @Meredith.reads on Instagram.

Kaytee Cobb 41:22

And you can find me Kaytee at @notesonbookmarks on Instagram.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:26

Full show notes with the title of every book we mentioned in the episode and timestamp so you can zoom right to where we talked about it can be found on our website at currentlyreadingpodcast.com.

Kaytee Cobb 41:36

You can also follow the show at @currentlyreadingpodcast on Instagram or email us at currentlyreadingpodcast@gmail.com.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 41:42

And if you really want to help us become a Patreon subscriber for just \$5 a month. You can also help us by reading and reviewing us on Apple podcasts and shouting us out on social media. All of those things make a huge difference in our being able to find our perfect audience.

Kaytee Cobb 41:58

Bookish friends are the best friends. All of those things are helping us grow and get closer to our goals. Thanks for doing that.

Meredith Monday Schwartz 42:04

Alright, until next year. Happy reading Kaytee.

Kaytee Cobb 42:07

Happy reading Meredith