



Book and library podcasts that will entertain and inform

Getting this column done was a close call because I thought I'm not a podcast person. However, once I found good podcasts about books and libraries and librarians even, I didn't want to stop listening. There are countless listening hours available to us for free of excellent and entertaining podcasts. Here are three.

The first one I discovered is **American Libraries Dewey Decibel Podcast**. (Just Google the bold print titles to find these podcasts, please.) I'm now in the middle of listening to how a librarian for years dedicated herself to discovering the identities and stories of victims of a serial killer. The bodies were found near the library in Allentown, PA, and there were other victims in different locations. Although the killer, Terry Rasmussen, was eventually found and convicted, the victims' identity remained a mystery for many years.

The wonderful thing about this particular podcast (Episode 43) is the dogged determination of a librarian doing what librarians do. But the production value – the music, the narration, the introduction -- was great. And finally, this podcast leaves listeners with two real "library mysteries" that we can work on solving. This particular podcast was a Halloween one. All this is done in half an hour.

This podcast is for professional librarians but also of interest to library patrons. Their latest podcast is about the impact of Covid-19 on privacy issues.

What about podcasts just for book lovers – discussions and recommendations. One of library director Pamela Williams' favorites is Anne Bogel's **What Should I Read Next**, part of her **Modern Mrs. Darcy** podcast. You can reach What Should I Read Next by googling it directly or through her Modern Mrs. Darcy site. Each podcast is around 45 minutes long.

There's a lot to love about Bogel's podcast, including her voice. I rejected a couple podcasts to include because there was too much giggling going on. (It's amazing how that's lots of fun with your friends when you're together, but it's got a three second shelf-life coming through your headphones.) Bogel sounds great – smooth, professional, well-modulated.

Bogel's podcast comes with extras also, such as a list and links, if you care to look, of every book mentioned during the podcast itself. No need to make notes or rely on memory.

Listeners can just link to any book they are interested in reading more about before committing.

We can sign up to receive links and reminders about each week's podcast. Bogel has managed to make a good living from being an avid reader. She, as she puts it, "does some literary matchmaking with one author a week." I listened to her discussion with Jennifer Weiner whose book **The Big Summer** came out recently while other publishers were pushing book releases to the back burner.

I signed up to get Bogel's newsletters and find out what she's up to every week.

The last one I'm mentioning is the **Bookriot Podcast**. This feels more commercial than the others although there's no mistaking that Bogel's is commercial. But this one actually has ads – 30 seconds of quick summaries of a sponsoring publisher pushing a book.

Despite the advertising, I like Bookriot. I listened to the one on the announcement of the Pulitzer Prizes for 2020. This podcast has Rebecca and Jeff as the analysts, and they do a good job. They are able to make fun and interesting digressions like how the major awards for literature are presented.

Jeff's description of how the Nobel Prize is announced, ("Some dude in Sweden comes out from behind a gold door like Willie Wonka in the Chocolate Factory and you have to have his announcement translated. Then he disappears.") made me laugh out loud. Only because it's the most prestigious prize on earth can they low-ball it to that extent. However, the Pulitzer is announced by Tweet which they think is a little too casual. This had nothing to do with who won but was highly entertaining.

The fiction prize went to Colson Whitehead for his novel **The Nickel Boys**. One of the first things Jeff did was make clear that this book doesn't dabble in magical realism like Whitehead's acclaimed **The Underground Railroad**. That was the very first thing I wondered, and he addressed it immediately. I had to be impressed, both with Jeff and Whitehead.

Podcasts offer good entertainment until we can get books directly from inside the library and even after. Give them a try. If you hear about any book you hope the library will have for you later, please leave a message with the library or me directly at rozweedmanatlibrary@gmail.com. We want to know what you want to read.

Your library is always here for you.