

Librarians Telling Tales Podcast Transcript- Episode 16

Quick Look Booklist:

- **Section 1: Recap of our 2022 Reading Goals**
 - *The Keeper of the Lost Cities* series by Shannon Messenger
 - *Blood, Bones, and Butter: The Inadvertent Education of a Reluctant Chef* by Gabrielle Hamilton
 - *As You Wish: Inconceivable Tales from the Making of The Princess Bride* by Cary Elwes
 - *Dr. Seuss & Mr. Geisel: A Biography* by Judith Morgan
- **Section 2: A Few of our 2022 Favorite Reads**
 - *Dry* by Neal Shusterman
 - *Alone* by Megan E. Freeman
 - *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
 - *Stay* by Bobbie Pyron
 - *Dogs of Winter* by Bobbie Pyron
 - *Cursed* by Karol Ruth Silverstein
 - *Wings of Fire* series by Tui Sutherland
 - *The Ranger's Apprentice* series by John Flanagan
 - *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate
 - *The One and Only Bob* by Katherine Applegate
 - *The Summer of the Monkeys* by Wilson Rawls
 - *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
 - *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt
 - *The House With a Clock in Its Walls* by John Bellairs
 - *101 Dalmatians* by Doty Smith
 - *Watership Down* by Richard Adams
 - *Warriors* series by Erin Hunter
 - *Bambi* by Felix Salten
 - *Kaiju No. 8* series by Naoya Matsumoto
 - *Venom* (Marvel) by multiple authors

Transcript:

Musical Intro: "Uplifting 2463" by Twisterium from pixabay.com
(Description) Upbeat, piano and percussion. Music fades and plays under.

Jennifer: Hey, Bookworms! Welcome to Librarians Telling Tales, where we introduce you to all the things we love about libraries: books, people, and making connections. I'm Jennifer!

Amy: I'm Amy!

Blair: I'm Blair!

(0:26) Music fades out

Amy: In today's episode, we are excited to recap our 2022 reading resolutions. Did we succeed? Did we fall short? And, we'll share some of our favorite bookish moments from this past year.

Music Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

(0:38) Section 1: Recap of our 2022 Reading Goals

Blair: So I think it's a little fair to say that it is still only December when we were recording this.

Amy: It's November 30th, actually.

Blair: Okay. It's... so we have a month to finish.

Amy: True.

Blair: I think that's fair to note, which I will need 'cause I have some books left to finish. So, Goodreads says I have finished 196 books but that includes some of my "Do Not Finish" books, which I'm not sure if I actually count them or not. Even though do not finish books were part of my resolution.

Amy: It sure was!

Blair: So I either have, according to what I actually finished, which was like 174 books that I read all the way through, I have a lot of books to read this month. Or if you listen to Goodreads, I have like six books to read this month, which is cakewalk.

Jennifer: I delete my books on Goodreads that I don't finish. That's just me. <laugh>

Blair: I made a special DNF – do not finish – list because that was part of my resolution was to actually stop reading books when I didn't like them this year. There were about 15 or 16 that I did not like and then there were some I don't know that I would totally count 'cause they were either a really easy reader or...

Jennifer: Oh, no. Oh, no. Blair, I totally count picture books because I use Goodreads as well as a reading goal, and I set my goal pretty high, and my friends are always amazed because I'm well above their reading resolutions. But I do count picture books and I take full credit for that. What I don't put on are my guilty pleasures.

All: <laugh>

Amy: Do you not put those on because you want to keep them from other's eyes or because...

Jennifer: Yes! <laughter> They don't need to know all of the romance paperbacks that I read in between just for some light reading, you know, some escapism. But I do count picture books because I feel like that's our job.

Blair: Well, it is! And I was keeping track of them, but I wasn't dating them so that they didn't end up on my list for the year.

Amy: I also count picture books. Some of the picture books this year were so moving and amazing that they even maybe trumped some of the standard fiction that I was reading. I would count it. So that means you have six books to complete in December.

Blair: No, that means I'm way past done because I didn't count any of my picture books at all on that list.

Amy: Oh, really? Okay.

Blair: Yeah. No, that list counts zero picture books. Yeah, way done.

Amy: You read 174 chapter books?

Blair: Yeah, like regular adult and youth books.

Amy: Wow.

Jennifer: One thing I love about Goodreads, and everybody keeps track of their books in uh different ways, is that I love the yearly challenge but I also like that I can keep track of the books that I've read from year to year. I can go back to 2022 and I see what I've read and then I also put those books into shelves— some of my favorites or if I'm thinking for book clubs here at the library or other book clubs I'm involved in, I'll have those shelves. It's been very efficient.

Blair: It's been really a help for my reader's advisory, being able to put them on shelves for sci-fi and romance and this and that and the other thing. So when I know that somebody's looking for a graphic novel that hits this, I've got it on a shelf. Because we know, off the tip of your tongue, your brain doesn't always catch up. So it's really nice to have a resource where I can easily be like, yes, there was in fact an action-packed realistic fiction book. Let me just find it in my brain. <laugh>

Jennifer: We read a lot. We read so much between the three of us, and it's quite astounding honestly how much we read.

Blair: Especially 'cause this year I decided also to make my list even harder. One of my groups that I'm in on Goodreads is a middle grade group and they do an A to Z challenge. So you're

supposed to try and read a book that has a title on every letter from A to Z. So I decided, why not? I'll just keep track of it that way. So I have an A to Z challenge for middle grade, YA, and adult. And I'm finished with middle grade, but I have some letters left for YA and adult to try and maybe finish this month. We'll see.

Jennifer: That's a clever challenge.

Blair: I like it. It's fun.

Jennifer: I like it. So one of my reading challenges for myself, which I was not sure I was going to complete, it was very ambitious, was to read *The Keeper of the Lost Cities* (Shannon Messenger). And I will confess that I did not read them all throughout the year. It was more of a, a last part of the year push. <laugh> But I did, and I feel like I'm part of a club now of the kids that have read *The Keeper of the Lost Cities* series by Shannon Messenger.

Amy: And tell us all how many books are in that series because we know, but our listeners may not know how big that series is.

Jennifer: Well, there are 8.5, but that's really nine. <laugh> Because there are eight books, then 8.5 was Shannon Messenger's gift to her fans with curious facts and interesting side notes and character stories while the fans were waiting for the next book to come out. But that book 8.5, it's called *Unlocked*, is just as thick.

Blair: I was gonna say, that's the other piece is that some of these books are like 800 plus pages. So it's even crazier when you think about 'em as page goals.

Jennifer: Yes. And number nine just came out this month, and there were no audiobooks to help me in my quest. <laugh> But I can honestly say that I finished that challenge and I'm very proud of myself.

Amy: Very cool.

Jennifer: I can and I will read number nine. I'm going to put myself in line for the next book, but I just feel like our fans need to have access to those books first.

Blair: Sure.

Jennifer: Didn't you have a reading goal, too?

Amy: Oh yes. I had the goal to read something that I wouldn't normally pick for myself, something different every month. And as I was leaving for lunch today, I was telling Blair I think she recommended four of the books that I read. <laugh> So, yes. And actually now I'm realizing that I still have a December selection to put together. So I haven't actually finished mine but only because mine was one item per month, so. I actually read some things that I well obviously I would never have picked, but I really enjoyed some of them. I'm not gonna lie and say I

enjoyed all of them, but I did enjoy some and more than I expected to. And one of the books that Blair recommended was *Blood, Bones, and Butter: The Inadvertent Education of a Reluctant Chef* by Gabrielle Hamilton. And I read that book in January, and then I went to Bolivia and that book changed my life because that book is partly about her life, but partly about her road to opening her own restaurant and learning about what makes good food and how you need to have the meat on the counter coming to room temperature and all the things that freak me out, right? I never want meat left out. Never. Like, you defrost in the refrigerator. You do not defrost by leaving it on the counter overnight that just, I won't eat it after that. Well in Bolivia, the market situation is very different, and we went to this open air market and we bought a bunch of things and a lot of it is not refrigerated, including the fresh meat. And then we drove to our friend's dad's la quinta, his like little farmhouse. We put everything in the back of the truck, not in the cooler. Although it was January there, early February, it was summertime. So it's hot and it's humid and I am like, oh my gosh, I'm gonna die. I'm not gonna be able to eat a thing. And as it turned out I didn't die and I didn't get sick and I ate everything 'cause it was delicious. And I also don't wanna be rude and like say no constantly, so I was trying things. But I think that I would not have been able to overcome my squeamishness had I not just read that book because she was so determined to reflect that kind of cultural use of food and how food does survive and not in the refrigerated, pasteurized, homogenated world of American cuisine. And that was so eye-opening. Thank you, Blair, because that was one I would, in a million years, I would never have read a chef's autobiography. <laugh> Like, I don't like to cook. But that book was... really, it was life changing.

Blair: And I frequently read chef autobiographies, I'm not gonna lie, because I do love learning about them. And there's some really cool ones that I have read. In the previous year, I read that one and I just thought when I read that one I was like, Amy would dig this. She doesn't know that she will, but this has got some good stuff in here.

Amy: Yeah, it worked out. Yes.

Jennifer: Do you cook Blair?

Blair: I do.

Jennifer: I did not know that about you.

Blair: Yes, I cook a lot but I'm also like a lazy chef who grew up living on leftovers and think leftovers are fine. So that means I cook on my weekends and the whole rest of the week is leftovers or whatever

Amy: I call that meal prep. I'm just saying...

Blair: A lot of people call that meal prep.

Amy: ...that that does not sound lazy at all to me. That sounds genius, strategic...

Blair: A lot of people call it meal prep.

Amy: ...fabulous. <laugh>

Blair: But, yes, I call it lazy 'cause then I only have to cook two days a week. <laugh>

Jennifer: So Amy, you are saying you read the book not only because it came from Blair and you were challenging yourself, but you don't generally read memoirs?

Amy: So in the last 10 years, maybe 10% of my total reading has been anything adult and then in that 10% of adult reads, 90% of that 10% is adult fantasy. So, no, I don't typically pick any adult non-fiction. I'll read it for kids and I'll read it for teens because it's interesting and then I can talk about it. But in my own life, I just am solid fantasy.

Jennifer: I agree. I don't like reading books about celebrities. Honestly it doesn't fascinate me.

Blair: I'm willing to do it for the right celebrity.

Jennifer: I'm not gonna commit myself to read. <laugh>

Blair: Totally fair. Totally fair.

Jennifer: I did love who's the, the actor who plays in the Princess Bride?

Amy: Cary. Cary Elwes.

Jennifer: He wrote a biography of his experience making that movie and the audiobook is phenomenal. Great road trip read. (*As You Wish: Inconceivable Tales from the Making of The Princess Bride* by Cary Elwes)

Blair: Dr. Seuss's biography is really cool, too. That's an adult biography of his life and that's really cool. I would recommend that one. (*Dr. Seuss & Mr. Geisel: A Biography* by Judith Morgan)

Jennifer: He has two things going for him in my, in my view. And so I think I will read that.

Blair: That's a really good one.

Jennifer: Because I'm very fascinated by his life in the publishing world when he was writing and he writes for kids. So those two things alone would fascinate me and he's no longer alive. I guess, that's three.

Blair: <laugh>

Jennifer: I like reading about people after they've lived their lives, you know when time's passed. What's the name of that book officially?

Blair: I have to look it up.

Jennifer: Okay. Show notes.

Music Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) *Bright marimba scale.*

(10:23) Section 2: A Few of our 2022 Favorite Reads

Blair: So what are some of our favorites that we read this year, whether or not they were part of our challenge?

Amy: So, this year I read *Dry* by Neal Shusterman. I really did enjoy it but, I think on the heels of the pandemic really and the idea, it's like this major water shortage and what happens in California when there is no drinking water. And it was just a wild thought. And I went to Costco and I bought some water as a result of that book and then I've kind of been on a little bit of a tick on that. Not so much of like the end of the world kind of thing, but just the idea of like what would you do if you had to survive on your own. And then I read *Alone* by Megan Freeman, and it's all about a girl in small town Colorado and they have a massive evacuation because of some unnamed unknown thing and she is left by herself. She's calling cell phones and then they've all been told to ditch their cell phones. So she hears her mom's ringtone for her in a dumpster and no one's answering. And her only experience with actual humans are these people that are out looting. And it was so well done and interesting until the end when they reveal the reason for the evacuation. What a...

Jennifer: Letdown?

Amy: It was a massive letdown. Like I thought the book was so interesting and I could see that really being like a cool thing for kids that like *Hatchet* (Gary Paulsen) and even Shusterman's *Dry*. It's a little bit younger than Shusterman's book but yeah. Another one I loved was Bobbie Pyron's *Stay*. I think I told you about that one.

Jennifer: I need to read that because I love her *Dogs of Winter* book about the young boy after the Soviet Union comes apart in the 1990s, the depression, darkness. That is a good book. Do you wanna talk about your books?

Blair: I am happy to. Again, some of mine were ones that I took off of the discard pile from YA, actually. There's one that I thought was really good. It's called *Cursed* by Karol Ruth Silverstein. Main character Ricky has a debilitating disease where she's in massive pain all the time and everything hurts and it's hard for her to walk. It's hard for her to do things. Her parents' marriage is breaking up and she's really living in an uncomfortable situation. She feels just depressed and unhappy and she's not going to school and she's tricking her parents into thinking she's going to school. She ends up basically being told: Well, you're gonna fail ninth grade if you don't start going to class. So she has to suck it up and change her ways, and she

ends up meeting this really cute, sweet boy. Just the way she makes relationships and the way she starts learning how to advocate for herself. It's really cool how it is both a little bit of a romance and a little bit of a self-growth journey. And I will admit it's one of those characters that in the first probably 25 pages I thought she was really annoying. I thought I was gonna not read that book and then I totally fell for her and the rest of the book just flew by. I read it in a day. It was really good.

Amy: Why is it called *Cursed*?

Blair: She curses a lot—fair warning on that—and also she calls herself cursed that her disease is cursing her.

Jennifer: Have you been able to talk to any of the teens about it yet?

Blair: I haven't yet. I only finished it a couple weeks ago.

Jennifer: Oh... Thanks for sharing the content warning.

Blair: Mostly for her, it's her expression of her pain. It happens a lot more in the beginning of the book because her pain levels are so high and poorly treated. Actually, it's interesting 'cause her therapist and her English teacher start to convince her that it would behoove her to curse less. As she gets happier, the language improves throughout the course of the book.

Jennifer: So there's a definite connection.

Blair: Yeah.

Jennifer: Well, I'll tell you the books that I really strived to read this year were the books the kids are always talking about because I felt disconnected from them. So, in addition to *The Keeper of the Lost Cities*, I read *Wings of Fire* (Tui Sutherland), the first five. I'm gonna stop there 'cause I think I did my due diligence; I understand the world. I was happy to do that. I actually started reading *The Ranger's Apprentice* (John Flanagan). I had not read that series. I'm really enjoying it. I also finally picked up *The One and Only Ivan* (Katherine Applegate). Loved that book. I'm just not a "talking animals" reader, but I love that book. So much.

Blair: You should 100% listen to *The One and Only Bob* (Katherine Applegate) because Danny DeVito narrates it.

Jennifer: You told me that, so I am. And I also saw the movie, which I thought was so well done. But I just thought there's so many books I can't keep up. Sometimes I feel like I'm getting so far behind, I'm reading all these other books because I'm my comfort blanket of historical fiction. So I haven't really stretched myself but I just came to the conclusion that I'm tired of not being able to converse with some of these kids on their books. I'm happy to share and love reader's advisory and talking books, and I can recommend right and left because I know about the

books. But just confession, I haven't read all of them. So I just have decided to try and read more and to read more classics, which is another book I read was *The Summer of the Monkeys* by Wilson Rawls.

Blair: I read that this year, too.

Jennifer: You did?

Blair: Yes.

Jennifer: I've always loved *Where the Red Fern Grows* (Wilson Rawls) so I was a little hesitant because I just didn't want another sad book. But this book [*Summer of the Monkeys*] was really quite funny, and I enjoyed it immensely. About 14 year old boy in the Ozarks in the late 1800s in this traveling circus train that gets derailed and these monkeys go missing and how he finds them and there's a reward, big reward for them. It's actually quite enjoyable. I found myself laughing out loud. So it's been a year of reading books that have already been out for a long time that I've decided to go back and really know.

Blair: I read *Across Five Aprils* (Irene Hunt) for the first time this year, also. That one I wasn't initially going to read it and then I was like wait, this is literally set in southern Illinois where I grew up. How have I never read this book before? How was this not required reading in my high school? This is ridiculous that I've never read it. So I had to read it 'cause it's all about the Civil War and the way it affected families and the way that some of the families went North and some of the families went South. And that was a big part of where I was when I grew up, is that southern Illinois almost split from the state and seceded because so many of the boys in that area were fighting for the South instead of fighting for the North. And so having grown up in that kind of area where we're 30 miles from Kentucky to then read about it as a real perspective, it was really cool. Classics are awesome. I also read *The House With a Clock in Its Walls* by John Bellairs, which was really good. And, of course, I read *101 Dalmatians* by Doty Smith, which we're using in book club.

Jennifer: In looking back, I realized there's an animal theme 'cause I read *Watership Down* (Richard Adams) really liked it a lot and it's in our collection but it's gonna take a special reader. I've discovered that just because someone liked *Warriors* (series by Erin Hunter) doesn't mean they're going to like *Watership Down*. It's a different kind of writing. It's classic for a reason. But I also read *Bambi* (Felix Salten), a book club selection. I would never have picked it up. It was not like the movie. It's a little different. It was a heavy book.

Blair: Talking about also keeping up with what the kids are reading, I made it a pretty good goal to read as much of the new graphic novels that were coming in as possible so that I could have read-a-likes for kids 'cause they just devour them so fast. And I think I have found some new series that are cool, particularly in YA for all of the kids who love the manga. I am a huge fan of the *Kaiju No. 8* (Naoya Matsumoto) series and those are upper teen, demon-slaying, monster,

really cool premise and content. Especially if kids are fans of like *Venom* (Marvel) and that anti-hero situation.

Jennifer: That would be a good challenge for us. I'm wondering if for me reading some more manga books next year would be helpful. Maybe one or two just so I can relate to the style or at least know some of the authors' names.

Blair: And it is tricky because some of them are only just recently being translated into English and so there's already a humongous back catalog of them and there's just such crazy volume of it. It is really hard to keep up. I was looking at my numbers, I read 21 middle grades, 19 YA, and six adult graphic novels this year just to try and expand my knowledge. But I think there are a few more in there that I didn't include as well, particularly in the middle grade 'cause I peruse almost everything that comes in.

Jennifer: It feels to me that a lot of the anime drives manga.

Blair: It does.

Amy: There's also Webtoons.

Blair/Jennifer: Yes!

Amy: One of our kiddos shared how she reads manga on her phone and it's so much easier. So I have done that. I cannot read a manga book. I am constantly going the wrong direction, not paying attention to things, skipping parts because it is a different way of reading. But when you're scrolling and things appear in the order in which they should appear and you're letting the phone determine that this is the sequence of panels, oh that's so much easier. I don't have to think about what to read.

Blair: I found with manga, I usually just try and read it in one go because my brain will adjust as I start going through the pages. But it does take me a while to remember that I am reading right to left even on the page the whole way through.

(19:17) Section 3: Bookish Moments from 2022

Jennifer: When I think of bookish moments, it's not necessarily about a book but something related to a book. I love bookmarks. I love to collect bookmarks from wherever I travel or if I'm visiting a bookstore. It's just fun for me, and they are so special. My daughter's been sending me bookmarks and she knows I love turtles and so she collaged me a bookmark. A dear friend of mine sent me a bookmark with a turtle on it. A young woman I work with made me a bookmark with her favorite quote on it. So it's just special because I put those bookmarks in all my books. <laugh> I mean, you can never have too many bookmarks. I'm a big believer in that. That's to me is a bookish kind of moment.

Blair: That's awesome. As we know, I read books at the dog park. Because I always read at the dog park, I can get into some really interesting conversations with people at the dog park and there are a number of people who I have turned onto Libby and turned onto using our online resources 'cause I live in Prescott Valley. So whether it's at the Prescott Valley dog park or the Prescott dog park, it's really interesting to be able to have those conversations with people. And I think it is fun to be able to librarian in the wild, out in the streets. Not just here inside the building, but you know, always an opportunity to share books and library resources and that's been really fun.

Jennifer: That triggered a remembrance of me. I was getting my glasses adjusted...

All: <laugh>

Amy: Wait, wait, wait. What glasses? I haven't seen you wear glasses.

Jennifer: I tried 'em yesterday. Blair saw them. I'm having a hard time wearing them. She was adjusting my glasses, and I told her I read a lot and that led to us talking about books and she said, well I love mysteries. And I said, do you know about the mystery book club at the library? And she got really excited. So there are lots of these moments out there for us, in the wild. I like that, Blair. We're librarians in the wild.

Amy: I think a lot of mine have been I can geek out about narrators. And the number of people that really are listeners of audiobooks and have really specific thoughts about narration, and I'm one of them, like there are narrators that I will eat and read all the things that they do.

Blair: Me too.

Amy: And there are others that I'm like, oh man, why'd you pick that guy to read your book? Like, no I can't. I gotta read it now. I mean, which is fine, but like I could have read this way faster with a narrator, you know, 'cause of walking dogs and stuff. I read so much more while moving and not needing my eyes on the page. But there's so many different styles of narration and then the ability to speed up a narrator.

Blair: So necessary.

Amy: I definitely have opinions about narrators, and I love to talk about narrators.

Jennifer: I agree. The book I'm listening to now, the narrator is so phenomenal and it's an adult book. I was thinking, I'm going to go look at her backlog and see what else she's done because I enjoy her so much. I'm laughing out loud. She's a gem. She's wonderful.

Blair: When I started really getting into audiobooks, that was actually what I did. I went to start searching inside Libby by narrator and seeing what else that narrator had done. So like Julia Whelan, love her. But now she's actually writing books, so she doesn't record as many.

Jennifer: I am on an audio high right now, finding some good stuff.

Amy: I agree. I've been reading some or listening rather to some really good things lately too.

Blair: You guys are gonna laugh. I color coded my list, okay. For my adult titles, for my A to Z, orange was audiobook. I basically only listened to audiobooks for my adult books this year 'cause I just don't have time.

Amy: This right now, listener, this is a bookish moment.

All: <laugh>

Amy: Blair just reached across the table where we're recording to display a numerous amount of pages of titles and...

Blair: Five. There's five pages. Okay, there's five.

Amy: I see orange and green and blue and red color-coding.

Blair: Look at my color coding at the top.

Amy: Yes. Oh my goodness. Wow.

Jennifer: It's pretty impressive.

Blair: <laugh>

Amy: That is like serious book nerdery right there.

Blair: Okay. Yes. Book nerdery. You're right.

Amy: Love it.

Jennifer: We hope this episode put a smile on your face and encourages you to remember that in this busy season you can always make time for reading.

Music Transition: "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from
Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

Outro (23:13)

Amy: Thank you for joining us today on Librarians Telling Tales. For a full list of the books shared in this episode, check the link in our podcast bio.

Blair: Don't forget to subscribe to catch our next episode where we share some of our book goals and challenges for 2023.

(23:23) Musical Outro: "Uplifting 2463" by Twisterium from pixabay.com

(Description) Upbeat, piano and percussion. Music fades in and plays under.

Jennifer: We'd like to thank our listeners for supporting this podcast. We would also like to thank the City of Prescott, Friends of the Prescott Public Library, and all of our fabulous coworkers at Prescott Public Library.

Amy: Be sure to like and subscribe to Librarians Telling Tales. And until next time, we'll see you in the library.

Total Runtime (23:53)