

Rogue Librarians, Episode 13
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Part 1: Why It's Banned)

Welcome to the 13th episode of Rogue Librarians, a podcast in which three librarians discuss banned books. We are your hosts, Marian, Dorothy, Alanna, and we are the Rogue Librarians. We would love for you to participate in our discussion. Please visit theroguelibrarians.com or follow us on Instagram or Facebook @roguelibrarianspod or on Twitter @RLibrarians.

Before we discuss our book today, we wanted to take the opportunity to introduce our wonderful audio editor who has chosen the pseudonym Lizzie. She does a lot of work for our podcast behind the scenes, but she's passionate about books too. Welcome, Lizzie.

Hello. Thank you so much for having me on.

We are so happy to have you. Um So today I was gonna talk a little bit about how I got involved with the rogue librarians because I think it's a really neat story. Um I think I was actually at a watch party with Alanna for uh oh gosh, what it was the new, it was *Persuasion* with Dakota Johnson. Um um because we, we share a love of Jane Austen and I also happen to love like particularly bad Jane Austen. Um uh interpretations like film and television, but we got to talking about it and she mentioned that, you know, she was starting this podcast with two other really cool ladies. Um And I was like, oh, I can, I know how to edit audio because I, I do that for my day job a little bit and um kind of one thing led to another and, and I, you know, I've been editing from the very beginning and it's so much fun listening to you guys. I have added to my uh to be read stack considerably since edit, starting to edit this podcast. So thank you. And also, no, thank you to my wallet for that.

Well, thank you, Lizzie. Um Let me just plug libraries. It won't cost as much in your wallet if you actually use the library. Um And we are librarians even if we're rogue.

And Lizzie, did you choose Lizzie for a particular reason?

I did, I chose her because of Lizzie Bennett. Um She is one of my, my favorite literary heroines, uh speaks her mind, you know, even if it's not particularly advantageous. Um She's just one of

the, the coolest uh literary heroines I've encountered. So when it came to picking a pseudonym, that was a no brainer for me.

That's an awesome choice. Absolutely. Well, thank you so much Lizzie. We couldn't do this podcast without you. We literally could not.

Oh, well, keep up the amazing work guys like I said, it brings me so much joy editing this podcast, so you're not allowed to stop just for me.

Well, I'm gonna just put in a plug Lizzie. Um You get the great joy of hearing all our bloopers and editing them out and making us sound smart, which we appreciate immensely. Um But just a little plug that um if you actually want to hear our true selves and our bloopers, um you might want to consider joining us as a patron uh through Patreon, which we will discuss a little bit more um, in a few moments.

Absolutely. Yeah. No, I mean, obviously you are three extremely intelligent women and the bloopers are very funny. Um The funniest things happen when you're recording from three different locations at once, but I can't wait to hear them actually.

Thank you so much Lizzie. Yes, thank you. All right. I can't wait to hear this one once you're done guys. Thank you.

Today, we will be discussing the absolutely true diary of a part time Indian, which was written by Sherman Alexie and illustrated by Ellen Forney. It was the sixth most challenged book in 2021 and the most frequently banned and challenged book from 2010 to 2019. First published in 2007, this semi-autobiographical novel won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, appeared on several lists for best books for young adults, and won the Odyssey Award for best audiobook, which was read by Alexie. It is recommended for those who are 15 and older by the *School Library Journal* and 14 and older by Common Sense Media. We also wanted to mention that Sherman Alexie was accused of sexual harassment by several women in 2018. NPR published an article after speaking to some of the women about Alexie's actions. And we put that article in the show notes. As a result, the American Indian Library Association rescinded its 2008 Best Young Adult book award and a few other organizations have cut ties

with him. We will discuss this in more detail a little bit later. Dorothy, would you mind giving us a summary of the book?

I would love to. Uh So *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is about Junior or um Arnold I think is Arnold Spirit uh who is a uh somewhat awkward uh youth, uh Native American youth living on the uh um reservation or we, we had some discussion about whether or not to call the, the, the reservation Spokane or Spokane the which um we'll discuss in a, in a minute. Uh But anyways, he's grown up on the rez, he's, he's bullied a lot. He's got big glasses and his head is big because he had quote unquote water on the brain when uh he was born. Uh But he's very smart and a teacher comes to him and suggests that he might want to leave the reservation uh for his education. And so he does, he goes to an all white school uh that is not on the reservation and this is sort of his journey through trying to be both. Well, that's why it's called a part-time Indian, right? He's trying to be both um live in the white world but also maintain his identity as a Native American.

Well, hey, Dorothy, thank you so much for that summary. It just, um it just makes me think a lot about um you know, obviously in this book and in this lifetime, Sherman Alexie had to walk that fine line. But, oh my goodness, how many of us have multiple identities that we try to try to walk? Um So it, it kind of resonates for a lot of people. Um Well, before we get into the reasons why the book is banned, um we, we want to take, uh we want to give you a few notes on terms used in this discussion. Um because it's, it's, you know, we're trying to honor everyone equally and it's not always easy to do that when you're talking about um a group of people um that you don't belong to. So, um we did a little research and, according to the National Museum of the American Indian, the following terms um are acceptable and often used interchangeably in the United States and those terms are American Indian, Indian, Native American or native. However, Native Peoples often have individual preferences. And when I say Native Peoples here, I mean, those who are um legitimately native um members of this country. Um So native peoples have their own preferences on how they would like to be addressed. And it's often different um depending on where in the country the reservation uh is. So to find out the best term, um you should always ask the person which term they prefer. So Sherman Alexie is as Dorothy said from the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene Indian or yeah Indian um group and grew up on the Spokane Indian reservation in the book. Alexie uses the term Indian. So as we go through quoting the book, um we're going to use that same term, but again, you know, disclaimer, we are most definitely respectful of all native peoples and we um we do not seek to offend. So

please understand the context in which we have chosen to use that term. Um And in other parts will probably continue to use Native American, which is a term that we've grown up using and I hope is respectful. So, Alanna, would you like to go into why it's banned?

Yes, thank you, Marian. So the main reasons it's been banned most recently are for profanity, sexual references and the use of a derogatory term. Uh It uses the N word at one point, but there have been several other reasons why it has been challenged or banned alcoholism racism, gambling, bullying, violence, unsuited for age group and allegations of sexual misconduct by the author are some of the other common reasons it's been banned.

Um And then following along that, um Alexie himself has said I have yet to receive a letter from a child somehow debilitated by the domestic violence, drug abuse, racism, poverty, sexuality, and murder contained in my book. To the contrary, kids as young as 10 have sent me autobiographical letters written in crayon complete with drawings inspired by my book. They are just as dark, terrifying and redemptive as anything I've ever read. Um So that's Alexie's response to the accusations of or the banning and challenging um reasons. Um And yet knowing all of that, um we want to mention separately that Alexie was accused of sexual harassment, um I believe back in 2018 and this is the person himself. Um And this has affected some people's decisions since then to continue whether to read or teach this book. And we wanted to mention that because this is thus far the first time that's come up with a book and authors that we've so far discussed on the Rogue Librarians.

I also wanted to point out that um the there are Native Americans who have also taken issue with the violence, the domestic violence, the drug abuse, the um the drinking uh of the, the depicted of the people on the reservation. Um They feel that it doesn't necessarily represent a whole picture of Native Americans, which I think is very interesting because this book is very much autobiographical, um which really comes home when you. I listened to the audiobook and it was the 10th anniversary edition. And at the end, he uh repeats a eulogy that he gave uh when the person that inspired, uh Rowdy died in a car accident. And it, everything is in there and it's very true to his experience. And that is something that I think is important to point out that one person's experience is not all people's experience, but when you represent a minority group, the fear is that people will think that that depiction is for, is everyone. Uh I don't know if you guys have any thoughts on that you wanna add.

Well, I, I just, I think that's a really good point and I'm, I'm so glad that you brought that out. Um For me, the first thing that pops into my head is this is why people need to read broadly. Um And not just rely on one book um to represent everything we know about Native American culture or, you know, nor should the hate you give be the one book that represents black culture or, you know, and you can go on um we all need to read widely and draw our own conclusions and do our own research. Um And I think it's important to note, I mean, as we all do that no, no representation is ever going to truly define every single person in a particular cultural group right now.

I agree with that, Marian, and we wanted to talk a little bit more about um when we are discussing a book with an author who has done problematic or terrible things or said problematic or terrible things. How do we choose whether or not to continue reading that book? How do we treat that book in our discussions of it? And um does it affect how valuable that work is or whether or not uh other people should continue to read it? So, what did the two of you think about that?

Well, I thought it was important that we discuss it here in this section because it is on the list of reasons that it has been removed or banned or suggested to be banned. Certainly, in our research, we've noted that some schools have decided not to teach the book after those allegations. Yes. And I, I know of one personally that chose not to. Right. So, and it's such a big conversation these days about, you know, we, we're finding out all kinds of things about historical authors and who they were and what we thought, you know, about their, whether or not they owned slaves or whatever else they may have done with whether they were eugenicists, for instance. Um Does it change the value of the work? Uh And I would kind of like to point out that I, I don't think it changes the value of the work. I do think it maybe should play into some decision making around how the work is treated. But I, you know, I reread this book knowing all of that about the author and when we get to the book discussion, uh next time we will, you know, go into what we think is beautiful and interesting and important about the book. Um I don't, I just don't think that the, the two necessarily need to go hand in hand. I do think it should be a conversation though, Marian, what do you think?

I, I definitely agree. And um very recently, I was part of a discussion at a local library. Um that was about this very topic. It, it was called divorcing authors from their works. Um And it, it focused mainly on three authors, um JK Rowling, um which is, you know, someone who's been

huge in the news um with comments um particularly um comments that are offensive to uh transgender people and allies. Um But also Roald Dahl has been in the news very recently about, um you know, allegations of anti-semitism in his works and um misogyny um and the treatment of children and um H.P. Lovecraft as well, um has been discussed quite a bit and um and then very, very recently, the Dilbert comic strip creator um has been in the news for um some unsavory comments shall we say? Um But so, you know, the premise of the book discussion was, you know, there are no easy answers. I mean, that was sort of the description of, you know, we're gonna have this book, this uh this author and their works description. But we need to consider the fact that they, we're not likely to come up with an easy answer and having sat through the discussion and heard many different intelligent people from lots of different walks of life discuss their, their feelings about it. That was kind of the conclusion. There are no easy answers. And, um, there were, uh for example, Jewish people in the book discussion who, you know, understand that. Um, you know, there's a good chance that Roald Dahl was quite anti-Semitic and yet, you know, they've read all Roald Dahl's books and, um, have shared them with their Children and can still appreciate the value um of the books. Um, but felt very much that it was important to know a little bit more now about the author and, you know, to kind of read those books with that thought process in mind of. Well, so this is who the author really was. Here's evidence that shows who the author really was. I'm reading this book now and sharing it with children through that lens as a teaching opportunity. And I think that that's an important piece of it. I think that, you know, so many of us grew up with Harry Potter. Um, you know, we've talked about it before about who, what our ages are here. But, you know, so I read Harry Potter as it was being published. So each book I read and then I had to wait for the next one to be published and then I read it and, and, you know, it was very impactful on my life, on my children's lives. Um, so much love for the whole Harry Potter story experience, movies, et cetera. However, I don't like what JK Rowling is saying and how she is using her platform right now. Does that detract from, from the quality of the books and this and this whole world she created, you know, again, same thing if we read it with the lens of now knowing what she thinks. Um maybe, maybe that encourages us to, you know, look at it through a different lens. But also I still think that we can appreciate the contributions that Harry Potter and the whole Harry Potter culture has made to our society, not the least of which is it encouraged people to read who previously had not been readers. And as librarians, we want people to read, but we don't want people to stop with just one book we want people to read as I said before broadly. So that you're, you're creating, you're getting enough information from a lot of different perspectives that

you're looking at things not just through your lens, but through the, the world's lens and more perspectives lens that, that gets us closer to the truth.

Uh, just a note of a, I'm a big fan of Harry Potter and the Sacred Text and also Witch Please. And both of them have had discussions about really excellent discussions about JK Rowling, but sort of came to the conclusion that she doesn't get to wreck the books for the rest of us. You know, what, once, once it's out there, um it is uh very much a democracy and we all get to make whatever meaning that we want out of the books. And I think it's ironic that it spoke to so many people who are gay and trans or otherwise considered other, but this is not a Harry Potter discussion, but I just, you know, I think it's interesting and I do think that uh to bring it back around to *The Absolutely True Diary* that there's uh a lot you can learn from reading this book and it maybe even goes a little ways since we know it's autobiographical towards understanding the background of Sherman Alexie, right?

And I think that um semi-autobiographical piece makes it a little bit more difficult to try to separate the book from the author in this case. Um because he has said that it's about 78% true. And um you know, he changed details and he changed people, but a lot of the situations are accurate from his past. And um Common Sense Media mentioned that um knowing like the first time you read the book or maybe if you read it before the allegations in 2018, um it, it strikes you as being kind of funny that some of the sexual references that he has. Um like he talks a lot about masturbation, he talks about um hugging the counselor and getting an erection from that and I didn't actually find those funny, but I know some people may um but anyways, um knowing um now that he was accused of sexual harassment um may affect how you see those scenes. Um So uh that's just something that's a little, it feels a little more difficult to try to tease apart. Um Knowing that some of this really happened.

It's true. Yeah, that's a really good point. I would also point out the scene with the counselor. I believe he pointed out how incredibly awkward that was for him, but it did include it.

So, and it seems like it's supposed to be a bit of comic relief because he just found out something really terrible in that moment and she's trying to comfort him. Um But it also, it seemed weird to me. So I think it's, yeah, it's interesting. Um Should we move on to the historical context?

Let's do that, Alanna. I know you've done some research on that if you want to get us started.

Sure. So I'm by no means an expert on Native American literature. But I did teach early American literature several years ago. And uh did include a few works of Native American literature. And um one thing I appreciate and I'm sure many other people do too is that um we have broadened our interpretation of the word literature in recent years and have included many more texts that used to be excluded. And uh we've also made a much bigger effort to include diverse voices in our discussion at the canon. So, um for example, the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* now includes several examples of Native American literature, which when I was in high school, um I don't think they were there. So uh it's great to see that. So in order to give you a little background on the history of Native American literature, we're going to talk about a few of the big moments that came up in the last few centuries and we encourage you to learn more by reading some of the articles mentioned in our show notes because we're not going to go into a lot of depth in the 18th and 19th centuries. Native Americans were typically portrayed in works by white authors as being violent antagonists such as in captivity narratives or sometimes as tragic heroes as in some novels and poems. The first Native American to publish a book in English was Samson Occom; he had studied English and converted to Christianity and a book of his sermons was published in 1771. William Apess published the first autobiography by a Native American. In 1829 the first novel published by a Native American was by John Roland Ridge. In 1854 people also began recording native stories and trying to preserve their languages and histories. Many native stories and speeches had been shared orally for generations, but they wanted to have written records of them. Several white people also published books that were supposedly told to them by prominent native Americans, especially in the 19th century, but they often shaped the books to suit their own purposes.

Great, thanks Alanna. Um I just want to add that. Um Although other texts were written by Native Americans in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, they did not receive critical recognition until N. Scott Momaday published *House Made Of Dawn* in 1968. Momaday's book won the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1969. After that, the sixties through the eighties were called the Native American Renaissance. Some examples of authors who started writing in that period are Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, Ray Young Bear, Joy Harjo and Louise Erdrich. Harjo became the first Native American to hold the post of U.S. Poet Laureate in 2019. And Erdrich received a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2021. Sherman Alexie became a literary star in the 1990s. There have been several newer voices in the past two decades,

including Tommy Orange, Terese Marie Mailhot, Melissa Febos, and Jesmyn Ward. Many of their books were intended to be read by adults, but there are also some new YA books by indigenous authors, including such, including books such as *Fire Keeper's Daughter*, *Hunting By Stars*, and *A Snake Falls to Earth*. I have not read any of those books. Have any of you, but they sound really good.

I've seen *Fire Keeper's Daughter* on the shelves. So definitely something to look at. Yeah. Yeah, I realized at, sorry, go ahead. Yeah, I realized well, doing this research that, uh, my knowledge of recent Native American literature is woefully, um, sparse. So I really want to read more of these authors.

Especially than you were once, right? Because the, the author that we had a lot of in, um, in the elementary school library I worked in was, uh, Joseph Bruchac, um, whose books are often, you know, part of the display for November and Native American Heritage Month. So, um, it, it occurs to me that I need to do a lot more wider reading myself. So, um, you know, this is a good, uh, self exploration for all of us.

Absolutely. All right. So, uh, our next segment would be the pros and cons of the book. Uh, and then of course, we'll have our next episode where we discuss the book in more detail. Uh, so we'll start with the pros. Um And, you know, it's, the book's honesty I think is powerful because it is autobiographical. And again, I know it's so hard to know what's what. But 78% is a lot of the book and listening to Sherman Alexie talk about his actual life. So much of the book was in there. It was, it was very interesting. Uh So I think that honesty and that's part of what's getting him in trouble with both uh white people and Native Americans is, you know, this was his experience. So I think honesty is super important. What did you guys think?

Yeah, definitely. I, I think especially what hit home for me this time reading it was how destructive alcoholism is in so many ways in um so many people's lives on the reservation and um they're not the only ones with uh pain or problems as he points out at one point when talking about the girl he likes. Um But uh just the amount of pain and suffering in every Indian family and the fact that so so many of them have lost multiple people um was just really hard to read and the senseless um number of deaths was just heartbreaking.

Yeah. Um I, I agree. And for those listeners who, who've listened to our previous episodes, um you know, we've talked a lot about um trauma and intergenerational trauma and, you know, that theme is not specific to one cultural experience, obviously, it's, it's something that a lot of different cultures have and continue to experience. Um We talked about intergenerational trauma with Jews and, you know, in our discussion of *Maus* and, and certainly in *The Hate U Give* with our discussion of um in Black Lives Matter and um and police targeting black uh boys in particular and, you know, the poverty in, you know, predominantly black communities and, and those kinds of things. And um we've even talked about the trauma of the LGBTQIA+ community in a couple of books. But, you know, and so it, that continuing theme of the trauma and poverty um really came through for me in this book. And I, I just started to really make that connection in a much deeper way of my goodness. You know, so many of the different cultures that have become Americans um have really dealt with deep uh deep intergenerational trauma. I mean, there's so much one could say about that and um I, I don't want to take over the this episode so I'll just stop right there. But it, it just, it, it definitely made connections for me.

Mhm And because it's focused on Junior's, or Arnold's, perspective, um We see his growth throughout the story and trying to navigate these two worlds and um the almost the entire reservation rejected him because they feel like he rejected them by leaving, to go to school and feeling so alone. But um what one of the things I really loved about the book was how he is able to make friends and form relationships with students and teachers at his new school and the amount of growth he shows, um, when he's dealing with really difficult situations was really heartwarming and I also loved his sense of humor. It's a very funny book, a lot of dark humor. But, um, it's, it's not all really sad, even though it deals with really sad situations.

I was really calls out the idea that, um you need that when you're dealing with a lot of sadness and hopelessness. That's true, which is interesting. And uh to piggyback on your uh point, a lot of uh I loved the way that Arnold's and I use Arnold because that's the name he uses in the, in the White school. But uh he, he comes to see people differently on and off the rez by making that comparison. So I think it's, you know, it's an important point of the book to look at the differences and then find where they have things in common. It was really interesting too because he talked a lot about what his assumptions were going into the white school of what, how he expected to be treated by the white, um, the white teachers and, and students and, and debunked some of those um assumptions, you know, just by his experience and, and how, you know, that made us all think Oh, yeah. Well, and they did the same looking at him and getting to

know him. Right. But, but it also shows that some of that expected behavior, it, it did happen. Right. But it just wasn't everyone all the time, which is also important.

And, uh, finally we've got, uh, on our list of pros that the illustrations are amusing. They, they add meaning and I think, really help, uh, some students who like to read in pictures to feel like the book is accessible. Yeah, for sure. And I just feel like more and more with the internet. Um And everyone having a cell phone, that visual learning is a huge part of people who are growing up today. So, so those illustrations really tap into a new way of knowing that perhaps, you know, my generation didn't have when, when I was a kid. So, so I had no trouble reading words and creating a visual image, but it seems like it's more of a challenge for a lot of people growing up today to be able to make their own visual image because so much of it's done for them um through the internet.

And it's not like there are illustrations throughout the entire book, but the when they are there, I think they add something um whether it's humor or meaning or um like there's a, there's a picture of that um you know, Arnold or Junior is the one who's supposed to be doing these cartoons. So they, because he's really interested in being a cartoonist. And so I think you see a lot of his personality and his uh interpretations of various people in these cartoons and they, there's a variety in how they uh how much detail they go into. Um And the one that really struck me was when he was trying to draw his friend, Rowdy, and Rowdy got really upset that he was drawing him. So he ended up like erasing the original head and drawing this really angry face over it. But you can still kind of see the real Rowdy underneath. And I think that depicts his friend really well.

There's a, a beautiful segment where uh he's talking with one of his friends at school uh about books and um I just found it. He says, I draw cartoons and says, what's your point? He says I take them seriously. I use them to understand the world. I use them to make fun of the world, to make fun of people. And sometimes I draw people because they're my friends and family and I want to talk to them. That's lovely. So you take your cartoons as seriously as you take books, asked Gordy. Yeah, I do. I said that's kind of pathetic, isn't it? No, not at all. Gordy said, if you're good at it and you love it and it helps you navigate the river of the world, then it can't be wrong. I love that.

Yeah, I really like that passage too. Should we move on to the cons?

Yes, let's do that. And we've kind of touched on some of them already. We have, uh, in addition to some of the very difficult topics that this book goes into a couple of things that really struck me this time, um, that I found offensive or like that I wish had gone into more depth. Um, but at the very beginning of the book, uh he uses the word retard a couple of times without questioning it. And, you know, this book was written over a decade ago. So, but even then I think it still would have been considered offensive, outdated and ableist. So I, I wish that that book, I sorry that that word wasn't there without being questioned. It's one thing when I think other students are using it um in a terrible way, but then he uses it himself, the character does. Um And then also he briefly mentions um Penelope's bulimia and also, um he mentions homophobia a couple of times and both of those conversations just felt incomplete to me and a little bit flippant in their tone. And I wished that if he was going to put them there, that he had gone into more depth and questioned them a little bit more, but especially how he brought up the bulimia part really bothered me this time.

I thought it was interesting though that it was used to point out that everyone has their addictions. Yes. Um So, you know, there was a reason to put it in there but it was glossed over very quickly, but it was at least not vilifying a character right from that. Um I'm trying to remember the exact homophobia at once, but this also seems like a good point to discuss the use of the N word uh that got it banned in some places. And um the only place I saw it turn up was when one character was making a very off color joke. Very racist, a very racist joke, uh which Arnold thinks to himself, that he needs to not only defend Native Americans, but he needs to defend black people as well. So it, it is meant in the, in the context to show that it's offensive, which I think is important whenever that word is gonna come up, especially in a book this recent.

Um I know we just said it was a long time ago, but I think the N word has been kind of out of favor in literature for longer than that. Um that it was to show the kind of language that people were using.

Exactly. And, and the fact that he punches that student in response to it um as a way to defend his honor and other Indians honor is uh I mean, that is a turning point in the book for their relationship and how other students see him at that school. Which, but, uh, yeah, it is supposed

to be, I think we're all supposed to react really badly to that. So, banning it for that reason doesn't make sense to me.

You know, I, I feel like people who challenge and ban books, at least in some part are trying to hold authors up to a level of perfection that not a single human being could ever rise up to. Um And, and I say that not because I condone any of this, but because when you're an author, writing a, a book and trying to include realistic dialogue, your dialogue is only realistic if you represent what people actually say in the world. And as much as we as readers don't want to hear or see those things because we know that it's, you know, outdated, offensive, ableist, you know, um racist, you know, all of these horrible things that we're trying to become more aware of. I also know that in conversations with wide um groups of people that these words and these attitudes are still too common in everyone's everyday speech. Um at least in their private speech as opposed to their speech in, you know, polite company shall we say? And the depictions in this book are of private conversations and they're absolutely showing up at the halls uh younger than high school. So how do we have on authors? Oh, we don't like the fact that you use this word or that word. And, um, or, you know, portrayed, you know, someone this way when everyone in the world unfortunately is still doing it and, and maybe, instead of banning a book for it, we need to have these discussions of, hey, maybe I should need to check myself, you know, don't be the pot calling the kettle black so to speak. Um, maybe, maybe instead of widely banning it, maybe we need to read these books more widely and really do a close reading of them and say, hey, you know, maybe, maybe I need to change the way that I'm thinking and talking. Um And also the, the other thing I wanted to add to that is, you know, when you read a book, you're reading the final version of maybe years of drafts and edits and more drafts and more edits that the author has worked on with a publishing house. And so, you know, I was just thinking specifically when Alanna, you and Dorothy talked about the mention and not really flushing out a conversation about bulimia and homophobia and perhaps that had been flushed out more in a previous draft. But as we all know, things that are uh you know, good contributors to the story end up getting cut because there's a page limit or a time limit. So I just want to plug that or it doesn't serve the story in that way, right? Or it doesn't serve the story in the way that is, you know, that they want. But you know, so we, we want to say Sherman Alexie Boo, you know, you did this or did that or to any of the authors that whose books are banned, but it's not their decision alone of what ends up being published as the final copy that we as readers are reading.

Yeah, that's, that's true. And one final thing to keep in mind before you pick up this book, if you haven't already read it is it does deal with difficult topics, as we mentioned. Um There are many depictions of racism, alcoholism, domestic abuse, bullying, death and grief. And um he discusses them in a really moving and um honest way. But if um you feel like it is not a good time for you to read about those things, then know that about yourself and uh decide whether or not you want to read the book as a result.

But at the same time, understand that as um Alexie's quote said at the beginning of this conversation, you know, he's received lots of letters from 10 year old readers that this book is so important to them because they've experienced um similar situations and, and it's somewhat therapeutic for them or to know that they're not alone. Mhm Exactly. Alrighty. Um Was there anything else do you want to add for the good of the cause? I don't think so. Well, then uh we'll go ahead and close up this episode, please join us next time for a close reading of the book's characters, themes and significance uh where we will delve much more deeply into the book. And of course, there will be spoilers um As always, if you would like to leave a comment or question, please visit theroguelibrarians.com or follow us on Instagram or Facebook @roguelibrarianspod or on Twitter @Rlibrarians. If you're enjoying this podcast, please subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, or wherever you find your podcasts and please leave us a rating and review. That's what helps us to get the word out to other potential listeners. Um We wanted to give a shout out to our newest patron, Trish Deal, Trish. We love you. Thank you so much. Um We put a lot into our podcast and when someone becomes a patron, it just gives us the pat on the back we need to continue and Trish um being our second patron just keeps us so full of joy. Um Thanks for helping us to continue making this podcast. Um We are, we are just so grateful. Um If you or our other listeners would like to support us, please join our patreon at patreon.com/roguelibrarians, you can learn more about our great perks there as well such as we were talking earlier about all of our funny bloopers that Lizzie gets to giggle at. Um So thank you for making that consideration And of course, thank you to Lizzie um for the audio editing as I, we could definitely not do any of this without Lizzie. And thank you to Chris, our brilliant music creator who has just made our podcast, um so much more professional. We could not have done this without them. And finally, thanks to all of you for reading with us because books are meant to be read. Bye!