

## **Rogue Librarians, Bonus Episode**

### **Book-Banning Battles**

Welcome to a bonus episode of Rogue Librarians. We are usually a podcast in which three librarians discuss banned books, but today we will be discussing the See You at the Library event held by a group called Brave Books on August 5th. Sounds innocuous, right? Go to your library, be brave about reading banned books? Well, not so. We'll discuss this coordinated attack on libraries and other sources of books. But while we're at it, we'll also discuss a few efforts that are helping to get books into the hands of young, and, sadly, we are without Alanna today, but we are still the Rogue Librarians.

We would love for you to participate in our discussion. Please visit [theroguelibrarians.com](http://theroguelibrarians.com) or follow us on Instagram or Facebook @roguelibrarianspod or on Twitter @rlibrarians.

We've decided some of the coordinated efforts by folks that are urging parents to publicly complain about and challenge books and schools, most notably the group Moms for Liberty. And we could do a whole episode on them alone, and probably will at some point. But for now, if you're curious why they have been labeled an extremist group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, check out the article, "Six Reasons Why Moms for Liberty is an Extremist Organization in the Publication, The Hill." And that link will be in our show notes. My personal favorite, number two, prominent members of Moms for Liberty have close ties to the Proud Boys, Three Percenters, QAnon, and white Christian nationalists. Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio once boasted that Moms for Liberty is the Gestapo with vaginas.

And just so you don't think they had to go digging very far to find this stuff, an Indiana chapter of the group uses a quote from Adolf Hitler, none other than Adolf Hitler himself on the front cover of their newsletter. And the quote was, "He alone who owns [all caps] the youth gains the future." Now, I haven't read this newsletter. Marian and I wouldn't be surprised if they were using the quote to accuse the left of trying to own the youth, but either way, it shows that they understand what it means to use their words, I mean to indoctrinate the youth. They know what that means when they use it on us and they know how to do it.

Yeah, the same things these groups are accusing public schools and libraries of doing. Simply having books available that not pushing, mind you, just available to diverse readers and taxpayers in their communities. And while folks are not paying attention, these extremist groups are getting school board members elected around the country who espouse their views.

Terrifying.

That is. I also want to point out that when, particularly researching this issue, I was so sensitive to the bias of the various sources, both on the left and the right. Like you could just really tell what you were reading by the rhetoric that was used. So I'll point out that *The Hill*, which that article comes from, receives a reading of neutral from the media watchdog Allsides, which means the source either does not show much predictable media bias or displays a balance of articles with left and right biases or balances the perspectives. So it's not necessarily a statement on this one particular op-ed that was in there, but as a publication, you know, it rates center. So I thought that was important to point out.

That is pretty important. And, you know, I just also want to throw in here that also while researching for this particular episode and particularly for any information on Brave Books, it turns out that almost every news source that covered Brave Books was, in fact, a right-leaning news source, not a left-leaning news source, which kind of also makes you pause because the left just doesn't want to talk about what's going on. They don't want to give them, I guess, the credence that one gets from being mentioned in a news article.

Plus, is it really news? That's always the big question mark, right? Is somebody complaining that they can't read /sell their books at public libraries? Is that a newsworthy element?

And you know you brought up a really good point there, Dorothy, because libraries, I should say all public libraries, but I assume all libraries whether they be school libraries or public libraries, have a written published collection development policy, which means every book that comes across their desks or that they read about, read a review about, does not make it into the library's collection. The collection development criteria is very, very specific, and it is the goal is always to create a balanced collection of many diverse points of view because we're supposed to be able to go to our library and see something that represents everyone in the community and also to learn about people who are different. That is a good thing. And so, just because Brave Books is saying, oh, woe is us, they don't want to buy our books doesn't mean any discrimination is happening. It simply means that the libraries looked at the books and deemed either that it wasn't necessary to add a book of that type to their collection because they already have so many or that they didn't consider it of a high enough caliber to include in their collection. So I just want to put that out there for people.

Okay, so hit me with exactly what this event was.

Right, so and it's past at this point because we are now recording this podcast in September. However, what we wanted to discuss today is a group that is vying for ownership of our youth. And this particular group is known as Brave Books. They are a publishing house, and the name of the publishing house is Brave Books. And they were

founded specifically for the purpose of putting, according to them, high-quality, good, moral, religious, right-leaning books in the library. They claim they're wholesome.

So, in order to give them a good, moral, religious, moral, religious, their books to be well known, they have appealed to the masses and on August 5th throughout the country, they scheduled and encouraged people to schedule events basically to take over public libraries. They wanted their followers to go in book space in the libraries and hold a story hour in which they would read these books, which are very religious, and sing hymns or children's songs, religious songs, and do crafts.

Okay, so let me interrupt for a sec. So they want to go to the library and read books. So what's so bad about that?

Well, in this particular case, and by the way, inevitably what happened is they got into, according to their website, 300 public libraries across 46 states. And all of this took place on August 5th, so you can see a quite a coordinated effort. They called their story hour "See You at the Library." And they also called it a national movement for free speech. So why is this a problem? Well, the number one reason that it's a problem is that the ACLU says very specifically, public institutions are not meant to spend public dollars proselytizing, which means pushing one religion over another. And it's one thing to have readings of books that are educational in nature as in this is what this sect of religion believes and this is what this sect of religion believes, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Right. And libraries will invite award-winning authors, people whose books are flying off the shelves, et cetera.

Yeah. But in this case, they're going way beyond that. They are, they're wanting to hold basically a religious service in the libraries, which many of them did on August 5th in 300 different libraries across 46 states. So what's what's bad is the fact that their agenda, the Brave Books agenda, goes far beyond reading religiously wholesome. And I do have wholesome in quotation marks material because wholesome means different things to different folks, right? Okay, so there is a publication called *Only Sky*, which proclaims it is dedicated to protecting America's secular democracy through reality-based journalism, storytelling, and commentary. And they wrote an article entitled, "Public libraries aren't censoring Kirk Cameron," who by the way is an author and an evangelist, former child actor, um, but he writes books for Brave Books. So that's his stake in this. But once again, to go back to the quote, "Public libraries aren't censoring Kirk Cameron. He just wants attention. Libraries aren't hosting events with Kirk Cameron because they are under no obligation to promote his faith-based ignorance." All right, so if we put freedom of speech in the forefront, like Brave Books has done on their website, then the non-Christian groups also get to have a say, right? They should, according to that argument.

All right. I noticed also that what you mentioned, Kirk Cameron, is promoting his own books. The reading was going to be of one of his books. And I will confess that I have not read that book. I would very much like to see what it says. But when he's talking about the whole campaign, he spends as much time complaining about LGBTQ library programming, which, to be clear, focuses on the idea of inclusion, which was in that article that he mentioned. Then says he feels like religion is being excellent. So another article, this one in LGBTQ Nation said Christianity and faith and the 10 Commandments are being taken out of schools and placed with toxic ideas like transgenderism. He claimed that in an article.

Which is ridiculous because they have been arguing about the 10 Commandments being taken out of public schools since I was a child and I am not a young.

And we'll get in a whole separate episode into a discussion about the Bible in schools and libraries, but separation of church and state has been around for a long time.

Sure has.

And as far as I know, libraries have the Bible. You can get the Bible at the library.

Yep, you sure can.

And I'm sure they have some very wholesome children's books in there.

I pulled some yesterday for a teacher at a Christian Academy, a private Christian Academy, who needed some books for her class, for five-year-olds. So I can assure you we have plenty.

Well Kirk Cameron, he's not quoting Hitler here, but I just want to call back to the quote about owning our youth. Cameron says about people taking Christianity and faith out of schools and replacing them with transgenderism. He says, "This is proof that more than ever we are getting destroyed in the battle for the hearts and minds of our children." So he is very much using battle rhetoric. It is a battle for the hearts and minds of our children. I would argue that those who preach inclusion, including LGBTQ+, including black history, including religious different histories.

Discussions on race.

Right, right. So I don't think they are trying to fight with anybody. They are simply trying to give people a lot of information. But when you seek to quiet voices, that's when you're battling. That's what I feel like they are doing. No one is saying Kirk Cameron's books should not be read. No. Right? But they are saying there are plenty of books that they feel should not be read. So you just always got to pay a attention. They want it to be a battle. They're using the language of a battle. I also point out that Moms for

Liberty are involved, you know, in the campaign as well. And we already know what their agenda is.

Well, we do. And again, you know, when I go back to what I mentioned about collection development policies, every individual public library has its own individual collection development policies. So in areas where there are more people who might seek books like the Brave Books collection, they'll be available readily in those libraries, assuming they're of high quality, right? And so there are libraries around the country that will certainly have these books. No one is trying to prevent those books from being in the collection or getting in people's hands. We're simply as librarians saying, you know, these books can be included in the library, but so can LGBTQ books, because there is an audience for those as well, as well as books about African Americans and Latinos and, you know, go on and on and on. Right.

And I don't, again, do not know what's in this book, but I'm sure there are plenty of books that are discarded due to, I don't know, just a lower quality of writing or unclear messaging or maybe hate speech. I mean, I don't know. I do not buy books for a library in my current job, but it's safe to say plenty of books that they have reasons for not wanting in the library.

Well, for sure. And as for events that are held in the library as well, the events tend to also have to follow a criteria that is set by the library, and that would include inclusivity. So, they would want to host events that are inclusive right now, rather than exclusive, meaning we wouldn't want someone to be reading a book that says someone is an abomination because they believe a different way.

Right. And again, not that that's what these books say because I haven't read them, but based on the rhetoric that I have seen on the Brave Books website, I'm concerned. I would have to read them and I can assure you that the librarians who did not want to have Kirk Cameron do a story reading at their library did read them and that played into the decisions that were made. So in following up on that, I just also wanted to just say, I mean, Dorothy, you mentioned it feels like a battle or they're using battle rhetoric. And I mean, I definitely found that in doing my research. It was upsetting to me to see that Kirk Cameron specifically seemed to go after public libraries. And it was like, it was like a tournament almost in the way he was reporting, you know, hey, we got into 300 libraries and two particular libraries, one in Indiana and one in New York, initially turned down his request to do his story hour. And so immediately his comeback was, well, I'm going to sue you for discrimination. And both libraries reached back out and came up with some sort of a compromise and Cameron was inevitably allowed to host a story hour in a booked room in these libraries. And yet on Cameron's website, it wasn't just, oh, okay, I get to do what I wanted to do. He literally posts a photograph of himself standing in front of his Christmas tree holding a handmade sign like one would take to a rally that that says, and I quote, we won two for two see you in Indiana, New York City and then in parentheses all are welcome."

I wonder how they would respond if a bunch of queens showed up to that right well and many people have said that this push was directly in response to the drag queen story hour that some libraries across the nation have had.

Yeah, right, that's what he's saying is that they're pushing LGBTQ+ story hours, et cetera, and to the detriment of religious material.

Right, right, so. Yeah. And then, there's something about the ALA, right?

Yeah, I was just going to say, I mean, this, this is just one thing, but it just gets so much worse. I mean, there's so many layers to what this See You at the Library movement was about. They've taken this war all the way to the top of the library chain by going after the ALA, which is the American Library Association. So this is from a Fox News article. Cameron is working with First Liberty Institute, the non-profit Christian conservative legal organization based in Texas, to attempt to hold the ALA accountable for what he believes is discrimination against him and his pro-faith messaging. Judging by its recent advisories to libraries across America, to explore ways to block, in quotations, his upcoming nationwide story event on August 5th.

Okay, so he's accusing ALA of attempting to block his story event, which he himself is couching as a battle against libraries. But let me be clear too, because, you know, when I go back in and and, you know, the quote that I just read from the Fox News article, "For what he believes is a discrimination against him and his pro-faith messaging," so pro-faith, right? Like he's trying to make the unsuspecting, uninformed listener believe that libraries are anti-faith of any kind, right? That's what he's trying to say there. That's what he wants you to believe. That is absolutely not what the message is from ALA. ALA promotes, not promotes, but certainly supports inclusion of materials and events in libraries of all faiths. What this is trying to say is that if he's doing a pro-faith story time, it's all about all the faiths, which is most definitely isn't. Not every faith believes these particular things. I'm just going to say it out loud. Not every faith hates LGBTQ people, right?

Not every Christian faith hates LGBTQ people.

Exactly.

I've, you know, belong to a church that performs special ceremonies for transgender people when they transition. Right. And marriages and whatnot. So he's, this is a very specific right-wing Christian belief system. It is not, you know, kind of a general, "Hey, we hate all faith." So I just want to make that very, very clear. You know, it's so insidiously kind of brilliant to what they're doing, right, and then they want to sue because that's what makes news. Yeah. And if they can get in the news, then people will hear their message.

Well, right. And they're trying to use scare tactics and make people believe, oh my God, they're coming after us. You know, oh my God, we have to do something. Yeah.

Which part of the rabbit hole I went down when I was researching this, and none of the stuff really made it into our script for this episode. But I was looking at the steps to achieve fascism and having an interior, having an interior enemy was key, someone within your own country to to villain to make the villain. And they got lots of those.

Oh, yeah. That that are, you know, it's LGBTQ, it's black, it's, it's undocumented workers, it's, it's immigrants. So that's happening. And then I think another one was start legislating after the conversation gets going, start legislating, taking away rights. I am paraphrasing here. I don't have the source in front of me, but it is chilling. It's really chilling. And I came away fairly depressed after reading all this stuff.

As did I. I mean, you know, I just wanna share that with our listeners. Dorothy and I spent, you know, a significant amount of time looking for information to give facts. And we both felt horrible by the end of the session of doing this research together. We both kind of left feeling really depressed and sad and not having a lot of hope for our country. So it's just, it, it's a lot to take in. I just, you know, when you were saying what you just said there, Dorothy, about, you know, finding an enemy and then starting legislation and limiting people's rights. Man, I just had a flashback to an exceedingly popular and rather deep Broadway play that I bet many of our listeners have seen and it's called "Wicked." And there are some really astute lines in the play, one of which is when, you know, the wizard who's a phony, as we all know from the Wizard of Oz, which used to be on television every year.

Yeah, yeah.

You know, comes from behind his big fake, you know, big talking head in the play Wicked. And he says, "Where I come from, people believe all sorts of lies. It's called, or we call it, history." So there's one. And then there's the scene in the opening of the play and then again at the end where the wicked witch is dead, or so they believe. And Madame Morrible, who is the assistant to the wizard, indicates we succeeded in creating an enemy, one enemy that everyone could agree to hate or fear. That was Elphaba, the wicked witch of the West. And so they could all band together to destroy her and along the way, they took away the rights of the animal professors, et cetera, et cetera.

Yeah, and then I just, you know, I got to just repeat this quote, you know, this attempt to say, Oh, poor Brave Books, we're being discriminated against, so we have to pursue this legal battle. I truly do believe that their only reason for doing this is to get media attention and to rile up religious conservatives of all sets by saying, Here's their rhetoric. Cameron and Brave Books calls it an easy plot to destroy America's social fabric. So it

isn't really about libraries or what we're reading at all. They want to own America's youth. That's the quote, right?

Mm-hmm. The Hitler. Open-minded, responsible youth are antithetical to their message. Open minds, folks, are harder to control.

Haha, yes. and I believe it was Book Riot where we, and a couple of other publications too, where I kept coming across the term Christofascists, which I immediately understood that it was talking about groups like this, but it did sound to me a little bit like, oh, it's name calling, you know, like, oh, they are, they are this bad thing, Christofascists. So I looked up the term and turns out the term was not recently created as part of this rhetoric war. It's the term was coined by another Dorothy, by the way, had nothing to do with American politics. Her name is very much to do with the Wizard of Oz. Her name was Dorothy Solle, and I am trying to say German sounds that may or may not come out correctly. And according to her Wikipedia page, her last name is spelled S-O-L-L-E with like an umlaut over the O. She was a German liberation theologian. I'm not sure what a liberation theologian is, but she went to um the theology to the school for for religion. And she's written a number of books on religion. And it was in her book called *Beyond Mere Obedience: Reflections on a Christian Ethic for the Future*. Such an interesting title that she coined the term "Christofascist" to describe basically fundamentalists. We have no problem understanding when fundamentalists is a bad thing when we look at terrorist organizations that are using it, other countries that are, you know, have human rights violations all because of their fundamental beliefs. And we try very hard, I try very hard not to lump every person of a religion into that extremist, fundamentalist sect. But this is why the secular community that we quoted from earlier, someone that's focused on those of us who are not religious and that's a growing number of people in this country, which I'm sure is part of what they're trying to fight. Secular community is taking the notes. They're like, no, you the US is about being able to have our freedoms. You can't tell us what to do.

Right. Right. I want to go back to the fact that you just mentioned *Book Riot*, which is, which is a an online, an online journal, I guess. You get a lot of information on books being published, trends in books, and so on and so forth. But I want to go back to that and give them credit because that's where I learned another thing about Brave Books, the publishing house, and Kirk Cameron. And it was a bit shocking and I actually did go to their website, to the Brave Books website to confirm this. But Brave Books is in fact, in addition to all the rhetoric we've already talked about, they are trying to undermine and replace Scholastic book fairs as the most popular book fair that is available at schools throughout the country, public and private. I don't know about you, Dorothy, but I'm gonna guess that the answer is yes. I grew up with Scholastic Bookfairs.

Absolutely. What a highlight of my year it was to go buy some books. And my kids as well.

Yeah. I mean, same. And, you know, Scholastic does a lot of really good things that people don't know about. For example, they donate a lot of books to those in need. And you know they're just, I mean, I would encourage you to do your own research but here's the thing when I went to bravebooks.com, the website, there is actually a complete tab a separate tab labeled Stop Scholastic. So I'm kind of feeling like there is a money goal here. It's not just about, you know, so-called morals.

There's definitely more going on here. And Book Riot has a quote, "We know that the goal is to not only kill public institutions, it is also to ensure an uneducated populace, eager to lap up the neatly developed agenda by well-connected, well-funded network of Christofascists. They posted on Instagram five quotes you won't believe are in scholastic books. Typical clickbait fashion, right? Five weird things you can do to whatever.

Classic. So, you know, they're definitely trying to create this moral panic. But if you look at these quotes that they put up, okay, the first three are from books about trans characters. So literally, they're going to hate every word of those books. So they could have picked anything. They picked stuff that they were talking about bodies and, you know, sex parts. So obviously, they, you know, it sounds terrible. No context, of course. And we know how important context is. But the last two, I just found a little funny that these things should be considered, you know, gasp. You know, how could they put this in a book? Here's one. "He had recently realized about himself that, when it came to love and romance, his feelings were aimed at other guys." I mean, it is about the most innocuous statement of being a homosexual that I can imagine.

Yeah. A lot of people who need to read that, it will save their lives to know that they're not the only one and don't have to self-loathe.

Right. And then it was interesting that they've chosen male gayness here and nothing to do with lesbians. But this is from *Heartstopper* and I think it's from the like the cover or the back cover or some blurb. "Boy meets boy, boys become friends, boys fall in love. A best-selling LGBTQ+ graphic novel about life, love, and everything that happens in between." And they say that this is for 11 years old and I'm like, okay, it is so far as I can tell. I've seen the adaptation. I have not read the book yet. Absolutely appropriate for the age group 11 plus because that is when people are exploring their own sexuality. To my knowledge, there's no actual sex in it anywhere.

Well, but also, these are book fair offerings, and presumably that means that there's an event where the parent gives the children or goes to the book fair with the children and helps them to select the books that they want to read and paste for them. So like there's no indoctrination going on. It's the same as if it were a bookstore selling these books, which we know these groups have gone after bookstores as well. Um But if it's for you buy it, if it's not for you don't buy it.

I would just want to go on record to say that *Heartstopper* the show on, I want to say Netflix, I think uh one of the most heartwarming things I've ever seen. You know, as a straight woman, sometimes there's a disconnect between me and the emotional content of a, of a um story about a gay relationship simply because I am not seeing myself in it. This one. None of that. It was so heartwarming and so sweet and they, they um, communicated with each other at all of the important times when they needed to. I mean, it was just like a manual for how to figure out a relationship. It was so, so great. Yeah. But just because it's two boys. Nope.

Yeah. Can I just, I just want to add a little levity here. So II I work with, um, a coworker who is gay and we were talking about some of these attempts at banning and, you know, horrors, horrors, you know, a boy falls in love with a boy. And, and it's so funny because this particular person I'm not gonna use um, his real name but said, um, he said, I don't know what people are so worried about. He said I grew up in a very, very religiously conservative area in the country and he said, I grew up hearing fairy tales, Cinderella, Snow White, you know, and on and on and on and on and on and on. And he said all of that that they read to me. I never saw a gay character, never heard about a gay character. But guess what? It didn't make me straight. Reading a book with gay characters. One, you know, out of the millions of books that people read at story times or whatever is not gonna make a straight person turn gay. And I thought, I mean, it made me laugh because it's true. I mean, people are just so driven by fear right now. Um But I digress.

We do. Yes, we do. We did not have Alanna here to keep us on the straight and narrow and this is why we work best.

We miss you. Um But I do want to go back to uh the, another one of the bravebooks.com quotes from their um from their web page. Which, you know, this is their final point in case anybody was concerned. Um, there, the last page of their campaign says it all: get Brave Books' extensive report on how to get Scholastic out of school libraries and replace them with a wholesome alternative at bravebooks.com. So the almighty dollar wins in the end, win, win for fascists, right. Get money and indoctrinate Children.

Yes. I said, indoctrinate with their extreme Christian messages like hate and fear thy neighbor. Um Sarcasm is dripping from that in case I was just gonna say, I hate the fact that Christian has become a dirty word because I was raised in a Christian family that taught me to love every one of God's creations. So um it, that just makes me sad that and everything.

I was not raised religious but I, you know, brought my kids to church and so was involved in the church as they were growing up and everything they preached at my church was love thy neighbor, love. That's all Jesus talked about. I just, I don't, I don't get it, but that's OK. Um I just want to point out, though, speaking of, you know, needing a little levity that how heavy-handed the propaganda is here on their little, you know, get rid of those Scholastic books. They've got like a little X marker over rainbow colored book with the gay club on the, on the front, right? Get rid of these books, let's replace them with these wholesome books. And one of those is um called...hang on. I gotta find it in the notes here. *Elephants Are Not Birds*. The elephant looks

surprisingly like Dumbo. I looked it up, Dumbo is in the public domain. So it, it is a clear reference to Dumbo. You could see him flying around in the background. Um So apparently, and I know that Disney is on a list of people that they're against. Uh probably because of the whole Florida thing um as our, as our target. And so Dumbo, our beloved little bullied, orphaned elephant, he finds himself, he finds the power of believing in himself becomes the star of the show. Saves the day. Well, according to them, according to what this book looks like from the cover. No, no, no, Dumbo, you just have to listen to what those bullies are telling you. You do not fit in, you should not try to fly and be yourself. But it did make me laugh.

Yeah, I mean, you have to, if you don't laugh, you cry at some of this.

Um Yeah. Uh but let's take a little look at some people who are trying to help put books into the hands of young readers. So the first one I want to talk about is the Banned Bookmobile, which is a project. Yeah, it's a project of the left leaning political group, moveon.org. Uh They were very, very active in, uh, I think when Obama was elected is when I first started hearing their name. Um Anyways, we've got this big colorful bus. Uh, and it's touring, uh, the, it was touring, I think the first tour is over now, uh, the states and providing free copies of at least 40 banned titles for a variety of ages. Uh, and I'm gonna quote here from a radio story on WVTF. Uh, they bill themselves as part public radio. Um, but the reality is those who love books are the majority says Monica Kazi, chief librarian on board the B Book Bus, she's been giving out free copies of 40 different titles. So those who love books are the majority. Um, they had some books we've heard of. Um, born in the water part of the 1619 Project they're all upset about, um, To Kill a Mockingbird, Gender Queer. Uh The Bluest Eye. Um, in fact, they went to Toni Morrison's hometown in Lorraine, Ohio to honor her as one of the most banned authors. So, one of my favorite things was a parent picking up for their child. What, uh, Junie B. Jones and The Yucky Lucky Fruit Cake and wondering aloud why this would be banned. Uh, they were surmising that maybe it was because she's too sassy. Wouldn't it be fun to read Junie B. Jones on the pod?

I think we should. Um, yeah, I mean, I, I know that there are parents who don't like Junie B. Jones. There are librarians who don't like Junie B. Jones. IB. Yeah, I do too. But I want to say I want to clarify school librarians because there are some school librarians who believe that they need to have all literature in their libraries. Right. And, um, so critically acclaimed, you know, Charlotte's Web and so on. Um, however, I always believed that if you want, if your goal is to get children to read, you have to present to children the things that are appealing to them and kids need to identify with other kids who are going through the same stuff and you know, call Junie B. Jones sassy if you want to. But based on the kids I see in my library, whoa um they're all a little sassy. So that's what kind of for real folks.

Maybe that's why I do love my middle schoolers.

I think I don't mind a little sassy in my kids so I could put up with them when I was a second grade teacher. I used to tell the parents at parent-teacher conferences. You know, your child is, is very well behaved and just the right amount of sass. And I don't think sass was necessarily the word I used, but you don't want a kid who can't think for themselves, right? You want a kid

who, who challenges you a little bit because that's how you learn. And um and the parents always thought that was kind of cool. So, yeah.

Yeah. Yeah, I loved it when my kids first uh book that really got her to read was um Captain Underpants. I'm like, of course, it's a banned book. That's my kid. Of course. Yes. And that is your kid. Yeah. So the Banned Bookmobile um was scheduled to end in Florida and meet up with the Florida Democratic Party, which was excellent to hear. So shout out to Florida Democrats fighting a good fight down there. And then they were also meeting with leaders of the Florida Freedom to Read Project. So there are people in Florida who uh parents probably in Florida who want their kids to have access to these books. So if you're gonna yell parental rights, non-religious parents have rights too, for sure.

I'm gonna close up with a letter. It's an open letter that's signed by many, many famous creative people. Um And I'm just gonna read the beginning, not the whole thing, but it says as artists, creators, entertainers and activists, we recognize and are horrified by the threat of censorship in the form of book bans. This restrictive behavior is not just antithetical to free speech and expression but has a chilling effect on the broader creative field. The government cannot and should not create any interference or dictate what people can produce, write, generate, read, listen to or consume. We cannot stress enough how these censorious efforts will not end with the bands. It's only a matter of time before regressive suppressive ideologues will shift their focus toward other forms of art and entertainment to further their attacks and efforts to scapegoat marginalized communities, particularly BIPOC and LGBTQ+ books. So it's, there's more to it and I highly recommend that you go to [moveon.org](http://moveon.org) and read it and we will put links to all the, all of our sources in the show notes.

Yeah. Well, thank you for that, Dorothy. Um, and I want to just bring it back to libraries. Um, the Brooklyn Public Library is doing something quite amazing. They are now offering a free e-library card to teens across the nation, and they're in fact calling it Books Unbanned. Um The idea here is, you know, to help teens who live in other states where there's a lot of book banning going on and it gives those teens access to books so that they can make their own decisions. Um I want to point out that it is specifically designed for young people, um, from age 13 to 21 nationwide. Um, and there is a link to, um, to the Brooklyn Library, um, for anybody who wants to sign up for one of those e-library cards. Um And the link will be in our show notes.

Nice. I think she's quoted as saying uh by she, I mean, um, this Linda E Johnson, the president and CEO of the Brooklyn Public Library. Um, this is from their website says access to information is the great promise upon which public libraries are founded. We cannot sit idly by while books rejected by a few are removed from the library shelves for all books unbanned will act as an antidote to censorship. Offering teens and adults across the country unlimited access to our extensive collection of ebooks. Uh, you know, that's fantastic.

You know, you might say, well, can't students everywhere with a library card have access to ebooks and the answer is no, not anymore. Um, we'll talk about it more in another special episode we're gonna do on upcoming legislation. But there is an act of legislation that, um, was

signed into law in Mississippi not very long ago, which restricts, um, youngsters. So I guess anyone under the age of 18 from access to anything on the Libby App, which is Overdrive, which, um, there's completely taking away any access to audiobooks in the state of Mississippi for anyone under 18 because they're afraid of what they might find on there.

God forbid. So, yeah, more on that next time. Exactly. So, here we are. We, you know, we started this podcast about a year ago and, um, just to read the books, you know, and have a discussion and the, it's, uh, this culture war has just been exploding all around us. So, uh, if you would like to support us in our efforts to keep you informed, please join our Patreon. Uh We are busy full-time and then some educators and librarians and this podcast is a labor of love so we can use all the help we can get. And if you can't join, we get it because who's got money, right? Who's got extra money these days? Get the word out about our podcast. We need reviews on Apple podcasts or wherever you find us. And I have noticed or it's been called to my attention uh by a couple of people who were trying to leave us reviews that um they couldn't figure out how to do it. Uh So just for them, um I'm going to let you know what I figured out. You can't seem to do it on a computer. You have to be on your phone to write a review on Apple Podcasts. So go to your phone, go to the pod, and then scroll down and look for that, you know, write a review box, you can write it on your computer, email it to yourself and then copy and paste it right out of that email into the, into the um app. So I hope that helps.

That's great. Thanks so much, Dorothy, because that has been a question that has come to my attention as well. Um As always, thank you for sticking with us. Um If you would like to leave a question or comment, please visit [theroguelibrarians.com](http://theroguelibrarians.com) or follow us on Instagram or Facebook @roguelibrarianspod or on Twitter @rlibrarians. If you are enjoying this podcast, please subscribe. Um that really helps us to get the word out there as well. You can subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, or wherever you find your podcasts. Thank you, as always, to Chris for our marvelous transition music and to Lizzie for the phenomenal audio editing. Thank you to Alanma, who keeps us on track, and we miss Alana so much this episode. Um We couldn't do this podcast without any of them. And, of course, thanks to all of our readers for reading with us because books are meant to be read. Bye.