Karen Farmer:

Hi, I'm Karen. Welcome to the Libro.fm Podcast, a monthly conversation with authors, narrators, booksellers, and more.

Craig Silva:

And I'm Craig. On today's episode, we chatted with our colleagues here at Libro and asked them to give us their best book recommendations that make great holiday gifts. Karen, this was truly just my sneaky way of getting help with my Christmas shopping. I just need help.

Karen Farmer:

Absolutely. We got a lot of very valuable information and we thought we should share it with everyone.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, I actually love giving books and audiobooks as gifts. It's small, you're not giving somebody something big they have to go put in their house, and depending on who you're giving it to and how much you know about them, you can usually make it a pretty thoughtful gift. Luckily, because I work at Libro, I get a certain amount of free credits around the holiday season to give to friends and family, which I guess I'm just outing myself that I give people free gifts that I get.

Karen Farmer:

Yeah. The secret is out.

Craig Silva:

Hopefully none of my friends and family listen to this podcast, although they better, I guess. Otherwise, I'm offended.

Karen Farmer:

I have a question. When you gift audiobooks, do you gift specific audiobooks for the person or do you gift credit bundles so the person can choose their own audiobooks?

Craig Silva:

So, both. Around the holidays, I definitely do credit bundles because it's awesome just to print out the little gift receipt. It feels like a gift, because you can put it in an envelope. And then the person can get whatever they want and I can usually give three credits or six credits, or whatever, so they can actually have books for many months. Throughout the year, I do tend to give specific books to someone via the Libro gifting feature.

If I had just read something and loved it and it made me think of a certain person, I might just send it to them on a whim. But yeah, around the holidays definitely gift bundles. What about you?

Karen Farmer:

I love a credit bundle. They are my favorite thing ever, because the sky is the limit. The person can choose what they want, and also, something that I should mention right now for the holidays, if you buy a credit bundle, you get to choose a free audiobook for yourself, so everyone wins. Who doesn't love that?

Craig Silva:

I love that. I also don't know if I even knew that.

Karen Farmer:

Well, there you go.

Craig Silva:

There's a lot of chatter on Slack, okay?

Karen Farmer:

If you're like Craig and you didn't know about this, you can learn more at libro.fm/holiday.

Craig Silva:

If you were going to give a specific audiobook to someone, Karen, what audiobook would you give?

Karen Farmer:

I know exactly what it is. It's one of my all-time favorite books. I love the book Bunny by Mona Awad. I love it so much. She is such an incredible writer. She's a Canadian novelist and short story writer, and Bunny came out a couple of years ago. It has campus thriller-y mystery things and magic.

It just has all of the boxes to check that I'm like, "This book is for me." And I have seen a lot of people on Instagram and other places posting about this book, even a couple of years later, that feel very similarly and can't say enough good things about it. So Bunny by Mona Awad is my choice.

Craig Silva:

Love it. Love it.

Karen Farmer:

What about you?

Craig Silva:

Yeah, for me, it's a tough one because giving a book to somebody is usually so specific. Just because I like something doesn't mean they will. And you might think you know, just because they have certain movie tastes, might not be their same taste in books. But a book that I love by an author that I love and I can tell by your face you know what I'm going to say.

Karen Farmer:

I do. I know exactly what you're going to say.

Craig Silva:

So there's this author that I love, her name is VE Schwab.

Karen Farmer:

I knew it.

Craig Silva:

For anyone that's listened to more than one episode of this podcast, you'll know that that was where I was going to go. It's not my favorite book of hers. I love her trilogies and bigger series, but that's a big, "Hey, here's an 800-page fantasy book," is a tough one as a gift.

But she does have a standalone novel that was really big about a year ago and it was on the New York Times Bestsellers List forever. It's called The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue, narrated by one of our favorite narrators, Julia Whelan. And although it is fantasy which I know is not everyone's cup of tea, it is very approachable for someone who may not be into fantasy.

And it's fun, and I mean, it's got everything. I don't know. I have a lot of friends that read that book that aren't fantasy people, or even really book people. So I feel like it has a lot of general appeal. So I think that's a good, safe book to give.

Karen Farmer:

I love that. I very much enjoyed that book as well. And I must say, I enjoy the audiobook even more, since we got to talk to Julia, the narrator. There was so much nuance.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, absolutely. If you're going to listen to the audiobook of that, or if somebody gifts it to you, go back to that episode and listen to how it was recorded and the painstaking detail that went into it. It is just amazing. So thank you, Julia.

Karen Farmer:

All right, well, Craig, should we talk to our coworkers?

Craig Silva:

Love it. Let's get started. For our listeners, Albee, can you tell us, well, I guess I just spoiled your name, but could you tell us your name and what you do here at Libro?

Albee:

Sure. My name's Albee Romero, and I'm part of the marketing team at Libro. And I work with media and influencers to get the word out about Libro, and I'm also involved in our content.

Craig Silva:

We appreciate you every day, Albee. Thank you for spreading the good word.

Albee:

Of course.

Craig Silva:

So if you're giving a book as a gift around the holiday season, what do you suggest?

Albee:

Oh, man. I always like to give a really personalized book based on stuff I know people are into. I think books make such great gifts, but I just finished The Rabbit Hutch by Tess Gunty, which you guys might know just won the National Book Award for Fiction, and it really blew my mind.

And it's a bit esoteric, a bit weird. I don't know if it's for everyone, but I just feel like there are people who would love it, and there's a lot of interwoven stories, the author just has a way with language that's so interesting. It's a book that's set in Indiana, and it's about a bunch of neighbors in a low rent apartment complex, and their stories all intertwine, which I always just love. So again, I don't know if it's for everyone, but it was so propulsive, so engaging, I picked it up and just read it in a matter of days. So it's fresh in my mind, so I have to recommend that.

I also asked my kids if there was anything that they would really recommend, and I'm just going to throw this out there in case anyone's shopping for younger people. So four, five, six-year-olds, really hot at my kids' school is a book called If I Built a House. There's actually three books. There's If I Built a Car, and If I Built a School.

They're by Chris Van Dusen, who you might know as the illustrator behind the Mercy Watson books and a lot of other great books for kids, but they're really fun and imaginative, and if you have a kid who's into building things and creating, I think they'd be a fun picture book. And then for my eight-year-old, she had to get involved too, and she said she'd really recommend The Land of Stories by Chris Colfer, who's a singer and actor who was on Glee. It's a six-book series, and they're a subversive... excuse me, a subversive take on fairy tales.

Craig Silva:

Awesome.

Karen Farmer:

Very cool.

Craig Silva:

I have some kids on my list, and I think you're helping me out here, so I appreciate it.

Albee:

Glad to help.

Craig Silva:

Down to the bookstore after this.

Karen Farmer:

I think you had mentioned The Rabbit Hutch in Slack a few days ago, and I looked it up. I wasn't familiar with it yet, and I have ordered it from my library, and I cannot wait to read this book.

Albee:

Great. Well, yeah. Let me know what you think.

Karen Farmer:

Absolutely.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, I downloaded it on Libro when you posted it on Slack as well, so. On our next podcast episode, we'll have to compare notes.

Karen Farmer:

Yes.

Craig Silva:

What are you currently listening to, Albee?

Albee:

So I tend to listen to more nonfiction and memoirs. What I have been listening to broken up over a period of weeks is The Power of Fun by Catherine Price. I am so busy, as we all are, but it's really a great book to think about how do you prioritize the things that actually make you feel happy? And sometimes, it's these micro-choices that we make, and being intentional about how we spend our time, so still have a lot of that to go, but I'm really enjoying it so far.

Craig Silva:

That sounds great. I read a book awhile ago called How to Do Nothing, and it sounds similar. I really enjoyed that, so maybe I'll go downstairs, get books for the kids, and also maybe some books for myself, as you do. So our lightning round question for you is what is the most memorable gift you have ever received? And it could be when you were a kid, or recently.

Albee:

Oh, gosh. Okay. This one's for Karen. I have to say, I think I got an American Girl doll.

Karen Farmer:

Yay!

Albee:

We always come back to this.

Craig Silva:

As soon as you said, "This one's for Karen," I knew what you were going to say, by the way. I was like, "Oh, it must be an American Girl doll."

Albee:

Yeah. Santa brought me a bike one year. That's pretty high up there. But yeah, I really had dreams of becoming an American Girl doll owner as a child, and found Samantha under the tree one year, and that was very special and memorable and probably why I'm still an American Girl doll fan.

Craig Silva:

Is Samantha still with us?

Albee:

Well, Karen knows this story, but-

Karen Farmer:

This is hard to hear.

Albee:

Hard for Karen to hear. I did give it to my daughter when we were locked down in quarantine. I thought really, now's the time. And did discover that Samantha's hair had been cut [inaudible 00:10:38]. It was very hard.

Craig Silva:

Oh, no!

Albee:

Yeah, luckily, not a huge chunk, and I did mention to my husband, "She cut Samantha's hair." And he's like, "Okay, you need to calm down. You need to get ahold of your life."

Craig Silva:

Did Samantha get a visit to the AG doll hospital?

Albee:

No, it wasn't that bad. We get a bow in her hair or something, it's fine. It wasn't a horrible chop, just a small section, so she's back in the mix, and she looks great, so I had to [inaudible 00:11:08].

Craig Silva:

Well, I'm sorry to bring up such painful memories here. Poor Samantha. Well, thank you for the time, Albee. It was fun learning and getting book recommendations.

Albee:

Of course. Oh my gosh, well, thanks for having me and great work, guys. Can't wait to hear the episode.

Karen Farmer:

Thanks, Albee.

Albee:

Bye.

Karen Farmer:

Bye.

Craig Silva:

Hi, thanks for joining the podcast. For listeners, can you tell us your name and what you do at Libro?

Nick Johnson:

Yeah, my name is Nick Johnson. I'm the Creative Director. I do all sorts of things.

Craig Silva:

I love your podcast voice. It's very different than your normal speaking voice. It goes an octave lower. I picture you should be in front of a fire with a scotch when you-

Nick Johnson:

Ah, that's actually not a bad idea.

Craig Silva:

So Nick, what is your recommendation for a good book to give someone around the holidays?

Nick Johnson:

Well, I actually have two that I'm going to give you today, and I believe you're both familiar with them because I think we talked about it in Nashville recently. The first is called A Psalm for the Wild-Built. It is part of the Monk & Robot series. Has anyone else suggested this one as a gift?

Karen Farmer:

Nope.

Craig Silva:

No one has suggested it, but Karen and I both recently read this and both recently loved it.

Karen Farmer:

Loved it.

Nick Johnson:

It's fantastic, and it's the first in the series. So the second one came out this year, but I love these books. They're so simple and short and meaningful. I was at an industry event recently, and I was speaking to someone and they said, "Do you have a recommendation of a book that has very few characters, and nothing happens?" And I said, "Yes!"

Karen Farmer:

I do!

Nick Johnson:

"I know the exact book for you." And I suggested this book, and then funny thing is, I actually saw them a week later at a different industry event, and they came up to me and gave me a hug and said how much they loved that book.

Karen Farmer:

Aw.

Nick Johnson:

It's just such a great story of two characters getting to know each other, meeting each other where they're at, learning about their life experiences. There's no dramatic rising action. There's no dramatic climax. It's just this great, wonderful story of friendship and I think it's a great book that anybody regardless of age would like.

Craig Silva:

I think that's a great recommendation too, because of the shortness. It's hard to give someone, unless they're a voracious reader, it's hard to be like, "Oh, here's a 500-page book." Like, "Thanks, I'll read this probably never." But this book is very easy to digest. It's super short, so I think it is a really good gift book for that reason.

Nick Johnson:

Well, and it's great I think for all age groups, and it's I think four hours long, the audiobook. So during the holidays with long drives going on, you can get through it in one or two drives. Yeah, just a great all-around book.

Karen Farmer:

The print books?

Craig Silva:

The audiobook of it is great too. Oh, sorry, you go.

Karen Farmer:

Oh, you went audio and I went print. I love it. The print books are so beautiful and the two of them together are so beautiful and it was one of the few times in my life my sister actually asked if she could borrow them from me, and I said, "No, but I will get you your own copy."

Nick Johnson:

That is a great point. I bought both print books after I listened to them both, because these books are one of the very few that when I listen to it, I'm like, "I need to own that book." I have enough people in my life I want to loan it out to or force to buy their own, or have on my bookshelf, so.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, if you loan it out, you're not getting it back, so you should probably go with that-

Karen Farmer:

No.

Craig Silva:

... force to buy their own one.

Nick Johnson:

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. My second one, I was thinking about this. I'm like, "Okay, what's a book that no one else is going to recommend on our team that is a really, really good gift book, especially for..." I was thinking fathers, but it could be really anybody. Because sometimes, dads are really difficult to buy for. The book I am going to recommend is called So Help Me Golf, and it's by Rick Riley.

And it just came out this last year. For those who don't know who he is, Rick Riley is a sports journalist. Wrote for Sports Illustrated for a long time, ESPN. Writes about all sorts of sports, but really has covered golf for decades, and he is a very talented and hilarious writer.

He's written a number of fiction books. In fact, I read my first book by him back at the tender age of 15 in the mid-90s. Gives you an idea of when I was born. And it was a fiction book about golf. But this is not, this is a collection of stories that he has accumulated over his decades of covering golf.

There's stories about golfing with famous celebrities, golfing with famous golfers. Just fun, unique stories about a PGA Tour pro who would pay his motel bills by robbing banks as he was traveling around the country. Just fun, unique, endearing stories, quick reads. Great for anyone in your life who loves golf, or just loves fun little storytelling.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome.

Craig Silva:

I like the cover for it. I pulled it up while you were talking. It's pretty fun. Yeah.

Nick Johnson:

Yeah. I love talking about covers in a podcast format.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, I was just going to say, I guess I have to explain what this looks like for listeners. Basically, it's as if the camera is sitting in the... I'm going to show you that I don't know golf. Sitting in the hole, what is it called?

Nick Johnson:

The cup.

Craig Silva:

The cup. It's sitting in the cup looking out, and you can see the sky as if you're inside of the golf hole. Yes.

Nick Johnson:

That works. You painted a picture.

Craig Silva:

Yes, yes. There you go.

Nick Johnson:

Yeah, no, anyone, if you know someone in your life who is a hardcore golf fan, they will love it because there's lots of hardcore golf knowledge in it. But also if you know someone who's just a more casual

golfer such as myself, it's still really fun and there's enough interesting stories about celebrities, and some of them get juicy, immediate past president and how hilarious it is to golf with him, because of how much of a cheater he is and-

Craig Silva:

Wow, I can't believe it.

Nick Johnson:

... piece of shit. So it's pretty funny. It's a great book, so that's my gift recommendation for a very specific audience.

Karen Farmer:

I'm more at the putt putt level, I would say. But this still sounds very interesting to me, so I'm going to go for it.

Nick Johnson:

There is a story about putt putt, so the author, who narrates it himself and he has a fantastic voice.

Craig Silva:

It's mini-golf, by the way.

Nick Johnson:

It's mini-golf, it's mini golf.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, I don't know what this putt putt you speak of is.

Nick Johnson:

I believe he tried to set the Guinness Book World Records about playing the most mini putt golf holes in a day.

Karen Farmer:

Amazing.

Nick Johnson:

And he writes a story about that, traveling from mini putt putt course to mini putt putt course, and I forget how many holes it ended up being. But it was something absurd, and it was a really funny story. So Karen, even you can get something out of this title.

Karen Farmer:

Perfect. I'm in.

Craig Silva:

And what are you listening to right now outside of the gift-giving world?

Nick Johnson:

I don't have a current listen, because I finished my most recent book. Actually, no, that's not true. I started one late last night. I finished The Paris Apartment yesterday, which to be honest, at the beginning, I didn't care for that much. I liked her older book, The Guest List more. But then as The Paris Apartment went on, it actually flopped, and I ended up liking The Paris Apartment even more than The Guest List. So that was a good mystery.

Craig Silva:

Interesting. I prefer Lucy Foley's... basically any of her other books more than The Paris Apartment. It wasn't my favorite.

Nick Johnson:

Yeah, I could see that. It grew on me, but I'm still not going to say it was one of my favorite murder mysteries or whatnot that I've read. And then just last night, I started I'm Glad My Mom Died by Jennette McCurdy.

Karen Farmer:

Oh, yep.

Nick Johnson:

If you can't tell, I'm working through Libro.fm's top 10 bestsellers for the year. So that's why both of those are on that list. It's been interesting. I'm not familiar with Jennette McCurdy's work. I've never watched iCarly. I was a little bit too old for that.

Craig Silva:

How could you?

Nick Johnson:

And my daughters are a little too young, so I'm not that familiar with her, but her story's really interesting. And it makes me feel much better about my parenting when I hear about her mom, so that's great.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, yeah. The bar is low there, for sure.

Nick Johnson:

The bar is very low. So it's interesting though so far, I really like it.

Craig Silva:

That was our number one selling book this year. Killing it.

Nick Johnson:

I think it's interesting to listen to the top 10. I forced... I shouldn't say forced myself. It is a goal I have to listen to our top 10 every year because there's always titles on there that I will never have picked on my

own. So I'm reading outside of my typical genres. I read my first rom com, or listened to my first rom com-

Craig Silva:

Book Lovers?

Nick Johnson:

Not Book Lovers. That's coming up. Thank You For Listening.

Karen Farmer:

Oh, Julia!

Craig Silva:

Oh, nice.

Nick Johnson:

Past Libro.fm Podcast guest, Julia Whelan, so.

Craig Silva:

That book, I loved that one.

Karen Farmer:

I did too.

Nick Johnson:

My wife listened to it immediately after I did. I forced her to, and then we geeked out over it and it was great.

Craig Silva:

That's awesome. All right. So if you've been listening to the last couple episodes, we've been doing this new thing where we lightning round question the guests at the end. Our question for you is what was the best gift you ever received as a child?

Nick Johnson:

Best gift? Wow. That's deep. I mean, I could say a bicycle or something like that. You know what? It was a comic book.

Karen Farmer:

Oh!

Nick Johnson:

Cyber Force, Episode 3 or book number three. I know this is very specific.

Karen Farmer:

This is great, yeah.

Nick Johnson:

Well, but there's a reason for it. So this was the first comic book I ever got as a kid. And it was put out by Image Comics, which it wasn't DC, it wasn't Marvel. It was this new upstart that was doing things with comic book artwork that had never been done before. Now, all comic books look like what Image started, but Image was really the key or the beginning of it.

I remember flipping through it, and on the third or fourth spread, which a spread for those not in the print world is two pages opened up. There was this full size artwork that covered both spreads of these heroes, and there was this bright, neon green smoke. It was just one of the most amazing pieces of artwork I'd ever seen. I attribute that one piece of artwork to my entire career.

Karen Farmer:

Wow.

Nick Johnson:

That is what made me want to start drawing, made me want to start being an artist, study art and painting and drawing in school, become a branding person, a creative director of Libro. It all comes from that comic book. So that was probably the best gift I've ever received.

Karen Farmer:

I have a tear in my eye. That was a really beautiful answer. Thank you.

Nick Johnson:

No, I still own the comic too. I still have it.

Craig Silva:

It's amazing.

Nick Johnson:

And I actually not too long ago, within the last few years, tried to find it up in my attic, and I did. And I like, "I wonder if that drawing still is any good, or if it's just total crap," and I found it-

Craig Silva:

Did it stand the test of time?

Nick Johnson:

It did, and I was like, "Nope, this is still a really, really good piece of artwork right here."

Craig Silva:

That's awesome. Have you told your parents that story?

Nick Johnson:

I think so. I think I told my mom a couple years ago when I... actually around the same time that I found the comic and looked at it.

Craig Silva:

Did she just weep immediately? I mean, Karen practically cried.

Nick Johnson:

I think she was very happy about that, though I don't think she remembers getting it for me.

Craig Silva:

She's like, "Wow, so it's my fault?"

Nick Johnson:

Yeah, exactly, so.

Craig Silva:

Awesome. Well, thanks for taking the time today, Nick. Appreciate it.

Nick Johnson:

Yeah. You're very welcome. Thank you for having me.

Karen Farmer:

I think you're our most tenured guest. This is your third appearance, so.

Nick Johnson:

Yes, that's exciting. Wow. I'm proud of that.

Karen Farmer:

We'll have you back soon.

Craig Silva:

Maybe.

Nick Johnson:

Which I think the cumulative time I've been on is still less than probably most of the guests, but I come in in little bits and pieces here to annoy people, and to use my octave lower podcasting voice.

Karen Farmer:

Yes. We are delighted to welcome our next guest to the podcast. For our listeners, can you please tell us who you are and what you do at Libro.fm.

Alyssa:

Sure. My name is Alyssa Newman, and I am the Product Operations Manager. But what I actually get to do is talk to publishers, run out content system with hundreds of thousands of audiobooks in it, and I get to curate a lot of the playlists that you see on our site and in the app.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome. Our playlists are one of my favorite things about Libro.fm. So thank you for all of the work you do on them.

Alyssa:

Yeah, of course. It doesn't ever feel like a job when you're like, "Read this book."

Karen Farmer:

Well, beautiful transition into the question Craig and I would like to ask you then. For the holidays, if you could only gift one audiobook, what would you gift?

Alyssa:

I agonized over this, but I ended up on The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet by Becky Chambers. And one of the reasons I would gift it to anyone, even people who are not used to science fiction, which is the genre that it sits in, is because it's a book genuinely about kindness in all of its forms. And something really special about it is the way the author is even kind to her characters. I don't know. It's just absolutely lovely.

Craig Silva:

That is our second Becky Chambers recommendation of the... not the same book. Not the same book. I haven't read that one. If it's anything like the other two that I recently read, I will absolutely pick this up.

Alyssa:

It's even heavier on found family, which if you're a sucker for that like I am, that's the way to go.

Craig Silva:

I'm going to spend so much money this week on books. You people are killing me.

Karen Farmer:

Alyssa, you absolutely got me hooked on Becky Chambers. I think the first time, not long after you started, you mentioned that book and I fell in love. So I always look forward to your recommendations. They're always 10 out of 10.

Alyssa:

That's what I love to hear. There's nothing more satisfying than someone saying, "I loved a book that you recommended to me."

Karen Farmer:

What are you currently listening to?

Alyssa:

Just last night, I started Bombshell by Sarah MacLean. I am the Libro.fm staff romance aficionado. So this is your classic mass market romance. It's also great in audio form too. And so far, what I know is that it's about a spinster 28-year-old finding love, which feels very in my wheelhouse as a spinster 28-year-old.

Karen Farmer:

Bombshell. Okay, that sounds great. I have a question, speaking of which, I don't know the answer to. What are your favorite romance novel tropes?

Alyssa:

I love there's only one bed, sorry. It's just the OG. I'm a sucker for it. I love any kind of marriage of convenience and I really like enemies to lovers when it's done super well. It's just chef's kiss, nothing can compare to enemies to lovers.

Craig Silva:

I love that trope in YA fantasy as well.

Alyssa:

It works really well in YA because teenagers have so many feelings, and the strongest one is enemies.

Karen Farmer:

Hatred.

Craig Silva:

I like that you hit Alyssa with an extra, because that's not even the lightning round question. You're just-

Karen Farmer:

I know. It was bonus. I had to know. I had to know. So your lightning round question, Alyssa, we specifically chose this one for you because you live in beautiful New York City. What is your favorite outdoor winter activity?

Alyssa:

I would say, and I recommend this to anyone, if you are ever lucky enough to be in New York when it snows, it's like you're transported to a magical world, and you get to... The city is so quiet and soft, and even taxi drivers honking their horns really angrily cannot ruin the beauty of just taking a walk in New York City just after it snowed. But if I can have a second answer-

Karen Farmer:

Oh, yeah.

Alyssa:

... it's obviously going to look at the Rockefeller Christmas tree with some Magnolia Bakery hot chocolate. It just hits all of the perfect holiday vibes, so.

Karen Farmer:

Can we come visit you? That sounds amazing.

Alyssa:

I always tell people to come visit in May and December, so yes, come visit me. Come visit me right now. Hop on a plane.

Karen Farmer:

We'll see you tomorrow. Well, thank you so much, Alyssa. We appreciate your recommendations, and Craig is going to go buy Becky Chambers right now.

Alyssa:

Please, please.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome. Well, welcome to the podcast, Mike. We're very happy to have you here today.

Mike:

Thank you.

Karen Farmer:

Yes. For our listeners, would you please tell us what you do at Libro.fm and in the bookish world?

Mike:

Hi, my name's Mike, and in the Libro.fm world, I am the general counsel. So I review contracts. I read those terms of service that I hope everybody is reading when they say they are. I read the privacy policy.

Craig Silva:

I'm sure people are reading those. For sure. Yeah.

Mike:

Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Craig Silva:

I always read them.

Mike:

And in the bookish world, I was introduced to Libro first through A Great Good Place For Books, which is about 500 yards from my house, and my daughter worked there and I've taken over. I update their website, and I set up their social media events and the like, so a little bit of everything. And the other thing I do in the bookish world is I listen to a lot of audiobooks, so.

Karen Farmer:

What is that like to live so close to an amazing bookstore? I feel like I would be in big trouble.

Mike:

It is a little tempting, and it is a little troublesome. And it helps if you just decide to go work at the store, so at least you get the discounts.

Karen Farmer:

That's genius, yep. Well, as we are currently very close to the holidays, the question we wanted to ask you was if you were going to gift a book this holiday season, what would you choose and why?

Mike:

So the book that I am recommending to many people, and I've given it a number of times already to people is Babel by RF Kuang. I've got to do the subtitle here too. I had to pull it up to make sure I got it right. Babel, or the Necessity of Violence: An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution. It is set in the early 1800s England, except there's magic and magic is caused by translation. So the heroes are young translators that are brought to England to help England maintain its power. The magic school trope.

Craig Silva:

I'm sold. I'm sold.

Karen Farmer:

Yeah, I was like, "Craig, yep."

Mike:

Oh, it is so good. Yeah, plus-

Craig Silva:

Love a magic school.

Mike:

... colonialism and its effects, and revolution and very cool.

Craig Silva:

This has been on my list forever, but I just haven't gotten to it yet. And now that it's December, I'm trying to hit those book numbers by the end of the year. So I'm not picking up a large book right now, but this will be my first January book I think.

Karen Farmer:

January 1.

Craig Silva:

Yes.

Mike:

Good approach.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome. Thank you for the recommendation, Mike. I think we're definitely both sold on that. So listeners, enjoy Babel. What are you currently listening to?

Mike:

Currently, I'm listening to Cory Doctorow's Chokepoint Capitalism and let me get the other author's name here off my Libro app. Rebecca Giblin, I wanted to make sure that I included her as well. But this is How Big Tech and Big Content Captured Creative Labor Markets and How We'll Win Them Back.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome.

Mike:

Very interesting book about how monopoly power has created monster companies like that monopolist bookseller, or book pusher in Seattle.

Craig Silva:

I wonder who you're talking about.

Mike:

But also things like Ticketmaster and Live Nation and just a couple of record labels. The way that we've unfortunately allowed a few companies to buy all their competitors and then they then squeeze everybody else for more and more money, and everybody else gets less and less return. So this highlights that problem and then talks about solutions, so. Totally recommend it. I'm about to put it into our Libro Slack as a good book to... a good back grounding book if you're in this industry.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome.

Craig Silva:

I'm glad this was not your recommend for a holiday gift. I'm like, "This is the most depressing holiday gift ever." It does sound amazing, just not under the tree.

Mike:

Yeah, I go a little bit towards dark themes, so. And I'm a lawyer, so it's... I got attracted to it. I follow Cory Doctorow on his blog and other efforts. He wrote a great fiction book. For fiction books, his book last year, Attack Surface was a really good cyber thriller that I highly recommend. It's still a very good gift book, so do Attack Surface if you're looking for another good gift book, so.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome.

Craig Silva:

Perfect.

Karen Farmer:

All right. So Mike, one last question for you, this is our lightning round question, which you have not been allowed to prepare for.

Mike:

Oh, boy.

Karen Farmer:

Oh, it's an easy one. What is your favorite holiday and why? And it doesn't have to be related to the current holiday season at all.

Mike:

My favorite holiday I'd have to say is actually Memorial Day, which is a weird holiday to say is your favorite holiday, but it's my birthday is May 30th. And as a kid, May 30th was Memorial Day, all the time. So I always got my birthday off in school.

Karen Farmer:

Nice.

Mike:

And then they changed it to the dumb floating Monday thing. And now, it's only sometimes that I get my day off, but anyway.

Craig Silva:

But you haven't abandoned Memorial Day. It's still your favorite?

Mike:

Yeah, well, as a kid-

Craig Silva:

Nostalgia reasons, I get it.

Mike:

Yeah. I was bonded to it pretty hard, so.

Karen Farmer:

I get that. My answer to this question is also my birthday. I'm like, "It's a day of rest for me."

Craig Silva:

That's not a holiday.

Karen Farmer:

It can be whatever you want it to be.

Mike:

Exactly.

Karen Farmer:

Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Mike. This has been so fun and thank you for your fantastic recommendations for our listeners.

Mike:

You are so welcome. Thank you for having me.

Craig Silva:

Thanks for coming on the podcast. For listeners, can you tell us your name and what you do at Libro?

Maddie Mullen:

Yeah, my name is Maddie Mullen, and I am Product Manager at Libro, so I do some prioritizing of all of the features that customers request.

Craig Silva:

And dealing with me begging for what we get to work on.

Maddie Mullen:

I love it.

Craig Silva:

Yes.

Maddie Mullen:

My favorite part of the job actually, Craig.

Craig Silva:

Yeah, I'm sure. I'm sure, yes. So what is your book that you want to recommend people?

Maddie Mullen:

I would like to recommend Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus, and I just love this book. It's about a woman in STEM in I believe the 50s or 60s. So I've been recommending it actually to all of my lady friends in STEM because I just thought that they would really enjoy it, and I've gotten a lot of friends who have reached back out and said, "This was my favorite book of the year." So yeah, I really, really liked it.

Craig Silva:

That book was in our top 10 bestsellers this year, right?

Maddie Mullen:

Yeah. I feel like it was a sneaky bestseller. I didn't hear about it a ton leading up to release, and then after release, it was everywhere. I see it on almost every list, so.

Craig Silva:

I love that term, sneaky bestseller. Yeah. What are you listening to right now? It doesn't have to be something you would even recommend, but what's your Libro current listen?

Maddie Mullen:

My current listen is actually Royal Holiday by Jasmine Guillory.

Craig Silva:

Oh, yes.

Maddie Mullen:

So yeah, I think this is my first of her books, actually. And it's one of the ones that's being featured in our Gift With Purchase campaign, so when people buy a credit bundle, they can choose this book. So it's also short and festive and great, so.

Craig Silva:

I'm unfamiliar. Could you give me the quick synopsis of what this is about?

Maddie Mullen:

Royal Holiday? Or-

Craig Silva:

Yeah.

Maddie Mullen:

Yeah. I was like, "Do you want me to tell you about the campaign, Craig?" No.

Craig Silva:

I mean, I guess so.

Maddie Mullen:

I mean, I can.

Craig Silva:

Listeners might want to know that they can get a free book.

Maddie Mullen:

Basically, this woman goes on vacation with her daughter to England, because her daughter has been asked to style a duchess, I believe. So they get to stay in a royal house, a cottage that's much more than a

cottage, I guess. She meets someone while there who works for the queen and from what I can tell, I'm less than halfway through it, but it seems to be a love story so far, so it's romance.

Craig Silva:

Nice. How are you liking it so far?

Maddie Mullen:

I like it. I like it a lot. The narrator's great. The story is very cute, and I don't know. I feel like all the characters are really lovable, so yeah. I'm really liking it.

Craig Silva:

Nice.

Maddie Mullen:

It feels very cozy, so.

Karen Farmer:

Perfect.

Craig Silva:

Love a cozy read. So lightning round question. We want to know, if you could only eat one holiday related food item for the rest of your life, what would it be? And it doesn't have to be December holiday based. It can be any of the holidays.

Maddie Mullen:

Okay. I'm embarrassed, but I'm just going to go with my gut. I would eat stuffing forever.

Karen Farmer:

Yes.

Maddie Mullen:

And not homemade stuffing, the Stove Top stuffing.

Karen Farmer:

I get it.

Craig Silva:

Nice.

Maddie Mullen:

So again, an embarrassing answer, but that's-

Craig Silva:

Are you a fan of stuffing on the day of Thanksgiving, or you love the leftovers for the next few days?

Maddie Mullen:

Oh, I'll eat it whenever. I love it for Thanksgiving.

Craig Silva:

All the stuffing, anytime.

Maddie Mullen:

All the time, yeah. I actually recently realized that hey, just because it's not Thanksgiving doesn't mean I can't make stuffing, so.

Karen Farmer:

Exactly.

Craig Silva:

I was just going to say that. I was like, "Isn't that weird that..." Does anyone makes stuffing not in November? I don't think I've ever had stuffing in July.

Karen Farmer:

There's nothing stopping you.

Maddie Mullen:

I will say that once, I made it with salmon, and I was like, "This doesn't feel right."

Craig Silva:

Yeah, that's too fancy.

Maddie Mullen:

This is supposed to go with poultry.

Craig Silva:

Cool. Well, thanks for coming on the podcast, Maddie. Appreciate it.

Maddie Mullen:

Yeah, thank you. This was fun.

Craig Silva:

Happy holidays.

Maddie Mullen:

Happy holidays.

Karen Farmer:

Well, Craig, I just added so many books to my to be read list thanks to this podcast. Just as a reminder, folks, if you would like to gift any of these audiobooks for the holidays or purchase them for yourself, you can gift these audiobooks directly or purchase a credit bundle. I recommend checking out libro.fm/holiday, because we have some great promotions going there right now, and just all kinds of other cool stuff you can do with donations around the holidays and things like that.

Craig Silva:

And as always, thank you for listening.