

## Episode 1.2 Q&A

### Angourie (host)

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which this work is created and presented. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

[Ukulele introduction music]

### Angourie

Hello there! My name's Angourie Rice, and you're listening to *The Community Library*, a podcast, book club and discussion space.

So this week's minisode, I decided to hold a Q&A. I asked you on twitter and Instagram if you had any questions about reading and the podcast, and I'm going to answer them today. But, before we get into the Q&A, I am going to tell you about what I'm currently reading.

[Intermission music]

### Angourie

So at the moment I am reading three books. The main book that I'm focussing on at the moment, that I read every night before bed, is *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J. K. Rowling. I really love this book ... I can't ... just, my re-read is further solidifying that this is my favourite book in this series. There's so much detail that goes into it ... it's so intricate. I love the little snippets that you get of the kids at school, just like dealing with homework, and friendships, and teachers, and ... I just really love those moments where, you know, it's not all about Voldemort and the upcoming Wizarding World War. It's about Harry being nervous for his first date, or Ginny getting onto the Quidditch team, or Ron practicing for the Quidditch team in secret, or Hermione knitting hats for elves. Like, it's ... you just get these really nice moments of pure love and friendship, and it's really comforting and nice. So I'm really enjoying that.

The next book that I'm currently reading is *The Nowhere Child* by Christian White. This is a mystery thriller. It follows kind of two timelines, and one is present day, and it follows a woman who is just living her life, just hanging out. And one day she is approached by a man, and he says: "Thirty years ago, a two-year-old child went missing in America, and I believe you are that missing child." And the story unfolds from there. And the other timeline we're following is, um, back in the '90s, in America, when the child first went missing, and the immediate reaction to this event. Uh, and so ... yeah, it's pretty engaging at the moment. I'm interested to find out if she really is the missing child ... uh, or what the story behind that is. So yeah, I'm intrigued by it.

At the moment I'm also reading *When Dimple Met Rishi*. This is by Sandhya Menon. And it's so cute! I'm actually really, really loving this, and I thought I wouldn't like it, because I'm not ... I don't usually go for YA romances, but this one just, kind of caught my eye, I thought it

would be sweet, and it is. It's really, really sweet. I really like the audiobook. It's narrated by a woman and a man, and because we have two perspectives – we have the perspective of Dimple and the perspective of Rishi – the woman narrates Dimple's perspective and the man narrates Rishi's perspective. And I really like that, because you can really distinguish the two perspectives from one another, and I really love that. I'm excited to see where it goes ... if they get together ... will they, won't they? But yeah, I'm really enjoying that one as well.

Please let me know what you're currently reading. You can tweet me at @angourierice, or you can use the hashtag #thecommunitylibrary on both Instagram and Twitter. And you can tag the community library in a post about what you're reading, if you like. The Instagram handle is @the\_community\_library. I'd be really interested to see what you're reading, if you're enjoying it, if you're not, um ... so yeah, let me know.

[Intermission music]

### **Angourie**

So, I've picked out some questions, and there are a lot of really interesting ones here. So I think a good one to start off with is ... "How did you get the idea for *The Community Library*?" So, I started really getting into podcasts maybe this time last year. So about April, May, June last year. Because I was walking home from school every day by myself, because my friend who I usually walk with had, ah, lots of after school bands and things like that. So, I would walk home by myself and I'd listen to a podcast along the way. And the podcast that I really got into was *Witch, Please*, which is a podcast where two Canadian professors critically analyse the *Harry Potter* series. And as soon as I found this, I was like: "This is ... this is *exactly* what I want to listen to." And I loved it, and I ... the thing that really caught my interest was their process of applying critical thinking and critical analysis to a children's book, and a book that is very popular and is so integrated into pop culture ... and applying their knowledge of being literature professors to something that everybody can relate to. And that idea really caught my interest. I think that was probably the first spark, where I thought: "I'm doing this, you know, I'm applying critical thinking in school and literature class, and ... what would happen if I applied that thinking to what I read in my own time?" As I started listening to more podcasts, I discovered that I really liked this format. And I really liked the format of being able to create something in your pyjamas, and nobody would care, because they can't see you!

So while I was, you know, thinking about creating a podcast, thinking about critically analysing books in popular culture, children's books, young adult books, not just things like *War and Peace* or Shakespeare ... So while I was thinking about all of these things, I graduated school, and I'd found that my relationship with reading had changed since I'd been in school because a lot of it was associated with pressure, and stress, and homework, and I didn't love that, um ... You know, I loved studying texts and writing essays, and I was very passionate about it, but I always put too much pressure on myself. So, once I graduated, I wanted to rebuild my relationship with reading into something that was a lot more positive, and wasn't associated with so much stress.

I also kind of wanted an excuse to keep reading, and to keep analysing books, because I wasn't going to literature class anymore, and I knew I was really going to miss that. I was really going to miss sitting down with my peers and talking about books.

So a lot of it was very personal, in wanting to build up my relationship with reading again, and make it something that I enjoyed again, and not something that was associated with stress and homework. I found that this idea was something that my friends were interested in, and shared very similar feelings with me.

So I thought, well, why not take this a step further, and why not take it to the public, and share it with followers and people online?

As I've, kind of, been getting more followers, I guess, online, I've been thinking a lot about the kind of content I put out into the world, because more and more people are seeing it. And, this project is something that I'm very passionate about. It's – it's content that I want to see, so ... I'm thinking, well, maybe other people want to see it too? Hopefully? It's an idea that I think is positive, and encouraging, and exciting, and ... it's to do with something that I'm very, very passionate about, and that I think is a really valuable learning tool, and that's reading.

I'm really happy that it's grown into a podcast that I can share with a wider audience, and I just hope that people love it as much as I do, and people are excited about it as well. And even if nobody liked it, I'd still make it because I actually have a lot of fun doing it!

So, yeah ... that was a very long answer, but I hope that answered your question in some way.

The next question is: "Where can I listen to the podcast?" So, as of the date of this recording, the podcast is available on iTunes, so Apple Podcasts, and on anchor.fm. So, I have an Anchor profile, and there are links in the bios of both my normal Instagram account, and the Instagram account for the podcast that will take you to the Anchor website where you can listen. From there, you can click on a link that will take you to listening to the podcast on Apple Podcasts. If by the time this episode is out and there are more platforms that it's available on, then I will link them in the show notes for you.

This next question is: "Favourite books." Um, and this is a tough one, because as soon I think about this I forget about every book I have ever read in my life! Um, I have actually used Goodreads – not sponsored by Goodreads – but, I have a shelf on Goodreads that reminds me of my favourite books, which is very helpful. And these are ones that I've rated five stars that really stick with me. And I'm just going to rattle off the names at the moments, and then you can look into them and research them if you want.

- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf
- *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton
- *The Man Who Loved Children* by Christina Stead
- *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge
- *Moxie* by Jennifer Mathieu
- *I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith
- *Emma* by Jane Austen

And there are a few more in there, mostly more Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf stuff, but, yeah ... That kind of, gives you an idea of some of my favourite books.

This question asks: "Have you ever been in a reading slump? And if so, how did you get out of it?" Yes, definitely. Um, but at the time I didn't know that it was called a "reading slump", or that was a thing that people could experience. I had a massive reading slump from when I

was about fourteen to when I was sixteen. Yeah, when I was in, kind of, grade 9, 10 and 11, I had this kind of weird relationship with reading where I was just too busy, or I was really discouraged from reading in my own time, because ... we were reading books at school that I didn't like, and then reading was associated with homework, and chores, and stress, and ... it was just really unsatisfying. It wasn't an enjoyable experience; reading and studying books that I really didn't care for. And so I just kind of got exhausted with reading, and I didn't do it in my own time anymore.

And then, at the end of year 11, so that was the end of 2017, I kind of had a realisation, where I was like: "Oh, I used to be a bookworm, like, I used to read all the time, and now I can't remember the last time I finished a book." And so at the start of 2018, I decided to make it, like, the "Year of Reading". And I set myself a goal to read more books, and I did. When I started implementing reading into my daily life again, I realised how much I missed it. I got back into a passion that I had forgotten about.

This question asks: "How many books do you typically read in a week?" Well, luckily for you, dear listener, I am a super-nerd, and love organising and graphing things, so I actually track my reading over the month. And I have a chart, or a graph, on which I count how many pages I read in a day, and I colour-code all the little lines, and ... yeah, it's super nerdy, but, let me calculate it for you! I just love bullet-journaling, and organising things, and tracking things, and documenting things.

So if we take last month, February, which was a pretty good reading month, I finished eight books. So, that's eight books in four weeks, so that's two books a week. But, I actually very rarely read a full book in seven days. Usually I read, like, three books at one time, and it might take me ten to twelve days to finish them all, but they all kind of finish at the same time, so that averages out to two books a week – my answer is two books a week, roughly. Okay, there you go.

I like this question. It is: "What's a book that you would say changed you?" For this, I'm going to answer with a book that is kind of ... non-fiction, activity book, how-to, self-help ... hybrid? It's kind of difficult to explain, um – the book is *How To Be An Explorer of the World: Portable Life Museum* by Keri Smith.

This is from the author of *Wreck this Journal*, I think that is maybe her most popular book? But *How To Be An Explorer of the World* was the first Keri Smith book I received as a gift. It's a collection of way to look at the world around you, and reevaluate your relationship with the world, and ... find beauty and interest in things that you would normally not give a second glance. It's also about documentation, and collection. I think the book really inspired me to harness my love of documenting things. I love taking notes, I love making graphs, I love noticing patterns, and tracking things over time. I love putting everything onto paper, and documenting my life and my world. And that's why I think this book really – like, when I was younger – it really inspired me to make that a central part of my life, and a central part of how I move in the world.

This question is: "Where is your favourite place to read?" I like reading in my bedroom, and I sit on my bed and read. That's about it. Anywhere that's comfortable!

This question asks: "Will you only be reading fiction?" And I assume this is in relation to the podcast, and no! I plan to talk about non-fiction, and essays, and poetry, and plays, and lots

of different types of text and formats of text. I am getting increasingly interested in non-fiction and essay collections, so that's definitely something I want to look at in the future.

This question asks: "How do you set aside time for reading?" I have talked about this a bit before ... I think on my blog. In terms of squeezing reading in when you feel like you have no time, I've found that if I have either an audiobook or an e-book on my phone, that means if I'm waiting for public transport, or waiting at the dentist's office, or something like that ... When you're hanging around and you have nothing to do, you can read instead of scrolling through Instagram. And I've found that once I had a book on my phone, that was the easiest way for me to fit in little snippets of reading into my day, and also cut down on time I spent on social media.

"What is your favourite genre to read?" I can't give you a specific genre that I like to read, but I can give you genres that I *don't* like to read? No, that's being negative, okay, I won't do that. I'm going to say ... my favourite genre to read ... I really like reading classics, and modern classics. I also really like reading contemporary YA.

"Do you prefer reading physical books, or on a kindle?" I prefer reading physical books, one hundred per cent. I like the feel of them. But as I said before, having an e-book is very convenient, and if I'm taking a day-trip somewhere, it's much more convenient to just have a book on my iPad than have a physical one.

This question asks: "If you were the main character in a book, would you be the antagonist or the protagonist?" I would hope I'd be the protagonist? But, I think there is something to be said for really well-written antagonists, especially when you know the motive for the antagonist. And, if the antagonist has a very sound and believable motive, I think that's the sign of an antagonist that is interesting and intriguing, and isn't just there to oppose to the protagonist for no reason.

This question is: "Is there a book that you had to put down multiple times before you finally came back and finished it? If so, what was the reason that the read was such a struggle?" I have found that if I pick up a book more than twice and I can't finish it, then I will give up. Um, but, there's one book, um, *I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith. I picked that up when I was about twelve, and didn't really get into it – maybe made it about 25, 30 pages in and just stopped reading. And then I picked it up a few years later, maybe when I was fifteen or sixteen? And I fell in love with it, finished it, thought it was brilliant, and now it's one of my favourite books. And I think initially, maybe I was just too young? And I didn't identify with the character immediately. In the book she's fifteen or sixteen, I think? I think she's sixteen. And maybe, just, as a twelve-year-old I didn't ... I didn't relate to her as much as I did when I was the same age as her. But I'm glad that I gave it a second go, because that is definitely one of my favourite books now.

"Do you ever re-read novels? If so, which ones?" I love re-reading books, um, especially if I haven't read them in a very, very long time. Something like *I, Coriander* by Sally Gardner, that was one of my favourite books growing up. I hadn't read it since I was about ... gosh, maybe eight or nine? And I picked it up last year, and read it all the way through, and I didn't like it as much as I did when I was younger. I think I liked it out of nostalgia more than

anything, but if I'd gone into it without having loved it as an eight-year-old, I probably wouldn't have liked it at all.

So, sometimes the re-reading experience can be kind of disappointing, but there are some books like ... like Virginia Woolf's texts, I find that the more times I read them, the more I get out of them. I like re-reading things that I know that I missed messages in, so that I can read it a second time, and get a bit more out of it, and a third time, and get even more out of it. So, yes, in general, I do really like re-reading books.

"What is your favourite book series?" *Harry Potter*. I honestly think that's it, because I don't really read series. Although I will say, I did love the *Inkheart*, *Inkspell*, *Inkdeath* series by Cornelia Funke when I was younger, and I'm actually planning to read that series this year and see if I still love it. But I think *Harry Potter* will always have a very, very special place in my heart.

"What is [your] favourite young adult novel?" I would say ... my favourite one that I've read recently is probably *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. I just ... I really loved that, I thought it was brilliant. And everybody has already said amazing things about it, so, you know, you – you just, you know how amazing it is. If you've read it, or if you've heard about it, like, yeah. It's a great book. Really, really awesome.

This question asks: "Do you prefer reading standalone novels or series? And why?" I prefer standalone novels. I don't ... I find it difficult to commit. Is that – is that ... bad? Does that say something about me? I – I prefer reading standalones because often I feel that the first book in a series, when the author knows that it's going to be a series, it often feels incomplete. And it often feels like ... not a whole novel. I would say standalones ... I prefer.

This question asks: "I know you're a big *Harry Potter* fan. Which is your favourite *Harry Potter* book and why?" Definitely *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, closely followed – and *very closely* followed – by *Prisoner of Azkaban*. Definitely those two, they're my top two. And I think it's the same with the movies – ah, but just flipped. So *Prisoner of Azkaban* is my favourite movie, closely followed by *Order of the Phoenix*.

This question asks: "Who is your favourite writer, and why?" I'd say my two favourite authors at the moment are ... well, actually my three favourite authors right now are Jane Austen, Angie Thomas, and Virginia Woolf, I think. They're the three where I've read multiple works by them, and I've consistently enjoyed their books. So I would say them.

This person asks: "Where do you get your books from?" I go to the library a lot. Um, the library that I go to is very close to the gym that I go to, so my, kind of reward for going to the gym is I get to go to the library. And it's good, because it's making me go to the gym a lot more than I used to. My parents also have a collection of books that has a lot of classics. So, if I want to read a widely known classic, I will look at their bookshelf, because, most likely we have a copy. I try to avoid buying books that I haven't read before. So, for example, I read *The Enchanted April*, and I read a borrowed copy, and I loved it so much that I bought my own copy to put on my bookshelf. So, I would prefer to have books on my bookshelf that I've read, that I know that I love. But mostly I get books from the library.

[Intermission music]

Thank you so much for sending all of your lovely questions, they were really interesting and thought-provoking, so thank you very much. If you have any requests of what you want to listen to in these minisodes, or any books that you would like me to talk about in the full episodes, don't hesitate to tweet me at @angourierice. You can even use the hashtag #thecommunitylibrary if you would like.

[Ukulele theme music]

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Just another reminder that next week, I will be discussing *Pulp* by Robin Talley with a guest, and I encourage you to read along, if you would like, so you can join in on the discussion. Once again, thank you for listening, and I'll talk to you next time. Bye!