

## An Oregon Cottage Podcast

### Episode 53: The Science of Why Thankfulness is Good For You + More

- Brian: Welcome to episode 53 where we are going to talk about the benefits of thankfulness.
- Jami: We'll share some experiments where they've actually proven that gratitude is good for you.
- Brian: And I know in our last episode about bread, we talked a lot about research, right? So hopefully you're not overly sick of hearing about research because we're going to be talking about some more research and this one having to do with thankfulness.
- Jami: Also Farmhouse updates, some favorite comfort food recipes and some cool things we just discovered.
- Brian: (Research) is sorta how in our modern era we tell if things really work. We want to research, right? To see if there's an actual benefit. Well. So, um, you know, we always tell our kids, and it was probably told to me too, that the magic words are please and thank you. And that was more just being polite and getting along. Right.
- Jami: Well, but it also, we knew that it's a way to get along in the world and therefore get ahead in the world. Like it's good all the way around.
- Brian: That's true. That's true. And they've shown that if you, by projecting how you would like to feel, asking for things with the please, being polite to other people and having gratitude with it, "Thank you." Your attitude and everything actually follows that. There's a whole something of, research that I won't pull up that has to do with that. I don't want to talk about it here.
- Jami: Don't even look for that in the show notes, ha!
- Brian: (laughing) I don't want to get off topic because what we want to talk about was that article that we ran across, this kind of sparked this whole thing,
- Jami: Yes, right! It kind of asked, you know, is gratitude the key to being satisfied with life?
- Brian: Right. That was, that was an NPR story that came across, um, Feedly, right? No Pocket. What do we use? Right - Pocket. That should be a future Cool Things, but it's not this one - so don't be looking for that. Anyway, basically what they were kind of saying, there's been a lot of studies lately on happiness. How do, how do people (say they are happy).

Jami: Which is interesting because how do you measure that? Right? It's very subjective

Brian: Yet, you know, when you're sad, well then you can probably do a scale of, oh, I feel horrible or I feel okay today, or I felt so there's gotta be some sort of measure. I'm sure psychologists have a clever way of measuring it. Yeah. And uh, and it can also just be, I don't know if it's the emptiness of our culture. We've sort of tried everything and we're kind of jaded. And so happiness is elusive. Like happiness doesn't necessarily come with the latest gadget or whatever, like, or even, I don't know, a new romance or something. It seems to be fleeting, so we're always studying what makes people happy. To answer your question, okay, the quick, boiling it down, it was that gratitude is the key to happiness. Yes. Practicing gratitude will actually make you happier.

Jami: And they did kind of define like being satisfied with your life is happiness. Not like, Ha, ha, giddy joy. Or, oh, this is just, it's not more like emotion, you know? "My Gosh, I'm so happy right now." It's like you're satisfied with your life, you're content, satisfied, and just living day to day brings you joy. That kind of satisfied, which goes deeper, that kind of speaks deeper to me than just happiness.

Brian: Right, right, yeah. And happiness. It's a funny word because in English it, it means luck. Luckiness which is really funny because we don't think you can pursue luckiness, you know. By happenstance, it's more of a joy. I don't know. I've heard that for the English doesn't really have a great word for that.

Jami: I've never thought of it as luck.

Brian: So I was poking around looking for other, and there's some research in there where, um, in measuring happiness, they found out that if you journal what you're happy about and they specified if you do it, if you write down, make a list of everything you're thankful for once a week, that is the optimum for being happy. So, okay. So not doing it all isn't great. If you do it once a week, you're really good. But then this is what's funny to me. They found if you do it two or more times a week it is too much, that the optimum is just once a week. (laughing)

Jami: I wonder if it has anything to do with making a list. Yeah. It's not what I like to do. I like to do a little, you know, one little thing a day.

Brian: Like find a couple of things you're happy about.

Jami: Just what you're thankful for that day.

Brian: Yeah, yeah, yeah. As opposed to the catalog. So maybe that's what it is.

Jami: And for me it's kind of like it's, you know, stop looking at the glass half empty, you know, just okay, there's things to be thankful for today. What is it? Write it down. Right.

Brian: And one of the gals that they had, um, interviewed, she was a social worker in the NPR story had said it seemed Hokey, but she was going to do it anyway. And it was, if she was at a really low point, she said she was unemployed, she's sleeping on a friend's mother's couch or something. And something else going on that was lousy in her life. And so she looked for things to be thankful for, things like the sun, there would be some sunshine that she could wake up. I mean, they were like really basic level things and it was amazing. She said she felt better and it helped her. She kinda got back on her feet. Then another one that I was poking around, WNYC did a documentary that I think it's fairly well widespread. I think it's called The Science of Gratitude.

Brian: And now I'm looking, um, oh yeah, I'll put the link for it. I actually have, I'm looking at my computer, I have the tab here. And it was like, they got Susan Sarandon to narrate it. You know, it's like, uh, I don't know how much you're paying her, but it's like a dive into all this different kind of research. And that was where they took people with, that were starting in on heart disease and they like hooked them up. They monitored their heart while they had them practice gratefulness or list what they're thankful for, whatever it was.

Jami: Really?

Brian: And they could measurably see an improvement and then an overall improvement in their heart health. Yes. And that amazing. And it found that, did it help them do the things they need to do to get healthier with their heart and soul.

Jami: So it wasn't just measuring happiness? It was actually looking at their physical body? Wow.

Brian: Yeah. And one gal they interviewed, you know, getting, she'd been on rough times when she was actually part of this study. She had been unemployed and going through some tough stuff. And so they said, yeah, they got her hooked up.

Jami: You mean people that had a heart attack?

Brian: Yeah, she'd had a heart attack and they enter into this study, post heart attack study, and then as she was getting, she really needed to change how she ate and exercise and handled stress in her life and being, having gratitude and being thankful actually helped her in those things. Completing things that we're going to make her better. Wow. But also in, as she sat there and was being measured, her heart vitals were whatever, and there was some, I don't know what they look for some drug or some level of heart sounds or something. Anyway, they were like, what's, what's the word? Completely concrete evidence. It wasn't like, are you happy? Are you know?

Jami: Right, right. So the more subjective, wow.

Brian: Yeah. Anyway, so the evidence is out there actually. Yeah. If you Google the science of gratitude, there's tons tons on it. That being thankful is, is good.

Jami: Yeah. You have another one from psychology today where science proves gratitude helps, right.

Brian: That's true. If you don't, if there are enough studies, I think there's four more studies in that one. Yeah. If you'd like to read studies.

Jami: So we should be thankful. So what it is is like, so how does that work in day to day life? So how does that work? So for me, um, I really started thinking about it about six years ago when I read Ann Voscamp's book 1000 Gifts. It was a pretty powerful book. Lots of people were reading it. Um, she's an interesting writer. She's kind of hard for me to follow. She's very poetic in her writing and so the, the writing part, but I loved the, she had a lot of things happen to her. A lot of things happened to her family, like some of the women you've discovered, there were a lot of things she had to work in her childhood that she had to work out and she really focused on, um, you know, she didn't know what to do, felt like she was drowning and just pulled out a book.

Jami: Just a little journal that she'd been given and just left it on the counter. And every day she just found something to be thankful for. And she just wrote something in there that was part of her life that she was thankful for. And she did it, um, until she had 1000 thankful things and 1000 gifts is what she called them. And that was kind of the whole point of her book. And so I was inspired to do that and I had been given a little journal and I left it out. I didn't go a whole thousand like she did. I think I got to like 400. But when you leave it out, you remember right when it's out there on the counter, you remember and you see it and you're like, oh, what today am I thankful for? And it is kind of amazing how it switches your mindset. Like I might be grumpy about things or stressed and things aren't going my way. And then I that I have to think, what am I thankful for today? And some days you really have to think about it. And it might be just that I was able, my body moved today and I was able to do exercise, you know, or I was able to, um, get out of bed or the sun shone and I, you know, spent time out in it or is able to dig in the dirt or, you know, anything that just brought a little bit of joy, you know, I talked to a friend today, it was just basic little things, but it does really change your attitude, your mindset, I want to say.

Jami: And, um, so that, that kind of really helped. And so now I really have things set up where I try to force myself to do that. So I have in my planner, there's a little gratitude in the Flexible Plannner, a little gratitude section every week. And I make sure to, you know, write a couple things in there at least. Um, I've set up a thankful reminder on my phone, just a regular reminder. I just titled It, you know, be thankful. And so a couple of times a day that goes off and it just makes me stop and go, Oh yeah, okay, this is great. I'm able to do this work and that I'm thankful for that or I am able to make this food and I'm thankful for that or whatever, just

whatever you're doing that day. So those are kind of the little things that I've set up.

Brian: You know, is worth with, this is not in the notes, but this just this thing came to mind. The opposite example. What do you call that? A negative example. Okay. You're going to remember that as I tell you this, you're going to remember this story. So we'd been given a night I think just one night at a very fancy resort at the coast. Yeah. Do you remember this? And so it was so fancy, it did not have wifi in the room. And so we I think, we could've have paid for it.

Jami: This was a while ago. But yeah, you did have to pay x for it.

Brian: We were too cheap to pay for it in the room. So we were down in the lobby, which also was the waiting area for a very fancy restaurant that this place had. And we're sitting down there using the free Wifi and we, there's this what will we call it? A conflict to let's say, this couple who looked very well to do. And we actually, we saw them drive off in a really nice Mercedes. I don't know if he saw that and they are berating the poor, um, hostess.

Jami: Yes, young hostess.

Brian: Evidently. Oh yes. And she'd been, they'd been seated and it was 20 minutes and something happened. I think she might've forgotten to tell the waiter they were there. It might've been something like that.

Jami: Yeah, I'm not sure. I don't remember who they were.

Brian: They were letting her very loudly know they were not happy. And remember, then the manager came out and offered them a free, uh, dinner then didn't he? Then they said, well, we are, we play golf a lot and we're never coming back to your golf course and you've lost thousands in business - they escalated. And he said, can I give you a free night? I think it went to that and the, the poor, um, remember the poor hostess is in tears breaking down and it was nice that they were all doing it loud enough that we could hear, we didn't have to kind of scoot in to hear what was being said. You know, that was very, and so they left and it was like how miserable they are at on the Oregon coast. It has to be one of the top, top places to stay.

Brian: And I just thought, I kind of felt not super bad for them, but how pathetic that you could be that wealthy and so ungrateful and you could just say, oh yeah, send us a bottle of wine or laugh about it or whatever. I mean it was like, I guess what would the opposite of gratitude would be entitled? I don't know.

Jami: They were definitely, yeah, definitely not looking at it as funny - it was really embarrassing.

Brian: yeah, you're right, it was a long time ago that I still remember it vividly.

Jami: Yeah, I remember feeling so bad for that hostess, caue we're all people, you know and we make mistakes.

Brian: Anyway, so the flip side of that, I always think about some of the stories that have really reminded me to be thankful in all things. You can always find something to be thankful about. And the ultimate was Corrie TenBoom who, um, was the Dutch. Um, she and her family, you know, saved a lot of Jewish people in World War II, hid them until they got caught.

Brian: And then she goes from, um, she and her family were arrested, sent to a prison, like a regular prison, and then it went at worst and they got sent to a work camp. And then she, as her family members are dying off or getting out. And then she and her sister are sent from a work camp to the Ravens Brook death camp. I remember her, her sister, Betsy, would always say, well, we need to be thankful for all things. So what ever happened, her sister would try to be thankful for it and Corrie would just say, oh, I don't, I, Corrie would always admit, um, you know, it was her story and, but she would say, I, you know, she couldn't be thankful. How can you be thankful for this? This is horrible.

Jami: And I think we'd all agree with her.

Brian: Yes. Oh, the things they went through were awful, awful things and mistreatment and humiliation and the beatings and the starvation and the lack of medical care.

Brian: But the one we were, we all remember is the fleas, right? Wasn't it flees or was it lice?

Jami: I thought it was lice.

Brian: Yeah. Cause we've had some lic in our family and we, you know, it's funny, I was not thankful for the lice when we, uh, we've had to deal with it. So they get lice. They're in this horrible, there's, there's, there's not even enough beds for everybody to sleep. It's so crowded and no food. And now they've got lice. And so her, her sister, Betsy, says, well, we, Corrie, we need to be thankful for the lice. And so, you know, Corrie, he's like, well, I can't how God, how can we be thankful for the lights and remember what happened? What, why they were thankful. What, what was it? Do you remember from the story?

Jami: Yeah, well the guards wouldn't bother them because they had lice. So they didn't have to worry about getting raped.

Brian: That's right. So not only were they not molested by the guards, there was a whole bunch they could do. They were free to do. It was like anytime they had in there, they could do whatever unsupervised, they could talk, they could read, they could do so much in there without the guards because of the lice. So anyway, so that reminds me, you can, if you try hard enough, you can be thankful for everything.

Jami: And I think what her sister knew is that the thankfulness isn't sugarcoating what you're going through. She knew it was for our own mental health. Right. But if you just dwell on all the bad stuff, you will spiral down into depression. I mean, for your own mental health, you have to cling to the good because you really can find it if you look right. Right. Yeah. I think that was her whole point.

Brian: And I think her thing, a lot of these modern things in people, you don't have to be religious to be thankful, but especially I think for religious people and for Christians, the thankfulness is to God. I mean we want to be grateful to other people and definitely, you know, um, tell them that, that's important. But that in these hard things, the hard heart things are to be thankful to God because God, I mean Betsy would say, and Corrie would say, well God sent the lice. I mean that was pretty bad, but then there was a, a much greater purpose in, you know, in having that, so. Right. That's what's important.

Jami: Well, I'm not sure I think God sent the lice, it just happens.

Brian: Well, it's theological. God created life. Yes. God, I don't know. God sent the lice.

Jami: Well, yeah, the lice are in our world and so we can get them, yes.

Brian: God allowed the lice. Maybe we can see it that way.

Jami: Yeah. Okay. That's, good.

Brian: Farmhouse Updates: Well, something we can be thankful for is we've um, made some new friends, and the husband of the couple is a fine home builder. Like yeah, fine home builder. And so as last week we were able to go and tour one of the homes that he's just finished and has been put on the market. And the reason it's in here in the farmhouse update is because he builds brand new homes to look like they're old homes. And it was pretty cool.

Jami: I wouldn't say to look like they're old, but definitely he wants to, he wants to pay respect, he wants to do it in a kind of a more craftsman style. Where are you really pay attention to detail. And you know, you make things look (authentic) - and he is doing craftsman style, so they all have the porches and the overhangs and, you know, the columns that are big, chunky, and some have the stone at the bottom and lots of things like that. But he really, you know, likes the details.

Brian: Right, Yeah. Yeah. And he's, um, I mean, he did say his one home, his open house home, show home, had been mistaken for a remodel. Someone thought it was an old home that had been remodeled.

Jami: Yeah. I would've never thought that. (laughing). It's too perfect.

Brian: But you, of course, inside you get the feel. You're right. It's almost too perfect. Having been done from scratch? It reminded me of some old Portland homes that have been done by extremely high end, I want to say, craftsmen where everything, every detail from how the wood floors done to, he had, um, plaster - he had it thin coated, like the walls aren't perfect. They're like, well, it looks like old plaster walls. Right. And of course then really thick moldings and all these details.

Jami: Like we, we noticed that his columns, he has them separating the kitchen, I mean the dining room from the living room, like a lot of craftsmen homes do. And he has these big thick columns. They are like 12 by 12 they're bigger than, anyway, they're pretty thick.

Brian: They'd be made from like four boards and kind of a square going up and down, making the column.

Jami: He made these, he spent time to make these little grooves going down on each side of each corner. And it just adds a little detail that's just like someone, appreciates this, you know?

Brian: See, I'm not used to seeing that in new construction. The American thing is to get as much square footage as you can and you just put down, you know, you just kind of bang it out and get it done, you know, and it's all bull nose to edges and you know, minimal. Whatever they got you know in bulk. So it was kind of, he was really, really cool to see.

Jami: And there were some ideas in there and some things that um, you know, I liked to see. The bathrooms, I liked the, I love the idea of the no maintenance. You know, where you just, you can go, there's no lip, so you can go straight from the floor, you can go straight from outside the shower to inside the shower.

Brian: Just the tile size changes. Just keeps tiling across the floor.

Jami: Right, and there's no glass and no curtain. It's just partial wall with just like kind of an open door that you go into. The only thing is, I mean I love the no maintenance. You've got no shower curtain. No glass hardly, you know, no tracks or anything to get dirty. And then as you age, you don't have to worry about tripping as you're going in and out. But I just think that has to be cold. You're open, you're basically opened to your whole bathroom.

Brian: Oh, I didn't think about that, when you're in the shower? Some air could be blowing.

Jami: Yeah. And I mean, I know when I open either the curtain or the glass, it's like there's a cold, all of a sudden comes in and I'm like, it's cold.

Brian: I did not even think about that. Well, anyway, it was. And then of course to know under the skin it's all the modern, that's what you want. You've

got the Pex piping and all the great modern stuff that makes it, you know, you kind of want best of both. So that was anyway

Jami: And we got some ideas for our closets, too. I loved the way they had the closet systems.

Brian: Yeah. I've been peppering him with construction questions anyway about how you do this, and how you do that, and what's the name for this and so yeah, that was good. Another thing, um, it's been a long time coming and getting our are the bathroom in the farmhouse going, I finally got that dumb floor up and part of it I was trying to scrounge, what's the word? Uh,

Jami: Salvage?

Brian: Salvage. That's the, that's the Genteel word. All the tongue and groove that was on the, all the existing walls for existing walls they had, they were kind of a cool painted all the way underneath. But on top of that was that old wallpaper, flowery wallpaper. Coming off in strips, like coming off like wallpaper does when it's really, really hard. So, um, I took it all outside, all the tongue and groove for the room and left it outside in the rain. This was going to be my experiment to see if this would work. Actually I did it with three pieces and it worked. And so then this, this weekend I just finished it. So I laid it, all outside and it rained and rained for days, like at least a week. Right. And then I took a putty knife and the wallpaper just came off like it was just paper sitting on it. It was, like, so great. So anyway, I don't know if I think the wood will dry out and be okay, but man that was the easiest of the wood.

Jami: You know the wood will dry out and be okay. because it didn't stay out.

Brian: Yeah, that's true. That's true.

Jami: It wasn't, it wasn't out for that long. It was just a week and wood can get wet - kiln dried wood can get wet. We put it under cover and we don't have plans to use it for a while. So I mean it has plenty of time to dry out. Yeah. Cause that's the number one thing everybody asks, like, "Won't it warp?" And I was like, I don't think so.

Brian: Oh Man, I've never had wallpaper come off that easy.

Jami: That's nice. If we could just do that for more, ha.

Brian: I just don't think that's a viable strategy for most wood. and I don't think it will work for our wood floors cause we don't want to take them out and hose them off outside yet. We'll have to figure out something else.

Brian: Food: Yeah, we'll, part of being thankful is being thankful for some warm comfort foods, isn't it?

Jami: Yes. One of the ways to beat those mid winter doldrums is really to have some of that warm, cozy food that just kind of helps us. Well, it helps us

get warm, but it's also got great memories around it. I think comfort food is, there's great memories about it, it's just like, we just love it. You know, we're usually sitting around a table, we're talking with people, we're eating warm bowls of,

Brian: there's an emotional attachment. Yeah. You've talked about people like fried chicken is like, they're hearing even more than just, food.

Jami: Yeah, I mean, I looked up a list just to make sure that my comfort foods were everyone's, and it is a lot of soups and stews and warming things. It's also, um, pastas or like Lasagna or you know, macaroni and cheese or, you know,

Brian: how about meatloaf?

Jami: No, that wasn't one of them, but fried chicken was chicken and things like that. But anyway, I picked out a few of our favorites that we, I make pretty much every, you know, a number of times during the winter because we love it. One is the sausage and lentil stew. And I do call this like the best stew ever because it is the best lentil stew. I've, I don't even make any other kinds of lentil soup and stew, because this is so good. I, there's a flavor, there's an interesting little tarragon in it. It's got some hot sauce. It's just so good.

Jami: And uh, I'm making that. In fact right now it is bubbling away on the stove as we speak and um, it's easy to serve with a salad and bread or cut up vegetables or whatever you want. And it's sort of, it's a one pot meal because there's tomatoes and onions and stuff in it. The other thing that, oh, my daughter's favorite, she asked for, it so many, so many times. Unfortunately we don't do it that much because it calls for it a little more expensive cut of meat. So we just did it probably a couple times. But French beef stew, um, served with sour cream, garlic, mashed potatoes, mashed potatoes was another comfort food. Yeah, that is on the list. But when you serve, I mean it kind of rocked my world. I used to always just cut up potatoes and put it in a stew and you serve it.

Jami: And then one time I saw, I don't know if it is a restaurant or something, but they served the stew over mashed potatoes and it was like, I don't want just some old potato in the stew, if I could have mashed potatoes. And it just took it to a whole nother level. And this French beef stew, I mean it has bacon. Yeah, I think it's probably the, one of the only ways my daughter eats mushrooms because that's part of it. So that's a really good one. And then, um, a chowder, we, you know, chowders are very comforting. So I have a quick sausage and corn chowder. And if you serve that with like a rich cornbread with honey butter, that's pretty good. And then for pasta, our Pesto Pasta, I mean I usually always have um, pesto in the freezer that is made from the garden basil when we have a garden and so it's pretty easy. So it's not only a quick meal but um, so we do have it a lot cause it's quick, comforting and warming. And so either the creamy pesto pasta or the Mediterranean Pasta Pesto with chicken, um, either one of those. We all love that. And that actually is something

that we have more times in the year, not just during the winter, but those four recipes with the sides are some favorite comfort foods.

Brian: Food that wells spark your gratitude. Yes. I am so thankful for this French Beef Stew.

Brian: Yes! Oh Man. Once you taste it, you will say that.

Brian & Jami: It's time for, This is Really Cool.

Brian: So a couple of weeks ago, uh, just out of nowhere, I don't know where this idea came from. I declared to you, I said, you know what would be cool would be to get a really good audio book. No, no. I'm out of order. Wouldn't it be really cool to rent an airbnb cabin out in the woods somewhere. Bring along a really good audio book for like hours and hours and just work on a giant jigsaw puzzle for a couple of days. Don't do anything else. Listen to audio book work on a jigsaw puzzle. And the reason I said that is because we listen to audio books. You can knit and I don't have anything to do. I joke about whittling or snapping or...

Jami: So what happens when we try to listen to one when we're not in the car driving?

Brian: I just generally fall asleep depending on how good it is.

Jami: Ha, yes, that's what happens.

Brian: I sit there for a while staring out the window. That is what happens. You fall asleep. So I thought if I had a jigsaw puzzle, which I'm not like a super puzzle doer, but it gives me something to do,

Jami: No I should give a little bit of background to say you were driving along and you declare this literally out of the blue and you are someone who has never once really been interested in puzzles. I mean we'd get jigsaw puzzles out with the kids and you do a fair share, but it was literally kind of like, "a what?" And so I immediately said, why aren't we doing that?

Brian: Yeah. And so especially with airbnb has really made it possible. I know there's other apps and other vacation rental stuff, but I feel like that's the one that for price wise, for getting like really good deals and he's out of the way places airbnb's the way to go.

Brian: And so we sort of both looked but then you hopped on it cause you're the one with the account and we got a um, a really cool little cabin in the woods, like an hour from here up on the edge of the national forest.

Jami: Okay. So we've got to make sure that you're Really Cool Things are the audio books and puzzles.

Brian: I'm not going to talk about any more about the cabin because you're going to talk about that thing, but I am going to talk about, can I mention

the books?, So we listened to, We Are Legion, We Are Bob, which was kind of a, it's a funny Sci-fi book about a guy who gets his head cryogenically frozen cause he's really rich. So that a hundred years after he dies, when they've solved all disease, they can revive him. Or what happens is they don't really have, well there's some laws have changed and technology has changed.

Brian: And so basically he finds out that his, all his memories of just been replicated in a computer and it kind of goes from there. And he doesn't really own himself. It's really funny how he gets out of this predicament and the, We Are Legion part that comes from that. Um, he can make backup copies of himself and he names them. And they're slightly different people. Anyway, that's all we're going to give away. It's really funny and um, it's, it's uh, the most ridiculous, uh, what's the word? Look into the future. Like you just, it's, it's, it's kind of ridiculous how the world is divided up with preposterous, I guess. Interesting. Yeah. If they could advance technology technologically, but not in theory. It's just enough to make the story work. Yeah. It's lots of fun. Yeah. Because the world is on the brink of annihilation between each other, fight wars and fighting. So, but anyway, the last thing about that, it solves the space travel problem going to the stars because when you're in a computer, you can adjust how you perceive time so you can fly to a star that's 10 light years away and just turn the time down. It doesn't feel like you're...

Jami: Yeah. So it wasn't, I wasn't completely out there. There's a lot of things that were in the realm of possibility. Right. And that's always a good Sci-fi, right? When they take something sort of real.

Brian: yeah, yeah. It was actually he just, because he's so funny, he, there's a lot of danger and adventure and problems, but yeah. Anyways, so We Are Legion, We Are Bob. Then the other one.

Jami: Yeah. And we had started the first one earlier right in the car. And so we only had a few hours left on that one.

Brian: Then we started in this really intense one called Underground Airlines. And basically if you've heard of the underground railroad, that was how slaves, it was a system of like safe houses and people and I think even an actual railroad that got slaves out of the south across wherever into the north to be free. The underground railroad is famous. I think everybody's heard of it. And so this, the premise of this book is what if right before he's inaugurated, president elect Abraham Lincoln is assassinated. And so the whole thing with the civil war never happened. And America kept slavery though we were able to limit it quite a bit. And now there's only four states that really have it. Right?

Jami: Well some of the other southern states have it in the lighter degree, but they have this "Hard Four," right?

Brian: Yeah. And it's the story set where a guy, he's kind of a bounty hunter and he's, he's tracking down and returning a runaway slaves, which was a

way, I think this is during slavery times, this could be done. You'd get a bounty. Yeah. Bring you back. Because slaves were quite valuable. There were thousands of each. So yeah.

Jami: Anyway, it's set in present day. Somebody felt somebody thought 2012 well it's hard to tell, but yeah, basically present day where we have everything. But just some things when he mentioned some things in history, some things obviously are different. There are, there have been amendments that you know, pretty much made trench slavery, entrenched slavery, and they have an amendment that you can't change the amendment like you've never heard of such a thing. Right.

Brian: Things we forget, like, okay, so James Brown, the rock singer is born a slave. Remember that? And he gets out and he tours Europe and it's, it's funny. Or Michael Jackson, we're just still trying to figure out if it's the same Michael Jackson, if some of his songs are the same or his songs are different because of the,

Jami: because they'd had, they would have, they would mention some sort of song that was supposed to raise awareness of the slavery. Right, right, right. Exactly. Yeah. Yeah. So maybe that was very clever how he really did that, but it was, it was more than clever. I mean, it was very, I was very mean. Honestly.

Brian: It's like, it's some rough stuff. The language, because it's the language of both languages or is bad. Yeah. Bad. Um, and here's what's super,

Jami: And just harrowing scenes.

Brian: Yes. Very harrowing. Yeah. Is that, I didn't know who the author was. His name is Ben Winters, and I just assumed because the protagonist was black and the way he did black dialects.

Jami: And it was in first person.

Brian: Yes, it's in first person, but also the way the guy read it was incredible. The guy, the audio book performance was amazing. All the voices he did you just assume that the author is black and he's actually white and that was kind of surprising probably. I don't know. Probably good. We didn't know that he does a he, it was very risky for him to do it. I kind of read some stuff about it, but the critical response was good.

Jami: So yeah, I had read good things about it, so when it came up as a sale audiobook on, Audible, I grabbed it when it was on sale.

Brian: Anyway, it's just great. You know, this good thing, history didn't happen this way, but it also helps you just kind of think about things, how we are as humans and how prejudice is kind of in just about inherent in people and, it was for black history month. What a great, what a great thing to listen to. There we go.

Jami: We didn't even plan it that way. Okay, so I'm just going to give a quick shout out to the cabin that we found. It's actually a cabin on the grounds of Horse Creek Lodge, which is up the McKenzie for anybody in the Willamette Valley of Oregon McKenzie River - the highway next to the river.

Jami: It's a very beautiful area in Oregon. It pretty much takes you east from the valley up over the mountains into Sisters in Bend area. So really pretty drive and it doesn't go quite up as high as if you go over Willamette Pass, what we usually went in the past and so you don't get as much as the snow, but that was fine with me because you don't get the dangerous driving conditions either. So this was actually before the McKenzie Bridge area, so I think it was like an hour out of town. So it was perfect. It was like an hour out of town. We're in the middle of the forest. We feel like we've traveled a lot more. And then this little cabin, it was a set of three cabins that's on the Horse Creek Lodge property. And it's just, of course really quiet now. In the winter, I think it's much busier (in the summer), they have a big shuttle service to all the water sports and rafting in the summer and they have camp grounds on the lodge as well, the large area. But so it's really quiet, peaceful. And the cabin is just a small little one room, you know, cabin with a really cute porch. But it's just really, um, what do I want to say? The amenities, it's much more luxurious than what I thought we were going to be getting. It's not very expensive a night it, um, they said they had Wifi, but you're up too far to get cell service, but Wifi you can pretty much still, we could still message our daughter and everything. So we felt kind of, you know, away but still not isolated. And they just, they had really, they had like, it was more like hotel kind of amenities, really nice bed and linens and multiple pillows, like lots of pillows.

Jami: You know, when you have lots of pillows and lots of, um, towels and stuff, you just feel like, wow. And then there were a little special touches. Like they had not only split wood for the fireplace but like little kindling, perfectly sized little kindling. And then they had the first, fireplace all set for you, all you had to do is strike a match and this thing just went up like the most beautiful fire. So we enjoyed the fireplace. The kitchen was fully stocked and even had things like coffee and tea and you know, oil and spices, like a really good amount of stuff. A full sized stove, the bathroom had, you know, lots of towels and a hairdryer. I mean it was just really, we just felt really great. Everything was Nice. It was just nice. It didn't seem rundown or anything like some of those airbnbs can. And so I would, if anybody's thinking about going to the McKenzie, I would definitely check out, Horse Creek Lodge Cabin.

Brian: And actually finding a cabin near water is not as easy as you would think for in Oregon.

Jami: We didn't have a water view. There was snow on the ground, but they have paths and we walked to Horse Creek which is pretty big. Horse Creek would be a little river, in some places, especially now it's rushing.

Brian: But I remember in the summer we thought wouldn't it be fun to go stay at a cabin somewhere? We need Wifi so we could still work. And I had trouble finding like A) cabins and B) ones where we were sure there was Wifi. It wasn't just at the end of, uh, we were looking to get electricity on a lot of those places. Right. So, right. So this was quite, yeah, quite comfortable. And it was a great place to listen to an audio book. And do puzzles. They had a table perfectly the size of the puzzle we did, I guess people, if people are puzzled people. So we did, we were kind of Weenie. So I got a puzzle that was like folk art. So there's lots of little things so I can tell where things work and not pretty much sky. Lots of faces, lots of faces and quilts and we'll house. Yeah, and if there's a ton of sky, all you do is sit there and you try pieces and try pieces and glue or whatever. So I didn't want that little bit of sky. We've got that. That was 550 and we got that one done like the first day. So now we're looking for, and there was just a couple of miles down the road was a store are pretty good size store and you were skeptical that there'd be puzzles. They actually had a little puzzles sections, so they must get these bored people up there. So we jumped up to 750 or more folkart. Not a lot of sky. It was missing a piece.

Jami: You guys. It actually missed a piece!

Brian: I mean we cut open the sealed bag. There is no way we lost it - we pulled the fridge out. There was no where for that to go.

Jami: I mean there was nothing around but wood floor. We even pulled the refrigerator out thinking it might've gotten under there at that table. It was from the manufacturer, a missing piece! Ugh.

Brian: A dark piece with the Pumpkin in it. I can tell you that. Oh, hard to find. Anyway, so, but other than that, that's so great. Yeah, we've got them both done and it was so great with the book. The happy little folk art really didn't go with the grim book, but it was great.

Brian: Well anyway, that is it for our time for this episode. Thank you so much for listening and we really are thankful for the people for even if you just listen in and never communicate and we've been especially thankful for those of you who've given us some feedback and said on this or even stuff you didn't like or that could be improved or clarify. We appreciate all of that communication. We've been extremely thankful for people that have been leaving us ratings and reviews and that's helped other people discover the podcast and so that you can leave a rating and a review through the podcast app on apple products.