

## 346 - My 10 Favorite Discoveries of 2023

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today, if you're listening on release day, is Christmas Day, so Merry Christmas to you! It's more likely you're listening a little after Christmas, so holiday wishes whenever and however they land. Today is also episode 346 - My 10 Favorite Discoveries of 2023.

Yearly recaps are the most fun, aren't they? I love seeing people's reading lists and favorite things and all of the end of year reflections that happen. I hope you're taking some time to make some kind of list of your own. Today though we're going to look through a specific lens, and I'm going to share my favorite discoveries of the year, things I did not know about or use or love before 2023. It's a random list but a lot of fun, so let's jump in.

My first and most favorite discovery of 2023 is Stephen King. Hear me out before you skip ahead because you're a self-proclaimed scaredy cat. I had never read Stephen King before, and I, like many people, had a particular idea of what his books would be. Namely, super scary. But also *just* scary. I didn't expect there to be anything there for me that was deep or layered or thoughtful. I thought he wrote straight horror, and I decided years and years ago that wasn't for me.

Side note: those of you who get the Latest Lazy Letter have already heard about how you can change your mind about stuff like that or that maybe even you might have been wrong. I actually love horror and scary stuff, but because I told myself for years that I didn't, I lost out. This was the year I stopped losing out.

But stepping away from the horror aspect, Stephen King doesn't just write horror. He writes everything, and he writes it magnificently well. I had no idea what a genius he is, how good of a writer he is which is hilarious because he's so prolific. I just didn't know. I have people in my life who know. My sister, Hannah, loves Stephen King. Laura Tremaine, host of the podcast 10 Things to Tell You, is obsessed with Stephen King and even hosts a Stephen King Summer book club for her Patreon community every year, and my friend Andy Baxter, half of my favorite band Penny and Sparrow, is a horror evangelist and has been trying to get me to read Stephen King for months. Well, this year I took the plunge. And it was my favorite discovery of the year.

It didn't take me long to realize that not only do I love Stephen King, but he's also one of my top three authors. It's him, Wendell Berry, and Neil Gaiman. If I could only read books by those three super eccentric gentlemen, I would be perfectly content.

This year, I have spent almost 160 hours with Stephen King in only three books. Holy moly. So basically I read twelve decently sized novels in the space of three. The man knows how to weave a tale. This year I listened to *The Stand*, *11.22.63*, and *IT*, all of which I reviewed in past newsletters as I do every month. On my shelf I have *Fairy Tale*, Billy Summers which is probably

my next one, and a couple of others. My sister really wants me to read *Pet Cemetery* which I might hold off on until next October because that feels right. All in all, I feel so grateful to have discovered an author who I know I'll enjoy for years and years. What a gift.

My next favorite discovery of 2023 is Naturium which is a super affordable, high quality skincare brand sold at Target. Naturium is spelled NATURIUM, and I've tried and loved several of their products. And we're talking super high quality and effective for a fraction of what you might pay for other premium skincare products. I use Naturium's BHA toner every day, and it's my favorite I've ever used. I've used Paula's Choice and one from Farmacy and one from Glow. Naturium's is my hands-down favorite. I can feel it working with that skin tingle, but somehow it's still gentle. A four ounce bottle from Target is \$19. A four ounce bottle of Paula's Choice at Sephora is \$35. A wild difference, and I like Naturium's better. I also use Naturium's Retinaldehyde serum which is a higher strength retinol product. I started out using something from Olay maybe? Just a drugstore brand since you want to ease into retinol products. Then I used Peter Thomas Roth retinol fusion serum which I really liked. But then I needed something stronger. I asked Jamie Golden, half of *The Popcast with Knox and Jamie*, a podcast I love, and my personal skincare expert. She said I needed to up my strength and recommended Naturium. The retinaldehyde was my first product of theirs, and I was hooked. Again, for context, the retinaldehyde from Naturium is \$29 for 1.7 oz which lasts a super long time, and Peter Thomas Roth's product is \$65 for one ounce. So \$29 for 1.7 ounces versus \$65 for one. And again I like Naturium better even. I've used a couple of other Naturium products, and there are even more I want to try. Basically when certain products from other brands run out, I'm going to try the same type of active ingredient in Naturium and see how it compares. In terms of price, it doesn't compare. It's so reasonably priced, and everything I've used has just been a hit. It's been such a great discovery.

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My next favorite discovery of 2023 was realizing that I could mark texts on my iPhone as unread. Did y'all know you could do this? You likely already know that if you swipe left, you can mute or delete a text. But if you swipe right, it marks it unread. When I realized I could do this, it changed everything. I still sometimes miss texts because I forget to mark them unread, but for the most part, I remember. That way texts don't get lost. And I assumed I was the last one to know this, but then one weekend, I was hanging out with Internet beloveds and sisters Emily P. Freeman and Myquillyn Smith aka *The Nester*, and neither of them knew about it! I very much enjoyed watching their minds explode much like mine did. So a simple but meaningful discovery of 2023.

Next up, I discovered the world of vintage accounts on Instagram and the magic of the Friday flatlay. A friend of mine who lives in Greensboro, Sabrina Pursley, has a business called Lettie and Row where she makes super cute jewelry. I think she was in a gift guide a couple of years ago. Well, she and a friend of hers started a business called *Every So Often* where they post a beautiful flatlay of all kinds of cute vintage finds. Everything is labeled with a letter, and basically the first person to say sold in the comments gets that item. Well, then I was flipping through their

stories where they highlighted other businesses that did this, and I have been obsessed every single one. There are some incredible curators out there, and I've purchased brass butterflies, this super weird trinket tray that's shaped like a swan, an old red lantern I used to decorate for Christmas, three different vintage paintings that have added such richness to my home. I'm just obsessed. I'm pretty sure Every So Often is only for local Greensboro pickup, but if you're local, follow them at @every.so.often.gso. Actually, if you're interested in this world, follow them anyway because they share other accounts' Friday flatlays all the time and highlight other businesses doing this. That's how I've found every single account actually, through Every So Often. My favorite account that I've ordered several things from already is @ellasatticvintage. Ella is excellent at finding treasures, and I've absolutely loved what they've added to my home. This has been the most fun discovery of 2023. Just the best kind of sparkle.

The next favorite discovery of 2023 is Gia Margaret. Gia Margaret is a pianist whose music, particularly the album Romantic Piano, is just transcendent. Somehow she's ethereal and easy but epic and romantic at the same time. If you like my playlists, if you like Breezy Instrumental, if you like my general music vibes, you will become just as obsessed with Gia Margaret as I am. Mostly beautiful with just a touch of weird. I love her.

Next up is lofi music. I don't know that I'd ever named or actively pursued listening to lofi music, but really it's something I've loved for a long time. The discovery though is that now I know the name of what I like and have been searching for playlists of different kinds of lofi music all the time. In fact, it's Christmas Day. Search holiday lofi on Spotify and have the most specific kind of background music fun. Lofi stands for low fidelity, which is basically a way of saying a lower quality or stripped back version of the recording. It sounds like vinyl almost. It's crinkly and imperfect, and most of the genre influences are jazz and blues and some hiphop. It's just the best vibe. The best vibe, and I'm glad I now have a name for a vibe I love.

Alright, four discoveries left. Next up is so embarrassingly obvious and not new to any of you, but this was the year I finally got a book light. You guys. I just didn't know what I was missing. I mean, every reader has a book light. It's the most obvious reading accessory there is, but somehow I had never gotten one until this calendar year, and I am so late to the game but here with bells on. I almost want to wait to read until it's dark just so I can use my book light. I have the Glocusent Willow Book Light. I got it on Amazon, and it's fantastic. I'm not sure that it's worlds better than any other book light, but I like that it's got a strong clip that clips to your book, it's super lightweight, and it has three different coolness settings for your light depending on where you are and what you want. It's so easy to use, and I love using it. I know book lights are traditionally for when you're reading somewhere where you don't want your light to disturb someone else who is sleeping, but honestly I use it to help with my own sleep. When I am reading in bed and feel myself fading, it's actually easier and less disturbing to my body to just click off the book light and put the book down rather than turning off my lamp and doing all the things. It keeps me closer to sleep when it's time. So I'll usually set everything up before I start reading - I'll set my alarm, turn on my white noise, take my gummy, and turn off the bedside lamp. Then all I have to do is turn off my book light when I'm reading to go to sleep. It's really so great, and I'm glad I've finally discovered it literally years and years after the rest of you did.

Next up is pickled red cabbage. You might have already seen me talk about pickled red cabbage in random places already, like when I talk about easy lunches, but I love this stuff. I don't currently have any made, and it makes me quite sad. I use it on rice bowls of all kinds, it's great on tacos, and my favorite easy use is in a barbecue chicken wrap. I Airfry a few of the Just Bare breaded chicken chunks that I get from Costco, I toss those with regular old barbecue sauce, and then I put that chicken and pickled red cabbage inside of a warmed tortilla smeared with mayo wasabi. It's creamy, spicy, sweet, tangy and crunchy from the cabbage, and has a great kick from the wasabi. Horseradish would do the same thing, but we are a wasabi household through and through. Regardless, I never knew how much pickled red cabbage would matter to me in 2023, but here we are. A favorite discovery for sure.

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Two more. One is a pair of jeans. I, like many people, struggle to find jeans I love, so when I do, I latch on. I'm a big fan of the high rise skinny from Madewell, and I have a slouchy straight leg jean from Evereve that I love but that they don't seem to sell anymore. But sometimes it was too slouchy. Too casual. And a skinny jean doesn't always give the proportion and balance I want depending on the top I'm wearing. So one day I just did the thing, went to Madewell, and tried on literally every style of denim they had. It was a commitment, but it was worth it because I discovered my favorite jean which is the Madewell Kick Out Crop Jean. It's a mid rise which is great for me, they come in petite which is also great for me since I'm short, and it has the perfect amount of flare. Very Three Little Bears in that it's just right. I have it in two washes and wear them literally all the time. So while this particular style of jeans might not work for you, I would encourage you to do the thing, go to a store that sells different kinds of jeans, and try on all kinds of styles. See what works, notice the types you like, and make things easier for yourself later.

And my final favorite discovery of 2023 which is not meaningful or poignant in any way is Tarte makeup. Tarte is spelled TARTE, and you might remember my mentioning a Tarte blush that is my perfect blush. Well, I have since gotten two other colors that are equally amazing in the same blush formula as well as a couple of eyeshadow palettes. I have discovered that Tarte is a go-to makeup brand for me. The colors are great, the formulas stay put and have great coverage, and the price is super reasonable. In fact, Tarte will do bundle sets which drops the cost significantly. There's an all stars Amazonian clay collectors set that has three eyeshadow palettes, all of which I use, and a blush, highlighter, bronzer palette that's fantastic. My favorite forever blush is the Tarte Amazonian clay 12 hour blush which is \$30, full-sized, and lasts forever, and my go-to color is Captivating. I also have Seduce which is a darker rosy nude color that I sometimes use as a bronzer that's a little less aggressive than a traditional bronzer, and I also have Paarty with three a's that's a slightly pinker version of Captivating when I want a bit more color. It's just such a great formula, and I will never ever go back. But also having tried other Tarte Amazonian clay products this year, I can safely say that particular type of Tarte cosmetic is a favorite discovery of 2023 since I use it literally every single day.

And there you have it! Those are my ten favorite discoveries of 2023: Stephen King, Naturium brand skincare, unread texts, vintage shopping on Instagram, Gia Margaret, lofi music, a booklight, pickled red cabbage, kick out crop jeans from Madewell, and Tarte Amazonian clay makeup. That's a solid list, and every single one of those things makes me very happy.

If you'd like more roundups from me, there are a couple of specifics that are going out soon. First is an email that will go out on Sunday, December 31st, and it's a roundup of all of the things that saved my life in 2023. I do What's Saving My Life episodes every couple of months, and this email will be part recap, part reflection on the things that saved my life in 2023. If you already get the Latest Lazy Letter, you'll automatically get that email, but if you don't get the newsletter but want to get the What's Saving My Life email, head to [thelazygeniuscollective.com/wsml2023](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/wsml2023). That's WSML for What's Saving My Life. I'd love for you to get that on Sunday. Then in two weeks on Wednesday January 10th, the next Latest Lazy Letter will go out. We usually send it out on the first Wednesday of the month, but since Team LG is on holiday break, we're pushing it a week to let everybody not work. In that newsletter I'll for sure have my final top ten favorite books of the year. It's also my birthday this week, and I'm doing something kind of cool and special to celebrate that I will likely share in that January 10th newsletter, so if you'd like to get that, you can sign up at [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join). And if you know you want both emails, you can just sign up for the newsletter at [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join), and you'll get both. Just do it before December 31st so you don't miss the What's Saving My Life email.

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week's Karen Zolbanski who has the best idea for taking down holiday decor. Karen writes this: "Hi! I wanted to share an answer to the magic question that paid off for me the last few years. "How can I make taking Christmas decorations down and resetting the house less dreary and depressing?" 🤪 I put together a big gift bag to open when I've put the Christmas stuff away. It's silver and winter-sparkly and has all kinds of fun stuff in it that I will look forward to using in the winter. Stuff that's in there now: books I had on hold at the library and saved to read later, Jan issues of magazines I subscribe to, new bath/body stuff, a plush blanket I got as an early Christmas gift, special winter decorations, etc. Can't wait to open it." How brilliant is this! I'm glad to share this now because if this sounds like a fun idea for you, you still have some time to put together your Winter gift bag to yourself once all the Christmas and holiday specific stuff has been packed away. Love this idea, Karen, thank you for sharing, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Okay, y'all, that's it for today. Merry Christmas, thanks for listening, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week.