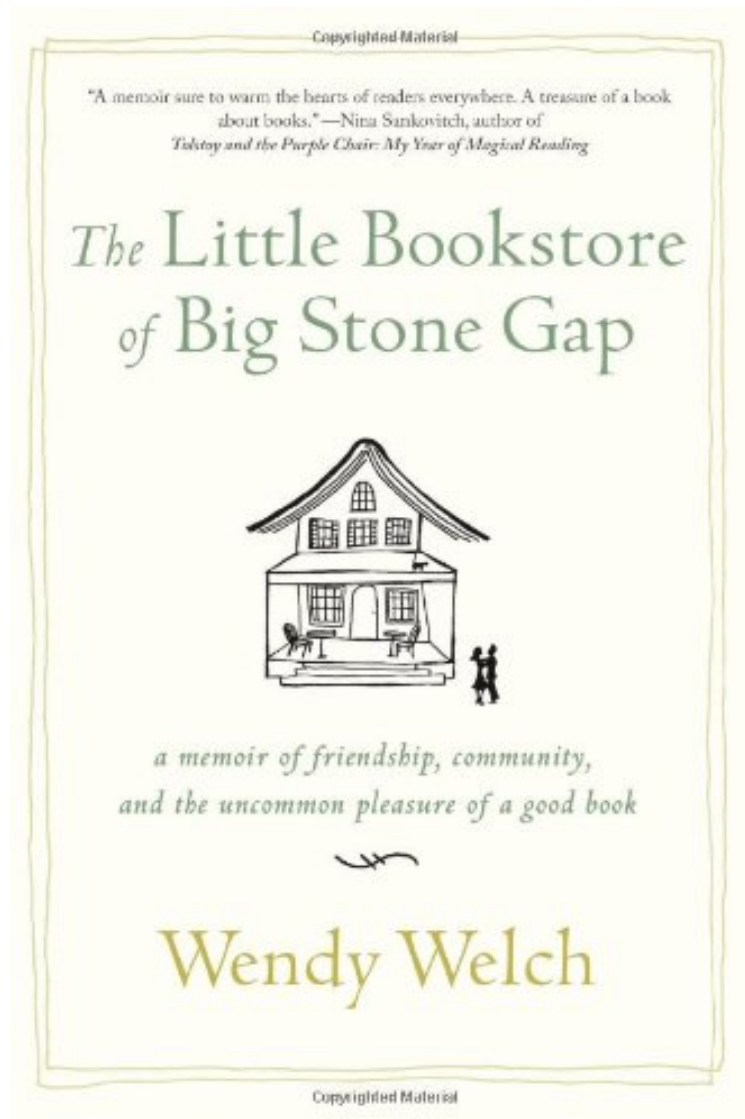


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Wendy Welch

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## **The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap: A Memoir of Friendship, Community, and the Uncommon Pleasure of a Good Book**

**Wendy Welch : The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap: A Memoir of Friendship, Community, and the Uncommon Pleasure of a Good Book** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap: A Memoir of Friendship, Community, and the Uncommon Pleasure of a Good Book*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I liked this book very muchBy SerenaI liked this book very much.

Clearly written with humor and love for the area and their store. I got a kick out of their thinking they could open a bookstore with only a couple of thousand books or so. I have that many books in my "want to read" pile! Wendy and her husband adapted quickly, worked hard, learned from their mistakes and enjoyed the local people. It's great that they seem to have eventually made a success of their store. I would love to visit it. I liked the list of books she recommends and those she doesn't. Both lists have some surprises. Jack, the husband, must be a saint. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Heartwarming, down-to-earth memoir of an intrepid bookselling duo. By Z Hayes. As a bibliophile, I know only too well the allure of books - the intoxicating smell of books old and new, the adrenaline rush of walking into a used bookstore (vs. a retail chain), and that sense of complete bliss and contentment when a treasure is found (after much hunting!). I enjoy reading books about bookstores and the art of book collecting, and was immensely pleased to have been introduced to this engaging and humorous memoir (thanks to a fellow bookworm) about a couple who followed their bliss and found peace, contentment, and a community that embraced them. Wendy Welch, an anthropologist, and her Scottish folksinger husband, Jack, had always wanted to own and run a bookstore and fate led them to the town of Big Stone Gap, Virginia, where an impulse buy made them the owners of an Edwardian mansion, which they promptly converted into a used bookstore. Each chapter of this delightfully charming memoir recounts the pair's attempts to get the book business up and running, trying to find their place within a tight-knit community, and in the beginning, desperately trying to convince others as much as themselves that they were there to stay. In today's world of quick internet shopping, and heavens! e-readers, is there a place for the quaint used bookstore? By Wendy Welch's account, the answer is a resounding yes. Despite the downturn in the economy and the onslaught of online book retailers, there is apparently a need in communities for used bookstores that serve as a social hub, a place for people to gather as a community, and a place where booksellers are not merely in the business of book-selling but filling the role of confidants, counselors, and genial souls who soothe and provide a cup of tea to any distressed soul who walks through the doors. As I read Welch's memoir, I was touched by the down-to-earth tones, the humility, and the sense of how much the author considers herself and her husband blessed by having finally found a place they can truly call home. The bookselling of course is important, but the sense of community and being embraced by the town in which they have chosen to set down roots shines through each chapter. It is a story that touched my soul and had me laughing and crying in parts, and I end by saying that this book is a must-read for bibliophiles and for anyone who considers an afternoon spent browsing in a used bookstore time well-spent and absolute bliss! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Cozy, Fun Read! By MJ Tom. As a lover of bookstores, particularly used or small indie book stores, this book brought my vision to life. Wendy and Jack found a great location and opened their store on a shoestring and a dream. They struggle through small-town politics and financial constraints to create a store that is not only a place to purchase books, but also a community center. I read it almost as a "how-to" book for my dream of opening a used bookstore, but it was much more than that. I have visited many bookstores in my wanderings. None of them have been quite what I imagine. I was surprised at how closely Tales of the Lonesome Pine matches my dream of the perfect one. The writing was not dry and technical. It was fun. I laughed out loud several times. I loved the local character - the townsfolk and the stories of life in small town America.

You don't need to be interested in opening a bookstore to enjoy this book.

An inspiring true story about losing your place, finding your purpose, and building a community one book at a time. Wendy Welch and her husband had always dreamed of owning a bookstore, so when they left their high-octane jobs for a simpler life in an Appalachian coal town, they seized an unexpected opportunity to pursue their dream. The only problems? A declining U.S. economy, a small town with no industry, and the advent of the e-book. They also had no idea how to run a bookstore. Against all odds, but with optimism, the help of their Virginian mountain community, and an abiding love for books, they succeeded in establishing more than a thriving business - they built a community.

The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap is the little bookstore that could: how two people, two cats, two dogs, and thirty-eight thousand books helped a small town find its heart. It is a story about people and books, and how together they create community.

From Booklist. Once the dream of every bibliophile, owning one's own bookstore means something different in these days of .com and e-readers. Keeping an independent bookstore thriving is problematic in even the biggest cities and best of economic times, and it's especially difficult in a rural community of 5,000 facing a major economic downturn. Yet none of those factors deterred Welch and her husband from impulsively buying a ramshackle Victorian mansion and filling it with thousands of used books. Nor did their lack of book trade knowledge or any type of local support stand in their way. Frugal, resourceful, cunning, and determined, they vowed to win over those who thought they'd never last. Having a pair of saucy cats and plates of Scottish shortbread helped convert any holdouts, but it was their empathetic demeanor and unabashed love of books that earned the Welch's continuing success. Amusing, engaging, astute, and perceptive, Welch's buoyant memoir of an endangered way of life is a fervent affirmation of the power of books to bring people together. --Carol Haggas. In a time when brick and mortar bookstores around the country are literally imperiled, The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap comes along like a cool compress on a nagging wound; with

humor, compassion, and a bold leap of spirit, Wendy Welch leads us back to this nearly forgotten truth, that bookstores are not simply distribution hubs for books, they are the warm living rooms of our culture, the portal to our dream worlds, the anchors for our hungry, drifting souls. Buy this book! Andre Dubus III, author of *Townie* and *The House of Sand and Fog* The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap confirms what I've long suspected, that book lovers are good people and that bookstores are the best places on earth. Add in the elements of pre-loved books, in-love bookstore owners, and to-fall-in-love with local characters, and you have *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap*, a story to thrill anyone who has ever dreamed of owning a bookstore (and which book lover hasn't?) and a memoir sure to warm the cockles of the hearts of readers everywhere. A treasure of a book about books. Nina Sankovitch, author of *Tolstoy and the Purple Chair: My Year of Magical Reading* Wendy Welch's memoir, *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap*, is a delight. Starting a used bookstore in a small Appalachian town during the decline-of-the-book era may seem like rank folly, but the project--and the book turn out to be anything but foolish. With warmth and humor, Welch details the small successes and large missteps along the path to finding a place in a community. She shows that, even in the age of the e-reader, there is hope for books and those who love them, and that reading and bookstores still perform an important function in civic life. Her clear prose sparkles with personality in this heartening tale of the perils and rewards of following one's dream. Thomas C. Foster, author of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* Wendy Welch's memoir is entertaining, informative, and - best of all - big-hearted and wise. A perfect pick-me-up for people discouraged by talk of the death of the book. Sam Savage, author of *Firmin and Glass* Charming, lively, bubbling with anecdote, incident and insight, Wendy Welch's animated memoir is any reader's perfect companion. You read this book and feel you've made a friend. By turns comic, and thoughtful, *The Little Bookstore at Big Stone Gap* brims with joie de livre. Laura Kalpakian, author of *American Cookery* and *The Memoir Club* Amusing, engaging, astute, and perceptive, Welch's buoyant memoir of an endangered way of life is a fervent affirmation of the power of books to bring people together. Booklist The whole narrative exudes enormous charm and the value of dreams and lives truly lived. Publishers Weekly An entertaining book with a full cast of eccentric characters. Kirkus Candid and endearing tale . . . Wendy brings a sense of humor and compassion to her story, sharing the trials and tribulations on opening and running a new bookstore. It is a joy to see the transitions that Wendy and Jack experience, and how a bookstore can be a magnet for heartbreaking stories and a hub of community spirit. This books is such a warm and engaging journey, best enjoyed with a cup of tea or three. Beyond the Margins A heartwarming, cheerleading affirmation of indie bookstores everywhere. Don't fly those flags at half-staff yet. Cleveland Plain Dealer About the Author WENDY WELCH and her husband (Scottish folksinger Jack Beck) own and operate *Tales of the Lonesome Pine Used Books* in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. An Ethnography PhD, she rescues shelter animals (SPAY and NEUTER, thanks!) and is one of the world's fastest crocheters. This is a good thing because between her day job teaching college courses on culture and public health, running special events at the shop, writing about stuff, and chasing kittens out of roads, she doesn't have a lot of spare time.