Calista

The Plastic Problem by Aubre Andrus

As we enter 2022, I thought it would be nice to think of a New Year’s resolution that wasn’t just to help

me, but to help Mother Earth as well. The Plastic Problem has 60 great ways to reduce your plastic

consumption. Maybe you could adopt one or two as well.

Eileen

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd by Agatha Christie

Roger Ackroyd knew too much. He knew that the woman he loved had poisoned her brutal first husband. He suspected also that someone had been blackmailing her. Now, tragically, came the news that she had taken her own life with a drug overdose. But the evening post brought Roger one last fatal scrap of information. Unfortunately, before he could finish the letter, he was stabbed to death.

The last few years, I’ve made a point to start off my new year reading something from the Golden Age of Detective Fiction, and this is the best of the best, with my favorite thing— a narrator who may not be telling the whole truth.

Kelly

The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend by Katarine Bivald

As I continue to try new authors, I believe I have found a little gem in Katarine Bivald’s The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend.

The story begins with Sara arriving in Broken Wheel, Iowa from Sweden to visit with her American pen pal Amy.  Unbeknownst to her, she has arrived on the same day as Amy’s funeral.   Even under these awkward circumstances, Sara finds the residents happy to look after her, encouraging her to stay in Amy’s house and providing food and necessities.  Sara doesn’t have much to return home to, having lost her longtime job in a bookstore and quite tired of her mother’s insistence she settle down.  Living a sheltered existence with her parents for her entire life (she’s in her twenties), she’s never done anything quite so daring as this - traveling across the world to meet and stay with a total stranger.  She’s not quite ready to go home a failure admitting her mother was right about the craziness of her trip to begin with.   Having only lived through the books she has read, Sara doesn’t quite know what to do in Broken Wheel but a plan comes to light when she discovers Amy’s library.

Interesting storyline with likable quirky characters.  I enjoyed this “something new” on my quest to discover new authors.

Linda’s #staffpick

*The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor* by Eddie Jaku

This remarkable accounting of a life lost and found is the closest thing to a recipe book. Eddie lists the ingredients that are needed to create a life of meaning and purpose from which happiness results. Like baking, the bread will not rise if one of the ingredients is insufficient or missing.

This is a book that speaks to readers. Eddie’s writing style is plain and easy to read…that does not translate to boring! His book can easily be read in a few hours. The typeface is a bit larger as is the space (leading) between the lines. Each chapter begins with an introductory quote that prepares readers for what is to follow. The quote below is from Chapter Fifteen:

 “What I have to share is not my pain. What I share is my hope.”

This book was published in 2021 when Eddie was 100 years young. Soon thereafter he died but fortunately for the world he recorded his experiences and the manner in which he was able to achieve happiness and create a beautiful life — not only for himself but for his family, friends, and the world at large. His achievements are remarkable and his story and outlook on life and living are relevant and not limited to a particular event or period of time.

El Deafo, Cece Bell

As I was getting ready for our new tween book club featuring Great Stone Face nominees, I decided to browse through past winners that I hadn’t read before. While I only meant to skim this autobiographical novel by Cece Bell, I ended up not being able to put it down. The humor and lightheartedness of this book make the tricky concepts digestible for the intended audience of 9-12 year olds. While the novel at first focuses mostly on Cece’s hearing loss, it goes on to explore the idea of accepting the treatment that you feel you deserve which can be applied to many different experiences. Early in the novel, Cece says that she used to look different from her friends, “but only in ways that didn’t matter.” Young readers will come away from this novel with a new perspective about how our differences actually do all matter, and that’s not a bad thing.