

Eileen

Outer order, Inner calm by Gretchen Rubin

February is a housecleaning type of month for me. It's far enough into the year that my new year's resolutions are habits or abandoned, and I'm mostly inside because of the cold weather. This book is arranged as a series of tips and thoughts, and I don't have to do anything I don't want to. An organized environment makes me happy, and it might work for you too.

Platforms: book

Joe

An Irish Country Doctor by Patrick Taylor

Summary: Barry Laverty, M.B., can barely find the Northern Ireland village of Ballybucklebo on a map when he first sets out to seek gainful employment there. But Barry jumps at the chance to secure a position as an assistant in a small rural practice. At least until he meets Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly.

The older physician has his own way of doing things. At first, Barry can't decide if the pugnacious O'Reilly is the biggest charlatan he has ever met or the best teacher he could ever hope for. Through O'Reilly, Barry soon gets to know all of the village's colourful and endearing residents and a host of other eccentric characters who make every day an education for the inexperienced young doctor. Ballybucklebo is a long way from Belfast, and Barry is quick to discover that he still has a lot to learn about country life. But with pluck and compassion, and only the slightest touch of blarney, he will find out more about life--and love--than he ever imagined back in medical school.

Platforms: Book, Libby audio

Kelly

Slow Horses by Mick Herron

I have to say this is about the best fiction I have read in the last few years. Mick Herron's book is the beginning of an 8-book series based on a bunch of disgraced MI6 agents led by a very disgraceful but cunning leader, himself an agent who messed up big time. His name is Jackson Lamb and he is not someone you'd even want to be in the same room with, never mind have him for a boss. He looks and smells like he has not bathed in a month or maybe six months, come to think of it. He is rude and crude and actually quite witty and brings humor into a story

that otherwise could be quite dark. The action and storyline, mostly told from multiple first person perspectives are so expertly woven into a tapestry so beautifully finished I find it hard to describe. Typical spy stuff but also interpersonal job-related employee issues written into a story that moves along quite well and demands that you sit up and pay attention.

No more information on storyline - just a must read for fans of intrigue, humor and fantastic fiction. Highly highly recommend. Also a book series.

platforms: ILL, Libby audio

Linda

You Could Make This Place Beautiful: A Memoir by Maggie Smith

Ruminate:

1: to go over in the mind repeatedly and often casually or slowly;

2: to chew repeatedly for an extended period

<https://buff.ly/4OPYeHg>

Maggie Smith writes about ruminating.

She writes about her life before marriage, while being happily married and raising a family. She writes about the shift in her marriage that led to a separation and a long-drawn-out divorce. She writes about the father of her children moving out-of-state. She writes about her professional life as a writer and her ex-husband's perception of her work.

The memoir is easy to navigate: some pages consist of a sentence or two. The author sets the stage for what is to follow. This reader enjoyed the ease of reading even when the content was emotionally heavy. A non-sequiter: Be prepared to Laugh Out Loud! Smith captures some real gems in regard to comments made by her children.

Readers gain insight in step with the author. All readers will appreciate what Smith has written in regard to her life – as a writer and as a woman – but women, especially women raising children, may identify more strongly with Smith's experiences.

All memoirs are an exposé. The bravery of the writer must be acknowledged. Smith shares her losses. More importantly she shares what she has learned. The author ends on a pragmatic, hopeful note.

Note: Maggie Smith is an award-winning author and poet.

Platforms: book, Libby ebook

Samantha

Eragon by Christopher Paolini

Summary:

“One boy...

One dragon...

A world of adventure.

When Eragon finds a polished blue stone in the forest, he thinks it is the lucky discovery of a poor farm boy; perhaps it will buy his family meat for the winter. But when the stone brings a dragon hatchling, Eragon soon realizes he has stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself.

Overnight his simple life is shattered, and he is thrust into a perilous new world of destiny, magic, and power. With only an ancient sword and the advice of an old storyteller for guidance, Eragon and the fledgling dragon must navigate the dangerous terrain and dark enemies of an Empire ruled by a king whose evil knows no bounds.

Can Eragon take up the mantle of the legendary Dragon Riders? The fate of the Empire may rest in his hands” (goodreads.com).

Rating: 4/5 stars.

Platforms: book

Tricia

Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates by Mary Mapes Dodge

Summary: Hans Brinker and his sister, Gretel, have grown up in poverty ever since his father lost his mind in an accident when they were very young. Given the opportunity to replace his homemade wooden skates with real blades in time to enter a significant race, Hans instead offers the small sum of money to a doctor in hopes of seeing his father cured.

This story, written in 1865 as a contemporary novel, is set in the Netherlands. Vivid descriptions set the stage for a heartwarming story that is completely foreign to modern America.

Rating: 5/5 stars.

Platforms: Overdrive, Hoopla