

Calista

*The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follet

Set in the medieval twelfth century, goes a tale about a monk named Philip who wants to build the grandest cathedral England has ever known and about Tom Builder and his family who will make this a reality. Challenges abound from the start and as soon as one is resolved, another appears. Evil and enemies seem to come from every direction, even from the church and the law. Though even with all these challenges, Philip and Tom keep making progress, however slowly. This book spans several generations and it is lovely seeing how the characters grow and change. I enjoyed being back during that medieval time despite all the hardships they faced and seeing the faith and strength of these individuals.

Platforms: print book, Libby (audio and ebook)

Eileen

*One Summer: America 1927* by Bill Bryson

One of Bill Bryson's delightful histories/reminiscences. The topic this time is summer 1927, a memorable time in aviation, sports, politics, and culture. Bryson shows how we are still experiencing the effects of "that hell of a summer" almost one hundred years ago. (Hey, the library building was built that year!)

Platforms: print book, Libby (audio and ebook)

Kelly

*Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus

First time author Garmus does a fabulous job! An interesting title and an interesting twist on romance. This is not your usual love story set in the 1960's when women were still primarily expected to get married and raise a family. Having a career was okay but definitely limited. Womens' rights and equality were still in the dark ages and sometimes even made the workplace dangerous for women who dared think for themselves and demand a fair chance based on their abilities.

Enter Elizabeth Zott, the main character and a brilliant scientist (a chemist of course) who just happens to want not just a job but a career and is definitely not interested in getting married or having children - ever! She struggles through college, having to quit just shy of her degree and is forced to take a menial job at an all male laboratory that is definitely beneath her capabilities. Fortunately for Elizabeth she does meet Calvin Evans who is not in the least bit chauvinistic and recognizes her brilliance and natural talent for chemistry. Finally, a woman he can talk to and not be awkward, as long as chemistry is the main topic and boy does she love chemistry. He soon becomes her champion and gives her the chance to show her worth, much to their boss' frustration.

The story has a few surprises for both Elizabeth and Calvin which are both good and bad and keeps the pages turning. It was definitely a book that I had trouble putting down. For a first time published author this was an amazing read. The interesting and original way this love story is written makes it to the top of my favorite reads for 2023. I cannot wait for Bonnie Garmus' next book.

Platforms: print book, Libby (audio and ebook)

Linda

Real Simple: Life Made Easier

An audience of almost 22 million must mean something!

Real Simple features content relative to homemaking, childcare, cooking, and emotional well-being. The clean, uncluttered layout and photos are in keeping with simplicity.

The recipes are mouth-watering! The magazine has been a nominee for the prestigious James Beard Award.

Come check out the magazine selection and get inspired or just read and relax.

Platforms: print book, Libby (audio and ebook)

Rebecca

*The Bookseller's Secret: A Novel of Nancy Mitford and WWII* by Michelle Gable

A novel with two timelines - One set to 1940s London, during World War II, and the other set in present day London.

The 1940s timeline follows historic author Nancy Mitford on her journey to find her next great novel. The story leads us through her marriage, her affair, her relationship with her eccentric family, and her lavish friends. Nancy's story is mostly told from her years working at a London bookstore.

Flash forward some 80 years when we meet Katie – a struggling author who is spending some time in London with her best friend's family. While wandering through the neighborhood, Katie discovers the notorious bookstore and starts to discover the secrets that come along with Nancy and the bookstore's history.

Rating: 4/5 stars. Overall I enjoyed the tale of Katie and how she discovered her inner voice for her next novel. I loved how the author told a brief fiction of Mitford's history and the writing of her popular novel, *The Pursuit of Love*.

Platforms: print book

Rebekah

House of Salt and Sorrows: Erin A. Craig

The House of Salt and Sorrows was a very good read. It is a re-telling of the book "The Twelve Dancing Princesses." It takes place on a remote island. Annaleigh is one of 12 sisters and she lives in a big mansion by the sea. As her sisters begin to die under mysterious circumstances, Annaleigh sets out to uncover the truth behind all of their deaths. With great descriptions, unique word-building, and intriguing characters, this book is a must read for any person interested in dark fairy tales and gothic literature.

Platforms: print book, Libby (audio)