

Midnight Library – Haig, Matt

This is a nonfiction book that focuses on the philosophy of pondering regret. It is about the journey of exploring books within the life library that reveals other outcomes that could have occurred had different decisions had been made, in essence a foreshadowing of the butterfly effect to reveal that it is easy to believe other paths would have necessarily been better. In fact, slight deviations in decisions can have profound impact in unforeseen ways.

Notable quotes:

This library is yours. It is here for you. You see, everyone's lives could have ended up in an infinite number of ways. (33)

Sometimes regrets aren't based on fact at all. Sometimes regrets are just...a load of bullshit. (67)

Well, you can choose choices but not outcomes. But I stand by what I said. It was a good choice. It just wasn't a desired outcome. (83)

Most gossip is envy in disguise. (94)

To be human was to continually dumb the world down into an understandable story that keeps things simple. She knew that everything humans see is a simplification. A human sees the world in three dimensions. That is a simplification. Humans are fundamentally limited, general creatures, living on autopilot, who straighten out curved streets in their minds, which explains why they get lost all the time. (149)

'I want to cancel my membership of the library. I would like to hand in my library card.' 'You are the library card.' (185)

Maybe there was no perfect life for her, but somewhere, surely, there was a life worth living. And if she was to find a life truly worth living, she realized she would have to cast a wider net. (194)

You need to choose more lives from the bottom of top shelves. (194)

It's an easy game to play, but a hard one to master. Every move you make opens a whole new world of possibility. (195)

You didn't have to enjoy every aspect of each life to keep having the option of experiencing them. You just had to never give up on the idea that there would be a life somewhere that could be enjoyed. Equally, enjoying a life didn't mean you stayed in that life. (211)

If there was a bad experience, there wouldn't only be bad experiences. (215)

'The fun is in the jumping, mon amie.' 'But what if it's in the landing?'" (215)

So long as there are still books on the shelves, you are never trapped. Every book is a potential escape. You don't have to understand life. You just have to live it. (218)

You are right to think of these lives like a piano where you're playing tunes that aren't really you. You are forgetting who you are. In becoming everyone, you are becoming no one. You are forgetting your root life. (219)

You could be as honest as possible in life, but people only see the truth if it is close enough to their reality. (242)

It's quite a revelation to discover that the place you wanted to escape to is the exact same place you escaped from. That the prison wasn't the place, but the perspective. (284)

The paradox of volcanoes was that they were symbols of destruction but also life. Once the lava slows and cools, it solidifies and then breaks down over time to become soil – rich, fertile soil. (286)

'Like a lonely king on a board.' 'And you're not alone on the board now. A pawn has come and joined you.' 'You were never a pawn.' 'You're going to win this.' 'Well, that's the beauty, isn't it? You just never know how it ends.' (288)