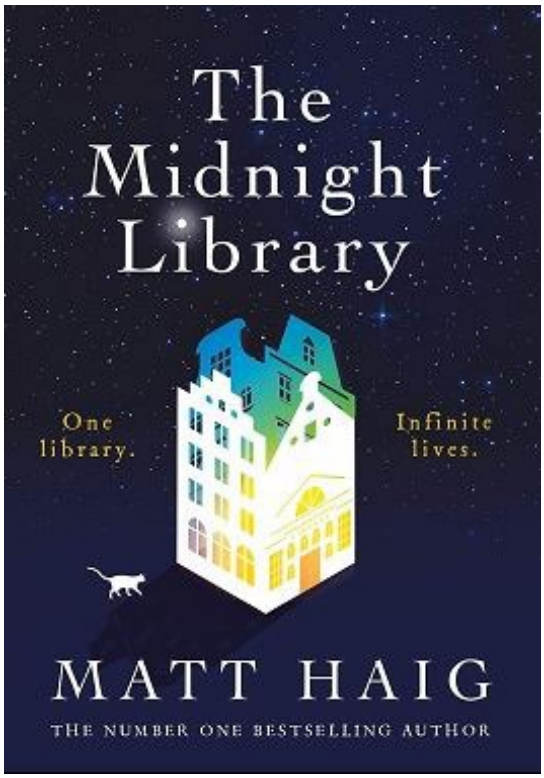
The Midnight Library
by Matt Haig

Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

The Midnight Library by Matt Haig

Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions



Book summary

Between life and death there is a library, and within that library, the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived. To see how things would be if you had made other choices . . . Would you have done anything different, if you had the chance to undo your regrets?"

A dazzling novel about all the choices that go into a life well lived, from the internationally bestselling author of *Reasons to Stay Alive* and *How To Stop Time*.

Somewhere beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all

also available to download from Libby

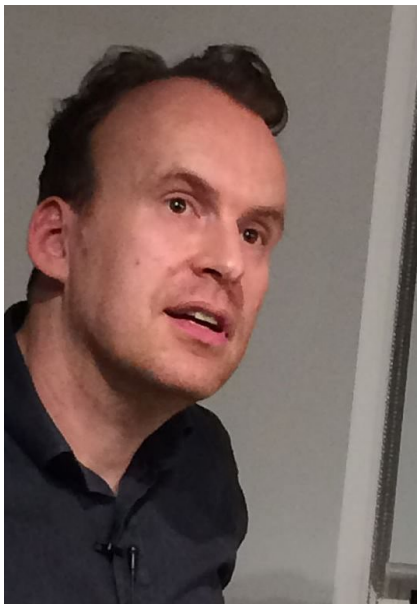
wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In The *Midnight Library*, Matt Haig's enchanting new novel, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the *Midnight Library* to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

Source: Author's website. (matthaig.com/books/midnight-library)

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Meet the Author



Matt Haig is an author for children and adults. His memoir *Reasons to Stay Alive* was a number one bestseller, staying in the British top ten for 46 weeks. His children's book *A Boy Called Christmas* was a runaway hit and is translated in over 40 languages. It was made into a film starring Maggie Smith, Sally Hawkins and Jim Broadbent and *The Guardian* called it an 'instant classic'. His novels for adults include the award-winning *How To Stop Time, The Radleys, The Humans* and the number one bestseller *The Midnight Library*.

Source: Author's website. (matthaig.com/life)

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Discussion Questions

1. The *Midnight Library* is different for each person who enters it. Nora experienced it as a library because of the meaningful relationship she had with Mrs. Elm, her childhood school librarian. Later, we learn that Huge experienced it as a video store, with a cherished uncle instead of a librarian. What do you think your *Midnight Library* would be? And who would be there?
2. Nora experiences a number of alternate lives in which she achieves a great deal of success in one area of her life at the expense of all the rest, be it in music, swimming or polar exploration. Do you think it's possible to reach fame and fortune in a single field and still maintain balance with other areas of your life?
3. In the library, Nora learns that the life she gave her cat was one of the best he could have experienced. Are there any parts of your life that you feel could not be improved by living it differently
4. In her life before she finds herself in the *Midnight Library*, Nora gave up many of the pursuits that brought her joy because she didn't feel like she could be the best at them. Do you think it's understandable that she would have given these things up? Do you think that wanting to be the best at something can inhibit us from enjoying it?
5. Mrs. Elm showed Nora the *Book of Regrets* when she first entered the library, and Nora was overwhelmed by it when she first looked in. But as she experienced more and more lives, her list of regrets began to shrink. Do you think by considering the ways in which our lives might have turned out differently, our regrets truly go away, or do we simply learn to live with them?
6. In the world of the *Midnight Library*, the books take on the role of portals into alternate realities. Do you think the role books played in the Midnight Library is similar to the role they play in your own life?
7. As the story progresses, Nora finds herself in lives that she could be more satisfied with than others that proved more difficult. Do you think you

would be able to live as an alternate version of yourself? Would you want to?

8. Over the course of the book, Nora lives a whole spectrum of lives, some for minutes and some for months, but only at the end does time actually pass, and by the time she wakes up in her root life it is one minute and 27 seconds past midnight and her outlook on life has changed entirely. What do you think this says about the speed at which we decide things about our lives and ourselves? Does it take a lifetime or a just few seconds?

Source: Reading Group Guides.
(readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-midnight-library/guide)

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Recipes

Broccoli and Garlic-Ricotta Toasts with Hot Honey



- 1 baguette, sliced ½" thick on a diagonal (about 12 slices)
- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 head of broccoli, stem peeled, stem and florets chopped into ½" pieces
- 1 head of garlic, cloves separated
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 1/2 cups fresh ricotta
- Freshly ground black pepper, kosher salt

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 400°. Arrange bread slices in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with 2 Tbsp. oil. Toss on baking sheet to coat, then arrange again in a single layer. Place broccoli and garlic on another rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with remaining 4 Tbsp. oil. Season generously with salt and toss to combine.

Place broccoli on top rack and bread on bottom rack and roast until bread is golden brown and crisp, 10–12 minutes. Remove bread from oven and continue to roast broccoli and garlic, tossing once, until broccoli is browned all over and garlic is tender, another 15–20 minutes. Let cool slightly.

Meanwhile, whisk honey, vinegar, and red pepper flakes in a small bowl. As soon as garlic is cool enough to handle, squeeze cloves out of their skins and mash in another small bowl to form a paste. Add ricotta and mix well; season with salt and black pepper. Spread ricotta over toasts and top with roasted broccoli. Arrange on a platter and drizzle with honey mixture.

Source: Claire Saffitz, bon appetit
(bonappetit.com/recipe/broccoli-and-garlic-ricotta-toasts-with-hot-honey)

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Refreshing Mint Tea



- 2 cups filtered water
- 15 fresh mint leaves (peppermint or spearmint)
- 1 to 2 teaspoons sugar (or honey), optional
- 1 cup ice, optional
- 2 lemon slices, optional
- Fresh lemon juice, optional

Bring the water to a boil. Remove from the heat and add the fresh mint leaves. Steep for 3 to 5 minutes, depending on desired strength. Add optional sweetener. Start with 1 teaspoon per cup and add more as desired.

If serving iced, fill tall glasses with ice and pour the tea over. If serving hot, pour the tea into mugs. Garnish with optional lemon slices and/or lemon juice to taste.

Source: The Spruce Eats. (thespruceeats.com/easy-fresh-mint-tea-recipe-766391)