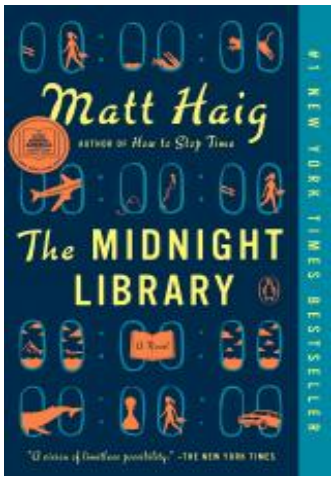
The Midnight Library

by Matt Haig



About the Book

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 out 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 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. Confronted 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.

Discussion Guide

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?

Author Bio

Matt Haig was born in Sheffield, England. His novels include THE HUMANS, HOW TO STOP TIME, and THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY, which has been a #1 *New York Times* bestseller and sold more than 14 million copies worldwide. His nonfiction works include his award-winning mental illness memoir REASONS TO STAY ALIVE and THE COMFORT BOOK. His most recent fiction, THE LIFE IMPOSSIBLE, was a *New York Times* bestseller. He has also written several children?s books, including A BOY CALLED CHRISTMAS, which became a major feature film. His work has been published in 56 languages, and he is an advocate for literacy, libraries and better mental health provision for everyone.

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Publication Date: May 9, 2023
Genres: Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction
Paperback: 304 pages
Publisher: Penguin Books
ISBN-10: 0525559493
ISBN-13: 9780525559498