

## Bonus: How I Read 120 Books This Year

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast. I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is a bonus episode to help us close out 2022: how I read 120 books this year.

This is not an episode of bragging. This is not an episode to make you feel like you should figure out a way to read 120 books or 20 books or 200 books or whatever. This episode isn't about numbers or even reaching reading goals and barely about books. It is about what can happen when you actively choose to be a genius about something that matters, like reading matters to me. So here's what we're going to do. The first half of this episode will be all about the choices to be a genius about something that matters, and the second half will be more reading specific if you're a book nerd like I am. The breakdowns, some favorite titles, stuff like that.

So let's start with the genius part. I love reading. It is my favorite hobby of all the hobbies. For awhile after college, I took a long break from reading. I got an English degree, so I had to read a lot. Then I watched TV a lot. Those were the glory days of ER and LOST. Why would I read?! But then I started reading again, fell in love even deeper with it than I was before, and I can't remember a day that's gone by in years and years where I haven't read for at least a few minutes. So I very much love reading. It matters to me deeply.

We'll put some other episodes in the show notes that are about books, like how to organize your books and how to find time to read and an episode with my favorite book guru, Anne Bogel, about how to figure out what to read next! We have a lot of great book-related episodes in the archives, so there's plenty there to listen to because I love reading so very much.

Now, just because you love something doesn't necessarily mean you have to be a genius about it. You don't have to spend a ton of time on it or get really good at it or be super intentional about it. Some things you can just love when they come around, and that's it. And then, of course, there are things you love that you do want to be a genius about. You want to invest the time and energy and knowledge and intention into making that thing, whatever it is, an integral part of your life.

Most years, but especially this year at the start of 2022, I did that with reading. I didn't set reading goals or anything. I didn't have a number to hit. But I knew from past experiences that there is little that gives me the same kind of pleasure that reading does. I mean, I love being with people obviously, and there's nothing like a good playoff game 7, but in general, the most consistent way that I can add joy and enjoyment to my life is by reading. It rarely lets me down. Even when I'm in a slump, I still value the energy I spend getting out of it. That is still valuable to me. So going into this year, I made a single commitment to myself about reading. If there was nothing more compelling to do, I would read. At any point, within reason of course, if I had the ability to read, I would. I still watched sports. I still listened to podcasts. I still did my job. I still played with my kids. I still sat in silence. But in those moments where I had a choice to make

about how I could spend my time, I would choose to read. Basically, if reading was an option, I'd try to take it.

Now, what am I really saying there? I have actively chosen reading over other things time and time again. I usually read about 50-60 books a year, and the choice to choose reading when it was an option doubled my reading. But it also took things away, right? That's the thing about being a genius about something. It always requires you to let something else go, to be lazy about something, to take energy that was going one direction and sending it in another. So this year, I've listened to fewer podcast episodes than I have in the past. I love podcasts. Like a lot. And I love that you love podcasts, especially this one! Your loving podcasts pays my actual bills and helps me pay my team! So please keep listening. But there were a few shows that I stopped listening to altogether because I chose reading instead. There are a few shows that I listen to an episode that is super compelling, i.e. more compelling than reading would be.

I've also given up a lot of TV. Our TV habits have shifted in recent years because my boys stay up a lot later now. I mean, y'all, they go to bed at 9:45pm minimum. Usually it's 10pm. There is very little room for this lady to invest in a show with kids who not only go to bed late but who are also deeply not interested in watching anything I invite them to watch with me. I mean, I try to get them to watch classic comedies like *The Office* and *Bob's Burgers*. I think that they would love *Stranger Things* if they just got over the initial fear of the unknown of it. But no. They say no. They want to watch *Diners Drive-Ins and Dives* instead. So I read while they do that. And then when they go to bed, I don't usually have the energy to start a new show with Kaz, and the truth is Kaz falls asleep on the couch within ten minutes of the boys going to bed anyway. We're tired, y'all! So that's another reason I found it easier to choose reading over TV. But I did choose it. It doesn't mean reading is better or more worthy. I deeply disagree with that. Have you seen some of the magic that's on TV, right now? Gracious. But for me and this year especially, I predominantly choose stories in books over stories in TV shows.

So that's an application of the Lazy Genius principle Essentialize. I got rid of what's in the way of what matters. Another principle I used is to Build the Right Routines. I worked reading into almost every existing routine I could. I read in the morning with my coffee. I read during my lunch break. I read by listening to an audiobook when I'm doing stuff around the house or running errands, in the car and in the stores. I read while the kids watch *Guy Fieri* at night. I read when I go to bed. I read throughout the day, and I have rhythms of what form of my reading will take during those times. So that's almost a Decide Once. I listen to audiobooks when I'm moving around and can't be still, and I read ebooks or physical books otherwise. I also carry whatever book I'm reading around with me. I keep my Kindle Paperwhite or the physical book in whatever room I'm in, carrying it around with me like I do my phone. I'm keeping reading close by so I can do it whenever time allows.

I also added audiobooks to my life in 2022. I'll share the breakdown of those versus physical books in the second half, but that for sure has added so much beautiful reading to my life. And I know there are people who don't think listening to audiobooks is real reading, but they are sorely mistaken. At a very basic level, that means that people who are visually impaired who

can only listen to books aren't actually reading books. They aren't really readers. And we all know that is not true. There have been studies that show that comprehension doesn't really change between readers of physical books and audiobooks. Listening and reading both require the same kind of attention to comprehend the story, so they're both utilizing your brain in active ways. We could go on and on. But if you are a person who's been hesitant to read audiobooks because you feel like they don't count, I would ask you what the alternative is. One is that you don't read! If you have tiny humans at home, you're not going to be able to read a book with pages you flip. You're holding too many babies! But can you listen to a book? For sure. It's like grownup storytime. When you're a kid and somebody reads you a story, it is a formative reading experience and stays in your reading memory. The same is true for audiobooks. So that's another way I was a genius about reading: I expanded my formats to include audiobooks.

So in summary, I chose to be a genius about reading this year. At least, genius to me. I wanted to put more time and energy into it than in years past, not to necessarily read more books by number but to have it be part of my life in a deeper, more consistent way. I did that by choosing to read whenever it was available, and that meant a few things. I let other things go, I added reading to my existing routines, I kept reading near me at all times, and I expanded the formats I used to read. I essentialized, I built the right routines, and I decided once... I used a lot of Lazy Genius principles over the last year to double my reading from years before. Does the number matter? Not to me. Is it significant because it's so different than the past? I think so! And it shows that choosing something over and over again does make a difference in what matters to you.

### **We'll be right back...**

Okay, now for the book nerd numbers. Here's the breakdown of my reading in 2022. At the time that I'm actually recording this, it's the second week of December (since we're working ahead to take a long break over the holidays), and I am finishing the year with 120 books. I do this thing where I log my books from the start of Christmas break to the start of the next Christmas break. I'm not a January 1 to December 31 person. I am closing out my 2022 reading kind of December 16th which is when I stop making content for the year and when my kids are out of school and winter break reading really starts. So technically in this 2022 count, nine of those books happened in the last two weeks of December 2021. So there's that.

I track my reading in Trello. I've done a blog post about that or maybe it's an Instagram post? Maybe both. Either way, we'll have something in the show notes about how I use Trello to track my reading. I don't really need an elaborate book log because so much of my processing of what I read is done in my newsletter, the Latest Lazy Letter. I share the books I read every month, so they get solidified in my mind regularly through that which means I don't feel the need to log them anywhere else outside of the lists in Trello.

So here are some stats. I read 120 books total: 86 were fiction, and 34 were non-fiction. That's usually a more even split, and this year it was way different. In terms of format, it landed about where I expected: 39 audiobooks, 30 ebooks, and 51 physical in my hand books. Of the 120

books, 11 were rereads - The Hunger Games series and the Throne of Glass series. My biggest reading stretch was December break last through into January where I read 29 books over six weeks. And yet in April last year, I finished one book. Just one. Looking at the titles around that book, I can see why. None of those books were loves, so I had a lot of meh books for me without a lot of motivation to pick any of them up. My most read authors were Sarah J. Maas and Neil Gaiman, and my most read genre was fantasy which surprises no one.

I also just really enjoyed my reading year. Even with that spring slump, I don't think I've enjoyed a reading year more, and I think that's mostly because I just read so much.

Now real quick to close up, here are my favorite books I read in 2022. My favorite book of the year was The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman. It's up there with The Ocean at the End of the Lane and The Night Circus as one of my favorites of all time. Other fiction favorites included the Court of Thorns and Roses series by Sarah J. Maas, Upgrade by Blake Crouch a sci-fi thriller, Gilded by Marissa Meyer which is a dark retelling of Rumpelstiltskin, Piranesi which is a weird little book about a man caught in a castle in the middle of the ocean that's full of portals to other worlds, and Book Lovers by Emily Henry, my favorite rom-com book maybe ever.

Favorite audiobook was Taste by Stanley Tucci, followed closely by NOthing to See Here by Kevin Wilson narrated by Marin Ireland and Finding Me by Viola Davis. My favorite nonfiction read of the year was The Making of Biblical Womanhood followed closely by I Hope This Finds You Well, a book of poetry by Kate Baer.

And what's crazy is that if I scroll down my Trello list and see my top 30 books, all of them could be contenders for top ten book in any year. I guess that's what happens when you read a lot?

But those are the stats, and that's how I read 120 books this year. I hope it encourages you to think differently about something you want to be a genius about or reading in general. It's not about the numbers. It's about what matters most to you.

Okay, y'all, that's it for today. Thank you so much for listening, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, Happy New Year, and I'll see you next week.