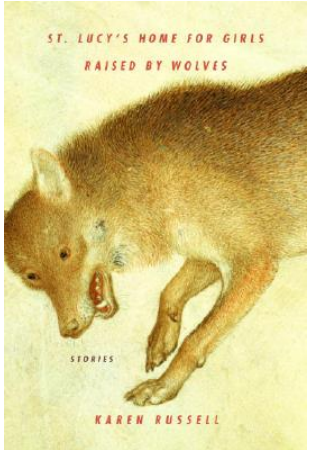
Blogmas days 22 – 31

Day 22 (Tuesday):

Stocking filler

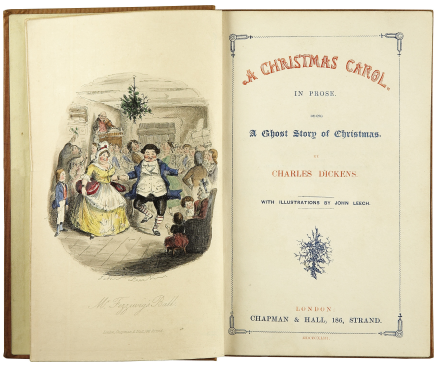


Short stories are great for little gifts. My current favourites are anything by Karen Russell, in particular 'Haunting Olivia.' Her writing style is amazing – interesting, quirky, deep, startling, raw – absolutely stunning.

Day 23 (Wednesday):

Read a Christmas Story

I read some of the classic, "A Christmas Carol." I think everyone knows at least a little about this must-read and its many versions, and everyone knows someone who fits the Scrooge character!!



Day 24 (Thursday):

Tradition

A long-kept tradition in my family is eating smoked salmon (and kilos of it!), scrambled eggs (not for me anymore, sadly!), capers, fresh orange juice and champagne, followed by croissants and fresh fruit for a late breakfast at Christmas. Absolutely delicious, and we did it again this year, today. It included by older brother, sister-in-law, and nephew, who have just come home from England, my Dad, Mum and younger brother (and puppy Albi looked for scraps!). A great tradition to keep, I say!

Day 25 (Friday)

Family

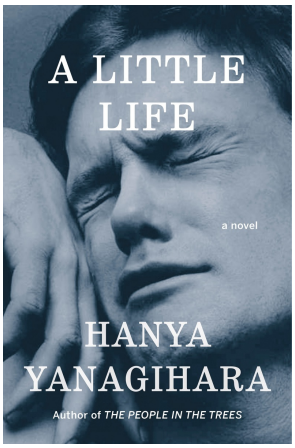
How did you celebrate Christmas (if you do) this year? Usually, my Christmas celebrations involve me and my parents, and for the last few years, either one or none of my two brothers. It is very small, but lovely! This year, in a complete change of events, we had 16 people at our house! My sister in law's family joined ours, and it was fun, and hectic!

Day 26 (Saturday):

Fat book

Boxing Day is my favourite day of the year. Leftovers, the Boxing Day cricket match, and the Summer holiday vibe makes it

a perfect day (even if you are indeed feeling fat post Christmas feasting!). Today, I have been reading 'The Wild Heart' by Beau Taplin – not exactly a fat book! It is a small book of poetry. A fat book I do have on my bookshelf ready to read is 'The Book of Strange New Things' by Michel Faber. I heard some BookTubers raving about this book, so I ordered it. My mum got to it first, and did not enjoy it at all, so it may have slipped down in priority on my to-read list, but I will give it a go soon! Another fat book I have on my list is "A Little Life" by Hanya Yanagihara. I have heard great things about it – including the fact that it is a book that tears you apart! – and plan to listen to it on audiobook.



Day 27 (Sunday):

Reflection

This time of year does lend itself to a time of reflection. I suppose when reflecting on my life currently, it is not filled with a lot of obvious positives, but I do try to include the good points, even if they are small. This year has brought with it yet more medication trials, another diagnosis, and not a great deal of health improvement, so it can be hard to think of it as a good year. However, it also brought with it a huge milestone for me – returning to university to study a course I have wanted to do for most of my life. That in itself is pretty fantastic, and I am quite proud of myself for making it through the first year. I definitely would not have had it not been for my mum, and I know that I am so very lucky to have her generous, selfless and loving presence in my life. It is difficult when feeling unwell so much, but I will continue to work towards making the best version of my life possible. I am also lucky to have the best pup around to cuddle and give me laugh! And just as the year is drawing to a close, part of my small family have returned to Australia, including the nephew

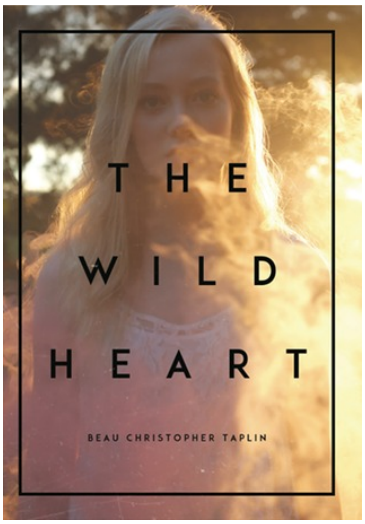
I had not yet met, which is also pretty awesome. So all in all, although life is tough, there are some pretty good things in it too.

Day 28 (Monday):

Read this month

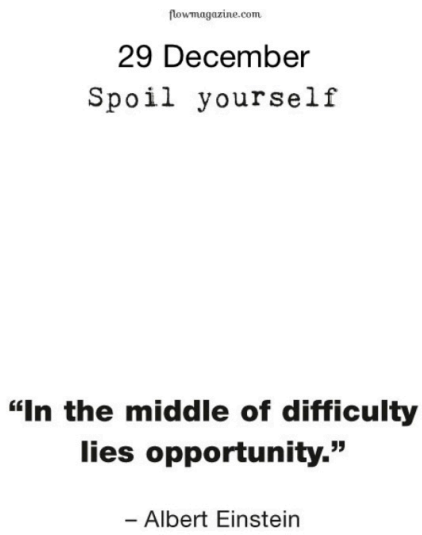
During December, I have read “Slade House” by David Mitchell, which you can read my thoughts about here. I also completed Stephen King’s book, “On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft”, which is a pleasant read; motivating and interesting, with some good tips. I enjoyed the mix of writing ideas with the happenings from King’s life. I listened to it on audiobook, which is narrated by King, which is pretty cool! I also completed “Blogging for Writers: How Authors and Writers Build Successful Blogs” by Robin Houghton, which is an extremely helpful and interesting book that I will continue to refer back to during the upkeep of my blog. It is great for those new to blog set up, but also good for those who have had a blog for a while and want to tweak or improve it. Lastly, I

completed “The Wild Heart” by Beau Taplin, which is a stunning book. Amazing words that make your eyes widen and jaw drop. I feel a bit disappointed because a lot of the concepts used are not new ideas – many metaphors and notions in the poems are commonly heard, but the way they are integrated into amazing poems makes up for it. Another book I am reading/listening to in December but have not yet finished is Outlander. It is amazing so far.

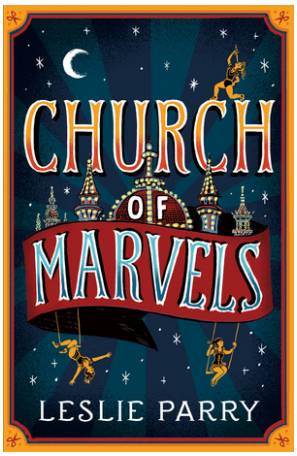


Day 29 (Tuesday):

Quote
I have the Flow Magazine app on my phone, which provides a new quote or idea each day, so I looked up today’s. It says, “In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity”. This fits me quite perfectly, I feel. As I mentioned on Day 28 with the reflection prompt, and often throughout my blog, even in the worst of times, so often something good comes from it.



Day 30 (Wednesday):



Favourite of the year

This would have to be “Church of Marvels”, which I have raved about here!

Day 31 (Thursday):

Resolutions

I find New Year resolutions a little irrelevant in that if you feel something needs to be changed, you should do it now, not just at the beginning of a new year. However, it is a good prompt to refresh our outlook and remind us to reevaluate how we are living our lives. I am not really setting myself New Year resolutions as such, because the way my life is so unpredictable and unreliable, it just sets me up for disappointment (for example, for a number of years, my resolution was to concentrate on and improve my health, and I am still yet to resolve that one!). However, there are things that I want to put more focus on this year. I want to concentrate more energy into this blog, in particular, the photography side. I also want to continue with my slow and steady increase of activity under the guidance of an exercise physiologist. I want to try to get a better idea on where to aim my study goals for the future. And I want to continue to see the positive, and to be better at relying on myself, rather than others, for happiness and strength.

Thank you for joining me in my Blogmas for 2015. I hope that

you have enjoyed the festive season, and that the new year brings you happiness.