



Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Reviewed by Zoe



The genre is Autobiography/Nature Writing/Nonfiction

Give a summary without spoilers!

This autobiographical book, rather than focusing on specific events in the author's life, speaks of life lessons and cultural wisdom through the teachings of nature. It uses a mixture of anecdotes, environmental analogies and indigenous stories from the author's personal experience to deliver beautiful messages about reciprocity, honoring the environment and getting in touch with nature. This is a book about braiding sweetgrass, broken into its phases- planting, tending and braiding, for example. The poetry inherent in the author's carefully chosen anecdotes and plant wisdom is achingly beautiful and speaks so much about life, modern society, gratitude and the natural world.

What drew you to this book?

I was drawn to this media because I wanted to learn about the nature of North America without reading wikipedia entries and scientific journals. What I found was this book; a poetic, personal and touching account of what it means to get in touch with nature and one's heritage, each chapter a beautifully rendered lesson told through the biology of plants. It drew me in because it is food for the soul, every sentence of it.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?

It reminds me of a few things, though it is really comparable to nothing I've read. The indigenous folk stories recounted through this book are ones I have heard in other places- mostly collections of mythology. The discussions of indigenous heritage and the use of a weaving metaphor remind me of the book *Asegi Stories*, a primarily academic work that sorts through the history of queer and gender-nonconforming individuals in specifically Cherokee memory. However, even that work does not take the deeply personal approach found in *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

To whom would you recommend this book?

I would recommend this book to anyone who considers themselves an environmentalist or nature-lover, especially those living in North America. This book brings attention to many environmental issues, as well as the oppression faced by indigenous peoples. Its wisdom and examination of plant life both microscopic and massive is really for anyone

to enjoy, on the other hand. I feel this book is, all in all, a powerful lesson in how to connect with the earth.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

This book was incredible to read, and it is by far my favorite non-fiction book that I have ever read. I would highly recommend it to anyone who feels a pull towards nature.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

I was looking for something like this, and when I found it on amazon I ordered it immediately. I was not disappointed. It was a fabulous thing to read this past summer, the perfect book to bring to a bench in the park.