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DHC 180

**Book Review**

I read the book *Choked Life and Breath in the Age of Air Pollution* by Beth Gardiner. The book is about Gardner as she travels through different parts of the world and tells stories of other people and the conditions they live in. She travels from london to; Delhi, Poland, San Joaquin Valley, India, China, Malawi, Germany and Washington D.C. Gardners journey started when she moved to London and felt the air was thick. She started researching in 2012 about science of pollution effects and was surprised by what she found. The book was Published in 2019 by The University of Chicago Press. I chose this book because of the amount of amazing reviews I found online, and I was not disappointed. This book definitely lives up to the reviews.

I found the chapter called “Reluctant Innovators: Air and the Automakers” the most interesting to me. It talks about how the automobile companies have changed to become more eco friendly over the past decades. The most interesting part to me was when she talked about the discontinuation of leaded gas. After leaded gas was banned it improved the life of millions and saved $2.4 trillion. Gardiner stated, “Researchers found it has also prevented 60 million chrimes” Leaded gas was linked to aggressive behavior because of the toxic fumes it put off. I think this is fascinating and probably would have never known this without reading the book.

This books format reminds me a lot of Nan Shepherds *The Living Mountain*. This book is a personal journey book full of stories of things she saw while traveling mixed with excellent poetry. Gardier reminds me of this in many way though she is not a poet she is still telling the stories of people she meets on the quest to fight pollution. The stories she tells of others effected by different kinds of pollution are heartbreaking and eye opening. My favorite story out of the book is about a husband and wife that take in sixty-four orphans in africa that lived on the streets. They strive to provide for these kids with their store they own. They sell chickens, eggs, homemade clothing and rent out two of their SUVs. This story is heartwarming and makes you feel like there is still humanity in the world.

I wish gardiner talked more about what she expected to come out of this book. It brought up a lot of good talking points but she didn't really mention what could be done about it. I think the ending of the book could have been a lot better. The last chapter named “What Comes Next” was only five and a half pages with barley any info at all. She pretty much ends the book saying that there isn't anything individuals can do and that it is all up to the government.

I rate this book a 4.5 out of 5 because It was full of information but not overwhelming. It was really easy to understand and had a lot of heartwarming stories. Why -0.5? I didn't like how the ending chapter said “What Comes Next” and did not go into more detail, it was very brief. I really enjoyed how much she talked about her own family and that they were the reason she was doing this! She of course dedicated the book to her husband Dan and daughter Anna. I would also recommend this book to every mom, it has so many stories about mothers with their children that are heartbreaking but turn into success stories. I would recommend this book to any one who is interested on learning about pollution but don't know where to start.

**References:**

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