Twitter Thread by Ethan M. Aldridge



Ethan M. Aldridge
@EthanMAldridge



I've lately seen folks on here say they've felt guilty for getting books (mine and other authors) from the library, or people insinuating some authors might be against libraries. This is nonsense, and here's a thread on how using your local library supports authors.

It's easy to see why people would think, at first glance, that getting books from the library is depriving a writer of their dues. It's free, after all! You're not paying anything, so how would the author be getting paid anything for your reading? This is a misconception.

While it IS true that, in the US, authors are not directly paid each time someone checks out a book, they DO benefit, in multiple concrete ways.

The first, and most direct, being that libraries and library systems BUY the books for their collection. If a book looks to be popular, they buy in bulk! If a book *becomes* popular (i.e. lots of people checking it out), they will continue to buy more copies of that book.

If the library subscribes to a curation service (like the Junior Library Guild), a book is bought for a library system in large quantities before the book is even released. This is a big deal, especially for new and unknown authors (it's why we get excited when we're JLG picks)

Another way libraries support authors is introducing readers to a writer's body of work. Statistically speaking, if a reader picks up an authors book at a library and enjoys it, they're much more like to buy that and future books from that author themselves.

Libraries are a main way fanbase's a generated for a writer. This is especially true for children's writers (their audience, at the outset, doesn't have a lot of personal pocket money, after all), and writer's of series. A reader checks out the 1st book, likes it, buys the rest.

Another asset libraries provide to authors is reviving interest in old work. Books fade from fashion, go out of print, but continue circulating in libraries. If those books suddenly find a new audience with the help of wise librarians, the author can suddenly see new sales.

Books can go out of print and be impossible to find in bookstores, but suddenly the right librarian puts the right book in peoples hands, word-of-mouth spreads, and suddenly an author is hearing talk of reprints and sale of adaptation rights.

In addition to *all of this,* checking out books supports your local library, helping them get bigger allocations of city and state funds (which we'd all rather see the money go to than some *other* city and state funded organizations that shall remain nameless).

And authors use the library too! Research! Reference! A great place to write without shelling out for expensive lattes! Workshops! Finding new work and new inspiration!

So please, support your favorite author by enthusiastically using your local library. You can even use free apps like Libby to gain access to your libraries entire digital collection, audiobooks, and ebooks right on your phone. It's easy, it's important, and it's wonderful

P.s. this thread is specifically about the ways libraries support authors, to say nothing of their phenomenally important service of providing free and open information access that's compiled, sorted, and accessed via trained librarians, something more valuable now than ever.

P.P.S. A lot of great and wise librarians have noted to me in the comments that, if you would like to utilize libraries to support an author but your local library does not have their book, you can always request they order it for their collection or through inter-library loans!