FICTION:

*Circling the Sun* by Paula McLain: This fictional account of the life of Beryl Markham delivers a beautifully written story of an adventurous and unconventional woman growing up in Africa in the early 1900’s. It also tells the story of her loves, tragedies and heartaches. Paula McLain, who also wrote *The Paris Wife*, delivers another great novel. —Linda’s pick

*The Dog Master* by Bruce Cameron: How were wolves domesticated 30,000 years ago to become man’s best friend? Cameron has imagined that only a set of extraordinary circumstances could have transformed one of these fierce creatures into a hunting companion, a bodyguard, a soldier, and a friend. I really liked this story which is an evocative glimpse of prehistory, an emotional coming of age saga, and a thrilling tale of survival against all odds. Rebecca’s pick

*Ida* — DVD: A strikingly still and austere film about a young novice who is on the verge of taking her vows in 1960s Poland. Before taking her orders, Ida’s Mother Superior encourages her to visit her aunt, which takes her on a journey to discover a dark family secret dating from the terrible years of the Nazi occupation. Winner of the 2015 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, the first Polish film to do so. Dovanne’s pick

*The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy* by Rachel Joyce: This book is actually the sequel to *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*. In the first book Harold Fry is walking across England to see Queenie, an old friend in hospice, dying of cancer. He asks her to hold on until he gets there. In this lovely second book, a hospice volunteer suggests that Queenie should write a letter telling Harold everything. In confessing to secrets she has hidden for twenty years, she will find atonement for the past. We loved this book; it’s very well-written and the story draws you into Queenie’s world, and makes you think about gracefully dying. Audrey & Judith’s pick

*Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger: Affecting and dynamic, this is at once a tragedy, a romance, and an unflagging exploration into the spirituality and magic possible in the everyday world. Enger’s debut, narrated by an asthmatic 11-year-old named Reuben Land, is the story of Reuben’s unusual family and their journey across the frozen Badlands of the Dakotas in search of his fugitive older brother. The story begs to be read aloud, so get the version on audio book. Audrey’s pick

*Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline (2012): In a grim dystopian United States, people play a virtual reality game (OASIS) in order to escape their real lives. In this sad world there is one hope, a multi-billion dollar prize has been hidden within OASIS by its creator (an eccentric man obsessed with 1980s culture) and will be won by whomever can solve the clues, find the keys, and conquer the gates. This is an adventurous read which will keep you turning pages to see what will happen next as Wade Watts struggles to overcome the challenges posed by other competitors, including a corporation which will stop at nothing to gain control over OASIS, even if it means taking people out of the game permanently. Talia’s pick

*Seveneves* by Neal Stephenson: I decided to read Seveneves because of how much I loved *The Martian*; both books share the genre of “hard” science fiction (sci-fi based on scientific accuracy and technical detail). Seveneves opens by blowing up the moon into, at first, eight pieces. The book follows how the world and individuals react to this and the inevitable extinction event of a “hard rain” - a meteor shower of moon debris which will set the atmosphere on fire. It then takes you up into space with the survivors and how they cope with technical failures, hopelessness, and plain old human greed and ambition. While there is quite a bit of technical detail, it is woven into the plot and dialogue well and isn’t a distraction from everything else that is going on. Talia’s pick

*Time’s Up* by Janey Mack: Maisie McGrane has a great combo of protagonist characteristics – smart, tough, gritty, good-looking and sexy all rolled into one young, but determined, Chicago Police Academy wash-out turned meter maid. Add several interesting supporting characters, including the smokin’ hot, but mysterious Hank – self-defense instructor at Joe’s where Maisie works out - and you have a recipe for a fun, suspenseful mystery. I enjoyed “Hank’s Rules”, and her mother, “July’s Rules” that appeared regularly, via italicized copy, as Maisie’s silent thoughts. Janey Mack’s debut is stellar. Judith’s pick.
**Travels with Gannon and Wyatt Series by Patti Wheeler** (J series found in Youth): I love the action and adventure that Gannon and Wyatt encounter in each of their books: *Botswana, Ireland, Great Bear Rainforest, Egypt and Greenland*. It’s exciting to experience the culture through Gannon and Wyatt’s journal entries. The best part is that Gannon and Wyatt are real life twin brothers who have traveled to each of the places in their book series and have taken real photos and videos that enhance the reader’s experience. I would highly recommend all of the books. *Lauras pick*

**The Truth and Other Lies by Sascca Arango**: Part way through this creepy but compelling first novel by a German scriptwriter, I had to stop and google “sociopath vs. psychopath”. I figured the anti-hero protagonist, Henry Hayden, had to be one or the other. Henry has become a famous “author” by having his reclusive but brilliant wife’s manuscripts published as his own. He is humbling about his success and seems to be a devoted husband, but when his editor/mistress becomes pregnant, the world he has carefully constructed begins to unravel. Henry constructs one lie after another in order to protect himself and the reader is left wondering when—or if—he will ever get caught. *Beth’s pick*

**Valley Fever by Katherine Taylor**: After yet another breakup, Ingrid Palamede returns to her childhood home in California’s lush Central Valley, where she stays on to help her ailing father manage the 20,000 acre farm, flush with grapes and apricots. Ingrid finds herself being pulled back in to life in Fresno not only because of her growing concerns that her father is being cheated by his best friend, but also by two rekindled friendships: with a once best friend who betrayed her, and with her first love. I learned a lot about grape-growing and the wine industry, but especially enjoyed the book for how this novelist brought the characters to life through sparkling dialogue. *Beth’s pick*

**NON-FICTION:**

**Being Mortal by Atul Gwande**: All of us will die, there’s no avoiding that, but for some people choices can be made about HOW we spend the end of our life. This book is a compelling account of modern medicine’s failures to deal humanely and wisely with aging and dying, but it also offers hope in that the current system shows signs of reform. Rather than simply informing patients about their options or telling them what to do, some doctors, including the author, are choosing to offer the guidance that helps patients make their own decisions regarding treatment. As one participant in a recent book discussion said, “This should be required reading for everyone.” *Beth & Judith’s pick*

**Jaqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis: The Untold Story by Barbara Leaming**: this interesting portrait of Jackie’s life weaves between her intellectual and psychological development. It paints a picture of a very real woman who grew up with privilege, then endured a tragedy in the public eye and how that influenced the rest of her life. She was a public figurehead and was revered and ridiculed. She made decisions for her children, her country and her personal life while dealing with a lasting psychological trauma. The book is a recap of the political and social life of her era and keeps the reader involved until the end. *Linda’s Pick*

**Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson**: As a Harvard law student in an internship in Georgia, Stevenson visited death-row inmates and saw firsthand the injustices suffered by the disadvantaged. The visit made such an impression on him that he started the Equal Justice Institute in Montgomery, Alabama. Stevenson recounts his efforts to defend a man accused of a murder he swears he didn’t commit and shares the stories of other men, women, and children forced through an American criminal justice system that shows little mercy. It is a must-read for anyone interested in criminal justice, fans of true crime, and those wondering why there is so much anger in our country. *Beth’s pick*

**Liar, Temptress, Soldier, Spy: Four Women Undercover in the Civil War by Karen Abbott**: a detailed account of the stories of four women in impossible wartime situations. One used flirtation to gather information for the South, another left an abusive home situation to reinvent herself as a man and ended up a soldier and spy fighting against the evils of slavery. An established society woman in Washington DC used her connections to send coded messages to the Southern army, and a wealthy spinster right in the heart of Richmond worked to slip information to the Union. The author uses authentic dialogue taken from archival letters and diaries, then describes the scenes in which they were used. Each woman has hardships and conquests as she struggles to fight for her beliefs. *Talia’s pick*

**Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town by Jon Krakauer** — A relentless and informative study of rape surrounding the University of Montana in the typical small college town of Missoula. Bringing to light individual stories and experiences, Krakauer clearly illustrates many of the reasons that the crime of rape is largely under reported and that the perpetrator is usually known to the victim. Jon Krakauer is the author of many non-fiction titles including *Into the Wild, Into Thin Air* and *Under the Banner of Heaven*. *Davonne’s pick*

**The Romanov Sisters: the Lost Lives of the Daughters of Nicholas and Alexandra by Helen Rappaport** — Ever since reading the book *Nicholas and Alexandra* by Robert K. Massie many years ago, I’ve been interested in the Romanov Russian royalty. This new book focuses on the lives, personalities, and relationships of the four Romanov sisters — Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia — rather than their more famous brother, Alexis, who suffered from hemophilia. *Davonne’s pick*

**The Wright Brothers by David McCullough** — This wonderful book brings the history of the Wright Brothers and their flying machines to life as we learn about the family, personalities and struggles that led the brothers to this monumental discovery. A fascinating window into the not so distant past. David McCullough is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winning author for the biographies *Truman* and *John Adams*. *Davonne’s pick*