Fiction

**A Boy Made of Blocks by Keith Stuart:** First person narration makes this novel unique; it feels like reading from the father’s journal. Keith Stuart writes for The Guardian about video games, and this is his first novel. While coming from his experience as the father of an autistic boy, it is not an autobiography. Raising and living with a challenged child – whether it is autism or another impairment - is extremely stressful. I quickly became immersed in the story as I rooted for the family to work through the troubles. Stuart taught me about the positives of Minecraft and video games in general. This is a miraculous and uplifting story. *Judith*

**Cover Me in Darkness by Eileen Rendahl:** Amanda Sinclair’s past haunts her despite her attempts to keep it at bay. Parole day for the leader of the cult she escaped as a teenager seems to set off a string of events that defy being coincidental. The character, a young scientist working in a chemistry lab in downtown Chicago, captured me and the mystery kept me interested to the end. Rendahl has had success writing under other names in other genres: as Eileen Carr she writes romantic suspense, and as Kristi Abbott she writes cozy mysteries. *Judith*

**Hag-Seed by Margaret Atwood** – A modern re-telling of Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest*. I enjoyed this smoothly written, fast-paced tale with all its flawed characters, despite the fact that I’m only vaguely familiar with the details of the original play. *Davonne*

**Heartstone by Elle Katharine White:** There have been a lot of re-imaginings of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen but this one comes with dragons! White creates a fascinating fantasy world and culture which I actually hope she continues in future books. I’m not the biggest *Pride and Prejudice* fan—I can recognize the basic plot and people in this book, but everything else is new and interesting to read. Even if you don’t know anything about *Pride and Prejudice*, *Heartstone* can stand on its own. *Talia*

**Know the Mother by Desiree Cooper** – Painful, yet gripping short stories outlining the emotional, societal and practical struggles and joys of motherhood, from a variety of viewpoints. *Davonne*

**News of the World by Paulette Jiles:** It is 1870 and an elderly widower, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. On his travels he is asked to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. The child was taken captive by the Kiowa four years earlier. The story talks of Texas in the years after the Civil war, addresses the issue of what “news” will be shared, and tells the story of a little girl adapting to a new way of life. Available in audio, book and eBook. –*Linda*
The Sun is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon – The story of one undocumented family’s difficulties from the perspectives of the practical and scientifically minded teen daughter, Natasha, and the poetically thoughtful teen, Daniel, with whom she falls in love as she searches for a path to keep her family from deportation. The coming of age characters consider their futures as connected to the past, fate, the universe and the countless possibilities affected by a single event. This book was a finalist for the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature. (Teen) Davonne

Non-Fiction:

Born to Run by Bruce Springsteen: This is a wonderful autobiography of “The Boss” who grew up Irish-Italian and semi-poor in a New Jersey neighborhood. As a teen he had a difficult relationship with his father who suffered from depression and alcoholism. Once he picked up a guitar, he realized that music was going to be his passion and that writing was the thing he had to focus on if he wanted to be successful. He began writing in teens. After some success in NJ, he went to California, but learned that he played better to his Jersey audience, so he came home and finally had the success he needed with Born to Run. Early on, when his first marriage failed, the band became his family. Patti Scialfa, who was a part of the band - became his rock and helped him overcome his fears about being a family man. Well written, with funny anecdotes, Bruce delves into the commitments of his life which were to support and be a voice for working class people. I listened to the audiobook, read by Springsteen himself, which made it even more special. Sandi

Rise: How a House Built a Family by Cara Brookins: A memoir told with a bold, straight-forward style, this is the story of how one woman finally found the courage to get out of her life as a battered wife and move herself and her four children on to a new one. They did it by tackling the enormous DIY project of building their own house. Somehow she found the strength and energy to do this with her kids while working as a computer analyst and social media marketing expert. Impressive. Judith

Kaffe Fassett’s Bold Blooms: quilts and other works celebrating flowers by Kaffe Fassett: A popular fabric, knitting, and needlepoint designer, Fassett is well known for his bold use of color and designs with large blooms. This is a beautiful book with excellent photographs. If you have interests in any kind or art, there is something here for you, since much of the text - which is concise and intermingled among the photos - deals with his design process; the techniques and principles can be applied to many different mediums. If nothing else, it is simply a joy to look at. Judith

Mrs. Sherlock Holmes by Brad Ricca: The story of Grace Humiston, the first female United States attorney and someone who stood up for those who had limited means. This book follows her unique cases, including one of slavery in the South, exonerating those on death row, as well as international cases. The main case is about the disappearance of Ruth Cruger in 1917, which became a national story. This narrative non-fiction will appeal to true crime fans and those interested in crime in the early twentieth century. Talia

Strong is the new Beautiful by Lindsey Vonn: Alpine ski racer and Olympic gold Medalist Vonn has been racing, training, recovering from injury, and trying various diets since she a young teen. Now in her thirties, she has developed a regimen based on experience that touts whole foods, and a variety of workouts that have transformed her life and her body. Her goal with this book is to offer plans for workouts and eating that are doable for anyone. She has chapters on mind, diet, & fitness. In fitness, she explains ways to make exercise a “happy habit”, reasons to strength train, the importance and benefits of warm-ups and cool-downs, and pictures detailing 65 of her favorite “Get-Strong” exercises. This is a thorough manual that celebrates strength and eating well as the vehicle to overall well-being. Judith