FICTION

**Best Day Ever by Kaira Rouda:** From the outside it looks like Paul Strom has the perfect life. A great career, a beautiful home, and, of course, a dutiful wife. But are things ever as they seem? Rouda knows how to tell a tale and weave a story that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Fans of Liane Moriarty’s *The Husband’s Secret* will love this one! - Leanne

**The Half Drowned King by Linnea Hartsuyker:** This is a great historical and family saga taking place during the time of the Vikings. The story follows Ragnvald Eysteinsson and his quest to restore his family’s lands and rescue his sister, Svanhild, from his enemies. Ragnvald journeys throughout the Viking lands, encountering kings and battles. Svanhild also has a journey in front of her and proves to be a strong female character in a world of men. While it is a historical fiction novel, it does have a touch of mysticism appropriate for the Viking age. I recommend it to anyone who enjoys stories of adventurous quests and historical fiction. - Talia

**Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro:** This author won the Nobel Prize in Literature this year, so I sought one of his books that I hadn’t read. As dystopian novels are currently popular, this choice fits the times although it was published in 2005. The setting is a British boarding school which houses children who have been cloned for use as donors. The reader learns the emotions and experiences of several childhood friends as they become adults and grapple with their fate. A movie of the same name came out in 2010. - Davonne

**New Boy by Tracy Chevalier:** The 4th in the Hogarth Shakespeare series, this modernized telling of *Othello* takes place in one day of a suburban elementary schoolyard of the 1970s. The elements of racism, love, betrayal, bullying and jealousy are all vividly illuminated. This book stands well on its own, apart from the retelling of Shakespeare, as do the other books that I’ve read in this series: *Hagseed* by Margaret Atwood and *Vinegar Girl* by Anne Tyler. - Davonne

**The Stars Are Fire by Anita Shreve:** To say this is the story of a woman, says nothing yet it says everything. Grace is married to Gene and they have settled into their mutually defined roles. A fire erupts and destroys everything in its path including the town where they live, their family home and ultimately the life they knew. Grace finds strength and resolve she didn’t know she had and rebuilds her life with her two children. Just when she is solidly on her feet, Grace receives the shock of her life. How will the new Grace fit into the mold of the Grace she lost in the fire? Will she find the courage to begin again? - Leanne

**The Tea Planter’s Wife by Dinah Jeffries:** Set on a tea plantation in what is now known as Sri Lanka in the 1920s and 1930s, *The Tea Planter’s Wife* revolves around Gwen. Gwen is the wealthy wife of a British tea plantation owner. After she gives birth, she harbors a shocking secret that threatens to tear her life apart. What will happen to her life if her husband finds out her secret? Will he take her son away from her? - Laura

**Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck:** This historical fiction of World War II takes a different approach than most novels of this time period. The main characters are the widows of three men who conspired to assassinate Hitler. The strong, flawed female characters all consider the consequences of their choices and subsequent burdens, amongst the backdrop of a society that inadvertently allowed a cruel dictator to take control of the country and their lives. - Davonne

**The Wonder by Emma Donoghue:** If I can read a book twice and then want to start over again (which is how I felt about this book), then I know it belongs on my book shelf. In it, an English nurse trained by Florence Nightingale is sent to Ireland to keep watch over an 11-year old girl who, it is claimed, has not ingested any food for four months. Is it a miracle, as some claim, or a dangerous hoax? The beautiful prose, claustrophobic atmosphere and mounting tension all kept me turning the pages. - Beth
NON-FICTION:

**Born a Crime by Trevor Noah:** This coming-of-age story is set in the time of apartheid and tells how a child with one black parent and one white, dealt with his status of being born a crime. His stories are compelling and inspiring. Some stories will help you understand what it was like to live under apartheid and others just explain more of the human condition. He is obviously a brilliant person who struggled and survived. Trevor Noah is a South African television and radio host and comedian, known for his role as host of The Daily Show. I listened to the book on audio and appreciated the author’s telling of his own story. - *Linda*

**Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Who Helped Win World War II by Liza Mundy:** An absolutely fascinating look at the work these women did during WWII. Recruited from small towns and the best colleges, their work done in secret was crucial to the success of World War II. Very well researched and written. Those who enjoyed “Hidden Figures” would most likely enjoy this book. - *Leanne*

**Dear Fahrenheit 451: Love and Heartbreak in the Stacks by Annie Spence:** The rest of the subtitle is “A Librarian’s Love Letters and Break-up Notes to the Books in her Life”, but you don’t have to be a librarian to appreciate this witty and insightful book (though there are some insider jokes…). I went to my local bookstore and bought my own copy because it is a great guide to expanding my own reading and I wanted to be able to mark it up. Readers (and librarians) will enjoy this. - *Beth*

**The Disappearing Spoon by Sam Kean:** A must read for all history and science buffs. This books walks you through each element of the periodic table by sharing an interesting story about its discovery and uses, like why did Lewis and Clark swallow mercury capsules? and why was Godzilla killed with a cadmium missile? - *Katie*

**Inner Life of Cats: Science and Secrets of our Mysterious Feline Companions by Thomas McNamee:** As a self-confessed cat-person, I found this informative and sensitive book a fascinating study of these half-wild, half-domesticated creatures that live with us. The subtitle ultimately describes the book, which is also interjected with stories from the life of Augusta, the author's cat, who characterizes the species as well as her own individual personality. - *Davonne*

**The Last Castle by Denise Kiernan:** The fascinating true story behind the magnificent Gilded Age mansion The Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina—the largest, grandest residence ever built in the United States. The book chronicles George Vanderbilt’s story as he acquires the land, travels the world for ideas and creates his vision with the help of an incredible architect and landscape designer in the early 1900s. It is more than a house, it’s an industry, a tale of preservation and a peek into the lives of the wealthiest Americans a century ago. The author spoke at the Harbor Springs Festival of the Book in the fall of 2017. - *Linda*

**The Storm Before the Storm by Mike Duncan:** Mike Duncan is a podcaster that I have been listening to for years. He began with The History of Rome and is currently working his way through all the world revolutions in his current podcast, Revolutions. I enjoy his podcasts for his way of sticking to the facts, while maintaining a wonderful dry humor that keeps everything from getting too boring. This book sticks with that and delves deep into a period of Roman history that is often skipped over, the rise and fall being much more popular with historians. Here he covers the end of the republic of Rome and what will eventually bring about the Empire. This is the story of the generation before Caesar and fall of the republic. I recommend it to anyone who enjoys reading about ancient history and Rome. - *Talia*

**The Tao of Pooh by Ben Hoff:** Author Ben Hoff uses the beloved characters of Winnie-the-Pooh to explain Taoism, simplicity, and natural living. This is an easy, entertaining read for someone just getting interested in philosophy or religion. - *Katie*

**Total Cat Mojo: The Ultimate Guide to Life with Your Cat by Jackson Galaxy:** I have lived with cats for 50 years and I learned a thing or two from this book. The author, host of the show “My Cat from Hell” on Animal Planet, draws on his experience as a shelter worker and cat behaviorist to help “cat guardians” ensure their pets will be happy, healthy and well-adjusted. A must-read for anyone who is thinking about acquiring (or has) a cat in their home. - *Beth*