

STARS

University of Central Florida
STARS

Featured Bookshelf

University Libraries

12-1-2016

Featured Bookshelf: 2016 Staff Favorite Reads

Megan M. Haught

Univeristy of Central Florida, megan.haught@ucf.edu

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/featured-bookshelf>

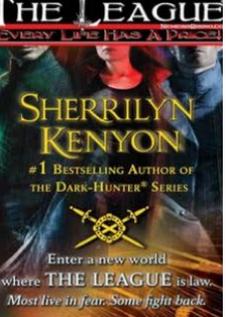
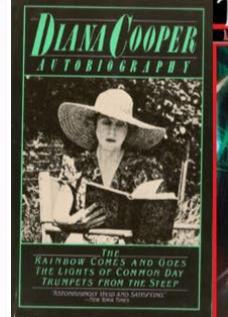
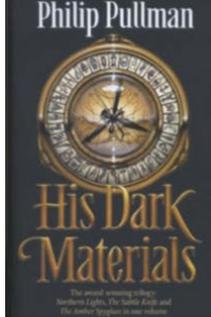
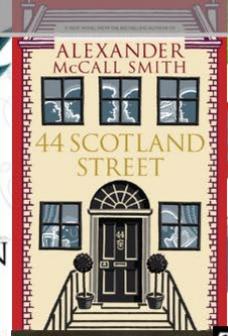
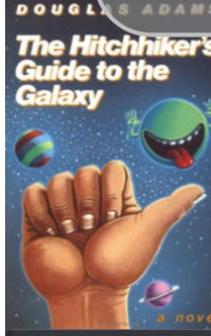
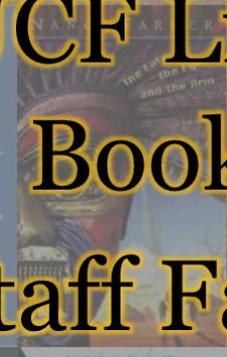
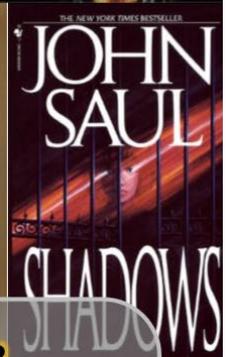
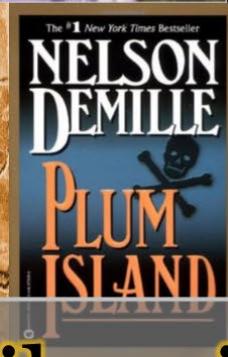
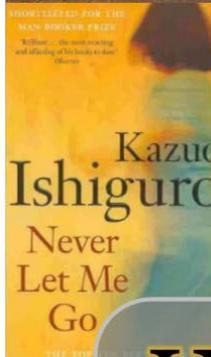
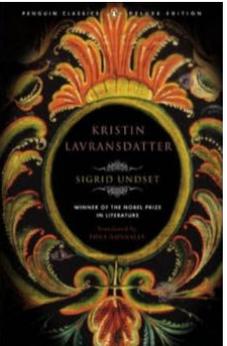
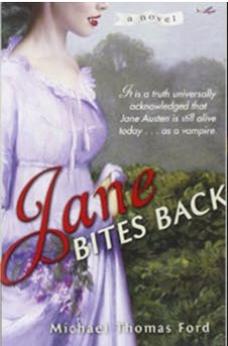
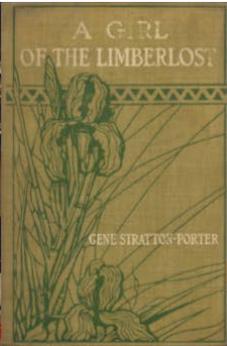
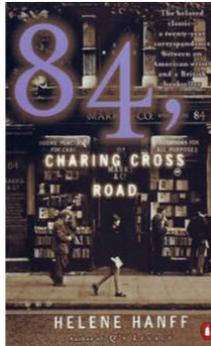
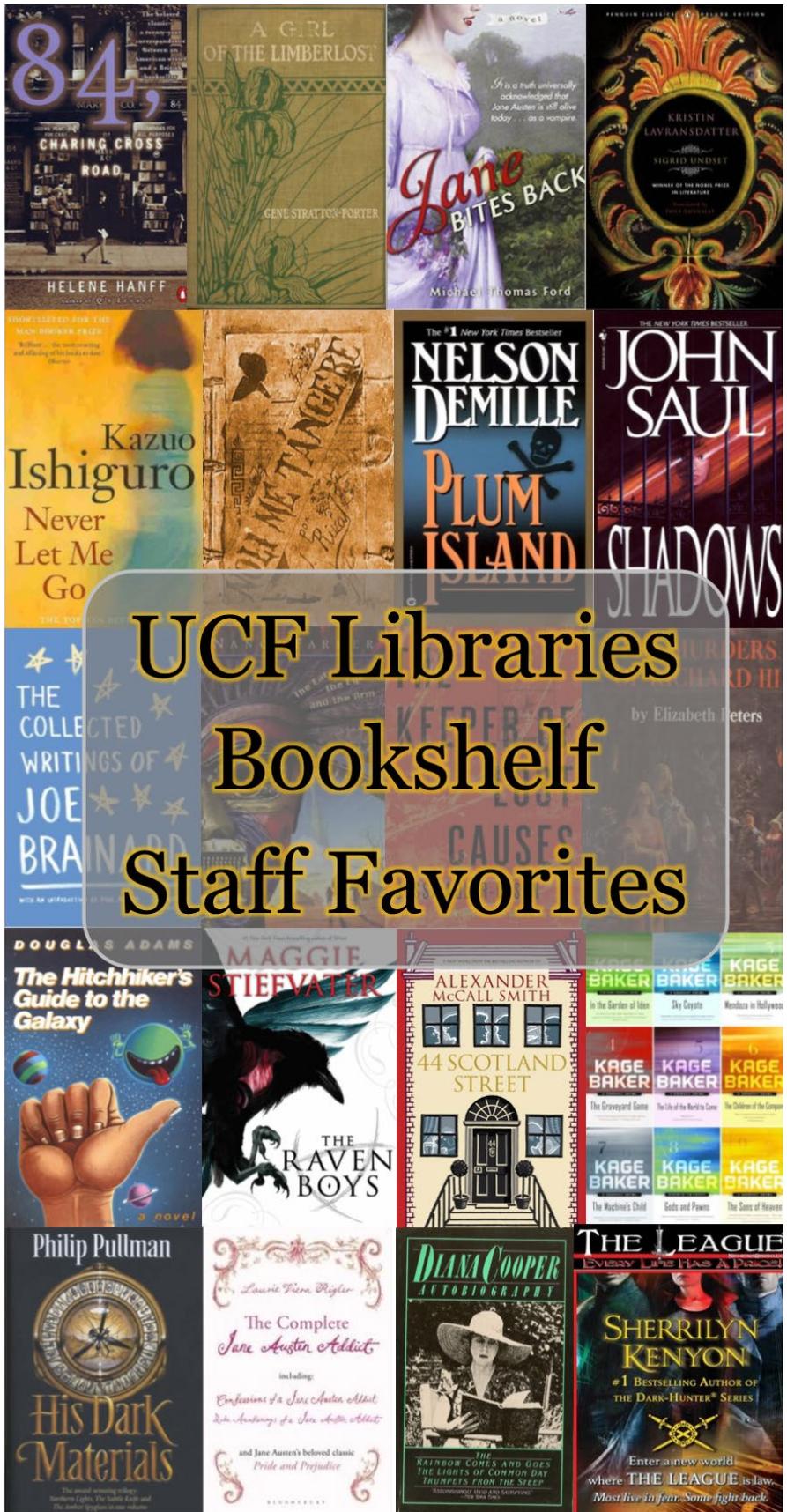
University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Featured Bookshelf by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation

Haught, Megan M., "Featured Bookshelf: 2016 Staff Favorite Reads" (2016). *Featured Bookshelf*. 1.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/featured-bookshelf/1>





For the month of December, the UCF Libraries Bookshelf is celebrating the favorite books and series of the employees of the UCF Libraries. These are the books we have (and will continue to) read many times over the course of our lives. They cross genres from mystery, science fiction, young adult and memoirs. These are our well-loved books and we are thrilled to share them with you.

Favorite Books

84 Charing Cross Road by Helene Hanff

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF021739330>

It all began with a letter inquiring about second-hand books, written by Helene Hanff in New York, and posted to a bookshop at 84, Charing Cross Road in London. As Helene's sarcastic and witty letters are responded to by the stodgy and proper Frank Doel of 84, Charing Cross Road, a relationship blossoms into a warm and charming long-distance friendship lasting many years.

Suggested by Jamie LaMoreaux, Acquisitions & Collections: "The story of a correspondence between a New Yorker (in 1950) and an English Antiquarian book seller. Her other books are about her breaking into show business badly, her travel (finally!) to England and the play that was made out of her book, her life and the books she loves. Slice of life in show business that doesn't always go as planned or desired."

A Girl of the Limberlost by Gene Stratton-Porter

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF024625840>

Set near the Limberlost Swamp in Indiana at the beginning of the 20th century, "A Girl of the Limberlost" is the story of Elnora Comstock, a young girl who is just entering high school at the outset of the novel. The story is one of Elnora's struggles to overcome her poverty; to win the love of her mother, who blames Elnora for her husband's death; and to find a romantic love of her own. A classic and romantic coming of age story, "A Girl of the Limberlost" will delight readers of all ages.

Suggested by Brianna Stack, Administration: "'A Girl of the Limberlost' is one of my favorite books. It is by Gene Stratton-Porter and was published in 1909. It is out of print but can be downloaded for free on Kindle! [Note: UCF Library has an ebook version linked above.] Written by a naturalist, this book is very informative about the wildlife in the forests of the Midwest at the time. Bits of history and natural history make the story interesting, and it has a conservation and preservation message throughout. Although part of this book is a love story, the more important relationship in the book is between the mother and daughter. I found it in an elementary school library sale 20-some years ago and have read it many times since!"

Jane Bites Back by Michael Thomas Ford

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/326533823>

Two hundred years after her death, Jane Austen is still surrounded by the literature she loves—but now it's because she's the owner of Flyleaf Books in a sleepy college town in Upstate New York. Every day she watches her novels fly off the shelves—along with dozens of unauthorized sequels, spin-offs, and adaptations. Jane may be undead, but her books have taken on a life of their own.

Suggested by Jamie LaMoreaux, Acquisitions & Collections: "a really wicked funny series about Jane

Austen as a Vampire that's rather pissed off her most recent book has 200 rejection slips and she hasn't received royalties in centuries. Brontites might not like this as much as Janeites."

Kristin Lavransdatter by Sigrid Undset

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF023732526>

In her great historical epic Kristin Lavransdatter, set in fourteenth-century Norway, Nobel laureate Sigrid Undset tells the life story of one passionate and headstrong woman. Painting a richly detailed backdrop, Undset immerses readers in the day-to-day life, social conventions, and political and religious undercurrents of the period.

Suggested by Meg Scharf, Administration: "Originally written as three books: The Wreath, (1920), The Wife (1921), and The Cross (1922), later versions printed them together as one book. So it is a bit like reading a series. This trilogy formed the basis of Undset's work for which she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1928. Kristin lives in 14th Century Norway, and this is the story of her life. It is a detailed portrayal of life in medieval Norway, which fascinated me. I first read it after high school, at the recommendation of a favorite teacher."

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF021548959>

From the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans*, comes an unforgettable edge-of-your-seat mystery that is at once heartbreakingly tender and morally courageous about what it means to be human. Hailsham seems like a pleasant English boarding school, far from the influences of the city. Its students are well tended and supported, trained in art and literature, and become just the sort of people the world wants them to be. But, curiously, they are taught nothing of the outside world and are allowed little contact with it. Within the grounds of Hailsham, Kathy grows from schoolgirl to young woman, but it's only when she and her friends Ruth and Tommy leave the safe grounds of the school (as they always knew they would) that they realize the full truth of what Hailsham is.

Suggested by Mary Page, Administration: "It's a dystopian novel set in England that's both creepy and tragic, disturbing and lovely. "

Noli Me Tangere by Jose Rizal

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF029534776>

In more than a century since its appearance, José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* has become widely known as the great novel of the Philippines. A passionate love story set against the ugly political backdrop of repression, torture, and murder, "The Noli," as it is called in the Philippines, was the first major artistic manifestation of Asian resistance to European colonialism, and Rizal became a guiding conscience—and martyr—for the revolution that would subsequently rise up in the Spanish province.

Suggested by Ven Basco, Subject Librarian: "I read this when I was 14 as a required text in high school. A semi-autobiographical account of the Philippine society during its time under the Spanish rule. Set against the ugly political backdrop of repression, torture and murder. Incredible amount of details filled with realism."

Plum Island by Nelson DeMille

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/733645702>

Wounded in the line of duty, NYPD homicide cop John Corey is convalescing in rural eastern Long Island when an attractive young couple he knows is found shot to death on the family patio. The victims were biologists at Plum Island, a research site rumored to be an incubator for germ warfare. Suddenly, a local double murder takes on shattering global implications -- and thrusts Corey and two extraordinary women into a dangerous search for the secret of Plum Island.

Suggested by Jonathan Hanie, Circulation: "It is a murder mystery set on Long Island and it is a REAL page-turner!"

Shadows by John Saul

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/25282231>

The Academy is a school for special children, gifted or cursed with extraordinary minds. Josh tries to save the others from an evil intellect and death.

Suggested by Mary Rubin, Special Collections & University Archives: "if you can transport yourself in time to 1993, then you'll be okay with the dated technology references. Think of bringing Frankenstein to life with a dial-up modem... besides that, it is well written and super unique. Definitely helped push my interest in the horror/sci-fi genre."

The Collected Writings of Joe Brainard by Joe Brainard

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF030654012>

An artist associated with the New York School of poets, Joe Brainard (1942-1994) was a wonderful writer whose one-of-a-kind autobiographical work *I Remember* ("a completely original book" -Edmund White) has had a wide and growing influence. It is joined in this major new retrospective with many other pieces that for the first time present the full range of Brainard's writing in all its deadpan wit, madcap inventiveness, self-revealing frankness, and generosity of spirit.

Suggested by John Venecek, Subject Librarian: "Joe Brainard is one of the best-kept secrets in American literature. He was a visual artist and writer who is known for a series of memoirs that are all called I remember. Each follows the same basic structure: a sentence that begins with the words "I remember" followed by a single memory that can be as short as a couple words or sometimes a full paragraph. He also wrote many other scattered memoirs, poems, and portraits that are all collected here. I read this every December because it includes a memoir that inspired a writing exercise I do every year, "Self Portrait on Christmas Night."

The Ear, The Eye, and The Arm by Nancy Farmer

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF020795932>

The year is 2174. The place is Zimbabwe, Africa. Three adventurous children escape their parents' heavily guarded mansion to explore the dangerous world outside. They soon learn how dangerous it really is. Tendai, the oldest boy, is their leader, although he worries about being brave enough. Rita, his sister, is an expert at starting fights. Kuda, his little brother, is willing to try anything.

Suggested by Cynthia Dancel, Research & Information Services: "Set in the future in Zimbabwe, three

detectives, each with a special power/mutation, are charged with finding the General's children who are find their way from a futuristic city to a toxic waste dump to a traditional village which has shunned technology and closed itself to the outside world. I especially enjoy this book because not only do the heroes have flaws but the villains also have kind elements to them and at times are forgiven rather than vanquished."

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF025337350>

Seconds before the Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out-of-work actor.

Suggested by Andrew Hackler, Circulation: "This science fiction comedy is the book that made me like reading. Fluttering somewhere between parody and homage, Arthur Dent faces off against the non-sequitur and satiric forces of the galaxy, when all he wants is a cup of tea. This book is a fun read that is truly engaging."

The Keeper of Lost Causes by Jussi Adler-Olsen

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/703207340>

Chief detective Carl Mørck, recovering from what he thought was a career-destroying gunshot wound, is relegated to cold cases and becomes immersed in the five-year disappearance of a politician.

Suggested by Jonathan Hanie, Circulation

The Murders of Richard III by Elizabeth Peters

<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/918812>

American librarian Jacqueline Kirby is fascinated by the assembled guests at an English country mansion who have assumed the dress and lifestyle of Richard III's court, until someone decides to recreate his historic crimes.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services: "I first read this mystery when I was 11 and have been reading it at least once a year since. The heroine, Jacqueline Kirby, is smart and pragmatic with a very sarcastic wit. She was a big influence in my formative years as you can see from my red hair, big purse and job at an academic library."

The Raven Boys by Maggie Stiefvater

<http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?29CF030818089>

Though she is from a family of clairvoyants, Blue Sargent's only gift seems to be that she makes other people's talents stronger, and when she meets Gansey, one of the Raven Boys from the expensive Aglionby Academy, she discovers that he has talents of his own--and that together their talents are a dangerous mix.

Suggested by Emma Gisclair, Curriculum Materials Center: "This is the first book in Stiefvater's Raven Cycle, which is technically about five teens searching for the tomb of a mythical Welsh king in the

Virginia mountains. But it's really about so much more: intense friendships, family and its impact on who we are, self-doubt, death's inevitability, the magic around and inside all of us. This series has a cast of real, flawed but endearing characters that I can never get out of my head."

Favorite Series

44 Scotland Street series by Alexander McCall Smith

<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/series/4SS/44-scotland-street-series>

Welcome to 44 Scotland Street, home to some of Edinburgh's most colorful characters. There's Pat, a twenty-year-old who has recently moved into a flat with Bruce, an athletic young man with a keen awareness of his own appearance. Their neighbor, Domenica, is an eccentric and insightful widow. In the flat below are Irene and her appealing son Bertie, who is the victim of his mother's desire for him to learn the saxophone and Italian—all at the tender age of five. Love triangles, a lost painting, intriguing new friends, and an encounter with a famous Scottish crime writer are just a few of the ingredients that add to this delightful and witty portrait of Edinburgh society, which was first published as a serial in The Scotsman newspaper.

Suggested by Larry Cooperman, Research & Information Services: "it's a serialized account of a group of people who live in Edinburgh. There are nine books now in the series, I think, and they are very well written and enjoyable."

Company series by Kage Baker

<https://www.tor.com/2016/03/29/rereading-kage-bakers-company-series-introduction/>

In the 24th century, the Company preserves works of art and extinct forms of life (for profit of course). It recruits orphans from the past, renders them all but immortal, and trains them to serve the Company, Dr. Zeus. One of these is Mendoza the botanist. She is sent to Elizabethan England to collect samples from the garden of Sir Walter Iden. But while there, she meets Nicholas Harpole, with whom she falls in love. And that love sounds great bells of change that will echo down the centuries, and through the succeeding novels of The Company.

Suggested by Joanie Reynolds, Interlibrary Loan & Document Delivery Services: "I recommend Kage Baker's Company Series to anyone who likes time travel, cyborgs, romance, conspiracies, and nonlinear thinking. I enjoyed the characters, the settings and the fact that I didn't know if, when or where my favorite characters were going to appear in subsequent novels."

His Dark Materials series by Philip Pullman

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18116.His_Dark_Materials

In an epic trilogy, Philip Pullman unlocks the door to a world parallel to our own, but with a mysterious slant all its own. Demons and winged creatures live side by side with humans, and a mysterious entity called Dust just might have the power to unite the universes—if it isn't destroyed first.

Suggested by Mary Page, Administration: "It's a fantasy that starts out in ancient Oxford and travels to the frozen Arctic and beyond to imaginary lands. Written for children and young adults, it's considered more "literary" than the Harry Potter series. Highly recommended!!"

Jane Austin Addict series by Laurie Viera Rigler

<https://www.goodreads.com/series/74674-jane-austen-addict>

In this Jane Austen inspired comedy, love story, and exploration of identity and destiny, a modern LA girl wakes up as an Englishwoman in Austen's time.

Suggested by Jamie LaMoreaux, Acquisition & Collections: "Funny premise of what would happen if two people from different centuries swapped places and bodies."

Lady Diana Cooper, Autobiography by Lady Diana Cooper

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6082.Diana_Cooper

Three books in one: "The Rainbow Comes and Goes" "The Lights of Common Day" "Trumpets and the Steep" Most beautiful and influential woman of her day. Married to Duff Cooper. She is the first Lady Diana.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Subject Librarian: "The three-volume memoirs of Lady Diana Cooper (1892-1986): The Light of Common Day, The Rainbow Comes and Goes, and Trumpets from the Steep – all of which give a fascinating glimpse of the life of the English aristocracy during the early twentieth century. In the 1920s Diana was proclaimed "the most beautiful girl in the world," and for that her picture was on the cover of Time magazine. She was no snob, though. As editor Robert Gottlieb recently wrote, "What can it have been like to have been Lady Diana Cooper ... the most celebrated debutante of her era, the daughter of a duke, the wife of a famous diplomat (and so the British ambassadress to Paris), an internationally acclaimed actress, a character in at least half a dozen novels (by writers as unlike as Evelyn Waugh, Nancy Mitford, Arnold Bennett, D.H. Lawrence and Enid Bagnold), a dedicated nurse to wounded and dying soldiers in World War I, and a pig farmer?" The "illegitimate" daughter of the Duchess of Rutland and journalist Henry Cust, she once observed, "I am cheered very much by Tom Jones on bastards, and like to see myself as a 'Living Monument of Incontinence'." I love her elegiac last paragraph from Trumpets from the Steep: "Age wins and one must learn to grow old ... so now I must learn to walk this long unlovely wintry way, looking for spectacles, shunning the cruel looking-glass, laughing at my clumsiness before others mistakenly condole, not expecting gallantry yet disappointed to receive none, apprehending every ache or shaft of pain, alive to blinding flashes of mortality, unarmed, totally vulnerable."

The League series by Sherrilyn Kenyon

<https://www.goodreads.com/series/118772-the-league>

Welcome to a world where corrupt assassination politics dominate everything and everyone- because sometimes the cure really is worse than the illness. It's kill or be killed. You're either the hunter or the prey. But there are those who will protect you. Men and women who come from the streets and from bloodied backgrounds of survival. You just have to decide is they're better than the ones chasing you...Or worse.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services: "Kenyon's books in general, but her League series in particular, focus on men and women who have survived horrific situations with humor and a strong sense of self. She is a good reminder that what doesn't kill you hurts a lot and to survive you need to move forward with purpose."