

Good morning! This is Sue Mauger.

You're listening to "Reading between the Lines" brought to you by the Friends of the Homer Public Library.

Imagine having no perception that you have a left side. Not that you can't move your left side, but that you have no understanding that it even exists. This is the reality of Sarah Nickerson in Lisa Genova's novel *Left Neglected*. An over-achieving working mom juggling career, kids, marriage, and a fateful cell phone, Sarah wins rock-paper-scissors with her husband one morning, and gets a kid-free commute to work. Sarah uses her unusually quiet drive to downtown Boston to return some calls. With her attention on the phone, the tail lights in front of her go unnoticed too long. When she awakes in the hospital with a severe brain trauma, the world seems right – but only right – no left.

Lisa Genova, a Harvard trained neuroscientist, reveals the world of 'left neglect' through Sarah's first person account of how an injury to the right side of the brain can cause visual neglect of the left-side of space. In extreme cases, patients with left neglect will shave only the right side of their face or eat only the right side of a plate of food. Left hand and left leg lie limp – forgotten.

With months of rehab behind her, Sarah eventually returns home to a life that she can no longer keep up with. As she mourns the life she's lost, the

realization of all that she had neglected - her children – her mother – herself - in the frantic pace of a successful life – brings Sarah to a new understanding of the fullness of life – even without the left side of it.

This insightful page turner is Lisa Genova's second book. Her first published in 2009 explores another type of neurological disorder – early onset Alzheimer's Disease. In *Still Alice*, we get the chance to experience the world as Alice Howland does as she begins the heartbreaking descent into tangled neurons and broken connections. Alice escorts us through the first forgetful moments - not unusual as we age – but bouts of disorientation, missed meetings, and forgotten lectures in front of a room full of students, make her realize that something more than an occasional senior moment is happening. As Alice and her family come to grips with the reality of Alzheimers - which has a strong genetic link and thus may be the future reality for her children– Genova walks us through the stages of degenerative dementia while trying to keep Alice at the center of the story and not let the disease swallow her up. While *Still Alice* may initially appeal most to those dealing with friends and family with the disease, this very human story of loss and love should shine clearly through the pages for all readers. *Still Alice* is on the shelves of the library and the just published *Left Neglected* is available by interlibrary loan – both are fascinating tales about the weaknesses of our brains but the strength of our hearts.

And the enthusiasm of our spirit was in full display last weekend at Homer's Winter Carnival and I'd like to thank the members of the Krewe of Gambrinus for their melodious march of support for the library.

The Library hours are

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

and Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tune in next Sunday morning at this same time for "Reading between the Lines" right here on KBBI 890, Homer!