



AAUW Afternoon Books Selections for 2021-2022

Pgs	Presenter	Snacks	Date	Book/Author	Genre & Details
358	Caroline	Suman	7/26/21	<i>Wild Women and the Blues/ Denny S. Bryce</i>	Historical fiction. Impeccably researched. A dual timeline. The lives of an ambitious chorus girl in 1925 and a grieving film student in 2015 intersect in this debut novel about the 1920s Chicago jazz scene and a young Black woman trying to make it as a dancer.
352 pgs	Janet Presenter	Janet Snacks	8/23/21	<i>Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Start Up/ John Carreyrou</i>	Non-fiction. Voted one of the best books of the year by NPR, NYT Book review. Time. WSJ. WP. Written by the Wall Street Journal reporter who first exposed Theranos. Covers all known history of how Theranos started, maintained its lies, and fell. An incredible demonstration of the weaknesses of human psychology.
541 pgs	Gretchen Presenter	Kathy Snacks	9/27/21	<i>Cutting for Stone/ Abraham Verghese</i>	Historical literary fiction. Medicine. Multiple awards (PEN Hemingway, Indies Choice, Goodreads, Dayton Literary Peace Prize etc.) Moving from Addis Ababa to New York City and back again, <i>Cutting for Stone</i> is an unforgettable story of love and betrayal, medicine and ordinary miracles—and two brothers whose fates are forever intertwined.
366	Kathy	Chris	10/25/21	<i>Huckleberry Finn/ Mark Twain</i>	World classic. Great American novel. Vernacular English. Satire. Remarkable for its characterization, realistic style, and social significance, this book is relevant for today's issues. It is more than worthy of a revisit considering the times in which we live.
320	Chris	Jeanne	11/22/21	<i>Snow/ John Banville</i>	Murder mystery. Thriller. Historical fiction. Set in 1950's Catholic Ireland, a flinty, visibly Protestant Detective Inspector is sent to investigate the murder of a Catholic priest in a manor house belonging to a well-known aristocratic, and secretive family.
256	Jeanne	Mary & all	12/20//21* (Party)	<i>The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency/</i>	Detective mystery novel. Based in Botswana.

				Alexander McCall Smith.	First of a charming series, Mma Ramotswe—with help from her loyal associate, Grace Makutsi—navigates her cases and her personal life with wisdom, good humor, and the occasional cup of Bush tea.
342	Mary	Tammy	01/24/22	Before We Were Yours/ Lisa Wingate	Historical fiction Based on the heartbreaking true scandal of a woman whose Memphis adoption center kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families. “Heart-racing” and shocking tale of struggle, hope, and redemption.
430	Tammy	Gretchen	02/28/22	The King of California/ Mark Arax and Rick Wartzman	Biography. Business & social history. Hardcover only. The fascinating story of a cotton magnate whose voracious appetite for land drove him to create the first big agricultural empire of the Central Valley of California, and shaped the landscape for decades to come.
287	Suman	Elaine	03/28/22	Sherlock Holmes: The Missing Years - The Adventures of the Great Detective in India and Tibet/ Jamyang Norbu	Mystery novel. Crossword Award for English Fiction. The key to a mystery which tells the story of Holmes in a landscape so fascinating, a game so intriguing, that it is impossible to resist. An exciting, richly humorous detective story, <i>it evokes the</i> romance of Kipling's India.
400	Elaine	Charlene	04/25/22	American Dirt/ Jeanine Cummins.	Fiction. Thriller. Suspense. The story of the harrowing journey of a mother and son escaping to US for asylum from Acapulco, Mexico after their family is killed by a lord of a drug cartel. An eye opener about the perils of such an endeavor.
304	Charlene	Caroline	05/23/22	The Midnight Library/ Matt Haig	Science fiction. Fantasy fiction. Literary & philosophical fiction. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one - different career, undoing breakups, realizing dreams; Nora searches within to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living.

June 27, 2022: Book Selection Meeting for 2022-20223 Bring your recommendations for the coming year.

Other books that were recommended and are worth reading:

1. *Sons and Lovers*, D.H. Lawrence

[Fictional autobiography. Literary fiction. \(368 pages\)](#)

This is the most autobiographical work of Lawrence. He tells the story of Paul Morel (Lawrence) and his relationships with his parents. In particular, he writes of his relationship with his mother (Oedipus, anyone?). His mother was an intelligent, middle class woman who meets and is attracted to (and marries) a rough coal miner. Paul's strongest relationship is with his mother and this affects his relationships with the other women in his life, from the young Miriam to the sensuous Clara.

Written in Lawrence's distinctive style with passages that border on poetry.

2. *The Lost Apothecary*, Sarah Penner

[Historical fiction. Mystery. Hardcover only. \(320 pages\)](#)

Sarah Penner's debut novel, *The Lost Apothecary*, is an enthralling work of mystery, murder, trust, and betrayal. Set in an atmospheric London, Penner's immersive story flows skillfully from past to present, revealing the heartaches and lost dreams of three captivating main characters in a page-turningly tense drama that surprises right up until the final paragraph.

3. *The Vanishing Half*, Britt Bennet

[Mystery. Historical fiction. Family saga. Hardcover only. \(352 pages\)](#)

Brit Bennett's first novel, *The Mothers*, was the sort of smashingly successful debut that can make but also possibly break a young writer by raising expectations and pressure. Four years later, her second, *The Vanishing Half*, more than lives up to her early promise. It's an even better book, more expansive yet also deeper, a multi-generational family saga that tackles prickly issues of racial identity and bigotry and conveys the corrosive effects of secrets and dissembling. It's also a great read that will transport you out of your current circumstances, whatever they are.

4. *To the Bright Edge of the World*, Eowyn Ivey

[Historical fiction. Adventure fiction. \(432 pages\)](#)

Spellbinding fiction about the opening up of Alaska in 1885. Told through the diaries of two people – the leader of the expedition and his young wife left behind in the Army barracks - and a present-day correspondence between a descendent and a native Alaskan. The book contains photos, maps, and diagrams but all is imaginary.

5. *The Unseen*, Roy Jacobsen

[Translation. Literary fiction. Booker Prize shortlist. \(268 pages\)](#)

Hundreds of islands and skerries float off the Norwegian coast like flotillas of unwanted bits of the mainland. Some of these islands are inhabited and Jacobsen relates the life of one family's daily struggles to live, the pleasures they derive from the island and surrounding sea, and the difficulty encountered when one tries to break free and become part of modern life on the mainland itself.

6. *The Children's Blizzard*, Melanie Benjamin.

Historical fiction. Saga. (368 pages) (available paper back in Jan. 2022).

This is a tale about the settlers and immigrant life in the Dakota Territories in 1888. It revolves around a huge blizzard that took place in Jan. of that year and how it especially affected 2 sisters (that were both teachers in different schools) and the way they dealt with crisis with their students. A riveting read.

7. *What is the What*, Dave Eggers

Fiction. Memoir. Finalist National Book Award. (475 pages)

What Is the What is the epic novel based on the life of Valentino Achak Deng who, along with thousands of other children —the so-called Lost Boys—was forced to leave his village in Sudan at the age of seven and trek hundreds of miles by foot, pursued by militias, government bombers, and wild animals, crossing the deserts of three countries to find freedom. When he finally is resettled in the United States, he finds a life full of promise, but also heartache and myriad new challenges. Moving, suspenseful, and unexpectedly funny, *What Is the What* is an astonishing novel that illuminates the lives of millions through one extraordinary man.

8. *Where the Crawdads Sing*, Delia Owens

Mystery. Literary fiction. Bildungsroman. (368 pages)

A first novel that is at once a murder mystery, a coming-of-age narrative and a celebration of nature.... Owens here surveys the desolate marshlands of the North Carolina coast through the eyes of an abandoned child. And in her isolation that child makes us open our own eyes to the secret wonders—and dangers—of her private world.

9. *Ben Franklin: An American life*, Walter Isaacson

Acclaimed biography. (493 pages)

This authoritative, engrossing, colourful full-scale biography shows how the most fascinating of America's founders helped define our national character, and why he has a particular resonance in the 21st century.

The runaway apprentice became, over the course of his eighty-four-year life, America's best writer, inventor, media baron, scientist, diplomat, business strategist, and one of its most practical and ingenious political leaders. The wit behind *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the wisdom behind the Declaration of Independence, the new nation's alliance with France, the treaty that ended the Revolution, and the compromises that created a near-perfect Constitution, are all explored.

10. *The Japanese Lover*, Isabel Allende

[Historical Fiction. Romance. Time frame 1940 to 2010. \(322 pages\)](#)

Young Alma Belasco's parents send her to live with an aunt and uncle in their opulent mansion in San Francisco as Nazi's take over her Polish homeland. She encounters Ichimei Fukuda, the quiet son of the family's Japanese gardener and a tender love affair begins to blossom. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the two are pulled apart as Ichimei and his family is forcibly relocated to internment camps. Throughout their lifetimes, Alma and Ichimei reunite again and again, but theirs is a love that they are forever forced to hide from the world.

11. *No Path in Darjeeling Is Straight - Memories of a Hill Town*, Parimal Bhattacharya

[Non-fiction. Travelogue. History. Biography. \(200 pages\)](#)

One of the finest works of Indian non-fiction in recent years, about a land of incomparable beauty originally inhabited by Lepchas and other tribes; the British who took it for themselves in the mid-1800s so they could remember home; vast tea gardens with which they replaced verdant forests to produce the fabled Orange Pekoe...with empathy, and in shimmering prose, *it* effortlessly merges travel, history, literature, memory, politics and the pleasures of ennui into an unforgettable portrait of a place and its people.

12. *There There, Tommy Orange*

[History. Literary fiction. Pulitzer Award finalist, 2019 American Book Award. \(304 pages\)](#)

“Groundbreaking, extraordinary” “brilliant, propulsive” story of twelve unforgettable characters, Urban Indians (Native Americans) living in Oakland, California, who converge and collide on one fateful day. A wondrous and shattering portrait of an America - fierce, funny, suspenseful, thoroughly modern, and impossible to put down. A voice we have never heard full of poetry and rage exploding onto the page with urgency and force that grapples with a complex and painful history, an inheritance of beauty and profound spirituality, and about a plague of addiction, abuse, and suicide. Destined to be a classic.

13. *You are Not so Smart*, David McRaney

[Humour. Self-help. \(302 pages\)](#)

This book helps us understand how we think and why. We habitually lie to ourselves without even realizing it. It helps us to better understand human behavior with humor and wit.