

2021 SUMMER READING RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM THE MIDTOWN SCHOLAR BOOKSTORE

HISTORY

1

***AMERICA ON FIRE: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion Since the 1960s* by Elizabeth Hinton:** From one of our top historians, a groundbreaking story of policing and “riots” that shatters our understanding of the post–civil rights era.* Harrisburg is featured heavily in the book. Signed 1st edition copies are available for purchase from the Midtown Scholar Bookstore * * * WITF’s “Pick of the Month” for June 2021 *

2

***ON JUNETEENTH* by Annette Gordon-Reed:** The essential, sweeping story of Juneteenth’s integral importance to American history, as told by a Pulitzer Prize–winning historian and Texas native. Gordon-Reed is the Carl M. Loeb University Professor at Harvard Law School and has won sixteen book prizes, including the Pulitzer Prize in History in 2009 and the National Book Award in 2008, for *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*. Her other works include *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy* (UVA Press, 1997).

3

***EMPIRE OF PAIN: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty* by Patrick Radden Keefe:** A grand, devastating portrait of three generations of the Sackler family, famed for their philanthropy, whose fortune was built by Valium and whose reputation was destroyed by OxyContin, by the prize-winning, bestselling author of *Say Nothing*.

4

***RELIGION AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM* by Benjamin M. Friedman:** From one of the nation's preeminent experts on economic policy, a major reassessment of the foundations of modern economic thinking that explores the profound influence of an until-now unrecognized force—religion.

MEMOIR

5

***IN THE HEIGHTS: Finding Home* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, Quiara Alegría Hudes, and Jeremy McCarter {Release date, 6/15/2021}:** Miranda reunites with Jeremy McCarter, co-author of *Hamilton: The Revolution*, and Quiara Alegría Hudes, the Pulitzer Prize–winning librettist of the Broadway musical and screenwriter of the film. They do more than trace the making of an unlikely Broadway smash and a major motion picture. They give readers an intimate look at the decades-long creative life of *In the Heights*. Like *Hamilton: The Revolution*, the book offers untold stories, perceptive essays, and the lyrics to Miranda’s songs—complete with his funny, heartfelt annotations. It also features newly commissioned portraits and never-before-seen photos from backstage, the movie set, and productions around the world.

FICTION

6

***THE COMMITTED* by Viet Thanh Nguyen:** The sequel to *The Sympathizer*, which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction and went on to sell over a million copies worldwide, *The Committed* tells the story of “the man of two minds” as he comes as a refugee to France and turns his hand to capitalism. * The author lived in Harrisburg as refugee from 1975-1978. *

7

***THE EAGLE'S CLAW* by Jeff Shaara:** In a riveting tale that picks up where *To Wake the Giant* left off, New York Times bestselling author Jeff Shaara transports us to the Battle of Midway in another masterpiece of military historical fiction. * The author lives in Gettysburg. Signed 1st edition copies are available for purchase at the Midtown Scholar Bookstore. *

8

***WHEREABOUTS* by Jhumpa Lahiri:** A marvelous new novel from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Lowland* and *Interpreter of Maladies*—her first in nearly a decade—about a woman questioning her place in the world, wavering between stasis and movement, between the need to belong and the refusal to form lasting ties. Written in Italian, then translated by Lahiri.

9

***WHILE JUSTICE SLEEPS* by Stacey Abrams:** A gripping, complexly plotted thriller set within the halls of the U.S. Supreme Court. Avery Keene, a brilliant young law clerk for the legendary Justice Howard Wynn, is doing her best to hold her life together—excelling in an arduous job with the court while also dealing with a troubled family. When the shocking news breaks that Justice Wynn—the cantankerous swing vote on many current high-profile cases—has slipped into a coma, Avery’s life turns upside down. She finds that Justice Wynn had been secretly researching one of the most controversial cases before the court—a proposed merger between an American biotech company and an Indian genetics firm, which promises to unleash breathtaking results in the medical field. She also discovers that Wynn suspected a dangerously related conspiracy that infiltrates the highest power corridors of Washington.

10

***HOUSE IN THE CERULEAN SEA* by T. J. Klune:** Contemporary Fantasy & LGBTQ+ Humorous Fiction. A magical island. A dangerous task. A burning Secret. Reviewer Gail Carriger calls it “1984 meets *The Umbrella Academy* with a pinch of Douglas Adams thrown in.” Linus Baker leads a quiet, solitary life. At forty, he lives in a tiny house with a devious cat and his old records. As a Case Worker at the Department in Charge Of Magical Youth, he spends his days overseeing the well-being of children in government-sanctioned orphanages. When Linus is unexpectedly summoned by Extremely Upper Management, he's given a curious and highly classified assignment: travel to Marsyas Island Orphanage, where six dangerous children reside: a gnome, a sprite, a wyvern, an unidentifiable green blob, a were-Pomeranian, and the Antichrist. Linus must set aside his fears and determine whether or not they’re likely to bring about the end of days. An enchanting story, masterfully told, *The House in the Cerulean Sea* is about the profound experience of discovering an unlikely family in an unexpected place—and realizing that family is yours.

YA READERS – TEEN ROMANCE

***MAD, BAD, & DANGEROUS TO KNOW* by Samira Ahmed:** A romantic, sweeping adventure through the streets of Paris told in alternating narratives that bridge centuries, continents, and the lives of two young Muslim women fighting to write their own stories. It's August in Paris and 17-year-old Khayyam Maquet—American, French, Indian, Muslim—is at a crossroads. Two hundred years before, Leila is struggling to survive and keep her true love hidden from the Pasha who has “gifted” her with favored status. In the present day—and with the company of Alex, a *très charmant* teen descendant of Alexandre Dumas—Khayyam searches for a rumored lost painting, uncovering a connection between Leila and Alexandre Dumas, Eugène Delacroix, and Lord Byron that may have been erased from history. Echoing across centuries, Leila and Khayyam's lives intertwine, and as one woman's long-forgotten life is uncovered, another's is transformed.

***BLACKOUT* by Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon {Release date, 6/22/2021}:** Six critically acclaimed, bestselling, and award-winning authors bring the glowing warmth and electricity of Black teen love to this interlinked novel of charming, hilarious, and heartwarming stories that shine a bright light through the dark and celebrate the magic that six couples find on a sweltering starry night in the city. A summer heatwave blankets New York City in darkness. But as the city is thrown into confusion, a different kind of electricity sparks... A first meeting. Long-time friends. Bitter exes. And maybe the beginning of something new. When the lights go out, people reveal hidden truths. Love blossoms, friendship transforms, and new possibilities take flight.

MIDDLE GRADE READERS – SPOOKY SERIES

***DARK WATERS* by Katherine Arden {Release date, 8/3/2021}:** Three friends have to survive a group trip to Lake Champlain where it's said Vermont's very own Loch Ness monster lives.

YOUNGER READERS – GRAPHIC NOVEL

***DOG MAN # 10 – MOTHERING HEIGHTS: From The Creator of Captain Underpants* by Dav Pilkey:** Dog Man and Petey face their biggest challenges yet! Dog Man is down on his luck, Petey confronts his not so purr-fect past, and Grampa is up to no good. The world is spinning out of control as new villains spill into town. Everything seems dark and full of despair. But hope is not lost. Can the incredible power of love save the day? Dav Pilkey's wildly popular Dog Man series appeals to readers of all ages and explores universally positive themes, including love, empathy, kindness, persistence, and the importance of doing good.

CHILDREN – 2021 CALDECOTT AWARD-WINNING PICTURE BOOK

***THE WATER PROTECTORS* by Carole Lindstrom and Michaela Goade:** Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, We Are Water Protectors issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption. A bold and lyrical picture book written by Carole Lindstrom and vibrantly illustrated by Michaela Goade.