

Doris Betts Book Group 2021/22 Selections (updated 6/9/2022)

*Meeting time: 11am on the last Tuesday of every month

September 28, 2021

“The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek” by Kim Michelle Richardson

Led by Martha Adcox

The hardscrabble folks of Troublesome Creek have to scarp for everything—everything except books, that is. Thanks to Roosevelt's Kentucky Pack Horse Library Project, Troublesome's got its very own traveling librarian, Cussy Mary Carter.

October 26, 2021

“Great Expectations” by Charles Dickens

Led by Cindy Schmidt

Great Expectations follows the childhood and young adult years of Pip a blacksmith's apprentice in a country village. He suddenly comes into a large fortune (his great expectations) from a mysterious benefactor and moves to London where he enters high society.

This selection should offer opportunities to consider themes and to think about parallels with our times. An additional benefit, of course, is the ease of finding a copy!

November 30, 2021

“Souls Raised From the Dead” by Doris Betts

This month, let's dedicate ourselves to the enjoyment of our group's namesake, Doris Betts.

This is the story of an extended family of diverse characters struggling to cope with the terminal illness of a beloved child. With profound feeling, with a humor both delicate and robust, Doris Betts gives us a family richly varied and real.

December 28, 2021

“The Gift of the Magi” by O.Henry

January 25, 2022

“Things Fall Apart” Chinua Achebe

Told through the fictional experiences of Okonkwo, a wealthy and fearless Igbo warrior of Umuofia in the late 1800s, “Things Fall Apart” explores one man's futile resistance to the devaluing of his Igbo traditions.

February 22, 2022

“Snake Pitt” poetry by Joanna Barnett

Blanche has suggested a very interesting option: Let's join together to view the Netflix documentary, “Crip Camp”, about a summer camp for differently-abled young people.

Along with this, we will be reading a book of poetry entitled “Snake Pit” written by one of Blanche and Charlie’s young friends, Joanna Barnett. She writes movingly about her felt experience navigating the world in a wheelchair. As we consider a range of social justice issues, life in our world as someone differently-abled is an area that invites us to learn more - particularly from the perspective of those affected.

March 29, 2022

“Pastoral Song” by James Rebanks

Pastoral Song tells how rural landscapes around the world were brought close to collapse, and the age-old rhythms of work, weather, community and wild things were lost. This elegy from the northern fells of England is also a song of hope: of how, guided by the past, one farmer began to salvage a tiny corner that was now his.

April 26, 2022

“Daisy Miller” by Henry James

Led by JoAnne Robb

Originally published in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1878 and in book form in 1879, *Daisy Miller* brought Henry James his first widespread commercial and critical success. The young Daisy Miller, an American on holiday with her mother on the shores of Switzerland’s Lac Lemman, is one of James’s most vivid and tragic characters. Daisy’s friendship with an American gentleman, Mr. Winterbourne, and her subsequent infatuation with a passionate but impoverished Italian bring to life the great Jamesian themes of Americans abroad, innocence versus experience, and the grip of fate. As Elizabeth Hardwick writes in her Introduction, Daisy Miller “lives on, a figure out of literature who has entered history as a name, a vision.” - [Goodreads](#)

May 31, 2022

“Bitter in the Mouth” by Monique Truong

Led by Susie Eckblad

From Monique Truong, the bestselling and award-winning author of *The Book of Salt*, comes a brilliant, mesmerizing, beautifully written novel about a young woman’s search for identity and family, as she uncovers the secrets of her past and of history. Set in Boiling Springs, NC, it’s a laugh-out-loud read if you’ve lived in NC.

June 28, 2022

“The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey” by Walter Mosely

Led by Becky Peer

Marooned in an apartment that overflows with mementos from the past, 91-year-old Ptolemy Grey is all but forgotten by his family and the world. But when an unexpected opportunity arrives, everything changes for Ptolemy in ways as shocking and unanticipated as they are poignant and profound.

July 26, 2022

“The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency” by Alexander McCall Smith

Led by Martha Adcox

Precious Ramotswe has only just set up shop as Botswana's No.1 (and only) lady detective when she is hired to track down a missing husband, uncover a con man, and follow a wayward daughter. However, the case that tugs at her heart, and lands her in danger, is a missing eleven-year-old boy, who may have been snatched by witchdoctors.

August 30, 2022

“Late City” by Robert Olen

Led by - TBD

A 115-year-old man lies on his deathbed as the 2016 election results arrive, and revisits his life in this moving story of love, fatherhood, and the American century from Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Olen Butler.

A visionary and poignant novel centered around former newspaperman Sam Cunningham as he prepares to die, *Late City* covers much of the early twentieth century, unfurling as a conversation between the dying man and a surprising God. As the two review Sam's life, from his childhood in the American South and his time in the French trenches during World War I to his fledgling newspaper career in Chicago in the Roaring Twenties and the decades that follow, snippets of history are brought sharply into focus. – [Google Books](#)