

AAUW 2025-2026 Book Suggestions

SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

Book: The Women by Kristen Hannah

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Wendy

Summary: Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances "Frankie" McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is over-whelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism.

OCTOBER 27, 2025

Book: Paris by the Book by Liam Callanan

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Chris

Summary: When eccentric novelist Robert Eady abruptly vanishes, he leaves behind his wife, Leah, their daughters, and, hidden in an unexpected spot, plane tickets to Paris.

Hoping to uncover clues - and her husband - Leah sets off for France with her girls. Upon their arrival, she discovers an unfinished manuscript, one Robert had been writing without her knowledge...and that he had set in Paris. The Eady girls follow the path of the manuscript to a small, floundering English-language bookstore whose weary proprietor is eager to sell. Leah finds herself accepting the offer on the spot.

As the family settles into their new Parisian life, they trace the literary paths of some beloved Parisian classics, including *Madeline* and *The Red Balloon*, hoping more clues arise. But a series of startling discoveries forces Leah to consider that she may not be ready for what solving this mystery might do to her family - and the Paris she thought she knew.

NOVEMBER 24, 2025

Book: Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Lisa

Summary: After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago.

Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors—until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova.

Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late.

DECEMBER - NO MEETING

JANUARY 26, 2026

Book: The Briar Club by Kate Quinn

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Shirley

Summary: Washington, DC, 1950. Everyone keeps to themselves at Briarwood House, a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in the heart of the nation's capital where secrets hide behind white picket fences. But when the lovely, mysterious widow Grace March moves into the attic room, she draws her oddball collection of neighbors into unlikely friendship: poised English beauty Fliss, whose facade of perfect wife and mother covers gaping inner wounds; policeman's daughter Nora, who finds herself entangled with a shadowy gangster; frustrated baseball star Beatrice, whose career has come to an end along with the women's baseball league of WWII; and poisonous, gung-ho Arlene, who has thrown herself into McCarthy's Red Scare.

Grace's weekly attic-room dinner parties and window-brewed sun tea become a healing balm on all their lives, but she hides a terrible secret of her own. When a shocking act of violence tears the house apart, the Briar Club women must decide once and for all: who is the true enemy in their midst? Capturing the paranoia of the McCarthy era and evoking the changing roles for women in postwar America, *The Briar Club* is an intimate and thrilling novel of secrets and loyalty put to the test.

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

Book: The Only Woman in the Room by Marie Benedict

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Marilyn

Summary: Her beauty almost certainly saved her from the rising Nazi party and led to marriage with an Austrian arms dealer. Underestimated in everything else, she overheard the Third Reich's plans while at her husband's side and understood more than anyone would guess. She devised a plan to flee in disguise from their castle, and the whirlwind escape landed her in Hollywood. She became Hedy Lamarr, screen star. But she kept a secret more shocking than her heritage or her marriage: she was a scientist. And she had an idea that might help the country fight the Nazis and revolutionize modern communication...if anyone would listen to her.

MARCH 23, 2026

Book: My Friends by Fredrik Backman

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Wendy

Summary: Most people don't even notice them—three tiny figures sitting at the end of a long pier in the corner of one of the most famous paintings in the world. Most people think it's just a depiction of the sea. But Louisa, an aspiring artist herself, knows otherwise, and she is determined to find out the story of these three enigmatic figures. Twenty-five years earlier, in a distant seaside town, a group of teenagers find refuge from their bruising home lives by spending long summer days on an abandoned pier, telling silly jokes, sharing secrets, and committing small acts of rebellion. These lost souls find in each other a reason to get up each morning, a reason to dream, a reason to love. Out of that summer emerges a transcendent work of art, a painting that will unexpectedly be placed into eighteen-year-old Louisa's care. She embarks on a surprise-filled cross-country journey to learn how the painting came to be and to decide what to do with it. The

closer she gets to the painting's birthplace, the more nervous she becomes about what she'll find. Louisa is proof that happy endings don't always take the form we expect in this stunning testament to the transformative, timeless power of friendship and art.

APRIL 27, 2026

Book: After Anne: a Novel of Lucy Maud Montgomery's Life by Logan Steiner

Available: Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leaders: Shirley and Joanne

Summary: A stunning and unexpected portrait of Lucy Maud Montgomery, creator of one of literature's most prized heroines, whose personal demons were at odds with her most enduring legacy—the irrepressible Anne of Green Gables. “Dear old world,” she murmured, “you are very lovely, and I am glad to be alive in you.” —L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 1908

MAY 18, 2026

Book: Clark and Division by Naomi Hirahara

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book

Leader: Dotty

Summary: Chicago, 1944: Twenty-year-old Aki Ito and her parents have just been released from Manzanar, where they have been detained by the US government since the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, together with thousands of other Japanese Americans. The life in California the Itos were forced to leave behind is gone; instead, they are being resettled two thousand miles away in Chicago, where Aki's older sister, Rose, was sent months earlier and moved to the new Japanese American neighborhood near Clark and Division streets. But on the eve of the Ito family's reunion, Rose is killed by a subway train. Aki, who worshipped her sister, is stunned. Officials are ruling Rose's death a suicide. Aki cannot believe her perfect, polished, and optimistic sister would end her life. Her instinct tells her there is much more to the story, and she knows she is the only person who could ever learn the truth. Inspired by historical events, *Clark and Division* infuses an atmospheric and heartbreakingly real crime with rich period details and delicately wrought personal stories Naomi Hirahara has gleaned from thirty years of research and archival work in Japanese American history.

JUNE 22, 2026

Book: The House in the Cerulean Sea by TJ Kline

Available: Hardcover, Paperback, e-Book, Audio book
Leader: Lisa

Summary: Linus Baker is a by-the-book case worker in the Department in Charge of Magical Youth. He's tasked with determining whether six dangerous magical children are likely to bring about the end of the world. Arthur Parnassus is the master of the orphanage. He would do anything to keep the children safe, even if it means the world will burn. And his secrets will come to light. This is “a modern Orwellian fairy tale about learning your true nature and what you love and protect.” Deals with self-identity in respect to gender and sexuality issues.

JULY 27, 2026

Book: Alive Day: A Memoir by Karie Fugett
Available: Hardcover, e-Book, Audio book
Leader: Terri

Summary: Karie Fugett is living out of her car in a Kmart parking lot when her boyfriend, Cleve, suggests, “Maybe we could get married or somethin’.” Karie says yes out of love but also out of convenience. As a twenty-year-old high school dropout who ran away from her family and recently lost her job, Karie has nowhere else to turn. Just months after they elope, Cleve’s Marine unit is deployed to Iraq. It isn’t long before Karie gets the call: Cleve’s Humvee has been hit by an IED, and he’s suffered severe injuries. Karie rushes to Walter Reed, where she’s told it’s a miracle that her husband has survived. “Happy Alive Day, man,” a fellow vet says to Cleve, explaining that this will always be the day when he was given a second chance at life. Newlyweds barely out of their teens, Karie and Cleve are thrust into utterly foreign roles. Karie tries to adapt to her job as a caregiver, navigating the labyrinthine system of veterans affairs, hospital bureaucracies, and doctors who do little more than shrug when she raises concerns about Cleve’s dependency on painkillers. It is clear to Karie that Cleve is using opiates to dull a pain that is more than physical. She catches his first overdose, but what if she can’t save him a second time? Will she still be able to save herself?

Fugett’s story depicts an oft-overlooked reality of war: the experience of the many thousands of caregivers and spouses—mostly women, mostly young, mostly poor—whose lives have been shattered by battles fought against enemies abroad and against addiction at home.

AUGUST 24, 2026 - PLANNING MEETING

