

**Book Group**  
**AAUW - Southern New Hampshire Branch**  
**Book Blurbs 2021-2022**

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October 4, 2021

***The Vanishing Half*** by Brit Bennett

The book examines sisterhood, black identity, and parenthood. The Vignes twins, Stella and Desiree, grow up inseparable in the 60's in Mallard, Louisiana, a town reserved for black people with light skin. They flee to New Orleans, where Stella discovers she can pass for white, and thus begins the fracture that will ever separate the twins.

November 1, 2021

***Becoming*** by Michelle Obama

Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. In her memoir, she chronicles the experiences that shaped her. Written with honesty and wit, she describes her triumphs and disappointments, both public and private.

January 3, 2022

***Hamnet*** by Maggie O'Farrell

Little is known about William Shakespeare's family life in Stratford-on-Avon. That allows O'Farrell to place his wife at the center of this story of love, grief, and life in Renaissance England. Just as Shakespeare's theatrical career is taking off in London, his 11 year old son Hamnet succumbs to the plague and dies in 1596. Apart, he in London, she in Stratford, they grieve the loss of their child. Beautifully written and heartfelt.

March 7, 2022

***Blue Sky Kingdom*** by Bruce Kirkby

A warm, unforgettable true story of a family letting go of their known world to spend 3 months in Tibet amongst the Lamas of the Zanskar Valley. *Blue Sky Kingdom* explores the themes of modern distraction and the loss of ancient wisdom coupled with Bruce coming to terms with his elder son's diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum. Bruce Kirkby is a Canadian writer, photographer and adventurer called a top modern day explorer by Canadian Geographic.

April 4, 2022

***Surviving the White Gaze*** by Rebecca Carol

Rebecca Carroll grew up the only black person in her rural New Hampshire town. Adopted at birth by artistic parents who believed in peace, love, and zero population growth. Everything changed when she met her birth mother, a young white woman. This is about her struggle to overcome her completely white childhood while striving to identify as a Black woman in America while striving to identify as a Black woman in America. She hosts the podcast *Come Through*.

May 2, 2022

***The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race*** by Walter Isaacson

Even though told that girls didn't become scientists, Jennifer decided she would. Driven to understand how nature works and to turn discoveries into inventions, she would help to make what James Watson said was the most important biological advance since the structure of DNA. She and her collaborators developed an easy-to-use tool that can edit DNA. Known as CRISPR, it opened a brave new world of medical miracles and moral questions.

June 6, 2022

***The Spy and the Traitor; The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War*** by Ben Macintyre

Oleg Gordievsky was a spy like no other: the product of a KGB family and the best Soviet institutions. He eventually saw the lies and terror of the regime for what they were, and turned toward the West. As the Cold War heated up, he provided critical information that foiled Soviet plots, exposed spies of the West, and ultimately avoided nuclear escalation between the great powers. It is a riveting story of intrigue that sounds frighteningly like echoes of today.