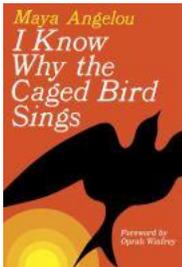


## Carver County Library Suggests *Classics of African American Literature*



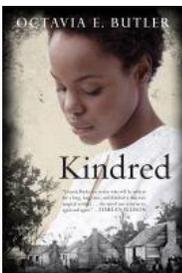
### Maya Angelou - *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (921 ANGELOU 2009)

Superbly told, with the poet's gift for language and observation, Angelou's autobiographical account describes her childhood of growing up black in Arkansas - a world of which most Americans are ignorant. Angelou tells the story of her difficult childhood and young adult years. Raised by her extended African American family, she endured racism, rape, and teen pregnancy, rising above adversity to become a respected educator and author.



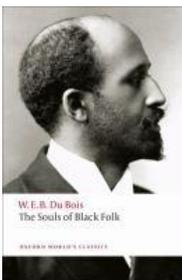
### James Baldwin - *If Beale Street Could Talk* (BAL 2018)

Baldwin's 1974 novel depicts the troubled romance between young lovers Tish and Fonny, who become engaged and plan to marry. When Fonny is arrested and imprisoned, their families endeavor to clear his name and win his release. In a love story that evokes the blues, where passion and sadness are inevitably intertwined, Baldwin has created two characters so alive and profoundly realized that they are unforgettably ingrained in the American psyche.



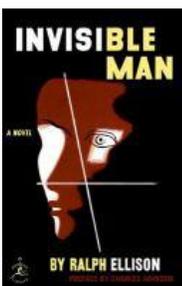
### Octavia Butler - *Kindred* (BUT 2004)

The visionary author's masterpiece pulls us--along with her Black female hero--through time to face the horrors of slavery and explore the impacts of racism, sexism, and white supremacy then and now. Dana, a modern black woman, is celebrating her twenty-sixth birthday with her new husband when she is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South. Rufus, the white son of a plantation owner, is drowning, and Dana has been summoned to save him. Dana is drawn back repeatedly through time to the slave quarters, and each time the stay grows longer, more arduous, and more dangerous until it is uncertain if Dana's life will end, long before it has a chance to begin.



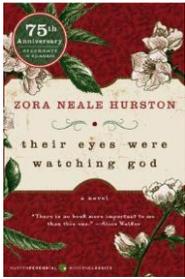
### W.E.B. Du Bois - *The Souls of Black Folk* (973.0496073 DUB)

Originally published in 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk* is a classic study of race, culture, and education at the turn of the twentieth century. With its singular combination of essays, memoir, and fiction, this book vaulted W. E. B. Du Bois to the forefront of American political commentary and civil rights activism. *The Souls of Black Folk* is an impassioned collection of richly articulated, even beautiful, short stories and essays on DuBois' own experiences and on black suppressions and sensibilities in general.



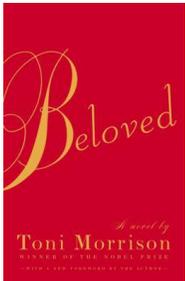
### Ralph Ellison - *Invisible Man* (ELL 1994)

A milestone in American literature, and a book that has continued to engage readers since its appearance in 1952. The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood," and retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. The book is a passionate and witty tour de force of style.



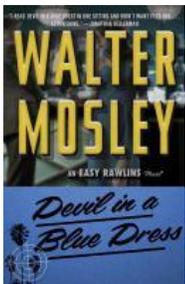
**Zora Neale Hurston - [Their Eyes Were Watching God](#) (HUR 2006)**

In depicting one of the first strong black women of 20th-century literature, Hurston's story of Janie Crawford pulls the reader into a timeless world of love, struggle, and self-exploration. Janie's quest for both love and fulfillment may be more powerful for modern audiences than its original readership. Out of print for almost thirty years--due largely to initial audiences' rejection of its strong black female protagonist--Hurston's classic has since its 1978 reissue become perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African American literature.



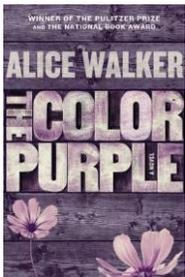
**Toni Morrison - [Beloved](#) (MOR 2004)**

Beloved is Morrison's masterpiece story of Sethe, its protagonist. Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has too many memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. And Sethe's new home is haunted by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.



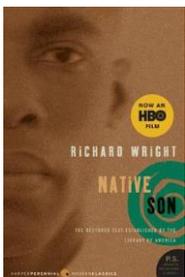
**Walter Mosley - [Devil in a Blue Dress](#) (MOS 2002)**

Mosley adds a twist to the hardboiled mystery by exploring racial and economic problems in his cinematic and compelling stories. Mosley is most famous for his series about Easy Rawlins, an African American detective in post-World War II Los Angeles. Mosley makes L.A. come alive, particularly the poorer and rougher parts of town. Mosley's characters are fully-developed with strengths and flaws and are often challenged by the difficult aspects of life. His heroes do not have super-human abilities, just the determination to help other people. Start with: Devil in a Blue Dress.



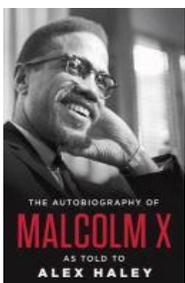
**Alice Walker - [The Color Purple](#) (WAL 2015)**

A story of two sisters--one a missionary in Africa and the other a child wife living in the South--who sustain their loyalty to and trust in each other across time, distance, and silence. Beautifully imagined and deeply compassionate, this classic novel of American literature is rich with passion, pain, inspiration, and an indomitable love of life.



**Richard Wright - [Native Son](#) (WRI 2005)**

Right from the start, Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. It could have been for assault or petty larceny; by chance, it was for murder and rape. Native Son tells the story of this young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, Richard Wright's powerful novel is an unsparing reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by people in inner cities across the country and of what it means to be black in America.



**Malcolm X - [The Autobiography of Malcolm X](#) (921 X 1992)**

Originally published in 1964, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and anti-integrationist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time. The Autobiography of Malcolm X stands as the definitive statement of a movement and a man whose work was never completed but whose message is timeless.