

# SAVVY WOMEN IN OUR MIDST

by Anne Carson

Reports that the sexist, ageist *Sex and the City* reboot is getting a renewal left me both surprised and irritated (see the February newsletter). Do they plan to go on portraying middle-aged women as so clueless they have barely heard of smartphones and podcasting?

As I thought of all the accomplished women I know who belie that show's nasty characterizations, I considered sending HBO a complaint letter. But then I thought: Nah, for HBO a cancellation notice is good enough.

But for you, I thought it might be interesting to learn about all the vibrant, creative, and yes, tech-savvy women in our midst.

Like Amy Mair, who is a local podcaster.



Amy focuses on books over at her own media company [Red Fern Book Review](#), where she invites authors and other book lovers to have wide-ranging chats about all things bookish. (And some things TVish.)

What I like about the podcast is that she does more than talk about the same 10 new books over and over again. For compulsive readers, she's a real alternative to mass media, which tend to push the awards nominees and a handful of books that are inexplicably anointed by the publishing industry.

A good example of Amy's broad-minded take on what to read next is [Episode 17](#): "Romance Novels, Part 1." She discusses the enduring popularity of romantic tales with Reema Faris, a former school board trustee in West Vancouver, who is now doing a Ph.D. (speaking of fine second acts).

Their conversation, over two episodes, covers everything from classics like *Pride & Prejudice* to A.S. Byatt's 1990 Booker Prize winner *Possession* to the current mania for Shonda Rhimes's *Bridgerton* series on Netflix.

There's a [monthly newsletter](#), too, with lots of reading tips.

Amy is a Vancouverite — I met her at one of my trunk shows — but she grew up in the U.S. where she studied history and journalism. Love brought her to Vancouver about 25 years ago after she met her husband at grad school in Chicago. He persuaded her to move to his town and she spent the first half of her career here as a writer and editor working for legacy media.

But the pandemic, an empty nest, and turning 50 occurred all at once and left her longing for a new challenge.

"I'm a very reluctant public speaker," Amy said. "But with podcasting, I feel like I am chatting with a friend."

As for that omnivorous approach to reading that I admire, she says her philosophy is to look for books that do two things simultaneously: expand her worldview while being a pleasure to read. If she's not engaged after the first 50 pages, she drops the book: no guilt!

"I am a big believer in mood reading or picking up a book because you like the cover art. Or just because it feels right," Amy said.

She doesn't have any reading rules, although she likes to follow a heavy, serious read with something light and frothy.

Sounds like good advice to me. You can find all 40+ episodes of her podcast on her website.

And if you know any savvy women in our midst -- or maybe you are one? -- please drop me a note. I want to know more about all the interesting women in our community and I know from some of our chats that you do too.

In the meantime, here's to finding a good read to get us through tough times.