“Stirring . . . [a] blueprint for all those who believe . . . that ‘the world . . . should be full of people raising their voices.’” —THE NEW YORK TIMES

What the Eyes Don’t See

A STORY OF CRISIS, RESISTANCE, AND HOPE IN AN AMERICAN CITY

Mona Hanna-Attisha

WHAT THE EYES DON’T SEE;
A STORY OF CRISIS, RESISTANCE, AND HOPE IN AN AMERICAN CITY

BY MONA HANNA-ATTISHA, MD.
We want to take a moment to welcome you to the Middle Tennessee State University family. Whether or not to attend college is a big decision and narrowing it down to one choice is an even tougher one. We are honored that you chose MTSU to help you reach your career and personal goals.

Our Summer Reading Program choice for 2020 is What the Eyes Don’t See; A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City, by Mona Hanna-Attisha. Flint was already a troubled city in 2014 when the state of Michigan, in the name of austerity, shifted the source of its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint River. Soon after, citizens began complaining about the water that flowed from their taps, but officials rebuffed them, insisting that the water was fine.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician at the city’s public hospital, took state officials at their word and encouraged the parents and children in her care to continue drinking the water, after all, it was American tap water, blessed with the state’s seal of approval. But a conversation at a cookout with an old friend, leaked documents from a rogue environmental inspector, and the activism of a concerned mother raised red flags about lead, a neurotoxin whose irreversible effects fall most heavily on children. Even as circumstantial evidence mounted and protests grew, Dr. Mona knew that the only thing that could stop the lead poisoning was undeniable proof and that to get it, she’d have to enter the fight of her life.

What the Eyes Don’t See is a riveting, beautifully rendered account of a shameful disaster that became a tale of hope, the story of a city on the ropes that came together to fight for justice, self-determination, and the right to build a better world for their and all of our children. Just like the themes in the book, you too will experience moments in your college career that might be challenging, emotional and even historical.

As you step on campus, you will meet new people, have new responsibilities and encounter a new way of life. You will go through a period of adjustment, having to balance your classes, studies, work time and social life. MTSU Administrative and Faculty members are here to support you and ensure you are successful.

Thank you for choosing MTSU and we welcome you!

Sincerely,

DA NIELLE ROCHELLE
Outreach and Support Programs Coordinator

INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE ADAPTED FROM THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE FOR THE BOOK: www.penguinrandomhouse.com
MEET THE AUTHOR

Mona Hanna-Attisha, MD, MPH, FAAP, is a physician, scientist, and activist who has been called to testify twice before the United States Congress, awarded the Freedom of Expression Courage Award by PEN America, and named one of Time magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in the World.

“Personal and emotional . . . She vividly describes the effects of lead poisoning on her young patients. . . . She is at her best when recounting the detective work she undertook after a tip from a friend. . . . Flint will not be defined by this crisis, vows [Dr.]Hanna-Attisha.”
— The Economist

2020 MTSU CONVOCATION

OPPORTUNITIES TO VISIT WITH AUTHOR MONA HANNA-ATTISHA, M.D.

We are thrilled to have Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, author of What the Eyes Don’t See, visit the campus of Middle Tennessee State University this summer to help us welcome our new students and start off the new academic year.

Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 5pm

The Distinguished Lecture Committee has invited Dr. Hanna-Attisha to speak at MTSU’s University Convocation. It is the kick off of the new school year, and all MTSU students, parents, alumni, faculty and staff are invited to attend.

Please join us for the President’s Picnic immediately following Convocation.

Information in this guide adapted from the official website for the book: www.penguinrandomhouse.com
ESSAY CONTEST

After reading the book, the Eyes Don't See; A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City, by Mona Hanna-Attisha, please write a 500 word essay discussing the following topic of your choice.

Select one of the following four topics:
For all these questions, use quotes from the text to support your interpretation.

1. What are the connections between Dr. Mona’s stories of Iraq and those of the Flint water crisis? What is the purpose of family stories like Haji and the Birds in the narrative? Are there morality tales from your own family that you cherish and give you strength?

2. Why did Dr. Mona decide to teach her pediatric residents about the history of racial injustice in the United States? What examples did she share when teaching residents about the history of racism in medical care? Why did she believe it was important for her residents to be made aware of the city’s weaknesses and needs, while also fostering solidarity with and empathy for Flint’s residents?

3. Dr. Mona writes, “We each have the power to fix things. We can open one another’s eyes to problems. We can work together to create a better, safer world” (page 13). How did Dr. Mona’s actions make a difference in the community of Flint? Can you think of a time in your own life when you have made other people aware of a problem that they were not aware of? What do you believe you can do as an individual to make the world a better and safer place?

4. Dr. Mona describes the “real villains” in the Flint water crisis as being “the ongoing effects of racism, inequality, greed, anti-intellectualism, and even laissez-faire neoliberal capitalism. These are powerful forces most of us don’t notice, and don’t want to” (page 14). Share your 5 reactions to this opinion. How could the water crisis have been prevented? What policies and practices do you think should be put in place in order to prevent future crises?

One winner will be selected from your high school. The winner and their Senior English teacher will be invited to a meet and greet with Dr. Mona before University Convocation on Saturday, August 22, 2020.

Additional Guidelines

•Essay Length: maximum of 500 words

•Formatting: double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman font

•Personal Information:
  o Cover Page: All entries must have a cover sheet that includes your name, essay title, student M number, MTSU email and phone number.

•Originality: Your submission must be an entirely original piece of writing.

•Deadline: All entries must be submitted by August 1st; submit your essay to Danielle.Rochelle@mtsu.edu.

Information in this guide adapted from the official website for the book: www.penguinrandomhouse.com