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# The Reading List 2009

## The RUSA CODES Reading List Council

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**2008-09 members:** Neal Wyatt, chair, Richmond, Virginia; Joyce Saricks, vice chair, Downers Grove, Illinois; Jennifer Baker, The Seattle Public Library; Arlene Griffin, LSSI Library North Jackson Madison County Library; Mirja Johanson, Perrot Memorial Library; Lucy Lockley, St. Charles City–County Library District; Robert Renwick, Brooklyn Public Library; Jacqueline Sasaki, Ann Arbor District Library; Sharron Smith, Kitchener Public Library; Tapley Trudell, San Antonio Public Library; and Alan Ziebarth, Chicago Public Library.

The Reading List annually recognizes the best books in eight genres: adrenaline (which includes suspense, thriller, and adventure), fantasy, historical fiction, horror, mystery, romance, science fiction, and women's fiction. This year's list includes novels that will please die-hard fans as well as introduce new readers to the pleasures of genre fiction.

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### ADRENALINE

C. J. Box. *Blue Heaven*. St. Martin's Minotaur, 2008 (978-0-312-36570-7). \$24.95

In this relentlessly paced story, two children witness a murder, elude crooked ex-cops, and find refuge with a taciturn rancher. The evocative landscape and emotional depth, along with the engaging characters and provocative story line, combine to create an unforgettable novel.

Readers may also enjoy Ridley Pearson's *Killer Weekend*, Lee Child's *Nothing to Lose*, and Elmore Leonard's *Hombre*.

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### FANTASY

Kim Wilkins. *The Veil of Gold*. Tor, 2008 (978-0-7653-2006-3). \$25.95

The discovery of a golden bear in the walls of a derelict St. Petersburg bath house lifts the veil between the real world and that of fairy tales. Treachery is rampant and death is ever-present: Stories aren't safe, and love can't rescue anyone—or can it?

Readers may also enjoy John Connolly's *The Book of Lost Things*, Orson Scott Card's *Enchantment*, and Charles de Lint's *Forests of the Heart*.

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### HISTORICAL FICTION

Jeff Shaara. *The Steel Wave: A Novel of World War II*. Ballantine, 2008 (978-0-345-46142-1). \$22.40

In this riveting tale of D-day and its aftermath, Shaara closely follows events through the lives of common soldiers and generals, Allies and Axis alike. A journalistic style underscores the drama of events, and the engaging warts-and-all portrayals add to the immediacy of the novel.

Readers may also enjoy Bernard Cornwell's Sharpe series, Rick Atkinson's *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943*, and Steven Pressfield's *Killing Rommel*.

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## HORROR

Toby Barlow. *Sharp Teeth*. Harper, 2008 (978-0-06-143022-0). \$22.95

The insiders' perspective and lyrical language of this haunting free-verse novel offer a sympathetic glimpse into the lives of urban werewolves, a nightmarish noir world where violence and heartbreak go hand in hand.

Readers may also enjoy Kelley Armstrong's *Bitten*, Nicholas Peck's *The Wolfman*, and Charlie Huston's Joe Pitt series.

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## MYSTERY

David Hewson. *The Garden of Evil*. Delacorte, 2008 (978-0-385-33957-5). \$24

In contemporary Rome, an unknown lascivious painting by Caravaggio, grisly murders, and a heart-stopping chase mark series detective Nic Costa's return. The perfidious villains can only be outwitted by inventive police work and an unexpected ally in this masterfully crafted puzzler.

Readers may also enjoy Arturo Perez-Reverte's *The Flanders Panel*, Donna Leon's *Dressed for Death*, and Jonathan Santlofer's *The Death Artist*.

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## ROMANCE

Joanna Bourne. *The Spymaster's Lady*. Berkley, 2008 (978-0-425-21960-7). \$7.99

Take a British spymaster and a resourceful French agent, spice with clever banter, toss in a refreshing and unexpected plot, add a heaping measure of sexual chemistry, and the

result is an irresistible read with Napoleon's ambitions for England hanging in the balance.

Readers may also enjoy Amanda Quick's *Scandal*, Julia Quinn's *Its in His Kiss*, and Andrea Pickens' *Seduced by a Spy*.

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## SCIENCE FICTION

George R. R. Martin, Gardner Dozois, and Daniel Abraham. *Hunter's Run*. Eos, 2008 (978-0-06-137329-9). \$25.95

On a dangerous backwater planet, a criminal outcast stumbles across an alien race in hiding in this relentless and gritty adventure. Forced into a life-threatening hunt, he is irrevocably changed and learns what it means to be truly human.

Readers may also enjoy Robert Silverberg's *Downward to the Earth*, Barry B. Longyear's *Enemy Mine*, and Richard K. Morgan's *Thirteen*.

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## WOMEN'S FICTION

Kate Maloy. *Every Last Cuckoo*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008 (978-1-56512-541-4). \$22.95

Set against the richly textured landscape of rural Vermont, Maloy's optimistic and heartwarming novel chronicles one woman's experience of widowhood as she remembers the pains and pleasures of her long marriage and moves into a new phase of her life.

Readers may also enjoy Stephanie Kallos's *Broken for You*, Helen Humphreys' *The Lost Garden*, and Elizabeth Berg's *The Year of Pleasures*.

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### References

1. Walter Gibbs and Sarah Lyall, "Gore Shares Peace Prize for Climate Change Work," *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 2007, A1, ProQuest (accessed March 17, 2008).
2. James Kanter and Andrew C. Revkin, "Scientists Detail Climate Changes, Poles to Tropics," *New York Times*, Apr. 7, 2007, A1, ProQuest (accessed Mar. 17, 2008).
3. Gregg Easterbrook, "Finally Feeling the Heat," *New York Times*, May 24, 2006, A27, ProQuest (accessed Mar. 17, 2008).