The Reading List 2010

The RUSA CODES Reading List Council

The Reading List Council 2009–10 members are Joyce Saricks, chair, Downers Grove, Illinois; Jacqueline Sasaki, vice-chair, Ann Arbor District Library; Jennifer Baker, Seattle Public Library; Kathleen Collins, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle; Mari Miller-Lamb, Long Island University, Brooklyn; Sharron Smith, Kitchener Public Library; Tapley Trudell, San Antonio Public Library; Kimberly Wells, Denton Public Library; Neal Wyatt, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond; 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 diehard fans as well as introduce new readers to the pleasure of genre fiction.

ADRENALINE


Lone wolf Jack Reacher takes on terrorism and the Department of Homeland Security as he stumbles onto the tail end of an Al Qaeda sting. Crossing politics, police departments, and an alphabet soup of federal agencies, Reacher cleans house. The nonstop tension, atmosphere of menace, and Reacher’s matter-of-fact narration create an immediate and believable thriller.

Readers may also enjoy The John Rain series by Barry Eisler, Robert Ludlum’s *The Bourne Identity*, and C. J. Box’s *Below Zero*.

FANTASY


When the city of Windwir is destroyed by an ancient weapon, tribes of the Named Lands flock to the desolation to battle an unknown foe. Elegiac in tone, this compelling high fantasy introduces readers to a complex new world.

Readers may also enjoy George R. R. Martin’s *Game of Thrones*, Terry Goodkind’s *Wizards First Rule*, and David Anthony Durham’s *Acacia. Book One, The War With the Mein*.

HISTORICAL FICTION


Vividly recreating the pageantry and violence of the 1400s, Cornwell takes readers into the heart of the soldiering class in this intimate retelling of the Battle of Agincourt. With a brisk pace and brilliant evocation of everyday life, he details the brutality of war and the lives of the men who fought.

Readers may also enjoy the Templar Trilogy by Jack Whyte, Tim Willocks’s *The Religon*, and Stephen Pressfield’s *Gates of Fire*.
**HORROR**


In this deeply disturbing novel, the Brotherhood of Mutilation, a cult that gains wisdom through amputation, kidnaps a maimed detective and forces him to investigate the murder of a cult leader. Through sparse language, a noir sensibility, and macabre humor, Evenson crafts a compulsively readable nightmare that asks, “How do you know the moment when you cease to be human?”

Readers may also enjoy Will Elliott’s *Pilo Family Circus*, Stephen King’s *Misery*, and J. G. Ballard’s *Crash*.

**MYSTERY**


During the early years of South African Apartheid, Detective Emmanuel Cooper straddles the racial divide while investigating the murder of a small-town police captain. Set against the cinematic backdrop of the harsh South African landscape, Cooper’s inquiries uncover a web of secrets and lies. The spare prose and the intricate plot belie the novel’s emotional impact.

Readers may also enjoy Michael Stanley’s *A Carrion Death*, James McClure’s *Salamander Cotton*, and the *Heat of the Sun* (distributed by PBS).

**ROMANCE**


Lady Olivia Bevelstoke and Sir Harry Valentine’s unconventional courtship begins when she is caught spying on him. Endearingly quirky characters, a windowsill romance, and laugh-out-loud scenes make this witty and charming story the perfect Regency romp.

Readers may also enjoy Tessa Dare’s *Goddess of the Hunt*, Nora Roberts’s *The Winning Hand*, and Elizabeth Boyle’s *Letters from a Duke*.

**SCIENCE FICTION**


Bacigalupi constructs a sobering and nuanced vision of future Bangkok teetering on the edge of disaster. In this inhospitable environment, a disparate group of characters calculates how to survive. The novel’s gritty tone, provocative storyline, and sympathetic characters evoke a world that is frightening real.

Readers may also enjoy Bruce Sterling’s *Distraction*, Ian McDonald’s *Brasyl*, and Charles Stross’s *Accelerando*.

**WOMEN’S FICTION**


Thirty-something Valentine Roncalli seeks her future in the family’s exclusive hand-crafted wedding shoe company while juggling work and romance. Trigiani vividly captures both New York and Italy and infuses this novel with humor, warmth, and hope.

Readers may also enjoy Jennifer Weiner’s *Good in Bed*, Judith Ryan Hendricks’s *Bread Alone*, and Monica McInerney’s *Greetings from Somewhere*.