
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

Lee Child. *Gone Tomorrow*. Delacorte, 2009. \$27 (ISBN 978-0-385-34057-1).

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

Ken Scholes. *Lamentation*. Tor, 2009. \$7.99 (ISBN 978-0-765-32127-5).

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

Bernard Cornwell. *Agincourt*. Harper, 2009. \$27.99 (ISBN 978-0-061-57891-5).

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

Brian Evenson. *Last Days*. Underland, 2009. \$12.95 (ISBN 978-0-980-22600-3).

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 spare 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

Malla Nunn. *A Beautiful Place to Die*. Atria, 2009. \$25 (ISBN 978-1-416-58620-3).

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

Julia Quinn. *What Happens in London*. Avon, 2009. \$7.99 (ISBN 978-0-061-49188-7).

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 *Love Letters from a Duke*.

SCIENCE FICTION

Paolo Bacigalupi. *The Windup Girl*. Night Shade, 2009. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-1-597-80157-7).

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 story line, 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

Adriana Trigiani. *Very Valentine*. Harper, 2009. \$25.99 (ISBN 978-0-061-25705-6).

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*.

NOTABLE BOOKS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 321

Nicholas Thompson. *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War*. Holt. \$27.50 (ISBN 978-0-805-08142-8).

The remarkable half-century friendship and rivalry between two influential strategists who helped shape American policy is brought to life in this insightful dual biography.

POETRY

Sherman Alexie. *Face*. Hanging Loose. \$18 (ISBN 978-1-931-23670-6).

Autobiographical poems experimenting with various styles and forms explore childhood, fatherhood, and the trials, perks, and humor of minor celebrity.

Stephen Dunn. *What Goes On: Selected and New Poems 1995–2009*. Norton. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-0-393-06775-0).

Completely accessible poems written in ordinary language deal with cats, love, barfights, desire, melancholia, and relationships.