
Notable Books List 2015

RUSQ Notable Books Council

RUSA Notable Books Council contributing members are Katharine Phenix (chair), Anythink Libraries, Adams County, Colorado; Liz Kirchhoff, (vice-chair), Barrington (IL) Area Library; Victoria Caplinger, NoveList/EBSCO Information Services, Durham, North Carolina; Stacey Hayman, Rocky River (OH) Public Library; Jason A. Reuscher, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, State College, Pennsylvania; Mary Callaghan "Cal" Zunt, Cleveland Public Library; Sharon Castleberry, Dallas, Texas; Sarah Jaffa, Kitsap Regional Library, Kitsap County, Washington; Sara Taffae, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Craig Clark, Upper Arlington, Ohio; Vicki L. Gregory, School of Information, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida; and Marlene Harris, Reading Reality, Duluth, Georgia.

The Notable Books Council, a group of readers' advisory experts within the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), a division of the American Library Association, has announced its selections for the 2015 Notable Books List.

Since 1944, the goal of the Notable Books Council has been to make available to the nation's readers a list of about twenty-five very good, very readable, and at times very important fiction, nonfiction, and poetry books for the adult reader. A book may be selected for inclusion on the Notable Books List if it possesses exceptional literary merit, expands the horizons of human knowledge, makes a specialized body of knowledge accessible to the nonspecialist, has the potential to contribute significantly to the solution of a contemporary problem, or presents a unique concept.

The 2015 winners are:

FICTION

Denfeld, Rene. *The Enchanted: A Novel*. Harper (ISBN: 978-0-06-228550-8). Death row inmates await escape through execution in this weirdly gorgeous tale.

Doerr, Anthony. *All the Light We Cannot See*. Scribner (ISBN: 978-1-4767-4658-6). Navigating the dark of World War II, a German boy and a French girl survive using senses other than sight.

Flanagan, Richard. *Narrow Road to the Deep North: A Novel*. Knopf (ISBN: 978-0-385-35285-7). Australian beaches, Burmese jungles, love and death permeate a story of World War II POWs.

Harkaway, Nick. *Tigerman*. Knopf (ISBN: 978-0-385-35241-3). Funny, strange, and dangerous, the island of Mancreu may be beyond saving, but perhaps a superhero can bring redemption. Full of win.

Lee, Chang-Rae. *On Such a Full Sea*. Riverhead (ISBN: 978-1-59448-610-4). From fish farm to big pharma, one hundred years later it's all the same.

McEwan, Ian. *The Children Act*. Nan A Talese (ISBN: 978-0-385-53970-8). A deceptively simple story reveals complexities of life choices.

FROM COMMITTEES OF RUSA

Mitchell, David. *The Bone Clocks: A Novel*. Random House (ISBN: 978-1-4000-6567-7). The human condition: bleak but not without moments of redemption.

Mandel, Emily St. John. *Station Eleven: A Novel*. Knopf (ISBN: 978-0-385-35330-4). Love, music, and Shakespeare sustain survivors of a global pandemic.

Ness, Patrick. *The Crane Wife*. Penguin (ISBN: 978-1-59420-547-7). A thoughtful exposition of love, in all its endless varieties.

Powers, Richard. *Orfeo: A Novel*. Norton (ISBN: 978-0-393-24082-5). On the run from Homeland Security, Peter Els reflects on a life of attempted creation and immortality through music and chemistry.

Rash, Ron. *Something Rich and Strange: Selected Stories*. Ecco (ISBN: 978-0-06-234934-7). A brutal and beautiful collection of human tales set in the Carolinas.

Toews, Miriam. *All My Puny Sorrows*. McSweeney (ISBN: 978-1-940450-27-8). How much sacrifice does the love of a sister require?

NONFICTION

Birmingham, Kevin. *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce's Ulysses*. Penguin (ISBN: 978-1-59420-336-7). Biography of a notorious classic which changed the landscape of literature and launched the Modernist movement.

Blum, Howard. *Dark Invasion: 1915 Germany's Secret War and the Hunt for the First Terrorist Cell in America*. Harper (ISBN: 978-0-06-230755-2). German spies collaborate to unleash a campaign of terror in the United States at the start of World War I.

Bragg, Rick. *Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story*. Harper (ISBN: 978-0062078223). Can a man play rock and roll and still go to heaven?

Eig, Jonathan. *The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Re-invented Sex and Launched a Revolution*. Norton (ISBN: 978-0-393-07372-0). The not-so-immaculate conception of the first oral contraceptive.

Greenwald, Glenn. *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State*. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt (ISBN: 978-1627790734). A real-life spy thriller and a cautionary tale about government data gathering.

Jager, Eric. *Blood Royal: A True Tale of Crime and Detection in Medieval Paris*. Little, Brown (ISBN: 978-0-316-22451-2). Political intrigue that starts with a murder and ends with a throne.

Kolbert, Elizabeth. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. Henry Holt (ISBN: 978-0-8050-9299-8). Whether it's rats or cockroaches that inherit the earth, this tale of species loss forms a narrative of evolution and annihilation.

Lepore, Jill. *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. Knopf (ISBN: 978-0-385-35404-2). Suffering Sappho, we need to teach these girls to have some fun!

Macy, Beth. *Factory Man*. Little, Brown (ISBN: 978-0-316-23143-5). Made in America vs. Made in China—is it too late to save one of these labels?

Sides, Hampton. *In the Kingdom of Ice: The Grand and Terrible Polar Voyage of the USS Jeanette*. Doubleday. (ISBN: 978-0-385-53537-3). Glory and heartbreak on the rocks.

Stark, Lizzie. *Pandora's DNA: Tracing the Breast Cancer Genes Through History, Science, and One Family Tree*. Chicago Review Press (ISBN: 978-1613748602). One woman's face-off with her genetic fate.

Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. Spiegel & Grau (ISBN: 978-0-8129-9452-0). A searing indictment of institutionalized racism and state-sanctioned death.

POETRY

Fairchild, B. H. *The Blue Buick: New and Selected Poems*. Norton (ISBN: 978-0-393-24026-9). A regional American experience through myth and memory.

Hirsch, Edward. *Gabriel: A Poem*. Knopf (ISBN: 978-0-385-35357-1). A father's lament.