



## Reading Group Sets in Isle of Wight Libraries March 2009

### The Abortionist's Daughter by Elizabeth Hyde (12 COPIES)

Two weeks before Christmas, Diana Duprey, an outspoken abortion doctor, is found dead in her swimming pool. A national figure, Diana inspired passion and ignited tempers, but never more so than the day of her death. Her husband Frank, a longtime attorney in the DA's office; her daughter Megan, a freshman in college; the Reverend Stephen O'Connell, founder of the town's pro-life coalition: all of them quarreled with Diana that day and each one has something to lose in revealing the truth. Meanwhile the detective on the case struggles for the answers — and finds himself more intimately involved than he ever could have imagined.

### Blue Slipper Bay by Wendy Harris (14 COPIES)

Sophie, bereft after the loss of her mother and her husband's betrayal, walks out of her demanding profession and her home seeking refuge with her friend, Jill, on the Isle of Wight. She doesn't suspect that she is about to be drawn into another crisis.

### Burning bright by Tracy Chevalier **NEW TITLE** (7 COPIES)

Against the backdrop of a city anxious over the bloody French Revolution, a surprising bond forms between Jem whose family have moved from Dorset and streetwise Londoner Maggie Butterfield. Their friendship takes a dramatic turn when they become entangled in the life of their neighbour, the poet and printer William Blake.

### The Children of Hurin by J.R.R.Tolkien **NEW TITLE** (5 COPIES)

The Children of Hurin will reunite fans of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings with Elves and Men, dragons and Dwarves, eagles and orcs and the rich landscape and characters unique to Tolkien

### The Conjuror's Bird by Martin Davies (6 COPIES)

It seems a long time ago that Fitz and Gabby were together, with his work on extinct species about to make him world-famous. Now, it's his career that is almost extinct. Suddenly, though, the beautiful Gabby reappears in his life. She wants his help in tracing the history of The Mysterious Bird of Ulieta, a creature once owned by the great 18th Century naturalist Joseph Banks. It soon becomes clear that Fitz is getting involved in something more complicated - and dangerous - than the search for a stuffed bird. To solve the puzzle, he must uncover the identity of the amazing woman Banks loved - a woman who has disappeared from history as effectively as the specimen he is hunting. A mixture of detection, romance and history, "The Conjuror's Bird" has all the makings of a word-of-mouth bestseller.

### The Cranford Chronicles by Mrs Gaskell (6 COPIES)

Based on three Elizabeth Gaskell novels, "The Cranford Chronicles" follows the small absurdities and major tragedies in the lives of the people of Cranford, a small

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Cheshire market town, during one extraordinary year. In this witty and poignant story the railway is pushing its way relentlessly towards the town from Manchester, bringing fears of migrant workers and the breakdown of law and order. The arrival of handsome young Doctor Harrison causes yet further agitation not just because of his revolutionary methods but also because of his effect on the hearts of the ladies. Meanwhile Miss Matty Jenkyns nurses her own broken heart after she was forced to give up the man she loved when she was a young girl.

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon (4 COPIES)

This is a murder mystery novel like no other. The detective, and narrator, is Christopher Boone. Christopher is fifteen and has Asperger's, a form of autism. He knows a very great deal about maths and very little about human beings. He loves lists, patterns and the truth. He hates the colours yellow and brown and being touched. He has never gone further than the end of the road on his own, but when he finds a neighbour's dog murdered he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his whole world upside down.

Days from a Different World by John Simpson (NF) (6 COPIES)

'I have already touched on my childhood in "Strange Places, Questionable People". But the further through life I get the more I want to revisit it. I want to look at the whole of my childhood, the England I grew up in and my family.' This is not a mere exercise in nostalgia, rather it is a journey through the England of the late 1940s in all its shabby wonder, which also tells the somewhat strange and often deeply painful story of John Simpson's family. Here we meet his father and his grandmother, still living in the small and rather depressing south London suburb which his family built, dominated and, finally, declined with. We meet the grandfather who drank the family money away and abandoned his wife and children, and the grandfather who toured the country with a Wild West show. We learn, too, of the broken marriages and the unfulfilled lives, of the people who died, and the lives which were just beginning. Candid, beautifully written and touching, "Days from a Different World" will enchant all those who read it.

The dig by John Preston **NEW TITLE** (6 COPIES)

In the long hot summer of 1939 Britain is preparing for war, but Mrs Pretty. A widowed farmer, suspects that the strange mounds on her land hold buried treasure.

The Divide by Nicholas Evans (7 COPIES)

Two backcountry skiers find the body of a young woman embedded in the ice of a remote mountain creek. All through the night police work with arc lights and chainsaws to prise her out. Identifying her doesn't take so long. Abbie Cooper is wanted for murder and her picture is on law enforcement computers all across America. But how did she die? And what was the trail of events that led this golden child of a loving family so tragically astray? From the number one bestselling author of THE HORSE WHISPERER, master storyteller Nicholas Evans, comes this powerful new novel, an epic thriller of the human heart. In a journey of discovery and redemption, from the streets of New York to the daunting grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, it tells the heart-rending tale of a family fractured by divorce. As both parents and children struggle in search of lost happiness, some devastating truths unravel. THE DIVIDE is the story of a great love betrayed and of the yearnings and

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needs, and the dashed hopes and disillusionments that connect and separate all men and women.

Empress Orchid by Anchee Min (8 COPIES)

To rescue her family from poverty and avoid marrying her slope-shouldered cousin, seventeen-year-old Orchid competes to be one of the Emperor's wives. When she is chosen as a lower-ranking concubine she enters the erotically charged and ritualised Forbidden City. But beneath its immaculate facade lie whispers of murders and ghosts, and the thousands of concubines will stoop to any lengths to bear the Emperor's son. Orchid trains herself in the art of pleasuring a man, bribes her way into the royal bed, and seduces the monarch, drawing the attention of dangerous foes. Little does she know that China will collapse around her, and that she will be its last Empress.

Engleby by Sebastian Faulks **NEW TITLE** (5 COPIES)

Mike Engleby says things that others dare not even think. When the novel opens in the 1970's, he is a university student, having survived a traditional school. A man devoid of scruple or self-pity, Engleby provides a witheringly frank account of English education.

The Farm by Richard Benson (NF) (10 COPIES)

It was like being the village idiot with O-levels. I jack-knifed trailers, got outwitted by even the dimmest animals and was dragged through a hedge backwards on a tractor ...' Richard Benson was never cut out for the family farm, but he returned from London when his dad had to sell up and found that their shared loss was part of a profound change in rural life. In the house after the sale, dad gave a heavy raspy sigh and sank against my mum. Everything seemed to freeze for a moment as the clock kept ticking ...'

The First Casualty by Ben Elton (9 COPIES)

Flanders, June 1917: a British officer and celebrated poet, is shot dead, killed not by German fire, but while recuperating from shell shock well behind the lines. A young English soldier is arrested and, although he protests his innocence, charged with his murder. Douglas Kingsley is a conscientious objector, previously a detective with the London police, now imprisoned for his beliefs. He is released and sent to France in order to secure a conviction. Forced to conduct his investigations amidst the hell of The Third Battle of Ypres, Kingsley soon discovers that both the evidence and the witnesses he needs are quite literally disappearing into the mud that surrounds him. Ben Elton's tenth novel is a gut-wrenching historical drama which explores some fundamental questions. What is murder? What is justice in the face of unimaginable daily slaughter? And where is the honour in saving a man from the gallows if he is only to be returned to die in a suicidal battle? As the gap between legally-sanctioned and illegal murder becomes evermore blurred, Kingsley quickly learns that the first casualty when war comes is truth.

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The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton **NEW TITLE** (5 COPIES)

On the eve of the First World War, a little girl is found alone after a gruelling ocean voyage from England to Australia. All she can remember is that a woman she calls the Authoress had promised to look after her. But the Authoress has vanished. So starts the haunting second novel from the author of 'The House at Riverton'.

Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (13 COPIES)

The sweeping novel from the author of 'Purple Hibiscus', shortlisted for the Orange Prize, and winner of the Commonwealth Writers Award. This highly anticipated novel from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is set in Nigeria during the 1960s, at the time of a vicious civil war in which a million people died and thousands were massacred in cold blood. The three main characters in the novel are swept up in the violence during these turbulent years. One is a young boy from a poor village who is employed at a university lecturer's house. The other is a young middle-class woman, Olanna, who has to confront the reality of the massacre of her relatives. And the third is a white man, a writer who lives in Nigeria for no clear reason, and who falls in love with Olanna's twin sister, a remote and enigmatic character. As these people's lives intersect, they have to question their own responses to the unfolding political events. This extraordinary novel is about Africa in a wider sense: about moral responsibility, about the end of colonialism, about ethnic allegiances, about class and race; and about the ways in which love can complicate all of these things.

The House at Riverton by Kate Morton (12 COPIES)

Summer 1924: On the eve of a glittering Society party, by the lake of a grand English country house, a young poet takes his life. The only witnesses, sisters Hannah and Emmeline Hartford, will never speak to each other again. Winter 1999: Grace Bradley, 98, one-time housemaid of Riverton Manor, is visited by a young director making a film about the poet's suicide. Ghosts awaken and memories, long-consigned to the dark reaches of Grace's mind, begin to sneak back through the cracks. A shocking secret threatens to emerge; something history has forgotten but Grace never could.

How to Talk to a Widower by Jonathan Topper (8 COPIES)

When Doug Parker married Hailey - beautiful, smart and ten years older - he left his carefree Manhattan life behind to live with her and her teenage son, Russ, in the suburbs. Three years later, Hailey has been dead for a year, and Doug, a widower at 29, just wants to drown himself in self-pity and Jack Daniels. But his family has other ideas...Russ is furious with Doug for not adopting him after Hailey died, and has fallen in with a bad crowd. Claire, Doug's irrepressible and pregnant twin sister, has just left her husband and moved in, uninvited, determined to turn his life around. Then there's Debbie, their younger sister, engaged to Doug's ex-best friend and maniacally determined to pull off the perfect wedding at any cost. Soon, Doug finds himself trying to forge a relationship with Russ, reconnecting with his own eccentric nuclear family, and reluctantly dipping his toes into the shark-infested waters of the second-time-around dating scene. It isn't long before his new life is spinning hopelessly out of control...

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Human Traces by Sebastian Faulks (11 COPIES)

"Human Traces" explores the question of what kind of beings men and women really are. Jacques Rebiere and Thomas Midwinter, both sixteen when the story starts in 1876, come from different countries and contrasting families. They are united by an ambition to understand how the mind works and whether madness is the price we pay for being human. As psychiatrists, they travel on a quest from the squalor of the Victorian lunatic asylum to the crowded lecture halls of the renowned Professor Charcot in Paris; from the heights of the Sierra Madre in California to the plains of unexplored Africa. Their search is made urgent by the case of Jacques' brother Olivier, for whose severe illness no name has yet been found. Thomas' sister Sonia becomes the pivotal figure in the volatile relationship between the two men. It threatens to explode with the arrival in their Austrian sanatorium of an enigmatic patient, Fraulein Katharina von A, whose illness epitomises all that divides them. As the concerns of the old century fade and the First World War divides Europe, the novel rises to a climax in which the value of being alive is called into question. This is Sebastian Faulks' most ambitious novel yet, with scenes of emotional power recalling his most celebrated work, yet set here on an even larger scale.

Innocent Traitor by Alison Weir (6 COPIES)

Lady Jane Gray was born into times of extreme danger. Child of a scheming father and a ruthless mother, for whom she was merely a pawn in a dynastic power game with the highest stakes, she lived a life in thrall to political machinations and lethal religious fervour.

The Interpretation of Murder by Jed Rubenfeld (8 COPIES)

A dazzling literary thriller - the story of Sigmund Freud assisting a Manhattan murder investigation. Think SHADOW OF THE WIND meets THE HISTORIAN. THE INTERPRETATION OF MURDER is an inventive "tour de force" inspired by Sigmund Freud's 1909 visit to America, accompanied by protege and rival Carl Jung. When a wealthy young debutante is discovered bound, whipped and strangled in a luxurious apartment overlooking the city, and another society beauty narrowly escapes the same fate, the mayor of New York calls upon Freud to use his revolutionary new ideas to help the surviving victim recover her memory of the attack, and solve the crime. But nothing about the attacks - or about the surviving victim, Nora - is quite as it seems. And there are those in very high places determined to stop the truth coming out, and Freud's startling theories taking root on American soil.

The Island by Victoria Hislop (3 COPIES)

On the brink of a life-changing decision, Alexis Fielding longs to find out about her mother's past. But Sofia has never spoken of it. All she admits to is growing up in a small Cretan village before moving to London. When Alexis decides to visit Crete, however, Sofia gives her daughter a letter to take to an old friend, and promises that through her she will learn more. Arriving in Plaka, Alexis is astonished to see that it lies a stone's throw from the tiny, deserted island of Spinalonga - Greece's former leper colony. Then she finds Fortini, and at last hears the story that Sofia has buried all her life: the tale of her great-grandmother Eleni and her daughters and a family rent by tragedy, war and passion. She discovers how intimately she is connected with the island, and how secrecy holds them all in its powerful grip...

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Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy (6 COPIES)

The story of a struggle between the flesh and the spirit. It concerns Jude Fawley, a young Wessex villager of exceptional promise, who goes to Oxford, contracts a loveless marriage and becomes embroiled in a doomed love affair with his cousin.

The Kindness of Strangers by Kate Adie (NF) (6 COPIES)

Kate Adie's story is an unusual one. Raised in post-war Sunderland, where life was 'a sunny experience, full of meat-paste sandwiches and Sunday school', she has reported memorably and courageously from many of the world's trouble spots since she joined the BBC in 1969. The Kindness Of Strangers encompasses Adie's reporting from, inter alia, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Tiananmen Square and, of course, the Gulf War of 1991. It offers a compelling combination of vivid frontline reporting and evocative writing and reveals the extraordinarily demanding life of the woman who is always at the heart of the action. Although an intensely private person, Kate Adie also divulges what it's like to be a woman in a man's world ? an inspiration to many working women

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini (6 COPIES)

This is a story of fathers and sons, friendship and betrayal, and the casualties of fate. In the 1970s, Afghanistan: Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realises that one day he must return to an Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

Labyrinth by Kate Mosse (6 COPIES)

When Dr Alice Tanner discovers two skeletons during an archaeological dig in southern France, she unearths a link with a horrific and brutal past. But it's not just the sight of the shattered bones that makes her uneasy; there's an overwhelming sense of evil in the tomb that Alice finds hard to shake off, even in the bright French sunshine. Puzzled by the words carved inside the chamber, Alice has an uneasy feeling that she has disturbed something which was meant to remain hidden...Eight hundred years ago, on the night before a brutal civil war ripped apart Languedoc, a book was entrusted to Alais, a young herbalist and healer. Although she cannot understand the symbols and diagrams the book contains, Alais knows her destiny lies in protecting their secret, at all costs. Skilfully blending the lives of two women divided by centuries but united by a common destiny, LABYRINTH is a powerful story steeped in the atmosphere and history of southern France.

The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets by Eva Rice (12 COPIES)

Set in the 1950s, in an England still recovering from the Second World War, The Lost Art Of Keeping Secrets is the enchanting story of Penelope Wallace and her eccentric family at the start of the rock'n'roll era. Penelope longs to be grown-up and to fall in love; but various rather inconvenient things keep getting in her way. Like her mother, a stunning but petulant beauty widowed at a tragically early age, her younger brother Inigo, currently incapable of concentrating on anything that isn't Elvis Presley, a vast but crumbling ancestral home, a severe shortage of cash, and her best friend

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Charlotte's sardonic cousin Harry... Eva Rice's novel is an utterly engrossing read, in the tradition of Nancy Mitford and I Capture The Castle.

Love in the Present Tense by Catherine Ryan Hyde (12 COPIES)

"So much of how it was started when that cop got out and came up to me. But I didn't know all this when it first happened. I didn't know there would ever be a Leonard, or that this man would be his father, or that anybody would have to die..." Mitch is a 25-year-old with commitment issues. Leonard is a five-year-old kid with asthma and vision problems, who captivates everyone he meets. Pearl is Leonard's teenage mother, who's trying to hide a violent secret from her past. Life has given Pearl every reason to mistrust people, but circumstances force her to trust her neighbour Mitch. And one day, a man from Pearl's past arrives to take her away. She knows that if she is to preserve her dignity, she must go with him. With a heart full of agony, Pearl drops Leonard off with Mitch and never returns. Pearl, Leonard and Mitch each have a story to tell. As their lives unfold, profound questions arise about the nature of love and family. How do you go on loving someone who can't be there for you? The answers are heartbreaking, but ultimately triumphant, as Leonard and Mitch grow up side by side and piece together the layered truths and fictions of their almost magical lives. For readers who loved "About a Boy" and "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime" comes "Love in the Present Tense", from the bestselling author of "Pay It Forward".

March by Geraldine Brooks (15 COPIES)

Set during the American Civil War, "March" tells the story of John March, known to us as the father away from his family of girls in "Little Women", Louisa May Alcott's classic American novel. In Brooks' telling, March emerges as an abolitionist and idealistic chaplain on the front lines of a war that tests his faith in himself and in the Union cause when he learns that his side, too, is capable of barbarism and racism. As he recovers from a near-fatal illness in a Washington hospital, he must reassemble the shards of his shattered mind and body, and find a way to reconnect with a wife and daughters who have no idea of the ordeals he has been through. As Alcott drew on her real-life sisters in shaping the characters of her little women, so Brooks turned to the journals and letters of Bronson Alcott, Louisa May's father, an idealistic educator, animal rights exponent and abolitionist who was a friend and confidante of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. The story spans the vibrant intellectual world of Concord and the sensuous antebellum South, through to the first year of the Civil War as the North reels under a series of unexpected defeats

The Memory Keeper's daughter by Kim Edwards. **NEW TITLE** (6 COPIES)

It's 1964 and Dr David Henry finds himself delivering his wife's twins. Relieved, he sees that his son is born healthy, but recognises the signs of Down's Syndrome in his daughter's face. In a split-second decision that will haunt their family forever, he asks a nurse to take his daughter away.

Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones **NEW TITLE** (7 COPIES)

On a remote South Pacific island, threatened by uprising, Matilda and her classmates find their lives surprisingly intertwined with those of a boy called Pip, and a man named Mr. Dickens

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My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult (6 COPIES)

The only reason Anna was born was to donate her cord blood cells to her older sister. And though Anna is not sick, she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukemia that has plagued her since she was a child. Anna was born for this purpose, her parents tell her, which is why they love her even more. But now that she has reached an age of physical awareness, she can't help but long for control over her own body and respite from the constant flow of her own blood seeping into her sister's veins. And so she makes a decision that for most would be too difficult to bear, at any time and at any age. She decides to sue her parents for the rights to her own body.

Nine Tailors by Dorothy L Sayer (5 COPIES)

Return to a golden age of glamour, murder and intrigue. An exciting high profile relaunch for one of our best-loved detective story writers and her popular lead character Lord Peter Wimsey.

When his sexton finds a corpse in the wrong grave, the rector of Fenchurch St Paul asks Lord Peter Wimsey to find out who the dead man was and how he came to be there.

The lore of bell-ringing and a brilliantly-evoked village in the remote fens of East Anglia are the unforgettable background to a story of an old unsolved crime and its violent unravelling twenty years later.

The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith (6 COPIES)

Wayward daughters. Missing Husbands. Philandering partners. Curious conmen. If you've got a problem, and no one else can help you, then pay a visit to Precious Ramotswe, Botswana's only - and finest - female private detective.

Her methods may not be conventional, and her manner not exactly Miss Marple, but she's got warmth, wit and canny intuition on her side, not to mention Mr J.L.B. Maketoni, the charming proprietor of Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors. And Precious is going to need them all as she sets out on the trail of a missing child, a case that tumbles our heroine into a hotbed of strange situations and more than a little danger.

Delightfully different, The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency offers a captivating glimpse of an unusual world.

North and South by Mrs Gaskell (5 COPIES)

This is one of the earliest novels of industrial alienation, tellingly linked to the plight of 19th-century women. It tells of the relationship between Margaret Hale, a girl from the old rural south, and John Thornton, a mill owner from the new industrial north.

The other side of the bridge by Mary Lawson (14 COPIES)

Two brothers, Arthur and Jake Dunn, are the sons of a farmer in the mid-1930s, when life is tough and another world war is looming. Arthur is reticent, solid, dutiful and set to inherit the farm and his father's character; Jake is younger, attractive,

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mercurial and dangerous to know - the family misfit. When a beautiful young woman comes into the community, the fragile balance of sibling rivalry tips over the edge. Then there is Ian, the family's next generation, and far too sure he knows the difference between right and wrong. By now it is the fifties, and the world has changed - a little, but not enough.

These two generations in the small town of Struan, Ontario, are tragically interlocked, linked by fate and community but separated by a war which devours its young men - its unimaginable horror reaching right into the heart of this remote corner of an empire. With her astonishing ability to turn the ratchet of tension slowly and delicately, Lawson builds their story to a shocking climax. Taut with apprehension, surprising us with moments of tenderness and humour, *The Other Side of the Bridge* is a compelling, humane and vividly evoked novel with an irresistible emotional undertow.

#### *The Rainbow* by D H Lawrence (6 COPIES)

Set in the rural midlands of England, this classic novel recounts the lives of three generations of the Brangwen family. When Tom Brangwen marries a Polish widow, Lydia Lensky, and adopts her daughter Anna as his own, he is unprepared for the conflict and passion that erupts between them.

Condemned on publication for its open treatment of sexuality and "unpatriotic" spirit, Lawrence explores themes and characters which he later developed in *Women In Love*.

#### *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi (6 COPIES)

For two years before she left Iran in 1997, Azar Nafisi gathered seven young women at her house every Thursday morning to read and discuss forbidden works of Western literature. They were all former students whom she had taught at university. Some came from conservative and religious families, others were progressive and secular; several had spent time in jail. Shy and uncomfortable at first, they soon began to open up and speak more freely, not only about the novels they were reading but also about themselves, their dreams and disappointments. Their stories intertwined with those they were reading - "*Pride and Prejudice*", "*Washington Square*", "*Daisy Miller*" and "*Lolita*" - their *Lolita*, as they imagined her in Tehran. Nafisi's account flashes back to the early days of the revolution when she first started teaching at the University of Tehran amid the swirl of protests and demonstrations. In those frenetic days, the students took control of the university, expelled faculty members and purged the curriculum. Azar Nafisi's luminous tale offers a portrait of the Iran-Iraq war viewed from Tehran and gives us a glimpse, from the inside, of women's lives in revolutionary Iran.

#### *Restless* by William Boyd (10 COPIES)

It is 1939. Eva Delectorskaya is a beautiful 28-year-old Russian emigree living in Paris. As war breaks out she is recruited for the British Secret Service by Lucas Romer, a mysterious Englishman, and under his tutelage she learns to become the perfect spy, to mask her emotions and trust no one, including those she loves most. Since the war, Eva has carefully rebuilt her life as a typically English wife and mother. But once a spy, always a spy. Now she must complete one final assignment, and this time Eva can't do it alone: she needs her daughter's help.

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The Road by Cormac McCarthy (6 COPIES)

A father and his son walk alone through burned America, heading through the ravaged landscape to the coast. This is the profoundly moving story of their journey. "The Road" boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which two people, 'each the other's world entire', are sustained by love. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation.

A Round-Heeled Woman: My Late-life Adventures in Sex and Romance by Jane Juska (NF) (6 COPIES)

'Round-heeled' is an old-fashioned term for a promiscuous woman of easy virtue. It's a surprising way for a respectable English teacher of a certain age, with a passion for the novels of Anthony Trollope, to describe herself, but then that's just the first of many surprises to be found in this poignant, funny, unique memoir. Inspired by Eric Rohmer's film Autumn Tale, Jane Juska, a smart, energetic divorcée, decided she'd been celibate too long, and placed a personal ad in her favourite newspaper, The New York Review of Books. The response was overwhelming, and Juska took a sabbatical from teaching to meet some of the men who replied. And since her ad made it clear that she wasn't expecting just hand-holding, her dates zipped from first base to the full monty in record time. Juska is a totally engaging, perceptive writer, funny and frank about her exploits. It's high time someone revealed the fact that older single people are as eager for sex and intimacy as their younger counterparts. Jane Juska's brave, honest memoir will probably raise eyebrows and blood pressure, but it will undoubtedly appeal to the very large audience of grown-up readers who will be fascinated and inspired by her daring adventure.

Salmon fishing in the Yemen by Paul Torday (15 COPIES)

This is the story of Dr Alfred Jones, a fisheries scientist - for whom diary notable events include the acquisition of a new electric toothbrush and getting his article on caddis fly larvae published in 'Trout and Salmon' - who finds himself reluctantly involved in a project to bring salmon fishing to the Highlands of the Yemen ... a project that will change his life, and the course of British political history forever. With a wickedly wonderful cast of characters - including a visionary Sheikh, a weaselly spin doctor, Fred's devilish wife and a few thousand transplanted salmon - Salmon Fishing in the Yemen is a novel about hypocrisy and bureaucracy, dreams and deniability, and the transforming power of faith and love.

The savage garden by Mark Mills (9 COPIES)

A beautiful Tuscan villa, a mysterious garden, two hidden murders - one from the 16th century, one from the twentieth - and a family driven by dark secrets, combine in this evocative, intriguing mystery set in post-War Italy. In 1958, Adam Strickland, a young Cambridge scholar, travels to the Villa Docci in Tuscany to study a sixteenth-century garden. Designed and laid out by a grieving husband to the memory of his dead wife, it is a mysterious world of statues, grottoes, meandering rills and classical inscriptions. But tragedy has hit the Docci family more recently. The German occupation during World War 2 had a devastating impact on them, and the tensions between collaborators and partisans were played out within their own tight circle. Adam is fascinated by the Doccis and increasingly aware that there are dangerous

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secrets hidden within the family domain. The garden itself starts to exercise a powerful influence over his imagination, its iconography seeming to point to some deeper, darker truth than was first apparent. And what really lay behind a killing at the villa towards the end of the war? Past and present, love and intrigue, intertwine in an evocative mystery which vividly captures the experience of an innocent abroad in the uncertain world of post-War Italy.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd (6 COPIES)

Lily has grown up believing she accidentally killed her mother when she was four. She not only has her own memory of holding the gun, but her father's account of the event. Now fourteen, she yearns for her mother, and for forgiveness. Living on a peach farm in South Carolina with her father, she has only one friend: Rosaleen, a black servant whose sharp exterior hides a tender heart. South Carolina in the sixties is a place where segregation is still considered a cause worth fighting for. When racial tension explodes one summer afternoon, and Rosaleen is arrested and beaten, Lily is compelled to act. Fugitives from justice and from Lily's harsh and unyielding father, they follow a trail left by the woman who died ten years before. Finding sanctuary in the home of three beekeeping sisters, Lily starts a journey as much about her understanding of the world, as about the mystery surrounding her mother.

The secret river by Kate Greenville (8 COPIES)

After a childhood of poverty and petty crime in the slums of London, William Thornhill is sentenced in 1806 to be transported to New South Wales for the term of his natural life. With his wife Sal and children in tow, he arrives in a harsh land that feels at first like a death sentence. But among the convicts there is a whisper that freedom can be bought, an opportunity to start afresh. Away from the infant township of Sydney, up the Hawkesbury River, Thornhill encounters men who have tried to do just that: Blackwood, who is attempting to reconcile himself with the place and its people, and Smasher Williams, whose fear of this alien world turns into brutal depravity towards it. As Thornhill and his family stake their claim on a patch of ground by the river, the battle lines between old and new inhabitants are drawn. The Secret River joins a tradition of grand historical fiction that stretches from Thomas Keneally's The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith and Peter Carey's True History of the Kelly Gang.

Semi-detached by Griff Rhys Jones (non-fiction) (6 COPIES)

Emmy award-winning comedian Griff Rhys Jones recreates his suburban childhood and adolescence in precise and evocative detail

The Shack by William P. Young **NEW TITLE** (8 COPIES)

Mackenzie's daughter, Missy has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she has been murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later Mack receives a note, apparently from God, inviting him back to the shack.

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The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (6 COPIES)

A stunning literary thriller in the tradition of Umberto Eco. The discovery of a forgotten book leads to a hunt for an elusive author who may or may not still be alive...

Hidden in the heart of the old city of Barcelona is the 'cemetery of lost books', a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles that have long gone out of print. To this library, a man brings his 10-year-old son Daniel one cold morning in 1945. Daniel is allowed to choose one book from the shelves and pulls out 'La Sombra del Viento' by Julian Carax.

But as he grows up, several people seem inordinately interested in his find. Then, one night, as he is wandering the old streets once more, Daniel is approached by a figure who reminds him of a character from La Sombra del Viento, a character who turns out to be the devil. This man is tracking down every last copy of Carax's work in order to burn them. What begins as a case of literary curiosity turns into a race to find out the truth behind the life and death of Julian Carax and to save those he left behind. A page-turning exploration of obsession in literature and love, and the places that obsession can lead.

A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian by Marina Lewycka (11 COPIES)

For years, Nadezhda and Vera, two Ukrainian sisters, raised in England by their refugee parents, have had as little as possible to do with each other - and they have their reasons. But now they find they'd better learn how to get along, because since their mother's death their aging father has been sliding into his second childhood, and an alarming new woman has just entered his life. Valentina, a bosomy young synthetic blonde from the Ukraine, seems to think their father is much richer than he is, and she is keen that he leave this world with as little money to his name as possible. If Nadezhda and Vera don't stop her, no one will. But separating their addled and annoyingly lecherous dad from his new love will prove to be no easy feat - Valentina is a ruthless pro and the two sisters swiftly realize that they are mere amateurs when it comes to ruthlessness. As Hurricane Valentina turns the family house upside down, old secrets come falling out, including the most deeply buried one of them all, from the War, the one that explains much about why Nadezhda and Vera are so different. In the meantime, oblivious to it all, their father carries on with the great work of his dotage, a grand history of the tractor.

Shortlisted for the Orange Prize in 2005 and winner of the British Book Awards: Newcomer of the Year in 2006.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See (9 COPIES)

Lily is the daughter of a humble farmer, and to her family she is just another expensive mouth to feed. Then the local matchmaker delivers startling news: if Lily's feet are bound properly, they will be flawless. In nineteenth-century China, where a woman's eligibility is judged by the shape and size of her feet, this is extraordinary good luck. Lily now has the power to make a good marriage and change the fortunes of her family. To prepare for her new life, she must undergo the agonies of footbinding, learn nu shu, the famed secret women's writing, and make a very special friend, Snow Flower. But a bitter reversal of fortune is about to change everything.

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So many ways to begin by Jon McGregor **NEW TITLE** (6 COPIES)

Coventry Museum curator David Carter cannot help but wish for more out of life. But Auntie Julia's careless words, years earlier, have left David restless in the knowledge that his whole life has been a lie.

The Sorrow of Sisters by Wendy K Harris (7 COPIES)

Forty-nine year old Jane sits in her glass-walled designer home tapping out lucrative novels. She has accepted her childlessness, adores her comfortable husband, Chas and copes with her irascible father, Henry. But she is feeling dulled by the weight of her own repetitive fiction. Then Aunt Lillian dies and leaves her Wraith Cottage on the Isle of Wight. Jane has never heard of Lillian and Henry refuses to enlighten her. But Jane's curiosity has been aroused and she decides to investigate. Her inheritance reveals a story more extraordinary than she could have imagined.

The tenderness of wolves by Stef Penney **NEW TITLE** (7 COPIES)

As winter tightens its grip on the isolated settlement of Dove River, a woman steers herself for the journey of a lifetime. A man has been brutally murdered and her 17 year old son has disappeared. To clear her son's name, she has no choice but to follow the tracks leaving the dead man's cabin.

The Testament of Gideon Mack by James Robertson (8 COPIES)

If the devil didn't exist, would man have to invent him? For Gideon Mack, faithless minister, unfaithful husband and troubled soul, the existence of God, let alone the Devil, is no more credible than that of ghosts or fairies. Until the day he falls into a gorge and is rescued by someone who might just be Satan himself. Mack's testament - a compelling blend of memoir, legend, history and, quite probably, madness - recounts one man's emotional crisis, disappearance, resurrection and death. It also transports you into an utterly mesmerising exploration of the very nature of belief.

Then we came to the end by Joshua Ferris **NEW TITLE** (5 COPIES)

'Then We Came to the End' is about how we spend our days and too many of our nights. It is about being away from friends and family, about sharing a stretch of stained carpet with a group of strangers we call colleagues. The novel is the story of your life, the story of our times

This Book will Save your Life by A M Homes (11 COPIES)

An uplifting story set in Los Angeles about one man's effort to bring himself back to life. Richard is a modern day everyman; a middle-aged divorcee trading stocks out of his home. He has done such a good job getting his life under control that he needs no one. His life has slowed almost to a standstill, until two incidents conspire to hurl him back into the world. One day he wakes up with a knotty cramp in his back, which rapidly develops into an all-consuming pain. At the same time a wide sinkhole appears outside his living room window, threatening the foundations of his house. A vivid novel about compassion and transformation, "This Book Will Save Your Life" reveals what can happen if you are willing to open up to the world around you. Since her debut in 1989, A.M. Homes has been among the boldest and most original voices

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of her generation, acclaimed for the psychological accuracy and unnerving emotional intensity of her storytelling. Her keen ability to explore how extraordinary the ordinary can be is at the heart of her touching and funny new novel, her first in six years.

The Visible World. By Mark Slouka **NEW TITLE** (6 COPIES)

This is a story about memory and concealed histories, and about the way deeply hidden secrets of the past, eventually force their way into present.

We Need to Talk About Kevin by Lionel Shriver (9 COPIES)

Two years ago, Eva Khatchadourian's son, Kevin, murdered seven of his fellow high-school students, a cafeteria worker, and a popular algebra teacher. Because he was only fifteen at the time of the killings, he received a lenient sentence and is now in a prison for young offenders in upstate New York. Telling the story of Kevin's upbringing, Eva addresses herself to her estranged husband through a series of letters. Fearing that her own shortcomings may have shaped what her son has become, she confesses to a deep, long-standing ambivalence about both motherhood in general and Kevin in particular. How much is her fault? Lionel Shriver tells a compelling, absorbing, and resonant story while framing these horrifying tableaux of teenage carnage as metaphors for the larger tragedy - the tragedy of a country where everything works, nobody starves, and anything can be bought but a sense of purpose.

What a Carve Up! by Jonathan Coe (6 COPIES)

Michael is a lonely writer, obsessed by a film featuring a mad knifeman. When he is commissioned to write the family history of the Winshaws he realizes that the family have cast a blight on his life and he decides to take his revenge by re-enacting his favourite film.

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