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Realistic, Contemporary Fiction for Young Adults

Tired of dystopias, zombies and dragons? Here are some contemporary novels about and for young adult readers dealing with real life drama like friendships, identity, family, school, and heartbreak. To order any of these titles, contact the library by email, phone, mail, in person, or order through our [online catalog](#). Select titles can be [downloaded from BARD](#).

Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda By Becky Albertalli

Read by Jordan Leigh

Reading time 6 hours, 21 minutes

Not-so-openly-gay Simon Spier is blackmailed into playing wingman for his high school classmate with the threat that his sexual identity--and that of his secret pen-pal Blue--will be revealed. Strong language. William C. Morris Award. For senior high and older readers. 2015.

[Download from BARD: Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB083557

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR21328](#)

Also available in braille BR021328

Booked By Kwame Alexander

Read by Alec Volz

Reading time 2 hours, 54 minutes

A novel in verse. Eighth-grader Nick Hall loves soccer and hates books, but he soon learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. For grades 5-8. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Booked](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084472

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian By Sherman Alexie

Read by Michael Russotto

Reading time 5 hours, 38 minutes

Spokane Indian Reservation. Fourteen-year-old Junior--beset with physical problems caused by brain damage--transfers to an all-white town school. Called a traitor by his best friend and Tonto by his new classmates, Junior uses humor and wit to bridge the cultural divide. Some strong language. For junior and senior high readers. 2007.

[Download from BARD: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian](#)

Also available on cassette RC065403

The Haters By Jesse Andrews

Read by Michael Crouch

Reading time 8 hours, 39 minutes

When best friends Wes and Corey meet guitar player Ash, an older girl, the trio decide to ditch their jazz camp experience and embark on a raunchy road-trip adventure in search of becoming a true band. Strong language and some descriptions of sex. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: The Haters](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084063

Kids of Appetite By David Arnold

Read by Phoebe Strole

Reading time 10 hours, 3 minutes

Teens Victor Benucci and Madeline Falco sit in separate police interrogation rooms, telling about the misfits who brought them together and their journey, sparked by a message in an urn. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Kids of Appetite](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB085876

Thirteen Reasons Why By Jay Asher

Read by Erik Sandvold

Reading time 8 hours, 3 minutes

Clay Jensen receives a box of audiocassettes in the mail with no return address. Hannah Baker--a girl he barely knew but secretly liked, who committed suicide--recorded a final message for thirteen people to listen to and then pass on to the next person. For senior high readers. 2007.

[Download from BARD: Thirteen Reasons Why](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB070544

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants By Ann Brashares

Read by Ann Hodapp

Reading time 6 hours, 7 minutes

Four fifteen-year-olds, "Bridget the athlete, Lena the beauty, Tibby the rebel, and Carmen...the one with the bad temper," have been friends since childhood. During this first summer apart, they share a pair of used jeans that magically fits each of them perfectly and helps them through tough times. For senior high readers. 2001.

[Download from BARD: The Sisterhood of the Traveling](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB053252

Also available on cassette RC053252

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR13765](#)

Also available in braille BR013765

The Perks of Being a Wallflower By Stephen Chbosky

Read by Noah Galvin

Reading time 6 hours, 22 minutes

1991. High school freshman Charlie shares his observations in letters to someone he doesn't know. After befriending Patrick, who is gay, and Patrick's stepsister Sam, Charlie becomes more involved in the world around him. Young adult appeal. Some strong language and some explicit descriptions of sex. Commercial audiobook. 1999.

[Download from BARD: The Perks of Being a Wallflower](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075897

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR12551](#)

Also available in braille BR012551

Carter Finally Gets It By Brent Crawford

Read by Mark Delgado

Reading time 7 hours, 38 minutes

Will Carter--who has ADD--spends freshman year of high school obsessed with hot girls, sports, and basic survival. But when his friend Abby suddenly confesses to liking him, Carter realizes that growing up and dating are harder than they look. Some strong language. For junior and senior high readers. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Carter Finally Gets It](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB070493

Swim the Fly By Don Calame

Read by Erik Sandvold

Reading time 8 hours, 33 minutes

Every summer, marginal swimmers Cooper, Sean, and Matt set themselves crazy goals; this year's objective is to see a naked girl. When out-of-shape Matt falls for Kelly, the new girl on the swim team, his first priority is learning to swim the butterfly. For junior and senior high readers. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Swim the Fly](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB069067

The Royal We By Heather Cocks and Jessica Morgan

Read by Christine Lakin

Reading time 17 hours, 56 minutes

While studying at Oxford, American Rebecca Porter's neighbor is none other than Prince Nicholas, heir to the throne of Great Britain. She falls for him, but she must decide if she loves Nick enough as a man to get over him being a prince. Descriptions of sex and some strong language. Commercial audiobook. 2015.

[Download from BARD: The Royal We](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB081265

Boys Don't Knit (In Public) By Tom Easton

Read by Graham Halstead

Reading time 6 hours, 47 minutes

After a brush with the law, Ben, a dyed-in-the-wool worrier, must take up a new hobby as a condition of probation and chooses knitting. Amazed and conflicted by his own skill, Ben strives to keep his talent a secret. Some strong language. For senior high and older readers. 2015.

[Download from BARD: Boys Don't Knit \(In Public\)](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB082111

The Great American Whatever By Tim Federle

Read by Nick DePinto

Reading time 6 hours, 25 minutes

Sixteen-year-old Quinn, an aspiring screenwriter, copes with his sister's death, while his best friend Geoff forces him back into the world to face his new reality, starting with a college party. There, Quinn falls for a cute older guy. Strong language and descriptions of sex. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: The Great American Whatever](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB085186

Symptoms of Being Human By Jeff Garvin

Read by Mare Trevathan

Reading time 8 hours, 7 minutes

Teen child of a congressman, Riley, who identifies as a girl on some days and a boy on others, blogs anonymously about being gender-fluid. After being exposed as the author, Riley's life becomes even more complicated. Some violence and some strong language. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Symptoms of Being Human](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084902

Lily and Dunkin By Donna Gephart

Read by Ryan Gesell

Reading time 8 hours, 50 minutes

Lily Jo, born Timothy, knows she is a girl, but it's difficult to get people to understand that in eighth grade, especially her father. New kid Norbert is bipolar and keeps a secret. The two find acceptance with each other and forge a special friendship. Commercial audiobook. For grades 6-9. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Lily and Dunkin](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084488

Into the Wild Nerd Yonder By Julie Halpern

Read by Erin Jones

Reading time 5 hours, 21 minutes

When Jessie's friends Bizza and Char suddenly turn punk before the start of their sophomore year of high school, Jessie grapples with finding her own identity and gaining new friends, like Dottie. Intrigued, Jessie discovers the world of Dungeons and Dragons. Some strong language. For senior high readers. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Into the Wild Nerd Yonder](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB070717

Kissing Doorknobs By Terry Spencer Hesser

When she is eleven years old, Tara Sullivan begins to hear voices compelling her to repeat certain behaviors over and over. Tara drives her parents and friends to distraction, but until she meets another sufferer years later, she doesn't know she has obsessive-compulsive disorder and can be treated. For junior and senior high readers.

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR12306](#)

Also available in braille BR012306

This Is the Part Where You Laugh By Peter Brown Hoffmeister

Read by Doug Tisdale

Reading time 6 hours, 27 minutes

Travis and his best friend, Creature, spend a summer in a Eugene, Oregon, trailer park dealing with cancer, basketball, first love, addiction, gang violence, and work on a special novel-in-progress. Strong language, some violence, and some descriptions of sex. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: This Is the Part Where You Laugh](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB085457

For the Record By Charlotte Huang

Read by Mare Trevathan

Reading time 7 hours, 5 minutes

As the new lead singer of the band Melbourne, former reality-show loser Chelsea has only the summer tour to make the band and their fans love her, or it is back to boring high school. Some strong language. For senior high and older readers. 2015.

[Download from BARD: For the Record](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084676

Firecracker By David Iserson

Seventeen-year-old Astrid gets kicked out of private school and is sent back to her privileged family's Krieger Estate. But Astrid is horrified to learn that she must now attend public school. Some strong language. For senior high and older readers. 2013.

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR20174](#)

Also available in braille BR020174

The Gospel of Winter a Novel By Brendan Kiely

Read by Clay Teunis

Reading time 8 hours, 19 minutes

As sixteen-year-old Aidan's family breaks apart around him, he seeks comfort in drugs, alcohol, and his friendship with a local priest. His world further collapses, however, when he discovers the darkness of Father Greg's affections. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. For high school and older readers. 2014.

[Download from BARD: The Gospel of Winter a novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB085027

Still Life with Tornado By A. S. King

Read by Karissa Vacker

Reading time 8 hours, 58 minutes

Sixteen-year-old Sarah, a talented artist, slowly discovers the history of domestic violence in her family and learns why her brother left years earlier. Suddenly, Sarah is no longer able to create art and believes she is having an existential crisis. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Still Life with Tornado](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB086247

Schooled By Gordon Korman

Read by Gary Tipton

Reading time 4 hours, 16 minutes

Raised and homeschooled on his grandmother's commune, thirteen-year-old Capricorn "Cap" Anderson abruptly transitions to a crowded and noisy middle school while his grandmother recuperates from an accident. Clueless and naive, Cap becomes a target for eighth-grade bully Zach Powers, who sets Cap up for ridicule. For grades 6-9. 2007.

[Download from BARD: Schooled](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB068597

You Know Me Well a Novel By Nina LaCour and David Levithan

Read by Emma Galvin

Reading time 6 hours, 38 minutes

Mark and Kate sit next to each other in school but are barely acquainted, until they meet at a San Francisco club during Pride Week and help each other over their forbidden crushes. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: You Know Me Well](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084699

Whisper to Me By Nick Lake

Read by Gabriella Cavallero

Reading time 13 hours, 17 minutes

Told through letter-writing flashbacks, Cassie, a New Jersey shore teen, experiences exhilarating highs of new love, the frightening free falls of personal demons and family tragedy, and the bumps along the way to forgiveness, acceptance, and self-discovery. Some strong language. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Whisper to Me](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084822

When We Collided By Emery Lord

Read by Elizabeth Evans Reading time 8 hours, 22 minutes

After the death of his father, seventeen-year-old Jonah struggles to hold his family and their restaurant together. Vivi, a new summer resident in Verona Cove, tempts him with her vibrant personality, but she harbors her own secrets. Some strong language. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: When We Collided](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB086607

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR21729](#)

Also available in braille BR021729

Dumplin' By Julie Murphy

Read by Mare Trevathan Reading time 8 hours, 39 minutes

Willowdean, a Dolly Parton enthusiast, wants to prove to everyone in her small Texas town that she is more than just a fat girl. Therefore, Will and some other social misfits prepare to compete in a beauty pageant. Strong language. For junior and senior high and older readers. 2015.

[Download from BARD: Dumplin'](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB082707

Destroy All Cars by Blake Nelson

Read by Julian Thompson Reading time 4 hours, 16 minutes

In his AP English class assignments, James Hoff rants against cars, consumerism, his ex-girlfriend Sadie Kinnell, and everything he thinks is wrong with the world. When Sadie breaks up with her current boyfriend, James renews his interest. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. For senior high readers. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Destroy All Cars](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB069589

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR18676](#)

Also available in braille BR018676

We Are All Made of Molecules By Susin Nielsen-Fernlund

Read by Jorjeana Marie Reading time 5 hours, 46 minutes

Brilliant but socially-challenged Stewart and mean-girl Ashley must find common ground when his father moves in with her mother. Commercial audiobook. For grades 6-9 and older readers. 2015.

[Download from BARD: We Are All Made of Molecules](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB082328

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR21129](#)

Also available in braille BR021129

Anna and the French Kiss By Stephanie Perkins

Read by Kim Mai Guest Reading time 10 hours, 27 minutes

When Anna Oliphant's father--a bestselling novelist--sends her to an elite American boarding school in Paris for her senior year of high school, she is less than thrilled. But Anna befriends a boy, and soon they both yearn for something more. For senior high and older readers. 2010.

[Download from BARD: Anna and the French Kiss](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB081201

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR20421](#)

Also available in braille BR020421

Every Exquisite Thing By Matthew Quick

Read by Vanessa Johansson Reading time 5 hours, 58 minutes

Her beloved teacher gives star student and athlete Nanette a mysterious, out-of-print, cult classic novel that sparks the rebel within her. But as she befriends the reclusive author, Nanette learns that sometimes rebellion comes at a high price. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Every Exquisite Thing](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084378

Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging Confessions of Georgia

Nicolson By Louise Rennison

Read by Erin Jones

Reading time 4 hours, 26 minutes

A fourteen-year-old English schoolgirl records important events in her journal, describing life at school and at home with her toddler sister and troublemaking cat. Georgia and her boy-crazy girlfriends spend their spare time on beauty treatments and devising strategies for catching the right guy's attention. For senior high readers. 1999.

[Download from BARD: Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging...](#)

Also available on cassette RC052089

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR12902](#)

Also available in braille BR012902

Fangirl By Rainbow Rowell

Read by Abigail Maupin

Reading time 11 hours, 55 minutes

Eighteen-year-old Cath's adoration of fantasy character Simon Snow leads to her penning a fanfiction story that is popular online. Offline, shy Cath is out of her comfort zone at her new college--until romance finds her. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. For senior high and older readers. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Fangirl](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077545

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe By Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Read by Bruce Huntley

Reading time 6 hours, 57 minutes

Ari Mendoza is an angry loner whose older brother is in prison. But when Ari meets Dante--his opposite--the boys form a strong bond. Ari starts to ask questions about himself, his family, and the universe. Violence and strong language. For senior high and older readers. Stonewall, Pura Belpre Awards. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB076122

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR19825](#)

Also available in braille BR019825

Winger by Andrew Smith

Read by Mark Delgado

Reading time 8 hours, 55 minutes

Fourteen-year-old Ryan Dean, a junior at a prestigious boarding school, grapples with playing on the varsity rugby team, falling in love with his best friend Annie, and avoiding his bullying roommate Chas. Strong language, some violence, and some descriptions of sex. For senior high and older readers. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Winger](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB076899

It's Kind of a Funny Story By Ned Vizzini

Read by Jonathan Davis

Reading time 10 hours, 51 minutes

A tongue-in-cheek account of what leads high-achieving New York teenager Craig Gilner to check himself into a psychiatric hospital and how he comes to terms with depression while staying in the adult ward. Some descriptions of sex and some strong language. For senior high readers. 2006.

[Download from BARD: It's Kind of a Funny Story](#)

Also available on cassette RC062633

Highly Illogical Behavior By John Corey. Whaley

Read by Julia Whelan.

Reading time 6 hours, 19 minutes

Agoraphobic sixteen-year-old Solomon has not left his house in three years, but Lisa is determined to change that and get into a top psychology school based on the results. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: Highly Illogical Behavior](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB084363

Everything, Everything By Nicola Yoon

Read by Robbie Daymond

Reading time 6 hours, 46 minutes

Madeline has severe combined immunodeficiency and is literally allergic to the outside world. When a new family moves in next door, she and neighbor Olly begin a complicated romance that challenges everything she's ever known. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2015.

[Download from BARD: Everything, Everything](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB082468

The Serpent King By Jeff Zentner

Read by Michael Crouch

Reading time 9 hours, 9 minutes

In rural Tennessee, musician Dill, the son of a frequently imprisoned Pentecostal preacher, and his two outcast friends struggle to remain true to themselves as they contemplate their futures during their final year of high school. Violence and some strong language. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers. 2016.

[Download from BARD: The Serpent King](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB083873