



Young Adult Fiction: Alex Award Winning Books- Adult Fiction of Special Interest to Young People 12 – 18

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the ALA, selects ten books a year for the Alex award. The Alex award is given to books that are adult-level reading books but have special appeal to a young adult audience. 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](#).

Pure By Julianna Baggott

Read by Khristine Hvam

Reading time 14 hours, 6 minutes

Nanotechnology bombs leave some survivors fused to whatever is near them. Those who escaped fusing, the Pures, live in isolation from the victims, or Wretches. But when Partridge, one of the Pures, encounters Wretch Pressia, he enlists her help in finding his mother. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. Alex Award. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Pure](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB078234

The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake By Aimee Bender

Read by Jill Fox

Reading time 8 hours, 2 minutes

On her ninth birthday, Rose realizes she can taste her mother's emotions baked into a slice of cake. Eating becomes agonizing for Rose as she uncovers everyone's feelings. But she learns in adulthood to put her ability to good use. Some strong language. Bestseller. 2010.

[Download from BARD: The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB071699

City of Thieves a Novel By David Benioff

Read by Steven Carpenter

Reading time 7 hours, 46 minutes

Leningrad, 1942. Seventeen-year-old Lev Beniov, a looter, and his cellmate Kolya, a deserter, are reprieved by a Soviet colonel who needs eggs for his daughter's wedding cake. The two leave the besieged city and cross enemy lines, where they encounter death squads and partisans. Violence and strong language. Alex Award. 2008.

[Download from BARD: City of Thieves a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067228

Ready Player One By Ernest Cline

Read by Erik Sandvold

Reading time 16 hours, 46 minutes

2045. Multibillionaire James Halliday dies, leaving his last will and testament online for the world to see. His massively multiplayer online game OASIS has a hidden feature--an Easter egg--and the person who finds the egg first wins Halliday's fortune. Some strong language. Bestseller. Alex Award. 2011.

[Download from BARD: Ready Player One](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB073772

Room By Emma Donoghue

Read by Steven Carpenter

Reading time 9 hours, 8 minutes

Five-year-old Jack describes the locked room he has always lived in with his mother. He stays in the wardrobe when Old Nick visits and brings supplies. Jack watches television but thinks all of it is make believe. Then Jack's mother asks him to help with an escape plan. Bestseller. Alex Award. 2010.

[Download from BARD: Room](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB071989

The Round House By Louise Erdrich

Read by Gregory Maupin

Reading time 10 hours, 41 minutes

North Dakota, 1988. Thirteen-year-old Joe Coutts's mother Geraldine, a tribal enrollment specialist, is brutally raped at the Ojibwe Round House. Joe and his father, a judge, each search for Geraldine's attacker to bring him to justice. Strong language, some violence, and some descriptions of sex. National Book Award. Bestseller. 2012.

[Download from BARD: The Round House](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075641

The Universe Versus Alex Woods By Gavin Extence

Read by Joe. J. Thomas

Reading time 10 hours, 5 minutes

Seventeen-year-old Alex Woods has suffered from epilepsy and bullying since he was struck by a meteorite when he was ten. When he takes the rap for damaging his reclusive neighbor Mr. Peterson's greenhouse, Alex and Mr. Peterson bond over the works of Kurt Vonnegut. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. Alex Award. 2013.

[Download from BARD: The Universe Versus Alex Woods](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB078141

The Magicians a Novel By Lev Grossman

Read by Colleen Delany

Reading time 16 hours, 31 minutes

Bored with life, Quentin Coldwater spends his time reading fantasy and dreaming of the mythical realm of Fillory. But after being transported off the street to the Brakebills College for Magical Pedagogy, Quentin realizes that real sorcery isn't easy. Strong language and some descriptions of sex. Bestseller. Alex Award. 2009.

[Download from BARD: The Magicians a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB069579

The Lock Artist By Steve Hamilton

Read by MacLeod Andrews

Reading time 12 hours, 42 minutes

Teenager Michael Smith, who experienced a trauma at age eight that left him mute, has the ability to open any locked door or safe. Blackmailed to work on burglary jobs for a Detroit mobster, Michael struggles to regain his speech--and his life. Strong language, some violence, and some descriptions of sex. Commercial audiobook. Alex Award. 2010.

[Download from BARD: The Lock Artist](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB070587

Genghis Birth of an Empire, a Novel of Genghis Khan By Conn Iggulden

Read by Ken Kliban

Reading time 15 hours, 58 minutes

Asia, twelfth century. When the clan abandons his family, young Temujin--the future Genghis Khan--fights for survival on the harsh steppe. As Temujin grows into both a fierce warrior and a diplomat, he builds an army to one day conquer his enemies and unite the Mongol tribes. Violence. Alex Award. 2007.

[Download from BARD: Genghis Birth of an Empire, a Novel of Genghis...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067044

Mister Pip By Lloyd Jones

Read by Margaret Strom

Reading time 7 hours, 8 minutes

Tom Watts, the lone white man on a war-torn Pacific island, volunteers as schoolmaster and begins reading Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* to his students. The novel helps thirteen-year-old Matilda escape from the horrors of reality, even when the violence reaches her village. Some violence and some strong language. Alex Award. 2006.

[Download from BARD: Mister Pip](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067788

The Boy who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope By William Kamkwamba

Read by Jon Huffman

Reading time 11 hours, 4 minutes

Memoir of Malawi youth William, a school dropout who was inspired by a library book to build the first windmill in his village. Describes growing up on a farm without electricity, surviving famine, recycling scraps into a windmill to generate power, and inspiring others. Alex Award. 2009.

[Download from BARD: The Boy who Harnessed the Wind: Creating...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB072673

Just After Sunset By Stephen King

Read by Don Hagen

Reading time 14 hours, 11 minutes

Thirteen suspenseful short stories. In "The Gingerbread Girl" a grieving woman whose baby has died retreats to the Florida Keys only to encounter a serial killer. In "The Things They Left Behind" a man finds items belonging to his murdered coworkers in his apartment. Violence and strong language. Bestseller. Alex Award. 2008.

[Download from BARD: Just After Sunset](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067854

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR18104](#)

Also available in braille BR018104

Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok

Read by Elisabeth Rodgers Reading time 9 hours, 9 minutes

Eleven-year-old Ah-Kim "Kimberly" Chang and her widowed mother move to New York City before the 1997 Chinese takeover of their native Hong Kong. They live in an unheated apartment and work in Kimberly's aunt's Brooklyn sweatshop. But Kimberly's intelligence earns her a private-school scholarship and hope for the future. Alex Award. 2010.

[Download from BARD: Girl in Translation](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB073069

The God of Animals a Novel by Aryn Kyle

Read by Mare Trevathan Reading time 11 hours, 5 minutes

Colorado. When her older sister elopes, sixth-grader Alice Winston helps care for her mother, who is bedridden by depression, and assists her father in running the family's struggling horse farm. Strong language, some descriptions of sex, and some violence. For senior high and older readers. Alex Award. 2007.

[Download from BARD: The God of Animals a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067017

The Night Birds by Thomas Maltman

Read by David Hartley-Margolin Reading time 14 hours

Minnesota, 1876. Lonely teenager Asa's aunt Hazel comes to live with his family after a long stay in a mental institution. Asa appreciates her company and stories, which teach him about his German-immigrant relatives, their divide over slavery, and Hazel's bond with a Dakota warrior. Violence. Alex Award. 2007.

[Download from BARD: The Night Birds](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB070570

The Talk Funny Girl a Novel By Roland Merullo

Read by Laura Giannarelli Reading time 12 hours, 6 minutes

New Hampshire, 1980s. Marjorie is raised in impoverished isolation by unemployed parents who speak their own dialect and follow a sadistic minister. When Marjorie turns seventeen, her aunt finds her work with a stonemason. Meanwhile, a killer targets teenage girls. Some violence and some descriptions of sex. Alex Award. 2011.

[Download from BARD: The Talk Funny Girl a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075175

The Night Circus By Erin Morgenstern

Read by Gabriella Cavallero Reading time 13 hours, 11 minutes
At the Circus of Dreams magicians Celia and Marco are pitted against each other in an epic magical battle. Their mentors plan for it to have only one survivor, not foreseeing that Celia and Marco will fall in love. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. Bestseller. 2011.

[Download from BARD: The Night Circus](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB073783

The Death of Bees By Lisa O'Donnell

Read by Martha Harmon Pardee Reading time 6 hours, 42 minutes
Sisters Marnie and Nelly bury their parents in the backyard. Fifteen-year-old Marnie hides their secret from inquisitive adults, hoping to hold them at bay until she turns sixteen and can become her younger sister's legal guardian. Violence, some strong language, and some explicit descriptions of sex. Alex Award. 2012.

[Download from BARD: The Death of Bees](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB078303

American Shaolin Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks, and the Legend of Iron Crotch : an Odyssey in the New China By Matthew Polly

Read by Christopher Hurt Reading time 11 hours, 59 minutes
Travel writer describes the two years he spent studying kung fu at the Shaolin Temple, the birthplace of Zen Buddhism and martial arts. Discusses his 1992 journey to China, where he absorbed the culture and came of age. Some strong language. For senior high and older readers. Alex Award. 2007.

[Download from BARD: American Shaolin Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067650

Bad Monkeys By Matt Ruff

Read by Faith Potts Reading time 7 hours, 8 minutes
Jane Charlotte awakens in a psychiatric detention center after murdering a man--a "bad monkey"--for the secret crime-fighting organization she belongs to. Dr. Vale listens to Jane's life story while determining whether she is mentally ill. Some violence and some strong language. Alex Award. 2007.

[Download from BARD: Bad Monkeys](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB068037

Where'd You Go, Bernadette By Maria Semple

Read by Margaret Strom

Reading time 10 hours, 49 minutes

Seattle. Eighth-grader Bee's request for a family trip to Antarctica is the last straw for her mother Bernadette, who has become so socially inept that she hired a virtual assistant in India to handle her life. Just before the trip, Bernadette vanishes. Heartbroken Bee investigates. Some strong language. Bestseller. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Where'd You Go, Bernadette](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075351

Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore By Robin Sloan

Read by Andy Pyle

Reading time 9 hours, 48 minutes

While hunting for a new job, Web designer Clay Jannon wanders across Mr. Penumbra's Twenty-Four-Hour Bookstore, which sits next to a strip joint. Hired for the night shift, Clay is soon drawn into a world of mystery, intrigue, and kooky customers. Alex Award. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075599

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR19723](#)

Also available in braille BR019723

Brewster a Novel By Mark Slouka

Read by Ray Childs

Reading time 10 hours, 28 minutes

Brewster, New York; 1969. Best friends Jon and Ray are trying to cope with small-town life and loss. Jon still mourns over the untimely death of his older brother twelve years ago. Ray deals with his abusive father, an ex-cop. Both boys seek freedom. Violence and strong language. Alex Award. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Brewster a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077306

Golden Boy By Abigail Tarttelin

Read by James Konicek

Reading time 13 hours, 12 minutes

Fifteen-year-old Max is the golden boy at school and worshipped at home by his little brother and parents. But when Max, who is intersex, is raped by a childhood friend, his family's world falls apart. Violence, strong language, and explicit descriptions of sex. Alex Award. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Golden Boy](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB078383

The Good Thief by Hannah Tinti

Read by Jim Zeiger

Reading time 10 hours, 30 minutes

New England, 1800s. Ren, a twelve-year-old, one-handed orphan with no memory of his past, is adopted by Benjamin Nab, a con man claiming to be Ren's long-lost brother. As Benjamin introduces Ren to a dark, surreal world of grave robbers and petty thieves, Ren discovers his true parentage. Some violence. Alex Award. 2008.

[Download from BARD: The Good Thief](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB068250

Salvage the Bones By Jesmyn Ward

Read by Erin Jones

Reading time 8 hours, 15 minutes

Mississippi, August 2005. Young black teenager Esch Batiste--pregnant, hungry, and rejected--helps her widowed father and three brothers prepare for the approaching hurricane. When the storm arrives, the family seeks refuge in the attic. Violence, strong language, and some explicit descriptions of sex. National Book Award. Alex Award. 2011.

[Download from BARD: Salvage the Bones](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB074033

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR19453](#)

Also available in braille BR019453

Robocalypse a Novel By Daniel H Wilson

Read by Jack Fox

Reading time 10 hours, 46 minutes

In the near future, artificial intelligence leaps ahead of humans' abilities and can no longer be contained. When a computer program escapes from the lab and initiates random attacks, most people remain unaware until too late--robots have already taken over the world. Violence and strong language. Alex Award. 2011.

[Download from BARD: Robocalypse a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB074340

Mother, Mother a Novel By Koren Zailckas

Read by Celeste Lawson

Reading time 11 hours, 46 minutes

Josephine Hurst runs her household with an iron fist. Family members who don't live up to her expectations are cast aside and Josephine focuses her attentions on those who remain. But an incident involving daughter Violet prompts a visit from child protective services. Strong language and some violence. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Mother, Mother a Novel](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077649