

2002 Best Books for Young Adults

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Eighty-four books were chosen as Best Books for Young Adults by the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association. The list of titles includes fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and biography recommended for young adults ages 12-18. Thirteen titles received unanimous votes from the 15 member committee: *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* by Ann Brashares, four girls' adventures with a pair of magical pants; *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher, the triumph of diversity and non-conformity over prejudice; *Breathing Underwater* by Alex Flinn, one boy's struggle with his own anger; *Damage* by A. M. Jenkins, a teen's downward spiral into depression; *You Don't Know Me* by David Klass, where a teen copes with his mother's boyfriend's abuse; *Cut* by Patricia McCormick, in which a teen overcomes her obsession with self-mutilation; *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson, one boy's survival on a remote island where he confronts his inner demons; *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali* by Walter Dean Myers, the biography of the famous fighter; *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman, the third book in the His Dark Materials fantasy trilogy; *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones, free verse celebrating a teen girl's coming-of-age; *The Land* by Mildred Taylor, the prequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; *True Believer* by Virginia Euwer Wolff, where a teen works hard for success and learns hard truths about love; and, *Fighting Ruben Wolfe* by Markus Zusak, in which two brothers join an illegal fight circuit to help their family survive.

Committee members were: Donna McMillen, Chair, Fairwood Library, King County Library System, Renton, WA; Nicolas Buron, Queens Borough Public Library, New York, NY; Margaret Butzler, Bethel Park Public Library, Bethel Park, PA; Nicole Cooke, Montclair, NJ; Valerie Diamond, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD; Cynthia Dobrez, Harbor Lights School, Holland, MI; Donna Gilliland, University of Saint Thomas, Keffer Library, Minneapolis, MN; Nancy Maltby Henkel, Maple Valley Library, King County Library System, Maple Valley, WA; Diana Tixler Herald, Grand Junction, CO; Jan Hoberecht, Newton, KS; Andrea Howe, Albuquerque Academy Library, Albuquerque, NM; Susan Hunter, Riverside Middle School, Springfield, VT; Betsy Levine, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA; Diane Monnier, Bethesda Regional Library, Bethesda, MD; Cindy Welch, Harold Washington Library, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, IL; Stephanie Zvirin, Consultant, American Library Association, Chicago, IL; Angelina Benedetti, Administrative Assistant, King County Library System, Issaquah, WA.

An annotated list will appear in the March 15 issue of Booklist. For more information, contact the YALSA office by phone at 800-545-2433 x 4390 or e-mail, yalsa@ala.org ([/yalsa/yalsamemonly/yalsamoawards/mailto](http://yalsa/yalsamemonly/yalsamoawards/mailto))

Fiction

Bell, Hilari. **A Matter of Profit** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$16.95 (0-06-029513-9).

The Vivitare have conquered most of the peaceful T'chin Confederacy, but Ahvren questions the victory as he tries to trace an assassination plot in time to prevent it.

Brashares, Ann. **The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants** . 2001. Delacorte, \$14.95 (0-385-72933-2).

Four lifelong high-school friends and a magical pair of jeans take summer journeys to discover love, disappointments, and self-realization.

Brooks, Bruce. **All That Remains** . 2001. Atheneum, \$16.00 (0-689-83351-2).

Three novellas highlighting teens whose lives are affected in various ways by a death in the family.

Card, Orson Scott. **Shadow of the Hegemon** . 2001. Tor Books, \$25.95 (0-312-87651-3).

Targeted for assassination, Bean escapes when the other Battle School kids are abducted from their recently united families, leaving Petra to spearhead the fight from inside captivity.

Clement-Davies, David. **Fire Bringer** . 2000. Dutton Children's Books, \$19.95 (0-525-46492-1).

Rannoch, a young red deer, discovers he is the changeling destined to fulfill "the Prophecy," to defeat the evil Sgorr, and reunite the Great Herd.

The Color of Absence: **Twelve Stories About Loss and Hope** . Edited by James Howe. 2001. Atheneum, \$16.00 (0-689-82862-4).

Twelve stories explore the theme of loss - losing family members, friends, pets and innocence - and possibilities for healing and hope.

Cormier, Robert. **The Rag and Bone Shop** . 2001. Delacorte, \$15.95 (0-385-72962-6).

When twelve-year-old Jason is questioned as a witness in a young girl's murder investigation, he doesn't realize that his interrogation in the hands of a skilled detective will become a matter of life and death.

Crutcher, Chris. **Whale Talk** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$16.95 (0-06-029369-1).

Multiethnic T. J. leads a high-school swim team of nonconformists on a quest for a varsity letter jacket.

Ferris, Jean. **Eight Seconds** . 2000. Harcourt, \$17.00 (0-15-202367-4).

John's eighteenth summer is complicated by his struggle to understand his feelings toward Kit, a star bull rider that he metes at rodeo camp.

Ferris, Jean. **Of Sound Mind** . 2001. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$16.00 (0-374-35580-0).

High-school senior Theo is tired of being the "ears" for his deaf parents, especially when it begins to interfere with his plans for college and the rest of his life.

Fleischman, Paul. **Seek** . 2001. Cricket Books, \$16.95 (0-8126-4900-1).

The sounds of Rob's life - a radio DJ, Mexican soap operas, and his grandparents' storytelling - make up this compelling radio play.

Flinn, Alex. **Breathing Underwater** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-06-029198-2).

After Nick's girlfriend, Caitlin, has a restraining order issued against him, he is forced to come to grips with his anger and low self-esteem.

Geras, Adele. **Troy** . 2001. Harcourt, \$17.00 (0-15-216492-8).

Told from the point of view of the women of Troy, this book portrays the last weeks of the Trojan War. It is a modern version of the drama, complete with gods and goddesses who find ways to stir up trouble.

Griffin, Adele. **Amandine** . 2001. Hyperion Books for Children, \$15.99 (0-7868-0618-4).

Delia is the new girl at school mid-year in ninth grade and at first Amandine seems like the perfect best friend...until things go terribly wrong.

Heneghan, James. **The Grave** . 2000. FS&G, \$17.00 (0-374-32765-3).

A 13-year-old Irish orphan's life is changed forever when he is drawn into the past through a construction site that reveals a mass grave.

Holm, Jennifer. **Boston Jane: an Adventure** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$16.95 (0-06-028738-1).

A graduate of a young ladies academy, 16-year-old Jane is forced to forget all her etiquette training when she takes a sea voyage to meet her fiancé.

Jenkins, A. M.. **Damage** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-0602-9099-4).

Football star and high-school senior Austin clings to a relationship with beautiful, sexy Heather in the hope she will be his salvation.

Jimenez, Francisco. **Breaking Through** . 2001. Houghton Mifflin, \$15.00 (0-618-01173-0).

When 14-year-old Francisco returns to California after being adopted, his hard work and inner strength take him success.

Jordan, Sherryl. **Secret Sacrament** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-06-028904-X).

After Gavriel witnesses a terrible crime against a Shinali woman, he becomes disenchanted with the rulers of the Navorran Empire and is determined to become a healer at the Citadel.

Klass, David. **You Don't Know Me** . 2001. FS&G, \$17.00 (0-374-38706-0).

John, a 14-year-old boy from a small town defends himself against an abusive home life, an outcast school life, and being a social misfit by living outside of himself.

Koertge, Ron. **Brimstone Journals** . 2001. Candlewick, \$15.99 (0-7636-1302-9). In short poems, 15 students from Branston High School (known by the students as "Brimstone") write about their problems, plans, and the fears that connect them all.

Les Becquets, Diane. **The Stones of Mourning Creek** . 2001. Winslow, \$16.95 (1-58837-004-6).

Francie's grief over her mother's mysterious death is eased by her growing friendship with an African-American teen, Ruthie, and her family.

Love and Sex: Ten Stories of Truth . Edited by Michael Cart. 2001. Simon & Schuster, \$18.00 (0-689-83203-6).

Ten highly original stories of love, lust, intimacy, and sex - gay, straight, questioning and gender bending.

Lynch, Chris. **Freewill** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-06-028176-6).

Why are you carving statues, Will? Do you think it's causing the suicides? Are you doing it of your own free will? Will you ever know?

McCormick, Patricia. **Cut** . 2000. Front Street, \$16.95 (1-886910-61-8).

Callie, 13 and confined to a treatment facility for self-mutilation, gradually begins to take him to understand some of the reasons behind her problems.

McDonald, Janet. **Spellbound** . 2001. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$16.00 (0-374-37140-7).

Raven, at 16, feels trapped at home with her baby until her sister suggests that she compete in a spelling in a spelling bee to win a college scholarship.

McDonald, Joyce. **Shades of Simon Gray** . 2001. Random House, \$15.95 (0-385-32659-9).

Was the terrible crash, which put Simon Gray into a coma really an accident, or was he simply wishing to end the guilt he feels when his illegal computer project fails?

Mikaelsen, Ben. **Touching Spirit Bear** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-380-97744-3). After angry Cole attacks another boy, he agrees to a Circle Justice sentence of banishment to a remote island, where he encounters a mystical spirit bear.

Moriarty, Jaclyn. **Feeling Sorry for Celia** . 2001. St. Martins, \$16.95 (0-312-26923-4).

Australian teenager Elizabeth's life is revealed through notes from imaginary organizations such as The Cold Hard Truth Association, and from post-it notes from her mom and letters to a local pen pal.

Mosher, Richard. **Zazoo** . 2001. Houghton Mifflin, \$16.00 (0-618-13534-0).

From the moment almost 14-year-old Zazoo sees the handsome young man on the black bicycle, her life is changed forever with never-explored questions about her own past and that of her beloved "Grand-Pierre."

Na, An. **A Step from Heaven** . 2001. Front Street, \$15.95 (1-886910-58-8).

One Korean family's struggle to find its way in America as seen through the eyes of young Ju Park, from her earliest memories through the end of high school.

Naidoo, Beverly. **The Other Side of Truth** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.95 (0-06-029628-3).

Sade flees Nigeria for London with her younger brother, after her mother is assassinated. Afraid to give their names, the two are both victimized and defrauded as they seek to be reunited with their family.

Nix, Garth. **Lirael** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$16.95 (0-06-027823-4).

Lirael becomes a librarian in the vast warren of a library that not only houses books but also guards monstrous dangers and arcane magic that lets her conjure up the Disreputable Dog who accompanies her on a quest when the dead start warring on the living.

Nolan, Han. **Born Blue** . 2001. Harcourt, \$17.00 (0-15-201916-2).

Abandoned as a toddler by her addicted mother, Janie/Leshaya finds a friend in foster brother Harmon, and solace in singing like the soulful "ladies" of Jazz and the blues.

On the Fringe . Edited by Don Gallo. 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$17.99 (0-8037-2656-2).

Eleven outstanding young adult authors contribute riveting stories as current as today's headlines.

Park, Linda Sue. **A Single Shard** . 2001. Houghton Mifflin, \$15.00 (0-395-97827-0).

In twelfth-century Korea, a 13-year-old orphan, Tree-ear, becomes an apprentice to a maker of celadon pottery and a family through unexpected paths.

Peck, Richard. **Fair Weather** . 2001. Dial Books for Young Readers, \$16.99 (0-8037-2516-7).

Rosie's family is invited by Aunt Euterpe to attend the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and her unpredictable grandfather decides to come

Pierce, Meredith Ann. **Treasure at the Heart of the Tanglewood** . 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$16.99 (0-670-89247-5).

When amnesiac Hannah defies a wizard and allows the healing flora that grows in her tresses to go unplucked, she and her talking animal companions set out on a trek that brings a change of seasons back to the world.

Pierce, Tamora. **Protector of the Small: Squire** . 2001. Random House, \$15.95 (0-679-889-167).

Keladry of Mendalin, now 14, 5'10", and a squire to a kindly knight, faces challenges in the field and in her first romance, as she anticipates her final ordeal in the frightening magic chamber.

Pratchett, Terry. **The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.89 (0-06-001234-X).

All those stories about plagues and rats and magic pipers make great advance publicity for Maurice, the talking cat, and his rat acquaintances (some more talkative than others), when they roll into town with their piper to scam yet another gullible bunch with a bit of widdling on the cheese and swimming in the fresh cream before collecting the loot and scampering out of town.

Pullman, Philip. **The Amber Spyglass** . 2000. Knopf, \$19.95 (0-679-87926-9).

In this third and final installment of Pullman's His Dark Materials series, Lyra and Will are reunited, visit the underworld, and pursue the puzzle of Dust.

Rees, Celia. **Witch Child** . 2001. Candlewick, \$15.99 (0-7636-1421-1).

In 1659, having watched her grandmother hung from the gallows as a witch, Mary Newbury keeps a journal of her experiences travelling to New England and finds the same intolerance that killed her grandmother.

Rice, David. **Crazy Loco** . 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$16.99 (0-8037-2598-1).

A collection of tales from Chicano life in small-town Texas - from poignant to hilarious.

Ryan, Sara. **Empress of the World** . 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$15.99 (0-670-89688-8).

Nicola, who is studying archaeology at a summer institute for gifted high school students, meets a group of new friends, and discovers that her attraction to Battle leads to her first experience of love and heartbreak.

Salisbury, Graham. **The Lord of the Deep** . 2001. Delacorte, \$15.95 (0-385-72918-9). Thirteen-year-old Mikey learns some hard truths about life and honor during three fateful days aboard his stepfather's deep-sea fishing boat off Hawaii.

Sanchez, Alex. **Rainbow Boys** . 2001. Simon and Schuster, \$17.00 (0-689-84100-0).

Three very different high-school boys deal with the issues involved in being gay: coming out to parents and friends, self-acceptance, the art of forming relationships, health-related issues, and the dangers of exploitation.

Shinn, Sharon. **Summers at Castle Auburn** . 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$14.95 (0-441-00803-8).

As the years pass, Coriel, the illegitimate daughter of a nobleman, who spends her summers at the castle, becomes aware of the intrigue and the dark side that surround the royalty.

Sones, Sonya. **What My Mother Doesn't Know** . 2001. Simon & Schuster, \$17.00 (0-689-84114-0).

Writing in free verse, Sophie describes her first experiences with boyfriends, love and other hazards in her search for Mr. Right.

Stratton, Allan. **Leslie's Journal**. 2000. Annick Press, \$19.95 (1-55037-665-9).

Using her English journal, Leslie records her life as it spins out of control.

Tashjian, Janet. **The Gospel According to Larry** . 2001. Henry Holt, \$16.95 (0-8050-6378-1).

Things spiral out of control for Josh, a loner, who masquerades as "Larry" as he espouses anti-consumerism on his anonymous Web site.

Taylor, Mildred. **The Land** . 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$17.99 (0-8037-1950-7).

In a prequel to the Newbery-Award winner Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Cassie Logan's grandfather, Paul Edward, tells of his heart-breaking but ultimately triumphant struggle to acquire the land that would become the Logan family legacy.

Tingle, Rebecca. **The Edge On the Sword** . 2001. Penguin Putnam, \$18.99 (0-399-23580-9).

In ninth century Britain, 15-year-old Aethlflaed, daughter of King Alfred, finds she must assume new responsibilities, including betrothal to her father's ally, to strengthen their kingdom against Danish invaders.

Vance, Susanna. **Sights** . 2001. Delacorte, \$15.95 (0-385-32761-7).

Baby Girl has the gift to see the future and she and her beautiful mother make a new life amid the characters in small-town Cot.

Vande Velde, Vivian. **Being Dead** . 2001. Harcourt, \$17.00 (0-15-216320-4).

Seven unquiet souls haunt these seven stories that chill the mind of the reader.

Vijayaraghaven, Vineeta. **Motherland** . 2001. Soho Press, \$23.00 (1-56947-217-3).

Even though Maya was born in India, she is all-American. When her parents send her to visit her grandmother for the summer, she rediscovers her homeland, receives an offer of marriage, and uncovers a family secret.

Weaver, Beth. **Rooster** . 2001. Winslow, \$15.95 (1-58837-001-1).

Frustrated with all her responsibilities, which include taking care of a senile grandmother to a mentally handicapped neighbor, Rooster, Kady becomes enamored with wealthy, popular, and unscrupulous Jon.

Werlin, Nancy. **Black Mirror** . 2001. Dial Books for Young Readers, \$16.99 (0-8037-2605-8).

Frances tries to uncover the secrets at her boarding school that may hide more than just the reasons for her brother's death while she comes to terms with her own mixed heritage.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. **Every Time a Rainbow Dies** . 2001. William Morrow, \$15.95 (0-688-16245-2).

Thulani is drawn out from his grief over the death of his mother when he comes to the aid of a rape victim and is obsessed with forming a relationship with her.

Wittlinger, Ellen. **Razzle** . 2001. Simon and Schuster, \$17.00 (0-689-83565-5).

Newly arrived in the small, artsy, Cape Cod community, Kenyon befriends

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. **True Believer** . 2001. Atheneum, \$17.00 (0-689-82827-6).

In this poetic sequel to Make Lemonade, LaVaughn finds that her changing goals and relationships bring her both pain and joy.

Zusak, Markus. **Fighting Ruben Wolfe** . 2001. Scholastic, \$15.95 (0-439-24188-X).

Two brothers from the wrong side of the tracks spar with life in defense of family and on the Australian underground boxing circuit.

Nonfiction

Colton, Larry. **Counting Coup: the True Story of Basketball and Honor on the Little Big Horn** . 2000.

Warner Books, \$24.95 (0-446-52683-5).

Sportswriter Larry Colton chronicles a season of Hardin High School (Montana) girls' basketball as the players struggle with injuries, prejudice and the dismal reality of life on the Crow Indian Reservation.

Cooper, Michael. **Fighting for Honor: Japanese Americans and World War II** . 2000. Houghton Mifflin, \$16.00 (0-395-91375-6).

The Japanese-American experience at home and on the front lines is revealed in this thoughtful book about World War II.

Fisher, Antwone, with Mim Eichler Rivas. **Finding Fish** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$25.00 (0-688-17699-2).

Once an abused foster child and a homeless teen, Antwone relates his struggle to attain successful manhood and find his lost family.

Fradin, Dennis Brindell. **Bound for the North Star: True Stories of Fugitive Slaves** . 2000. Clarion, \$20.00 (0-395-97017-2).

The stories of fifteen fugitive slaves who escaped to the North via the Underground Railroad and other routes.

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. **Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist** . 2001. Delacorte, \$14.95 (0-385-32806-0).

An intriguing, colorful, biography of the Dutch artist's troubled life.

Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by 20th Century American Art . Edited by Jan Greenberg. 2001. Harry Abrams, \$19.95 (0-8109-4386-7).

A compilation of poems written in response to various pieces of American art.

Hoose, Phillip. **We Were There, Too!: Young People in U.S. History** . 2001. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$26.00 (0-374-38252-2).

Stories of over 70 people of diverse cultures who were present or played a role at important events in U. S. history.

Kendall, Martha. **Failure Is Impossible: the History of American Women's Rights** . 2001. Lerner, \$22.60 (0-82225-1744-2).

A brief but lively account of the struggles for equality and opportunity faced and won by American women throughout our country's history.

Ketchum, Liza. **Into the New Country: Eight Remarkable Women of the West** . 2000. Little Brown, \$18.95 (0-316-49597-2).

Profiles eight women who made fascinating contributions to the history of the American West. Includes photos, illustrations, and primary-source material.

King, Daniel. **Chess: From First Moves to Checkmate** . 2001. Kingfisher, \$16.95 (0-7534-5387-8).

This attractive introduction to the game of chess combines understandable explanations with stunning computer graphics. Covered are rules, strategy, famous players, history, and the chess notation.

Lawlor, Laurie. **Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit** . 2001. Holiday House, \$22.95 (0-8234-1588-0).

Helen Keller's life - her fun-loving nature, romance, and strong political views.

Lee, Bruce; selected and edited by John Little. **Bruce Lee: the Celebrated Life of the Golden Dragon** . 2000. Tuttle, \$24.95 (0-8048-3230-7).

This biography of the martial arts legend includes tons of never published photos as well as Lee writing about his childhood, his family and his stardom.

Marrin, Albert. **George Washington and the Founding of a Nation** . 2001. Dutton Children's Books, \$30.00 (0-525-46481-6).

An information-packed biography that makes Washington a real person and reveals the hard road he and his contemporaries traveled in the formation of our country.

Murphy, Jim. **Blizzard: the Storm that Changed America**. 2000. Scholastic, \$18.95 (0-590-67309-2).

Based on newspaper articles and personal accounts, this chronicle of the Blizzard of 1888 vividly portrays how the Northeast was crippled by snow for three days.

Myers, Walter Dean. **Bad Boy: a Memoir** . 2001. HarperCollins, \$15.89 (0-06-029523-6).

In a memoir that is funny, heart wrenching and unforgettable, Myers tells the story of his childhood in Harlem.

Myers, Walter Dean. **The Greatest: Muhammad Ali** . 2001. Scholastic, \$16.95 (0-590-54342-3).

A moving biography of the greatest boxer who ever lived-his unpopular political views, his fallibility, and his generous spirit.

Nelson, Marilyn. **Carver: a Life in Poems** . 2001. Front Street, \$16.95 (1-886910-53-7).

A biography in poems that illuminates George Washington Carver's gentle spirit, artistic sensibility, generosity, and faith, in addition to his skills as a scientist and inventor.

Orgill, Roxane. **Shout, Sister, Shout!: Ten Girl Singers Who Shaped a Century** . 2001. Simon and Schuster, \$18.00 (0-689-81991-9).

A collective musical biography of female singers that spans the decades of the twentieth century.

Owen, David. **Hidden Evidence: Forty True Crimes and How Forensic Science Helped Solve Them** . 2000. Firefly Books Ltd., \$24.95 (1-55209-483-9).

The evolution of forensic science and crime investigation is detailed in this study that includes famous cases from Jack the Ripper, presidential assassinations and recent serial killers.

Things I Have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls . Edited by Betsy Franco. 2001. Candlewick, 8.99pb, \$15.99hb (0-7636-1035-6pb, 0-7636-0905-6hb).

A follow-up to You Hear Me, this collection of stories and poems by teen girls reveals the truth about boyfriends, body image and being female.

Voices: Poetry and Art From Around the World . edited by Barbara Brenner. 2000. National Geographic Society, \$18.95 (0-7922-7071-1).

A powerful, beautiful anthology of the universal language of poetry and art, organized by continent.

Words with Wings: a Treasury of African-American Poetry and Art . Edited by Belinda Rochelle. 2001. HarperCollins, \$16.95 (0-688-16415-3).

This treasury tells a story of the African-American experience through an arresting compilation of 20 poems and 20 art works by African-American poets and artists.

Yell-OH Girls!: Emerging Voices Explore Culture, Identity and Growing-Up Asian American . edited by Vickie Nam. 2001. HarperCollins, \$13.00 (0-06-095944-4).

Young women of Asian descent detail their experiences of growing up in America.