

2019 Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults

The 2019 Amazing Audiobooks list was curated from a complete list of 62 nominated titles and is comprised of 39 titles total; with 35 fiction and 3 nonfiction audiobooks. The list has titles that range the gamut from adult nonfiction that appeals to teens, to social justice, fantasy, sci-fi, and realistic fiction. The committee listened to over 300 titles this year in their quest to choose a myriad of audiobooks that would appeal to all subsets of the teen audience.

Members of the 2019 Amazing Audiobooks Blogging Team are: Coordinator **Erin Durrett**, Clinton-Macomb Public Library, Clinton Township, MI; **Catherine Andronik**, Brien McMahon High School, Norwalk, CT (Retired); **Anna Dalin**, OC Public Libraries, Garden Grove, CA; **Joyce Fong**, Toledo Lucas County Public Library, Toledo, OH; **Brittany Garcia**, Rancho Cucamonga Public Library, Rancho Cucamonga, CA; **Sarah Hannah Gomez**, The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; **Cyndi Hamann**, Crystal Lake Public Library, Crystal Lake, IL; **Samantha Jackson**, Algoma Public Library, Algoma, WI; **Amy Oelkers**, Washington County Library - Oakdale Branch, Oakdale, MN; **Kennedy Penn-O'Toole**, Albany County Public Library, Laramie, WY; **Erin Phemester**, Alachua County Library District, Gainesville, FL; **Becky Proie**, New Castle Public Library, New Castle, PA; **Jessica Hilbun Schwartz**, Louisville Public Library, Louisville, CO; **Denise Tabscott**, Harpeth Valley Elementary, Nashville, TN.

***indicates a top ten (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/2019-top-ten-amazing-audiobooks-young-adults>) selection**

An Absolutely Remarkable Thing by **Hank Green**, read by **Kristen Sieh** and **Hank Green**. Penguin Audio, 2018. 9 hours, 30 minutes; 8 discs. 978-0-525-64178-0. April May stumbles upon a large metal sculpture one night in New York City and makes a video of it with her friend Andy. The video launches April May into fame, and a multitude of moral quandaries. Sieh's narration authentically captures April May's journey while skillfully including tweets, texts and other media.

After the Shot Drops by **Randy Ribay**, read by **Ramon De Ocampo** and **J.B. Adkins**. Listening Library, 2018. 8 hours 5 minutes. 978-1-9848-2842-2. Bunny is a basketball star who switches to a prep school in hopes of getting a scholarship. Nasir is Bunny's childhood best friend, left behind, dealing with the injustice of his cousin Wallace's eviction. De Ocampo and Adkins bring nuance and personality to the struggles of Bunny and Nasir.

***Akata Witch** by **Nnedi Okorafor**, read by **Yetide Badaki**. Tantor Audio, 2018. 8 hours and 49 minutes; 7 discs. 978-1-9773-0242-7. Sunny, an Albino Nigerian-American girl, who feels she belongs nowhere discovers she belongs to an ancient world of magical people. She and her friends must use their magic to save the world from an evil that threatens to destroy it. Badaki's delivery of this story is mesmerizing.

***The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge** by **MT Anderson** and **Eugene Yelchin**, read by **Gildart Jackson**. Dreamscape Media, 2018. 5 hours, 25 minutes. 9781974930388. Elfin historian Brangwain Spurge is sent on a diplomatic mission to the goblin kingdom, and his host, goblin Archivist Werfel is thrilled about the potential to ease tensions between the elves and goblins. Gildart Jackson's voice is perfect for this biting satire as he gives life to each character in this hilarious, unique tale.

The Astonishing Color of After by **Emily X.R.Pan**, read by **Stephanie Hsu**. Blackstone Audio, 2018. 11 hours, 52 minutes. 978-1-5491-9715-4. Leigh finds solace following her mother's suicide in her belief that her mother has returned as a red bird. Hsu's narration is emotionally connected and immersive in this tale of magical realism.

The Belles by **Dhonille Clayton**, read by **Rosie Jones**. Blackstone Audio, 2018. 12 hours, 57 minutes. 978-1-5385-4058-9. Camelia Beauregard is a Belle, who longs to be "the favorite" until she starts to discover dark secrets surrounding the royal family and what being a Belle really means. Jones does a delightful job of differentiating characters and imbuing whimsy and intrigue into this unforgettable original story.

Beneath the Sugar Sky by **Seanan McGuire**, read by **Michelle Dockrey**. Macmillan Audio, 2018. 4 hours, 11 minutes; 4 discs. 978-1-4272-9379-4. Seventeen year old Rini enlists the help of Eleanor West's Home for Wayward Children's students in order to resurrect her teenage dead mother and save her candy-filled home world from disappearing. Michelle Dockrey delivers a stunning narration that truly brings this dark whimsical fantasy alive.

Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree by **Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani**, read by **Katherine Tegen**. HarperAudio, 2018. 5 hours, 59 minutes. 978-1-9825-5144-5. A nameless teenager recounts her months with the terrorist group Boko Haram. The author based her story on interviews with real Nigerian abductees. Narrator Vivana Mazza conveys a full emotional arc.

Children of Blood and Bone by **Tomi Adeyemi**, read by **Bahni Turpin**. Macmillan Audio, 2018. 18 hours, 9 minutes; 14 discs. 978-1-4272-9551-4. Zélie Adebola is the only one who can restore magic to Orïsha, by her side her brother and the princess of Orïsha, while the King of Orïsha and the Price are determined to stop her. Bahni Turpin does it again, giving each of the three main characters their own voice, and brings to life a new and amazing world.

Circe by **Madeline Miller**, read by **Perdita Weeks**. Hachette Audio, 2018. 12 hours, 8 minutes; 10 discs. 978-1-5491-4238-3. Inspired by ancient myths, plays, and epics, Miller's "Circe" is the retelling of the goddess and sorceresses' life and her influence on myths, monsters, and man. Weeks' narration appropriately lyrical as a narrator of an epic; whilst, her character narrations are befitting their mood, tone, and divine status.

The Cruel Prince by **Holly Black**, read by **Caitlin Kelly**. Hachette Audio, 2018. 11 discs; 12 hours, 50 minutes. 978-1-4789-2373-2. Desperate to find their place within the world as they know it, Jude, Taryn, and Vivienne live day by day in the Fairie world under constant pressure from non-humans. Kelly narrates the vicious fey with sharp voices and edges, perfect for an otherworldly tale.

***Educated** by **Tara Westover**, read by **Julia Whelan**. Random House, 2018. 12 hours, 10 minutes. 978-0-5255-2805-0. Tara Westover grew up in isolation with six siblings, an herbalist mother, and a devout Mormon father, and at seventeen, she begins to fight for her education. Whelan gives an understated performance for the narration, which has enough dramatic action, such as the harrowing accidents the family experiences, to compel the story.

Folded Notes from High School by **Matt Boren**, read by **Full Cast**. Listening Library, 2018. 4 hours, 48 minutes; 4 discs. 978-0525588580. Tara Murphy's folded notes correspondences between her friends,

boyfriend, and unexpected crush freshman Matthew Bloom between 1991-1992 make this title a blast from the past. The full cast add teen angst and personality to this satirical coming of age novel.

For Every One by **Jason Reynolds**, read by **Jason Reynolds**. Simon & Schuster Audio, 2018. 25 minutes; 1 discs. 978-1-5082-4611-4. A letter to everyone who is on their path to achieve their dream. Reynolds offers no answers to achieving one's dream; he only offers his honest and love, his experiences, his failures, and his realizations for the listener's consideration and inspiration.

Harbor Me by **Jacqueline Woodson**, read by a **Full Cast including N'Jameh Camara, Jacqueline Woodson** and **Toshi Widoff-Woodson**. Listening Library, 2018. 3 hours, 50 minutes. 978-0-5256-3910-1. Six kids with learning disabilities are given ARTT (A Room To Talk) by their teacher who realizes they need time and space to open up. Woodson uses a full cast to narrate this story about sharing difficult secrets with friends, and includes an interview with her charming 10 year old son.

***I Have Lost My Way** by **Gayle Forman**, read by **Nicole Lewis, Michael Crouch**, and **Sunil Malhotra**. Listening Library, 2018. 7 hours, 29 minutes; 6 discs. 978-0-5256-3626-7. Three young adults accidentally collide in New York City and embark on a single day of adventure, friendship, secrets, and loss that will change their lives forever. Lewis, Crouch and Malhotra are equally exemplary in portraying the characters in happiness, retrospection, growth, and sorrow.

The Hazel Wood by **Melissa Albert**, read by **Rebecca Soler**. Macmillan Audio, 2018. 10 hours, 30 minutes. 978-1-4272-9353-4. When her mother disappears, Alice Crewe finds that her estranged grandmother's collection of obscure fairy tales is more real than she imagined--and they're after her. Rebecca Soler's Alice is cynical but not over-the-top, and she tells the *Tales of the Hinterland* with the voice of a classic storyteller.

A Heart in a Body in the World by **Deb Caletti**, read by **Julia Whelan**. Simon & Schuster Audio, 2018. 8 hours, 39 minutes. 978-1-5082-6338-8. Annabelle's tragedy over the past year has her running clear across the country away from *The Taker* in hopes of finding some resolution to her feelings of guilt and shame over what happened. This relevant story about toxic masculinity and violence is done justice by Whelan's tense but hopeful telling.

Illegal by **Eion Colfer** and **Andrew Donkin**, read by a **Full Cast**. Dreamscape Media, 2018. 1 hour, 10 minutes. 978-1-9749-2461-0. After realizing his brother has left, 12 year old Ebo follows the trail of his brother on the journey out of Ghana towards the safety of Europe. This beautiful and heartbreaking graphic novel is brought to life by a full cast and impactful sound effects.

***Lu** by **Jason Reynolds**, read by **Guy Lockard**. Simon & Schuster Audio, 2018. 4 hours, 50 minutes; 4 discs. 978-1508263463. Lucky Lu (the one and only, the kid, the guy) struggles to figure out where he fits in both on the track team, quite literally jumping hurdles, and in life, with a new sibling on the way. Guy Lockard concludes his flawless narration of the Track series with swagger, heart, and humility.

My Plain Jane by **Cynthia Hand, Brodi Ashton**, and **Jodi Meadows**, read by **Fiona Hardingham**. HarperAudio, 2018. 10 hours, 11 minutes; digital. 978-0-0628-4166-7. In this snarky Jane Eyre retelling, Jane, who can see and communicate with ghosts, chooses a bland governess position at Thornfield Hall over a lucrative job with the Society for the Relocation of Wayward Ghosts. Fiona Hardingham's skillful narration brings the wide cast of characters to life and perfectly captures the tale's unique tone.

Nate Expectations by **Tim Federle**, read by **Tim Federle**. Simon & Schuster Audio, 2018. 5 hours, 36 minutes; 5 discs. 978-1508261117. Nate heads back to Pennsylvania where he and best friend Libby tackle creating a Great Expectations musical of their own for English class. Tim Federle continues to deliver Nate's sass, heart, and newfound confidence by sounding like that one theatre kid that every high schooler in America knows and, hopefully, loves.

Obsidio by **Amie Kaufman** and **Jay Kristoff**, read by **a Full Cast**. Listening Library, 2018. 13 hours, 1 minute. 978-1-1019-1672-8. Obsidio is the conclusion to the illuminae files, where we follow Kady, Ezra, Hanna and Nik's escape and the outcome of who makes it out of the final space battle. The sound effects and full cast make this an audio performance you will not want to miss!

And the Ocean Was Our Sky by **Patrick Ness**, read by **Cassandra Campbell**. HarperAudio, 2018. 2 hours, 30 minutes; 2 discs. 978-0-06-288269-1. Ness' retelling of Moby Dick follows Bathsheba's whales as they fight against man. Campbell's narration combines the lyrical text with intensity creating a strong atmospheric listen.

Orphan Monster Spy by **Matt Killeen**, read by **Saskia Maarleveld**. Listening Library, 2018. 11 hours, 51 minutes; 10 discs. 978-0-5255-8977-8. A Jewish girl-turned-spy goes undercover at an elite boarding school for Nazi girls. Saskia Maarleveld's stunning narration matches the thrumming intensity of this powerful story.

***The Poet X** by **Elizabeth Acevedo**, read by **Elizabeth Acevedo**. HarperAudio, 2018. 3 hours, 30 minutes. 978-1-5385-0023-1. Xiomara Batista needs an outlet from her mother, who insists Xiomara attend confirmation classes, help around the house based on her gender, and never speak to boys. Author Acevedo narrates her own novel in verse in such a way that you feel more like you're in the audience at a poetry slam than listening to a mere audiobook.

***Quidditch Through the Ages** by **J.K. Rowling** and **Kennilworthy Whisp**, read by **Andrew Lincoln**. Pottermore, 2018. 3 hours, 10 minutes. 978-1-7811-0990-8. Re-released with additional content, *Quidditch Through The Ages* takes a look at the most popular wizarding sport from the *Harry Potter series*. Andrew Lincoln charms audiences with his narration of the history and early origins of Quidditch.

Royals by **Rachel Hawkins**, read by **Amanda Leigh Cobb**. Listening Library, 2018. 8 hours, 2 minutes. 978-0-5256-3200-9. Daisy Winters is a 16 year old with a normal life, until her older sister's relationship with the Crown Prince of Scotland forces her into the seclusion of the castle and time with Miles, the prince's younger roguish brother. Cobb brings personality and humor to the characters of this funny charming tale, especially Daisy herself.

***Sadie** by **Courtney Summers**, read by **Rebecca Soler, Fred Berman, Dan Bittner, Gabra Zackman**, and **a Full Cast**. Macmillan Audio, 2018. 7 hours, 57 minutes. 978-1-2502-1821-6. When Mattie is found dead, her older sister and caretaker Sadie has only one goal; track down her killer. West McCray, a radio personality starts a podcast about Sadie's disappearance, becoming obsessed with finding her before its too late. The full cast nail the intriguing premise and make this audio a nail-biting edge of your seat thriller.

Star Wars Most Wanted by **Rae Carson**, read by **Saskia Maarleveld**. Listening Library, 2018. 7 hours, 55 minutes; digital. 978-0-5256-3399-0. Every *Star Wars* fan knows Han Solo, but how did he meet Qi'ra and survive on Corellia? Maarleveld's narration paired with *Star Wars* sound effects create an exciting immersive experience.

The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik by **David Arnold**, read by **Michael Crouch**. Listening Library, 2018. 11 hours, 15 minutes; 9 discs. 978-0-5256-2569-8. Noah's about to start his senior year of high school, and he's got his whole life figured out; except it isn't the life that Noah wants anymore. Michael Crouch's narration adds to the story through authenticity and clear relatable emotions.

***Sunny** by **Jason Reynolds**, read by **Guy Lockard**. Simon & Schuster Audio, 2018. 3 hours 7 minutes. 978-1-5082-6347-0. Sunny's passion is dancing, but he runs to please his father. Then Sunny's coach finds a way for him to "dance" on the track by throwing discus instead of running. Narrator Guy Lockard perfectly captures Sunny's fresh, distinctive voice, creating an authentic character that readers will adore.

Swing by **Kwame Alexander** with **Mary Rand Hess**, read by **Kwame Alexander**. Dreamscape Media, 2018. 4 hours, 8 minutes. 978-1-9749-1729-7. Walt and Noah are best friends trying to navigate their junior year of high school, trying out for baseball, and being honest with the love interests in their lives. Alexander reads his work as no one else could, with vitality and lyrical prose that satisfies.

***Thunderhead** by **Neal Shusterman**, read by **Greg Trembley**. Audible Studios on Brilliance, 2018. 13 hours, 2 minutes; MP3 CD. 978-1-9786-1430-6. Rowan and Citra continue to challenge the Scythedom, but in very different ways. The Thunderhead watches to learn, evolve, and find loopholes in its own rules. Greg Trembley finds a fitting and unique voice for each main character, voicing the level of authority a Scythe and the Thunderhead feel they have.

The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle by **Leslie Connor**, read by **Andrew Eiden**. HarperAudio, 2018. 6 hours 35 minutes. 978-1-5385-9016-6. Middle school is a challenge for sweet, sensitive Mason Buttle. He has a condition that causes him to sweat profusely, he's dyslexic, and the police suspect he was involved in the death of his best friend. Narrator Andrew Eiden captures Mason's honesty and compassion, and imbues each and every character with depth and humanity.

To Kill A Kingdom by **Alexandra Christo**, read by **Jacob York** and **Stephanie Willis**. Audible Studios on Brilliance, 2018. 12 hours. 978-1-9786-5007-8. Princess Lira is forced to kill one of her own, making her mother turn her from siren to human woman. The change will remain permanent unless she is able to return with the heart of human Prince Elian. York and Willis are equally capable of rousing dramatic narration in their depictions of Lira and Elian.

Tyler Johnson was Here by **Jay Coles**, read by **Jaqwan J. Kelly**. Blackstone Audio, 2018. 7 hours; 6 discs. 978-1549-1972-7-7. Tyler has started to hang out with drug dealers, so Marvin follows him to a party to keep Tyler out of trouble. The narration really helps the reader to feel as though they are friends with Marvin and inside his head allowing the reader to ache and grieve right alongside Marvin throughout this audio.

When My Heart Joins the Thousand by **A.J. Stieger**, read by **Tavia Gilbert**. HarperAudio, 2018. 9 hours, 12 minutes. 978-0-0626-5647-6. Alvie Fitz had a traumatic childhood, finds it hard to relate to other people, and just wants to gain her emancipation. When her social worker suggests making a friend, Alvie makes an unlikely one in Stanley Finkle. Gilbert makes every voice distinct and powerful, emoting the devastation and heartbreak of these unforgettable characters.

Zora & Me: The Cursed Ground by **T.R. Simon**, read by **Channie Waites**. Candlewick on Brilliance Audio, 2018. 6 hours, 7 minutes; 5 discs. 978-1-9786-4470-0. A fictionalized telling of Zora Neale Hurston and

friend Carrie Brown's adventure in solving a local mystery while learning about community members' challenging pasts with slavery and lifelong prejudice. Waites enthusiastically tackles the curiosity of childhood while also beautifully and carefully handling the horror and inhumanity of slavery.