

AudioFile Editors Select 2017 Best Audiobooks

Celebrating the outstanding audiobook performances of the past year is always one of our favorite annual milestones at *AudioFile*.

It's a chance for us to revisit our own special listening experiences, and also to say "thank you" to the narrators, directors, producers, and publishers who bring us those experiences. And, of course, it's another opportunity for us to share that excellent listening with you.

On the following pages, you'll find our picks for the Best Audiobooks of 2017 in nine categories.

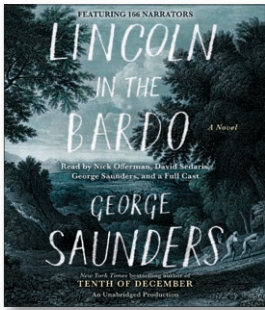
In addition to perusing these lists, we hope you'll join us on our blog and other social channels for more Best Audiobooks discussion.

As always, happy listening.

Find more of *AudioFile's* Best of 2017 online! Hear sound clips, watch narrator videos, and link to reviews at audiofilemagazine.com/bestof



FICTION



There's an undeniable appeal in hearing this impressive cast of narrators. By keeping our listening "gaze" soft, remarkable human forms come into focus.

ANNE BOLEYN: A KING'S OBSESSION Alison Weir
Read by Rosalyn Landor (Recorded Books)

BEARTOWN Fredrik Backman
Read by Marin Ireland (Simon & Schuster Audio)

THE ESSEX SERPENT Sarah Perry
Read by Juanita McMahon (Harper Audio)

FIVE-CARAT SOUL James McBride
Read by Arthur Morey, Nile Bullock, Prentice Onayemi, Dominic Hoffman (Penguin Audio/ Books on Tape)

FOREST DARK Nicole Krauss
Read by Gabra Zackman (Harper Audio)

THE GOLDEN HOUSE Salman Rushdie
Read by Vikas Adam (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

ISADORA Amelia Gray
Read by Jen Tullock (Macmillan Audio)

LINCOLN IN THE BARDO George Saunders
Read by Nick Offerman, David Sedaris, George Saunders, and a Full Cast (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

MANHATTAN BEACH Jennifer Egan
Read by Norbert Leo Butz, Heather Lind, Vincent Piazza (Simon & Schuster Audio)



MARIN IRELAND

"I grew so fond of all the citizens of this world, and it was a deeply joyous privilege to inhabit them. I was exhilarated reading them—I miss them all!"
—Marin Ireland on Beartown



VIKAS ADAM

"Narrating The Golden House was a rich feast allowing me to experience the pathos of the characters through Rushdie's sly words. Course after course, my palate was enticed, then satiated."
—Vikas Adam on The Golden House

THE REASON YOU'RE ALIVE Matthew Quick
Read by R.C. Bray (Harper Audio)

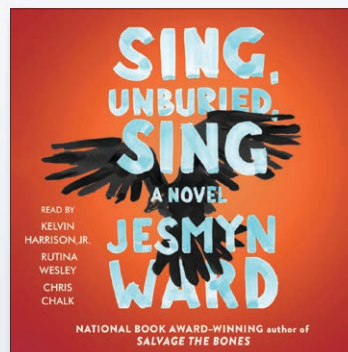
REFUGE Dina Nayeri
Read by Mozhan Marno, Youssif Kamal (Penguin Audio/ Books on Tape)

THE RULES OF MAGIC Alice Hoffman
Read by Marin Ireland (Simon & Schuster Audio)

SING, UNBURIED, SING Jesmyn Ward
Read by Kelvin Harrison, Jr., Rutina Wesley, Chris Chalk (Simon & Schuster Audio)

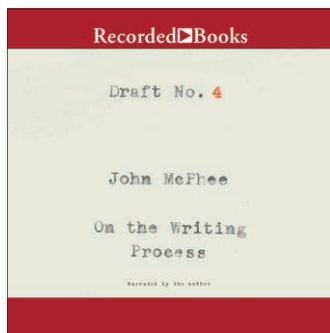
TRAJECTORY Richard Russo
Read by Amanda Carlin, Arthur Morey, Fred Sanders, Mark Bramhall (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

WHITE TEARS Hari Kunzru
Read by Lincoln Hoppe, Danny Campbell, Dominic Hoffman (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)



There is a truth and grittiness here that the narrators enhance significantly with their powerful talents.

NONFICTION & CULTURE



John McPhee delivers a fine performance of this master class in nonfiction writing.

CAESAR'S LAST BREATH Sam Kean

Read by Ben Sullivan (Hachette Audio)

DRAFT NO. 4 John McPhee

Read by John McPhee (Recorded Books)

FINISH Jon Acuff

Read by Jon Acuff (Penguin Audio/ Books on Tape)

I CAN'T BREATHE Matt Taibbi

Read by Dominic Hoffman (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

LETTERS TO A YOUNG WRITER Colum McCann

Read by Colum McCann (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

THE LITTLE BOOK OF HYGGE Meik Wiking

Read by Meik Wiking (Harper Audio)



ELLEN ARCHER

“Own It is a battle cry for women in the workplace and out in the world to use your power and your gifts. Change is afoot!”

—Ellen Archer on *Own It*



PAULA POUNDSTONE

THE MEANING OF MICHELLE Veronica Chambers [Ed.]

Read by January LaVoy, Prentice Onayemi (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

OPTION B Sheryl Sandberg, Adam Grant

Read by Elisa Donovan (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

OWN IT Sallie Krawcheck

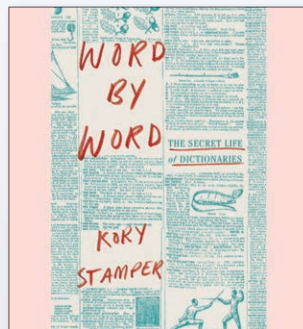
Read by Ellen Archer, Sallie Krawcheck (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

THE TOTALLY UNSCIENTIFIC STUDY OF THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS Paula Poundstone

Read by Paula Poundstone (HighBridge Audio)

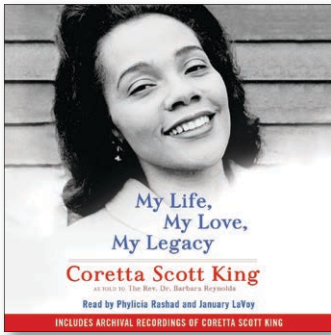
WORD BY WORD Kory Stamper

Read by Kory Stamper (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)



Stamper takes listeners on a verbal tour of her office and the work that goes into creating dictionaries. She narrates with a delight and fascination with language.

MEMOIR



This audiobook should cement the idea that Coretta Scott King was herself a major civil rights leader, in addition to being married to an icon in the field.

AL FRANKEN, GIANT OF THE SENATE Al Franken

Read by Al Franken (Hachette Audio)

THE BRIGHT HOUR Nina Riggs

Read by Cassandra Campbell, Kirby Heyborne (Simon & Schuster Audio)

CHASING SPACE Leland Melvin

Read by Ron Butler (Harper Audio)

DEATH NEED NOT BE FATAL Malachy McCourt, Brian McDonald

Read by Malachy McCourt (Simon & Schuster Audio)

HUNGER Roxane Gay

Read by Roxane Gay (Harper Audio)

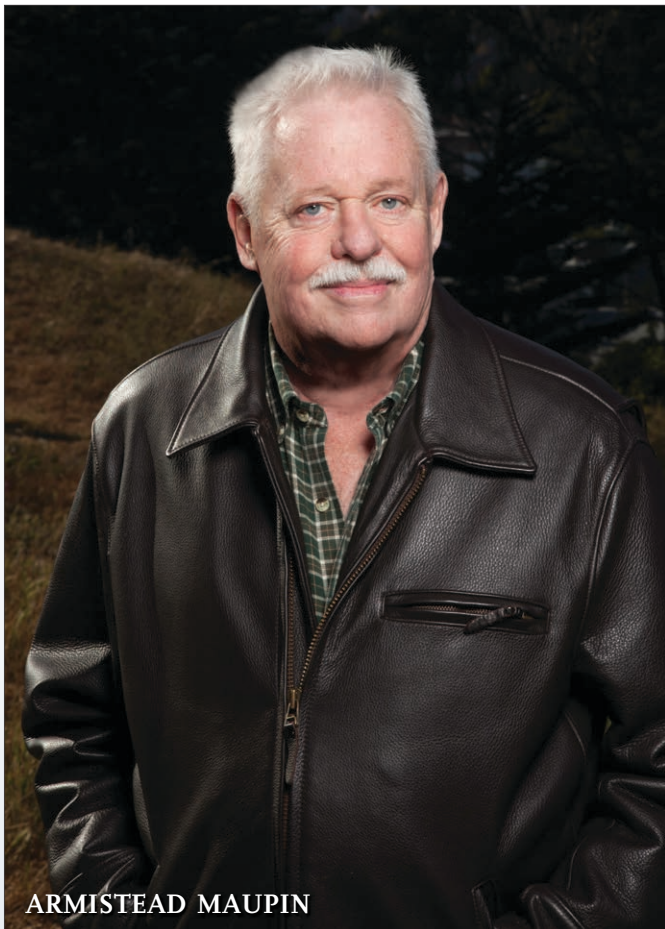
LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN John M. Perkins,

Shane Claiborne [Foreword]

Read by Calvin Robinson, Shane Claiborne (Oasis Audio)

LOGICAL FAMILY Armistead Maupin

Read by Armistead Maupin (Harper Audio)



ARMISTEAD MAUPIN



DAVID SEDARIS

MY LIFE, MY LOVE, MY LEGACY

Coretta Scott King, Barbara Reynolds

Read by Phylicia Rashad, January LaVoy (Macmillan Audio)

SEVEN Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, et al.

Read by Shannon Holt, Jossara Jinaro, Alex Kingston, et al. (L.A. Theatre Works)

THEFT BY FINDING David Sedaris

Read by David Sedaris (Hachette Audio)

VACATIONLAND John Hodgman

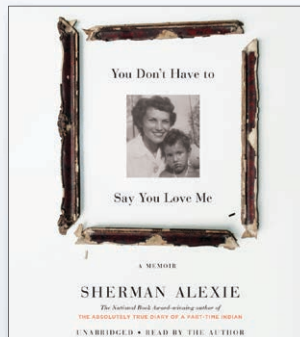
Read by John Hodgman (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

WHAT HAPPENED Hillary Rodham Clinton

Read by Hillary Rodham Clinton (Simon & Schuster Audio)

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY YOU LOVE ME Sherman Alexie

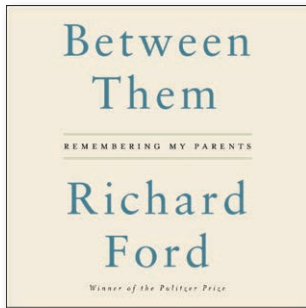
Read by Sherman Alexie (Hachette Audio)



Sherman Alexie narrates his powerful memoir with acute emotion and vulnerability.

David Sedaris photo by Ingrid Christie

BIOGRAPHY & HISTORY



Ford's remembrance of growing up in the 1950s is insightful, enlightening, and emotionally evocative, especially as performed by Christian Baskous.

BETWEEN THEM Richard Ford

Read by Christian Baskous (Harper Audio)

CAUGHT IN THE REVOLUTION Helen Rappaport

Read by Xe Sands (Macmillan Audio)

GRANT Ron Chernow

Read by Mark Bramhall (Penguin Audio/ Books on Tape)

THE JERSEY BROTHERS Sally Mott Freeman

Read by Cassandra Campbell (Simon & Schuster Audio)

LEONARDO DA VINCI Walter Isaacson

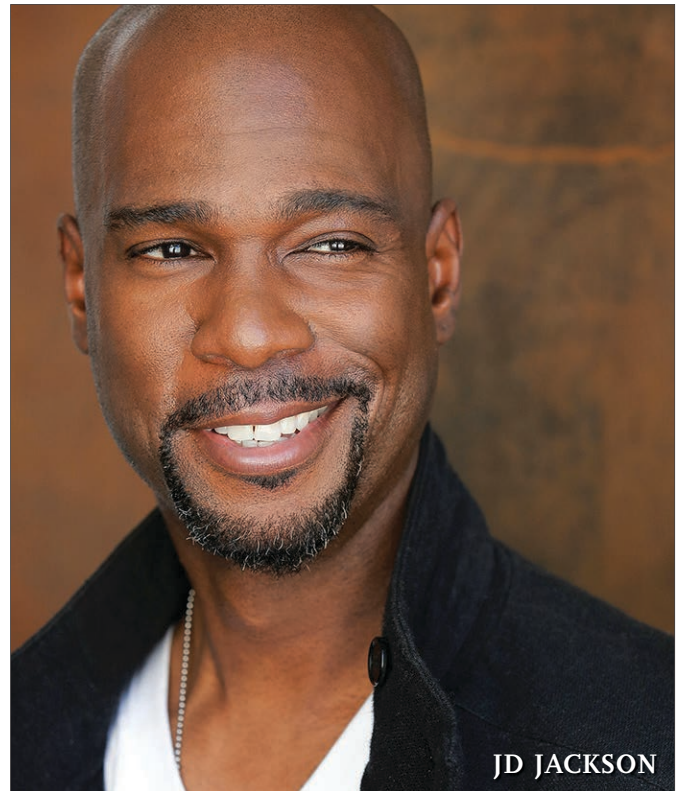
Read by Alfred Molina (Simon & Schuster Audio)

LUCY AND DESI Warren G. Harris

Read by Jim Frangione (Graymalkin Media)

A MIND AT PLAY Rob Goodman, Jimmy Soni

Read by Jonathan Yen (Tantor Media)



JD JACKSON

“Sting Like a Bee was an honor to narrate, since Ali is one of my heroes. Montville peels back the mythological layers of an icon, revealing a more human figure. In the end, he shows a man rising to the moment in extraordinary fashion.”

—JD Jackson on Sting Like a Bee

“REMEMBER THE LADIES” Angela P. Dodson

Read by Suzanne Toren (Hachette Audio)

STING LIKE A BEE Leigh Montville

Read by JD Jackson (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

THE VIETNAM WAR Geoffrey C. Ward, Ken Burns

Read by Ken Burns (Random House Audio)

A WOMAN IN BERLIN Anonymous, Philip Boehm [Trans.]

Read by Isabel Keating (Macmillan Audio)

THE WORLD REMADE G.J. Meyer

Read by Rob Shapiro (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)



CASSANDRA CAMPBELL

“This remarkable story of three brothers during World War II had me on the edge of my seat and moved me to tears.”

—Cassandra Campbell on The Jersey Brothers



The melancholy tone of Ken Burns's voice exactly suits the mood of this history of the Vietnam War.

MYSTERY & SUSPENSE

ARROWOOD Mick Finlay
Read by Malk Williams (Harlequin Audio)

BLUEBIRD, BLUEBIRD Attica Locke
Read by JD Jackson (Hachette Audio)

CAMINO ISLAND John Grisham
Read by January LaVoy (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

COLLARED David Rosenfelt
Read by Grover Gardner (Macmillan Audio)

A CONSPIRACY IN BELGRAVIA Sherry Thomas
Read by Kate Reading (Blackstone Audio)

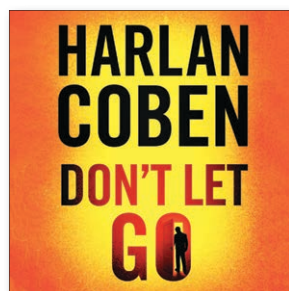
DON'T LET GO Harlan Coben
Read by Steven Weber (Brilliance Audio)

THE DRY Jane Harper
Read by Steven Shanahan (Macmillan Audio)

GLASS HOUSES Louise Penny
Read by Robert Bathurst (Macmillan Audio)

THE GOOD DAUGHTER Karin Slaughter
Read by Kathleen Early (Blackstone Audio)

A LEGACY OF SPIES John le Carré
Read by Tom Hollander (Penguin Audio/ Books on Tape)



Steven Weber adds tension, drama, and empathy to New Jersey detective Napoleon "Nap" Dumas's search for the truth.



WILL DAMRON

"Beyond being a taut thriller about the harrowing effects of war, the characters of The Room of White Fire drew me the most: They are deeply conflicted, yearning, and messy—like real people."
—Will Damron on The Room of White Fire



KATE READING

"The heroine is a very, very smart young woman whose family doesn't understand her."
—Kate Reading on
A Conspiracy in Belgravia

THE ROOM OF WHITE FIRE T. Jefferson Parker
Read by Will Damron (Penguin Audio/ Books on Tape)

SHERLOCK HOLMES Arthur Conan Doyle, Stephen Fry [Intro.]
Read by Stephen Fry (Audible, Inc.)

THE SILENT CORNER Dean Koontz
Read by Elisabeth Rodgers (Recorded Books)

SOHO DEAD Greg Keen
Read by Simon Vance (Brilliance Audio)

THE THIRST Jo Nesbø, Neil Smith [Trans.]
Read by John Lee (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

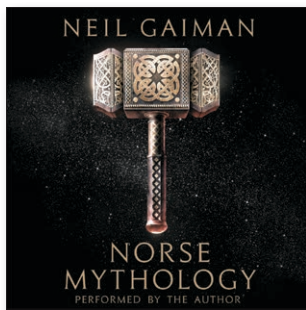
THE WESTERN STAR Craig Johnson
Read by George Guidall (Recorded Books)

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, DEAR Hallie Ephron
Read by Amy McFadden (Harper Audio)



Amy McFadden handles plot twists and coincidences with understated intensity, making this a must-listen.

SCI-FI, FANTASY & HORROR



Neil Gaiman's retelling of Norse myths is destined to become a classic for both his sure-footed stories and his captivating performance.

THE BEAR AND THE NIGHTINGALE Katherine Arden
Read by Kathleen Gati (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM
J.K. Rowling, Newt Scamander
Read by Eddie Redmayne (Pottermore from J.K. Rowling)

GWENDY'S BUTTON BOX Stephen King, Richard Chizmer
Read by Maggie Siff (Simon & Schuster Audio)

IT DEVOURS! Joseph Fink, Jeffrey Cranor
Read by Cecil Baldwin (Harper Audio)

NORSE MYTHOLOGY Neil Gaiman
Read by Neil Gaiman (Harper Audio)



MAGGIE SIFF

"I've always loved hearing stories out loud. Being able to close your eyes and be carried along in the flow of someone else's interpretation of language, there's a way that I think you can surrender to it differently than if you're reading for yourself."
—Maggie Siff on *Gwendy's Button Box*



ROBIN MILES

"The Stone Sky brought everything together at the end . . . the trilogy is a geologic wonder in literary form."
—Robin Miles on *The Stone Sky*

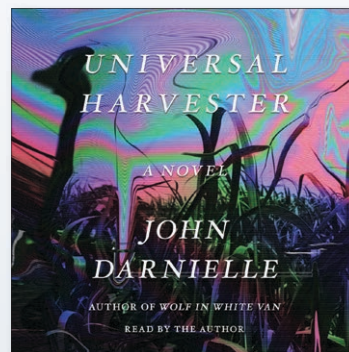
SLEEPING BEAUTIES Stephen King, Owen King
Read by Marin Ireland (Simon & Schuster Audio)

THE STONE SKY N.K. Jemisin
Read by Robin Miles (Hachette Audio)

STRANGE WEATHER Joe Hill
Read by Wil Wheaton, Dennis Boutsikaris, Kate Mulgrew, Stephen Lang (Harper Audio)

THANOS: DEATH SENTENCE Stuart Moore
Read by Richard Rohan and a Full Cast (GraphicAudio)

UNIVERSAL HARVESTER John Darnielle
Read by John Darnielle (Macmillan Audio)



What begins as a creepy horror story evolves into a melancholy meditation on loss and grief as delivered by author/narrator John Darnielle.

CHILDREN & FAMILY LISTENING



There's a story for every listener in this lively and winning anthology from We Need Diverse Books.

THE EPIC FAIL OF ARTURO ZAMORA Pablo Cartaya
Read by Pablo Cartaya (Listening Library)

THE ETHAN I WAS BEFORE Ali Standish
Read by Kirby Heyborne (Harper Audio)

FLYING LESSONS & OTHER STORIES Ellen Oh [Ed.]
Read by Dion Graham, Samantha Quan, Meg Medina, Julia Whelan, Adam Lazarre-White, Tim Tingle, Abigail Revasch, Sunil Malhotra, Kwame Alexander, Dominic Hoffman (Listening Library)

FREEDOM OVER ME Ashley Bryan
Read by Patricia R. Floyd, Kevin R. Free, Jenny Sterlin (Recorded Books)

FRIENDSHAPE Amy Krouse Rosenthal
Read by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, Kate & Lily Weyant, Quinn A. Seaman, Ryan Cassel (Weston Woods Studios)

HELLO, UNIVERSE Erin Entrada Kelly
Read by Ramon de Ocampo, Amielynn Abellera (Harper Audio)

I'M NEW HERE Anne Sibley O'Brien
Read by Frankie Corzo, Ariana Delawari, Ramon de Ocampo, Ruth Livier (Live Oak Media)

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SUN Anne Sibley O'Brien
Read by Jackie Chung (Scholastic Audiobooks)

MY BRIGADISTA YEAR Katherine Paterson
Read by Frankie Corzo (Brilliance Audio)



KIRBY HEYBORNE

"Through memorable characters and beautiful prose, The Ethan I Was Before shows us that we are not defined by our past mistakes."
—Kirby Heyborne on The Ethan I Was Before



RAMON DE OCAMPO

"Anyone who's ever felt lost will connect to this rare and beautiful piece."
—Ramon de Ocampo on Hello, Universe

THE PLAYBOOK Kwame Alexander
Read by Ruffin Prentiss III (Recorded Books)

A POEM FOR PETER Andrea Davis Pinkney
Read by Channie Waites (Recorded Books)

SEE YOU IN THE COSMOS Jack Cheng
Read by Kivlighan de Montebello, Brittany Pressley, Graham Halstead, Michael Crouch, Jason Culp, and a Full Cast (Listening Library)

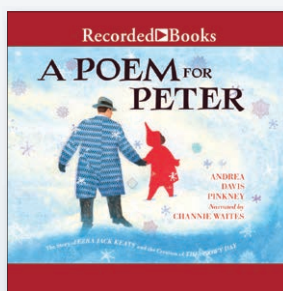
SHE PERSISTED Chelsea Clinton
Read by Chelsea Clinton (Listening Library)

THE SHIP OF THE DEAD Rick Riordan
Read by Michael Crouch (Listening Library)

TROMBONE SHORTY Troy Andrews
Read by Dion Graham (Live Oak Media)

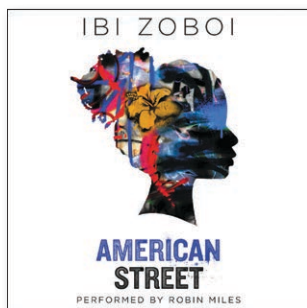
THE WAR I FINALLY WON Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
Read by Jayne Entwistle (Listening Library)

WRITING RADAR Jack Gantos
Read by Jack Gantos (Macmillan Audio)



Narrator Channie Waites is quick to establish the rhythms and emotions of this tribute to Ezra Jack Keats.

YOUNG ADULT



Narrator Robin Miles infuses the dialogue with authentic-sounding accents and age-appropriate sass and bravado.

AMERICAN STREET Ibi Zoboi
Read by Robin Miles (Harper Audio)

THE BOOK OF DUST: LA BELLE SAUVAGE Philip Pullman
Read by Michael Sheen (Listening Library)

THE GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO VICE AND VIRTUE Mackenzi Lee
Read by Christian Coulson (Harper Audio)

THE GO-BETWEEN Veronica Chambers
Read by Karla Souza (Listening Library)

THE GOLD-SON Carrie Anne Noble
Read by Gerard Doyle (Brilliance Audio)

GOODBYE DAYS Jeff Zentner
Read by Michael Crouch (Listening Library)

THE HATE U GIVE Angie Thomas
Read by Bahni Turpin (Harper Audio)

HONESTLY BEN Bill Konigsberg
Read by Dan Bittner (Scholastic Audiobooks)



"The Hate U Give was one of those books I just knew was going to be great. It's so important in this time for everyone to understand that we have not yet surpassed segregation and discrimination. It isn't over yet, and we have a long way to go."
—Bahni Turpin on *The Hate U Give*

THE INEXPLICABLE LOGIC OF MY LIFE Benjamin Alire Saenz
Read by Robbie Daymond (Listening Library)

LANDSCAPE WITH INVISIBLE HAND M.T. Anderson
Read by M.T. Anderson (Brilliance Audio)

LONG WAY DOWN Jason Reynolds
Read by Jason Reynolds (Simon & Schuster Audio)

LOVE AND FIRST SIGHT Josh Sundberg
Read by Pat Young (Hachette Audio)

NYXIA Scott Reintgen
Read by Sullivan Jones, Dominic Hoffman (Listening Library)

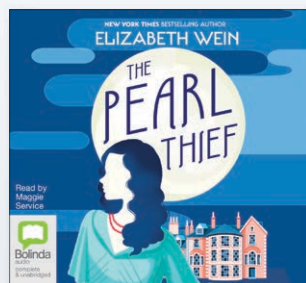
THE PEARL THIEF Elizabeth Wein
Read by Maggie Service (Bolinda Audio)

SOLO Kwame Alexander, Mary Rand Hess
Read by Kwame Alexander (Blink)

TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN John Green
Read by Kate Rudd (Listening Library)

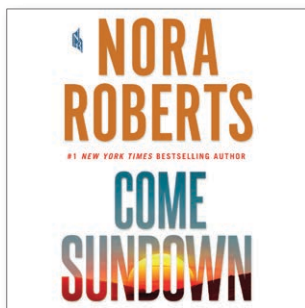


"Growing up is messy, and it's complicated, and Bill nails it in his writing."
—Dan Bittner on *Honestly Ben*



Maggie Service heightens the tension as the twists and turns multiply, never losing the story's emotions and elegant language.

ROMANCE



Narrator Elisabeth Rodgers and author Nora Roberts create a gripping romantic suspense set in western Montana.

BEAUTY LIKE THE NIGHT Joanna Bourne
Read by Kirsten Potter (Tantor Media)

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DUKE Kelly Bowen
Read by Ashford McNab (Hachette Audio)

CHASING DOWN A DREAM Beverly Jenkins
Read by Lynette Freeman (Recorded Books)

THE CHOSEN J.R. Ward
Read by Jim Frangione (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

CLAIM & PROTECT Rhenna Morgan
Read by John Lane (Harlequin Audio)

ENIGMA Catherine Coulter
Read by Renée Raudman, MacLeod Andrews (Brilliance Audio)

FAIR, BRIGHT, AND TERRIBLE Elizabeth Kingston
Read by Nicholas Boulton (Hedgehog Inc Productions)



“If you like romance; excitement; action; suspense; mystery; super sassy females; and strong, smart men, then these titles are for you.”
—Renée Raudman on *White Hot*

IF NOT FOR YOU Debbie Macomber
Read by Khristine Hvam (Random House Audio/ Books on Tape)

JANE OF AUSTIN Hillary Manton Lodge
Read by Kate Handford (Dreamscape)

OFF BASE Annabeth Albert
Read by Tyler Stevens (Harlequin Audio)

REAL DIRTY Meghan March
Read by Elena Wolfe, Sebastian York (Blackstone Audio)

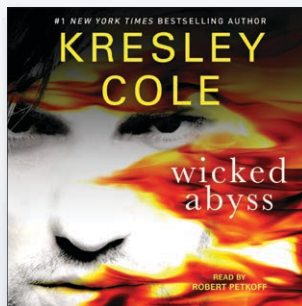
THE STRAWBERRY HEARTS DINER Carolyn Brown
Read by Brittany Pressley (Brilliance Audio)

WHITE HOT Ilona Andrews
Read by Renée Raudman (Harper Audio)

WICKED ABYSS Kresley Cole
Read by Robert Petkoff (Simon & Schuster Audio)



“Beth Prudhomme’s fierce determination to be her own woman, take chances, and choose her own path in love and life, and the self doubt that creates, was one I know all too well. I really connected to her and the characters surrounding her.”
—Khristine Hvam on *If Not for You*



Narrator Robert Petkoff brings the right mix of drama and humor to the production.