

## Alex Award Winners

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The Alex Awards are given to ten books written for adults that have special appeal to young adults, ages 12 through 18.

### [The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake: A Novel by Aimee Bender](#)

On the eve of her ninth birthday, unassuming Rose Edelstein, a girl at the periphery of schoolyard games and her distracted parents' attention, bites into her mother's homemade lemon-chocolate cake and discovers she has a magical gift: she can taste her mother's emotions in the cake. As Rose grows up she learns to harness her gift and becomes aware that there are secrets even her taste buds cannot discern.

### [City of Thieves, by David Benioff](#)

A writer visits his retired grandparents in Florida to document their experience during the infamous siege of Leningrad. His grandmother won't talk about it, but his grandfather reluctantly consents. The result is the captivating odyssey of two young men trying to survive against desperate odds.

### [Ready Player One, by Ernest Cline](#)

An exuberantly realized, exciting, and sweet-natured cyber-quest. Cline's imaginative and rollicking coming-of-age geek saga has a smash-hit vibe

### [Big Girl Small, by Rachel DeWoskin](#)

With a singing voice that can shake an auditorium, Judy should be the star of Darcy Academy, the local performing arts high school. So why is a girl this promising hiding out in a seedy motel room on the edge of town?

### [Room: A Novel by Emma Donoghue](#)

Room is the only home five-year-old Jack has ever known, but to Ma, it's the prison where she's been held hostage for seven years. Through determination and ingenuity, she's created a life for her son. But Jack's curiosity is building alongside Ma's desperation--and she knows Room cannot contain either for much longer.

### [Finding Nouf, by Zoë Ferraris](#)

Desert guide Nayir al-Sharqi, is hired by wealthy friends to find their missing daughter. When the girl turns up dead, apparently drowned in a flash flood in the desert, Nayir suspects that all is not as it seems. And as he looks into her death, he develops an uncomfortable partnership with a female technician at the local coroner's office.

### [Water for Elephants, by Sara Gruen](#)

When Jacob Jankowski jumps onto a passing train, he enters a world of freaks, grifters, and misfits, a second-rate circus struggling to survive during the Great Depression. A veterinary student who almost earned his degree, Jacob is put in charge of caring for the animals. There he meets Marlena, the beautiful star of the equestrian act, who is married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. He also meets Rosie, an elephant who seems untrainable until he discovers a way to reach her.

[Never Let Me Go, by Kazuo Ishiguro](#)

Hailsham seems like a pleasant English boarding school, far from the influences of the city. Its students are well tended and supported, trained in art and literature, and become just the sort of people the outside world (with which they have little contact) wants them to be. Within the grounds of Hailsham, Kathy grows from schoolgirl to young woman, but it's only when she and her friends Ruth and Tommy leave the safe school grounds that they realize the full truth of what Hailsham is.

[Mudbound, by Hillary Jordan](#)

Mudbound takes on prejudice in its myriad forms on a Mississippi Delta farm in 1946. City girl Laura McAllen attempts to raise her family despite questionable decisions made by her husband. Tensions continue to rise when her brother-in-law and the son of a family of sharecroppers both return from WWII as changed men bearing the scars of combat.

[The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer](#)

Relates how an enterprising teenager in Malawi builds a windmill from scraps he finds around his village and brings electricity, and a future, to his family.

[Just After Sunset: Stories, by Stephen King](#)

This collection of short works is comprised of pieces that previously appeared in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Playboy*, and *McSweeney's*, in a volume that includes such tales as "The Gingerbread Girl" and "N."

[Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok](#)

Caught between the pressure to succeed in America, her duty to their family, and her own personal desires, Kimberly Chang, an immigrant girl from Hong Kong, learns to constantly translate not just her language but herself back and forth between the worlds she straddles.

[The Lover's Dictionary, by David Levithan](#)

Taking a unique approach to this problem, the nameless narrator of David Levithan's *The Lover's Dictionary* has constructed the story of his relationship as a dictionary. Through these short entries, he provides an intimate window into the great events and quotidian trifles of being within a couple, giving us an indelible and deeply moving portrait of love in our time.

[The Talk Funny Girl, by Roland Merullo](#)

Raised by parents so intentionally isolated that they speak their own hybrid dialect, abused youth Marjorie witnesses her parents' submission to a sadistic cult leader before she is rescued by another abuse survivor who teaches her stoneworking skills.

[The Night Circus, by Erin Morgenstern](#)

A fierce competition is underway--a duel between two young circus magicians who have been trained since childhood for this purpose. This is a game in which only one can be left standing, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will.

[Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard by Liz Murray](#)

The memoir of a young woman who at age 15 was living on the streets but survived to make it to Harvard.

[The Boy Who Couldn't Sleep and Never Had To, by DC Pierson](#)

Fifteen-year-old Darren, a social misfit who spends his time at school trying not to be noticed while drawing characters for a planned film series and book tie-ins, befriends Eric, another outcast who reveals that he never sleeps.

[The Scrapbook of Frankie Pratt: A Novel in Pictures, by Caroline Preston](#)

For her graduation from high school in 1920, Frankie Pratt receives a scrapbook and her father's old Corona typewriter. Despite Frankie's dreams of becoming a writer, she must forgo a college scholarship to help her widowed mother. But when a mysterious Captain James sweeps her off her feet, her mother finds a way to protect Frankie from the less-than-noble intentions of her unsuitable beau.

[Three Girls and Their Brother, by Theresa Rebeck](#)

Now that it's all over, everybody is saying it was the picture—that stupid picture was behind every disaster. .

[My Abandonment by Peter Rock](#)

A thirteen-year-old girl and her father live in Forest Park, a nature preserve in Portland, Oregon. They inhabit cave shelter, bathe in a nearby creek, store perishables at the water's edge, use a makeshift septic system, tend a garden, even keep a library. But one small mistake allows a backcountry jogger to discover them, derailing their entire existence, and provoking a deeper flight.

[The Thirteenth Tale, by Diane Setterfield](#)

When her health begins failing, the mysterious author Vida Winter decides to let Margaret Lea, a biographer, write the truth about her life, but Margaret needs to verify the facts since Vida has a history of telling outlandish tales.

Stitches: A Memoir by David Small

[The Dragons of Babel, by Michael Swanwick](#)

Enslaved by a war-dragon of Babel, young Will evacuates to the Tower of Babel where he meets the confidence trickster, Nat Whilk, and becomes a hero to the homeless living in the tunnels under the city.

[The Good Thief, by Hannah Tinti](#)

Growing up in a New England orphanage unaware of his family and of how he had lost his left hand as an infant, twelve-year-old Ren is terrified of the future, until a young man shows up claiming to be his long-lost brother, with whom he embarks on an adventure-filled odyssey of scam artists, petty criminals, and resurrection men.

[Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward](#)

Enduring a hardscrabble existence as the children of alcoholic and absent parents, four siblings from a coastal Mississippi town prepare their meager stores for the arrival of Hurricane Katrina while struggling with such challenges as a teen pregnancy and a dying litter of prize pups.

[Robocalypse: A Novel, by Daniel H. Wilson](#)

Two decades into the future humans are battling for their very survival when a powerful AI computer goes rogue, and all the machines on earth rebel against their human controllers.