



The Sounds of Stories

I remember vividly Charles Laughton, the great actor of screen and stage, traveling all over and doing readings from great books. The audiences were mesmerized. Bill Martin, Jr., used to be a spectacular performer as a storyteller at IRA and NCTE. How we listened and how we cheered. People rushed to get copies of the books being used in these presentations.

Today we are blessed with audiobooks. Students should be able to listen and find the magic of interpretation as actors read aloud or participate in dramatizations based on the finest young adult literature.

Here are a few worthy of note:

1. *Melting Stones* by Tamora Pierce. Read by Grace Kelly and the Full Cast Family. Full Cast Audio.
2. *Twisted* by Laurie Halse Anderson. Read by Mike Chamberlain. Listening Library.
3. *Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel. Read by David Kelly and the Full Cast Family. Full Cast Audio.
4. *Evil Genius* by Catherine Jinks. Read by Justine Eyre. Listening Library.

5. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows* by J. K. Rowling. Read by Jim Dale. Listening Library.
6. *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing: Volume One-The Pox Party* by M. T. Anderson. Read by Peter Francis James. Listening Library.
7. *Fairest* by Gail Carson Levine. Read and sung by Sarah Naughton and the Full Cast Family. Full Cast Audio.
8. *Evolution, Me & Other Freaks of Nature* by Robin Brande. Read by Kaili Vernoff. Listening Library.
9. *The Rules of Survival* by Nancy Werlin. Read by Daniel Passer. Listening Library.
10. *On the Wings of Heroes* by Richard Peck. Read by Lincoln Hoppe. Listening Library.

11. *Last Shot* by John Feinstein. Read by John Feinstein.
12. *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* by Paula Danziger. Read by Caitlin Brodnick and the Full Cast Family. Full Cast Audio.

Great listening. Letting students read aloud from their favorite books, emphasizing dramatic techniques and interpretation, is a practical way to develop fluency, listening skills, and oral interpretation. Highly motivating.

Remembering the Holocaust

For too many students the Holocaust is at a time and place that might be equal to the American Revolution or the Civil War. While there are numerous books about Anne Frank and many other survivors or their friends and families, the emotional impact is not the same for those who lived during that time and remember World War II.

DK, in association with USC Shoah Foundation Institute, has published *Holocaust: The Events and Their Impact on Real People* in which survivors tell their stories on DVD. It is stunning with pictures and text, as well as the DVD, to remind the world that this should

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never happen again to any people anywhere in the world. The text is written by Angela Gluck Wood. Steven Spielberg has done the foreword. An important book.

The Naming Game

Alleen Pace Nilsen and Don L. F. Nilsen have provided a most interesting, fun, thought-provoking book, *Names and Naming in Young Adult Literature*, Scarecrow Press. They make a great case for showing that teens are very much interested in names, particularly in this age of computers and technology. Names are definitely important in self-identity. (I once had a student who had the name of Marilyn Monroe and had no resemblance to that celebrity in any way, shape or manner. It was embarrassing for her in many ways.)

The book discusses nicknames, friendly and mischievous, labeling people with “names,” according to their positions, actions, and personal characteristics. The authors provide interesting insights in how names are chosen to reveal class consciousness, ethnicity

(maybe rank), historical and cultural contexts. There are interesting reminders that in a number of novels, the authors take the time to explain how various characters got their names, such as Ratchet in *The Canning Season*.

J.K. Rowling, Louis Sachar, M. E. Kerr, M. T. Anderson, Walter Dean Myers, M. E. Kerr, and Cynthia Kadohata are just a few of the many authors’ works analyzed in this stimulating book. I must admit, that before I read this, I only on occasion thought of the naming game in certain books. But my eyes have been opened, and I thank these authors for their excellent analyses. Most worthwhile.

Making Time for Reading

After the ALAN workshop in New York City, I came home with loads of books and the desire to read and read and read. While every book I list here might not be a prizewinner, I think this list is worthy of exploring. As usual, I try to list titles according to a basic theme. Select and have fun.

Cultural Diversity

Sherman Alexie. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. Little, Brown.
Kim Antineau. *Broken Moon*. McElderry.
Lori Carlson, ed. *Moccasin Thunder: American Indian Stories for Today*. HarperCollins.
Walter Dean Myers. *Harlem Summer*. Scholastic.
Jacqueline Woodson. *Feathers*. Putnam.

On the Lighter Side

Mary Hershey. *The One Where the Kid Nearly Jumps to His Death*

and *Lands in California* Razorbill.

Jeff Kinney. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules*. Amulet.
Gregory Maguire. *One Final Firecracker*. Clarion.
Dyan Sheldon. *Confessions of a Hollywood Star*. Candlewick.
Wendelin Van Draanen. *Confessions of a Serial Kisser*. Knopf.

Short Stuff: Short Stories and Tales

David Almond and Others. *Click: One Novel, Ten Authors*. Arthur Levine/Scholastic.
Donald R. Gallo, ed. *What Are You Afraid of? Stories about Phobias*. Candlewick.
James Houston. *Treasury of Inuit Legends*. Harcourt.
David Levithan. *How They Met and Other Stories*. Knopf.
M. Jerry Weiss and Helen S. Weiss, eds. *Dreams and Visions*. Tor.

Biographies

Jan Adkins. *Up Close: Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect*. Viking.
Jack Batten. *Silent in an Evil Time: The Brave War of Edith Cavell*. Tundra.
Ken Rappaport. *Ladies First: Women Athletes Who Made a Difference*. Peachtree.
Carla Killough McClafferty. *Something Out of Nothing: Marie Curie and Radium*. Farrar Straus Giroux.
Jenna Bush. *Ana’s Story: A Journey of Hope*. Harper Collins.

Tales through Poetry

Kelly Bingham. *Shark Girl*. Candlewick.
Helen Frost. *The Braid*. Farrar Straus Giroux.
Nikki Grimes. *Dark Sons*. Hyperion.

Ellen Hopkins. *Glass*. McElderry.
Sonya Sones. *What My Girlfriend
Doesn't Know*. Simon and
Schuster.

Graphic Novels

Nick Abadzis. *Laika*. :01 First
Second.

Richard Appignanesi, adaptor,
illustrated by Emma Viecelli.
Manga Shakespeare: Hamlet.
Amulet.

Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin,
illustrated by Giovanni Rigano
and Paolo Lamanna. *Artemis
Fowl: The Graphic Novel*.
Hyperion.

Brian Jacques, illustrated by Bret
Blevins. *Redwall: The Graphic
Novel*.

Lat. *Town Boy*. :01 First Second.

The Impact of Wars

Wilborn Hampton. *War in the
Middle East: A Reporter's Story*.
Candlewick.

Dean Hughes. *Search and Destroy*.
Simon Pulse.

Walter Dean Myers. *Sunrise over
Fallujah*. Scholastic.

Mirijam Pressler. *Let Sleeping Dogs
Lie*. Front Street.

Meg Tillet. *Porcupine*. Tundra.

Friendships

Meg Cabot. *How to be Popular! A
Novel*. Harper Tempest.

Dennis and Elise Carr. *Welcome to
Wahoo*. Bloomsbury.

Walter Dean Myers. *Street Love*.
Amistad/Harper Tempest.

Jerry Spinelli. *Love, Stargirl*. Knopf.

Jacqueline Woodson. *After Tupac &
D Foster*. Putnam.

Bedside: Very Special People

S. A. Horazin. *Blood Brothers*.
Delacorte.

Amy Goldman Koss. *Side Effects*.
Roaring Brook Press.

Per Nilsson. *Seventeen*. Front Street.

Terry Rueman. *Inside Out*. Harper
Tempest.

Ellen Yeomans. *Rubber Houses*.
Little, Brown.

School Days

Pamela Ehrenberg. *Ethan, Sus-
pended*. Eerdmans.

Gordon Korman. *Schooled*.
Hyperion.

Michael Laser. *Cheater*. Dutton.

Catherine Gilbert Murdock. *The Off
Season*. Houghton Mifflin.

Francine Prose. *Bullyville*. Harper
Teen.