

What's an Alex Award?



Warning! Don't look for these books in the Young Adult section! These are "Adult Books," written for adults. Teens beware!

Ok, now that I've got your attention, let me also say that these books are just great for teens. So great, in fact, that the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) made an award just for them, and named them after a famous Baltimore librarian - sort of. Her name was Margaret A. Edwards, but her friends called her Alex, and that's where we get the Alex Awards. The 2012 Alex Awards feature ten books written for adults, but with special appeal to teens.

Some of them are about teens and the turbulent days of high school, such as Big Girl Small, about a 3-foot-9 teenage girl with an amazing singing voice and a talent for causing scandal. The New Kids is the real-life story of International High School, where trauma from their home countries makes the normal trials of high school so much harder for these non-English speakers. Another young woman with speech problems (her parents are so involved with a cult that they use a language of their own at her house) is cruelly taunted and seeks her own path in The Talk-Funny Girl. And in Salvage the Bones, the children of an alcoholic dad and dead mother in a small coastal Mississippi town desperately rely on each other in preparation for the mother of all hurricanes.

Fans of science fiction, especially dystopias, will enjoy Robopocalypse, in which the few human survivors tell their story and fight back following an uprising of sentient robots. In Ready, Player One (a much less dramatic, but equally dreary year near-future), everyone plays OASIS, a virtual utopia in which puzzles based on late-20th Century pop culture hold the key to vast power and wealth. For fantasy fans (especially those who grew up on a diet of Harry Potter) The Night Circus presents a darker and more mature magic, as well as a story of eternal love. And The Lover's Dictionary tries to explain what (to many) does seem as mysterious and unknowable as magic "a relationship" by using the form of dictionary entries. Even fans of history will enjoy several of these titles. In Zanesville chronicles the coming of age of two outcast girls in the 1970s, while The Scrapbook of Frankie Pratt is a story of a young woman's adventures in 1920s New York and Paris, told through images of postcards, menus, letters, and dozens of other everyday items.

All of these titles have some "adult" elements to them, but are suggested for those teens mature enough to handle that kind of thing. So take a moment to look outside the Young Adult section and try out one of these titles!

Posted by Chris H. on August 7, 2012

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