

---

# The 2016 Listen List

The Listen List highlights extraordinary narrators and listening experiences that merit special attention by a general adult audience and the librarians who advise them. Adhering to established criteria, committee members select twelve recordings that are benchmarks of excellence and are available for purchase by libraries. Titles are named to the list because the narration creates a new experience, offering listeners something they could not create by their own visual reading; and because the narrator achieves an outstanding performance in terms of voice, accents, pitch, tone, inflection, rhythm and pace. This juried list, designed for both avid listeners and those new to the pleasures of stories read aloud, includes fiction and nonfiction and features voices that enthrall, delight, and inspire, making one reluctant to stop listening.

Gattis, Ryan. *All Involved*. Narrated by Anthony Rey Perez, Marisol Ramirez, Jim Cooper, Adam Lazarre-White, and James Chen. HarperAudio (ISBN: 978-1-4815-3448-2).

This cinéma vérité soundscape depicts gang-related murder and retaliation amidst the chaos and confusion of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Seventeen individuals, including a Korean shopkeeper, Latino street hustlers, gritty cops, and sympathetic nurses, are artfully voiced by five actors evoking an emotional range from poetic reflection to brutal violence.

## Outstanding Audiobook Narration Council

**Outstanding Audiobook Narration Council** is Renee Young, chair, *NovelList*; Mary Burkey, Library Consultant; Diana Tixier Herald, Garfield County Libraries; Pam Spencer Holley, Library Consultant; Lucy M. Lockley, St. Charles City-County Library District; Dodie Ownes, Douglas County Libraries.

## Listen-Alikes

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Narrated by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Hallberg, Garth Risk. *City on Fire: A Novel*. Narrated by Rebecca Lowman, Tristan Morris, and Bronson Pinchot. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. Narrated by Reg Rogers, Sudhir Venkatesh, and Stephen J. Dubner. HarperAudio.

Steinhauer, Olen. *All the Old Knives*. Narrated by Ari Fliakos and Juliana Francis Kelly. Macmillan Audio (ISBN: 978-1-4272-5809-0).

In a single evening, two CIA agents and former lovers expose old memories and reveal differing perspectives of a terrorist attack. The interplay between Fliakos' gravelly, world-weary tone and Kelly's briskly controlled voice intensifies tautly-stretched emotions and engenders a misplaced trust that is shattered by a final plot twist.

## FROM COMMITTEES OF RUSA

### Listen-Alikes

- Koch, Herman. *The Dinner*. Narrated by Clive Mantle. Blackstone Audio.
- Flynn, Gillian. *Gone Girl*. Narrated by Julia Whelan and Kirby Heyborne. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Le Carré, John. *A Perfect Spy*. Narrated by Michael Jayston. Penguin Audio.

Alexander, Tasha. *And Only to Deceive*. Narrated by Kate Reading. Recorded Books/Tantor Media (ISBN: 978-1-4945-0909-5).

After marrying to escape her socially pretentious mother, Lady Emily falls in love with the deceased husband she barely knew while investigating his questionable acquisition of Greek antiquities. Immersing listeners in 19th century English society, Reading's pitch-perfect accents and vibrant performance capture Emily's transformation from privileged aristocrat to newly-independent woman.

### Listen-Alikes

- Huber, Anna Lee. *The Anatomist's Wife*. Narrated by Heather Wilds. Tantor Media.
- King, Laurie R. *The Beekeeper's Apprentice, or On the Segregation of the Queen*. Narrated by Jenny Sterlin. Recorded Books.
- Winspear, Jacqueline. *Maisie Dobbs*. Narrated by Rita Barrington. Blackstone Audio.

Larson, Erik. *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*. Narrated by Scott Brick. Books on Tape/Random House Audio (ISBN: 978-0-553-55164-8).

Brick's crisply evocative performance vividly conveys the wartime atmosphere and precise details of the sinking of the *Lusitania* by German *U-Boat 20*. His dramatic narration of passenger and crew experiences, as well as military and political machinations, propels listeners ever nearer to the inevitable and tragic conclusion.

### Listen-Alikes

- Lansing, Alfred. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. Narrated by Simon Prebble. Blackstone Audio.
- Tuchman, Barbara W. *The Guns of August*. Narrated by John Lee. Recorded Books/Tantor Media.
- Lord, Walter. *A Night to Remember: The Classic Account of the Final Hours of the Titanic*. Narrated by Martin Jarvis. Blackstone Audio.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Narrated by David Horovitch, Jamie Parker, Joseph Kloska, Alison Pettitt, and cast. Naxos AudioBooks. (ISBN: 9781843798736).

Stoker's classic horror tale, which introduces the iconic vampire Dracula, is brilliantly performed by an exceptional assemblage of British actors. Unfolding with quiet intensity, the well-matched voices result in fully-realized characters which combine to create mounting psychological and sexual tension in this revelatory listening experience.

### Listen-Alikes

- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Narrated by Daniel Philpott, Chris Larkin, Roger May, and Jonathan Oliver. Naxos AudioBooks.
- Kostova, Elizabeth. *The Historian*. Narrated by Justine Eyre and Paul Michael. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Narrated by Martin Jarvis. Blackstone Audio.

MacDonald, Helen. *H is for Hawk*. Narrated by Helen MacDonald. Blackstone Audio. (ISBN: 978-1-4815-3094-1).

Gracefully literate and whimsically humorous, MacDonald's elegiac tone details her journey through depression while nuanced reflections on T. H. White's *The Goshawk* provide a counterpoint to her raw grief. In an experience as natural as sharing a confidence, she opens her heart and entrusts the listener with both words and voice.

### Listen-Alikes

- Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia*. Narrated by Elizabeth Gilbert. Books on Tape/Penguin Audio.
- Montgomery, Sy. *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness*. Narrated by Sy Montgomery. Recorded Books/HighBridge Audio.
- Strayed, Cheryl. *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*. Narrated by Bernadette Dunne. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.

Johansen, Erika. *The Invasion of the Tearling*. Narrated by Davina Porter. HarperAudio. (ISBN: 978-1-5046-1200-5).

In this sequel to *The Queen of the Tearling*, Kelsea harnesses her strengthening magic and confronts the Red Queen while experiencing visions of an abused woman living in a vastly different civilization. Porter's regal tone, varied cadence, and commanding delivery intensify the emotional connection of sharply delineated yet intertwined stories.

### Listen-Alikes

- Martin, George R. R. *A Game of Thrones*. Narrated by Roy Dotrice. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Jemisin, N. K. *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*. Narrated by Casaundra Freeman. Brilliance Audio.
- Brennan, Marie. *A Natural History of Dragons*. Narrated by Kate Reading. Macmillan Audio.

Vaillant, John. *The Jaguar's Children*. Narrated by Ozzie Rodriguez and David H. Lawrence XVII. Books on Tape/Random House Audio. (ISBN: 978-0-553-55140-2).

Locked inside a tanker truck, abandoned in the desert, nineteen Latino immigrants are left to die. With authentic Spanish accents and riveting pacing, Laurence and Rodriguez capture visceral feelings of claustrophobia and desperation. Flashbacks reveal exploitive agribusiness practices while frantic rescue appeals are made to an unanswered cell phone.

### Listen-Alikes

- Tobar, Héctor. *Deep Down Dark: The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean Mine, and the Miracle That Set Them Free*. Narrated by Henry Leyva. Recorded Books/Macmillan Audio.
- Urrea, Luis Alberto. *The Devil's Highway: A True Story*. Narrated by Luis Alberto Urrea. Hachette Audio.
- Bacigalupi, Paolo. *The Windup Girl*. Narrated by Jonathan Davis. Brilliance Audio.

Sykes, Lucy, and Jo Piazza. *The Knockoff: A Novel*. Narrated by Katherine Kellgren. Books on Tape/Random House Audio. (ISBN: 978-0-553-55101-3).

Haute couture and social media collide in an absurdly entertaining face-off between Imogen, a 40-something magazine editor, and tech-savvy Eve, her power-hungry former assistant. Kellgren nails technophobe Imogen's elegant tone as well as Eve's sharply contrasting Millennial vernacular, adeptly capturing New York City's fast-paced publishing world.

### Listen-Alikes

- Weisberger, Lauren. *The Devil Wears Prada*. Narrated by Bernadette Dunne. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Hornby, Nick. *Funny Girl*. Narrated by Emma Fielding. Books on Tape/Penguin Audio.
- Fenton, Liz, and Lisa Steinke. *The Status of All Things*. Narrated by Amy McFadden. Dreamscape Media.

Carter, M. J. *The Strangler Vine*. Narrated by Alex Wyndham. Recorded Books/HighBridge Audio. (ISBN: 978-1-62231-634-2).

Carter creates a ripping good listen, weaving together a rich tapestry of adventure and historical authenticity in this captivating tale of a search for a social rebel. Wyndham's narration conjures the oppressive atmosphere and constricting formality of 1837 British Colonial rule through expert class inflections, Indian accents, and masterful pacing.

### Listen-Alikes

- Peters, Elizabeth. *The Curse of the Pharaohs*. Narrated by Barbara Rosenblat. Recorded Books.
- Horowitz, Anthony. *The House of Silk: A Sherlock Holmes Novel*. Narrated by Derek Jacobi. Blackstone Audio/Hachette Audio.

- Keating, H.R.F. *The Perfect Murder*. Narrated by Frederick Davidson. Blackstone Audio.

Francis-Sharma, Lauren. *'Til the Well Runs Dry*. Narrated by Ron Butler and Bahni Turpin. Recorded Books/Tantor Media. (ISBN: 978-1-4945-0476-2).

Marcia and Farouk, married but rarely together, share a love that spans decades despite being buffeted by a strict social hierarchy and a need for independence. Ideally-paired narrators Turpin and Butler create an immersive listening experience capturing the characters' unique dialects, from lilting Trinidadian rhythms to subtle East Indian tones.

### Listen-Alikes

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Americanah*. Narrated by Adjoa Andoh. Recorded Books.
- Yanique, Tiphonie. *Land of Love and Drowning*. Narrated by Cherise Boothe, Korey Jackson, Rachel Leslie, and Myra Lucretia Taylor. Recorded Books.
- John, Marie-Elena. *Unburnable*. Narrated by Robin Miles. Recorded Books.

Finkel, Michael. *True Story: Murder, Memoir, Mea Culpa*. Narrated by Rich Orlow. HarperAudio. (ISBN: 978-1-5046-1504-4).

Disgraced journalist Finkel is thrown a lifeline when he learns accused murderer Christopher Longo, one of the FBI's most wanted, has been using his identity. Orlow's absorbing presentation is unobtrusive yet chilling and generates an emotional response as he gives voice to both author and accused in this riveting memoir.

### Listen-Alikes

- Larson, Erik. *Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. Narrated by Scott Brick. Books on Tape/Random House Audio.
- Jobb, Dean. *Empire of Deception: The Incredible Story of a Master Swindler Who Seduced a City and Captivated the Nation*. Narrated by Peter Berkrot. Recorded Books/HighBridge Audio.
- Wolters, Cleary. *Out of Orange*. Narrated by Barbara Rosenblat. Blackstone Audio/HarperAudio.