



BOOK CRUSH

## Alyssa Milano Plants a Seed

The actor and activist inspires budding environmentalists in the fourth book of her middle-grade series.



She might always be Phoebe from *Charmed* to you, but tweens know Alyssa Milano as the author of the popular middle-grade series *Hope*. The fourth installment, *Project Go Green*, focuses on how sixth-grader Hope Roberts can help protect the planet, and it aptly comes out two weeks before Earth Day. Milano took inspo from her family's eco habits. "We're dedicated recyclers," says the mom of Milo, 9, and Elizabella, 6. *Parents* asked Milano about her family life and writing career; she has also penned a book about baseball for adults and a graphic-novel series for teens.

**How did you develop the character of Hope Roberts?** We rarely talk about middle school in a positive way. We think about kids being mean to each other and the strife that comes with transitioning into adulthood. I wanted *Hope* to be someone kids look to and see something different, someone who is positive and taking charge of her own power, but who still looks like she could live in their world.

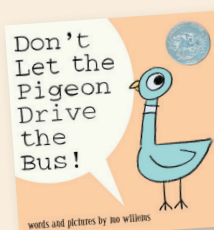
**What's bedtime like at your house?** Oh, I love bedtime. Usually, the kids bundle into bed with me, and we talk

about their day and get quiet time. As they go to their rooms, I'll spend a few minutes with each of them, talking or reading stories. The kids love books by Mo Willems like *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* and Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*, which they call "the crying book" because we all have a big cry when we read it.

**How have you diversified your kids' home library?** My husband, David, and I try to make sure every bookstore trip ends up with books for each of us that are written by someone who doesn't look like us. We've recently gotten into Kwame Alexander's work.

**If you could voice a children's book character, who would it be?** I mean, who wouldn't love to be *Coraline*? I read somewhere that Neil Gaiman said *Coraline* was an adventure story for kids and a horror story for adults, and I totally get why. She is fearless, creative, and so, so smart.

**What childhood book made you a reader and a writer?** Shel Silverstein's *The Missing Piece* has stuck with me. It's minimalistic but beautiful, funny, and sad, and it carries a message that being independent and on your own is worthwhile and fulfilling while it still celebrates a search for togetherness. I love it so much.



Milano's storytime regulars



### PRESS PLAY!

Turn car time (or anytime) into reading time with these three podcasts.

● **The Story Seeds Podcast**

Kids and well-known authors collab on original short stories, read aloud by the author. A creative workbook (\$25) offers bonus content for all episodes.



**FAVE EPISODE** Jason Reynolds, coauthor of *Stamped*, pairs up with a middle-schooler on a tale about an earthworm that turns into a human. *Ages 6 to 12*

● **Julie's Library**

The familiar voice of the original *Mary Poppins* soothes the family. Julie Andrews and her daughter, literary expert Emma Walton Hamilton, read one or two picture books in each segment. There's music too!

**FAVE EPISODE** Kids will get the rhyming bug from "Poetree & The Panda Problem." *Ages 4 to 8*

● **Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls**

Notable women narrate the podcast of this book series about female role models.

**FAVE EPISODE** Scientist Emily Calandrelli (producer and host of *Emily's Wonder Lab* on Netflix) introduces listeners to Mae Jemison, "the girl who dreamed of flying through the stars" and became the first Black woman to travel in space. *Ages 8+*



RAISING THE FUTURE BOOK CLUB



### A TEEN WHEELCHAIR USER TAKES CENTER STAGE

The first actor in a wheelchair to win a Tony Award, Ali Stroker writes about a musical-theater kid much like herself in the novel *The Chance to Fly*. Nat Beacon, the 13-year-old main character, is cast in a local production of *Wicked*, but not everyone is cool about her getting the part. Stroker will read the first chapter and take questions on @Parents Instagram Live on April 17 at 2 P.M. (EST). For more details, visit [parents.com/BookClub](https://parents.com/BookClub). *Ages 8 to 12*

ALYSSA MILANO: DIRK FRANK; ALI STROKER: BRIGITTE JOUXTEL. BOOKS: COURTESY OF THE PUBLISHERS.