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## Books



# A LITTLE GIRL'S LEGACY

YEARS

● In *Notes Left Behind*, Keith and Brooke Desserich chronicle their daughter's battle with brain cancer—and share the notes 6-year-old Elena hid in the house for them before she died.

**WHY DO THIS BOOK?** It's a journal for [Elena's sister] Gracie, showing Gracie who Elena really was.

**HOW MANY NOTES DID ELENA LEAVE?** I never counted. You sit down as a parent, and once you get to the third one, you're crying.

**ARE YOU STILL FINDING THEM?** We hadn't found any for about six months. Then last week, just before Gracie's seventh birthday, we found a note with "I Love You, Mom and Dad and Grace." The timing was quite nice.

**WHY DO YOU THINK ELENA DID IT?** I think she knew what was going on and the notes had a higher meaning.

**WHERE DO THE BOOK'S PROCEEDS GO?** We're hoping the Cure Starts Now (notesleftbehind.com) can raise millions for research. We're trying to change the world.



"Love and appreciate your children," says Keith, with Brooke, Gracie (left) and Elena.

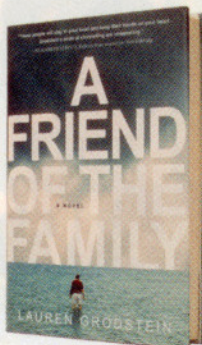
## A Friend of the Family

by Lauren Grodstein | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY BETH PERRY

NOVEL

After 17-year-old Laura Stern gives birth in a public bathroom, her small-town neighbors wonder whether to believe the rumor that the baby was stillborn. Years later, when Laura returns home and sets her sights on the son of a local doctor, old wounds are reopened and both families torn apart. The flashbacks are dizzying, but Grodstein's harsh, honest prose makes this haunting tale worthwhile.



## Lit

by Mary Karr | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY MICHELLE GREEN

MEMOIR

In her memoirs *The Liars' Club* and *Cherry*, Karr dazzled with perversely hilarious accounts of her hellacious Texas upbringing. Here she examines the fallout from those years. As a new mom she leans on Jack Daniels; as her marriage collapses, she aims for the depths: "You smell like a bum," her blueblood husband sneers after a bender. Karr movingly depicts her halting journey into AA, making it clear her grit and spirit remain intact. Even now, she says, "on a crowded subway, I still pine for a fire-arm some days."

