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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.

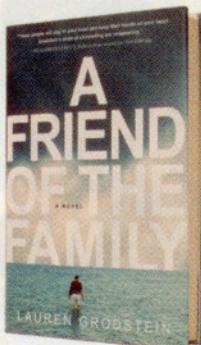
A Friend of the Family

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."

