

Memoirs Make Great Gifts
Kris Wiley and Aurora Ropp for The News Review

The gift-giving season is upon us, and books make the perfect present.

Over the next few weeks, I will recommend some of my favorite books of the year, and perhaps one of the titles will suit a reader in your life.

First up is a slate of memoirs. I enjoy the genre because, although the authors' lives often are quite different from mine, I almost always discover commonalities that elevate my reading experience.

My favorite memoir was "I'm Glad My Mom Died" by Jennette McCurdy, who is perhaps best known for her role in the Nickelodeon hit television series "iCarly." Fans of tell-all books or those about difficult mother-daughter relationships may like it, but I caution readers that terrible memories are shared.

McCurdy's abusive mother manipulated her daughter to be the child star she never was, and now, as an adult, McCurdy unpacks her journey from exploited minor to lost young adult to healthy adult. After reading this searing indictment of Hollywood, I would be happy to never see another child act again.

"The Talk" by Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Darrin Bell is a poignant, important memoir written in graphic novel format.

At age 6, Bell wants a toy gun so he can play like other kids. His mom, who is white, understands the danger that would create for her son, whose father is Black. Bell shares other moments that hit just as hard – making friends at a new school, driving incidents that involved police officers and the reception to the art he creates in response to national events.

At the end, Bell is back at the beginning, only this time he is deciding whether to have "The Talk" with his own 6-year-old son.

Finally, for another perspective on current events at the U.S.-Mexico border, try "Rivermouth: A Chronicle of Language, Faith, and Migration" by Alejandra Oliva.

Oliva details her experience in Tijuana in 2019, where she served as an interpreter and social justice advocate mostly for Central Americans seeking asylum in the United States. She intertwines that narrative with her own family's story living on both sides of the border.

Oliva's boots-on-the-ground perspective is refreshing and deeply unsettling.

For more gift-giving suggestions, contact me at kwiley@cityofroseburg.org or 541-492-7051.

Holiday Hours

The library will be closed Friday, Nov. 10 and Saturday, Nov. 11 in recognition of Veterans Day. The Zoom videoconferencing class will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 10 in the Ford Room. Register at library@cityofroseburg.org or 541-492-7052.

This Week's Library Events

Tuesday, November 7, 10 a.m. – Grab-and-go craft kits while supplies last

Wednesday, November 8, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Wednesday, November 8, 4 p.m. – Club de Idioma Español | Spanish Club for 2nd through 8th graders

Thursday, November 9, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, November 9, 3:30-5 p.m. – Building & Legos

Friday, November 10, 10:30 a.m. – Zoom Videoconferencing Basics (registration required)