

## Favorite Reads of the Year Kris Wiley for The News Review

As 2023 wraps up, I am reflecting on my favorite books of the year. Great plots, fully realized characters, amazing writing ... I had another banner year of reading.

The biggest surprise was the Empyrean series by Rebecca Yarros. I typically don't read fantasies, but I couldn't put down these books that feature fire-breathing, sentient dragons and a saucy enemies-to-lovers romance.

It starts with "Fourth Wing," which introduces Violet of the powerful Sorrengail family and Xaden, son of the martyred rebel leader.

Violet plans to become a scribe, but her mother forces her to train as a dragon rider at Basgiath War College. Good thing she has a knack for it because her kingdom faces threats from neighbors and within its own borders.

"Iron Flame" picks up from the jaw-dropping cliffhanger of the first book, and the war games get even more personal for Violet and Xaden, whose bond is tested over the course of 600-plus electrifying pages. The final scenes shattered me, and I can't wait to see where Yarros takes the story next.

Unfortunately, the title and publication date for the third book in the five-book series have not been released, so I will have to wait rather impatiently for at least a few months.

It was the year of big books because one of my other favorites came in at 736 pages. But don't let the size stop you from picking up "The Covenant of Water" by Abraham Verghese.

"Water" opens in 1900 with a 12-year-old girl who, after losing her father, is sent to Kerala in South India to marry a 40-year-old widower with a son. Big Ammachi, as the girl becomes known, anchors the story over the next 77 years, through the birth of her children and the death of her husband to the bond she shares with her physician-granddaughter.

This is a big, beautiful story with unforgettable characters whose lives converge in an extraordinary ending. I cried, which is the highest praise I can give a book.

For more favorite reads, visit the library's catalog at [roseburg.bibliionix.com](http://roseburg.bibliionix.com); click on Booklists/Staff Picks 2023.

### **Friends of the Library Book Sale**

The Friends of the Roseburg Public Library will hold their Winter Book Sale in the Ford Room this week.

Hours are 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1; and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2.

This will be a better book sale with gift-quality books just in time for the holidays. Most books will be priced at \$1 and are in great condition with no library withdrawals. Special art books and new editions published in the last three years will be offered for \$5. Colorful handcrafted book bags will be available for \$5.

The sale also will include a great selection of DVDs for 50¢ each and the usual vast table of mass market paperbacks for 25¢ each. The free clearance event will continue inside the library at the Friends Book Store.

Book donations are welcome during library operating hours. Community members interested in volunteering may call 541-492-7051.

### This Week's Library Events

Wednesday, November 29, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

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Thursday, November 30, 4-5 p.m. – Seasonal Kids Crafts

Thursday, November 30, 6:30 p.m. – Silent Book Group

Friday, December 1, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. – Friends of the Library Book Sale

Friday, December 1 – Winter Reading Program begins

Saturday, December 2, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. – Friends of the Library Book Sale