

Great New Books

April Ide, Assistant Library Director

Like many, over the long Thanksgiving weekend I chose to stay home and celebrate a quieter Thanksgiving than in past years. Although I missed seeing family and friends, I took the opportunity to enjoy a few books in my to-be-read stack. I must say, I chose some winners.

David Sedaris' latest book, "The Best of Me," collects his favorite essays and stories from throughout his writing career. He is hilarious as ever and many of the selections are about his family. His deep love for his family is obvious, but that doesn't keep him from sharing intimate and sometimes raw descriptions of his ever-shifting and complex relationships with his siblings and his 97-year-old father. He is able to make the most specific familial interactions universal and is a keen observer of human behavior. I highly recommend listening to the audiobook. His writing is fantastic in print, but there is nothing like hearing him read his own work. The audiobook also includes a few of his live readings, which are really special, and an interview with Sedaris that isn't in the print version. The library owns this book in all formats, including regular print, large print, CD audiobook, ebook, and eaudiobook.

William Ottens, the author of the "Librarian Problems" Tumblr blog, got his start at the Lawrence Public Library in Lawrence, Kansas. After a stint as a director of a small library in Iowa, Ottens is now back at the Lawrence Public Library. His book, "Librarian Tales: Funny, Strange, and Inspiring Dispatches from the Stacks," describes his education and career path, and then settles into detailing the life of a librarian. Ottens has worked in a variety of library positions throughout his tenure, and has insight to share on most aspects of librarianship. He describes the joys and frustrations of the job, and explains the higher missions of libraries. This is an excellent primer for anyone who is interested in what it means to be a librarian and what day-to-day work in a library looks like. And no, we don't get to read books on the job!

Lindy West, the author of "Shrill" and creator of the TV show by the same name, is back with a new book of essays, titled "Shit, Actually." This book is so refreshing and had me cackling the whole way through. She starts out by discussing "The Fugitive," the most perfect movie ever according to West. She then rates every other movie she chooses on a scale of 1 to 10 DVDs of "The Fugitive." Spoiler alert: "Love, Actually" does not fare well, which is where the title of this book comes in. West's descriptions of the plots of movies like "Jurassic Park," "Titanic," "The Lion King," and more lay bare just how bizarre these movies are and how many plot holes exist in movies that are now considered classics. I haven't even seen all of the movies she discusses and I couldn't stop laughing. I wish there were twenty more chapters of this book!

I wasn't able to get through everything on my list, but I look forward to reading "Cleo McDougal Regrets Nothing" by Allison Winn Scotch, "Hench" by Natalie Zina Walschots, and "The Lost Love Song" by Minnie Darke.

If any of these books pique your interest, visit our online catalog at www.newulmlibrary.org or give us a call at 507-359-8331 and we'd be happy to help you place them on hold. Happy reading!