

BOOK BREAK

Lend an ear to these



VICTORIA DIAZ

If you're looking for some good books to listen to, lend an ear to these:

"So Far," written and read by Kelsey Grammer (Dove, three hours, \$17.95). It may seem a little early for TV's popular "Frasier" to have put his life story together. But, considering all that's happened in his 40-something years, perhaps it's more than high time. There's all that fame and fortune, of course (most of which kicked in when he joined the cast of "Cheers"), but much of the rest has been a gut-wrenching roller coaster ride. Incredibly, both the actor's father and sister were victims of murder. All his marriages have failed. He's flirted with the drug scene and other less-than-wholesome pursuits. And, once upon a time, he was kicked out of the prestigious Juilliard School of Music. But let him tell you about that, and other high-low points along the way. In his familiar, mellifluous tones, he sounds sometimes very bon vivant, sometimes like the aging hippie next door. Whatever he sounds like, this is one engaging audiobook.

"Independence Day," by Richard Ford. Read by John Rubinstein. (Random House, three hours, \$17). Former sportswriter Frank Bascombe is a Realtor in Haddam, New Jersey. He is 44 years old, divorced, the father of two, and doesn't know where his life is going. Perhaps it isn't going anywhere. His ex-wife claims he's untrustworthy. His 16-year-old son Paul seems half-crazy with resentment toward the world in general. His girlfriend seems to be pulling away from him. His really deals are falling through. Things are bad all over when he and Paul set out on a trip to patch up their relationship. Then, things get worse. Ford's resonant prose and razor-sharp perceptions of us as we make our way toward the next century make this ultimately hopeful story of home and family a memorable work. And, oh those conversations! Rubinstein's subtly-nuanced reading of one of Ford's best efforts is first-rate.

"The Liars' Club," written and read by Mary Karr. (Penguin, four hours, \$16.95). This autobiography by Texas writer Karr could have been subtitled, "We cried until we laughed." Having grown up in an atmosphere marked by lying, cheating, loneliness, stealing, drinking, rape, terrible sickness, and

See DIAZ, 8D

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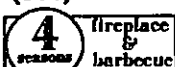


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