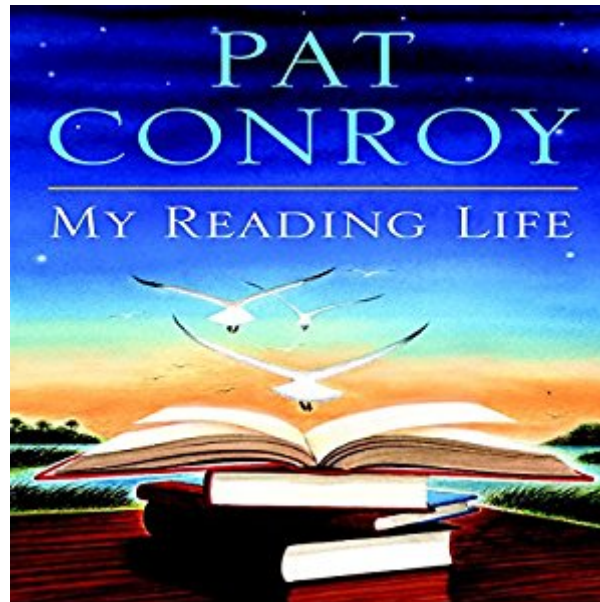




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My Reading Life



Synopsis

Best-selling author Pat Conroy acknowledges the books that have shaped him and celebrates the profound effect reading has had on his life. Pat Conroy, the beloved American storyteller, is also a voracious reader. He has for years kept a notebook in which he notes words or phrases, just from a love of language. But reading for him is not simply a pleasure to be enjoyed in off-hours or a source of inspiration for his own writing. It would hardly be an exaggeration to claim that reading has saved his life, and if not his life, then surely his sanity. In *My Reading Life*, Conroy revisits a life of passionate reading. He includes wonderful anecdotes from his school days, moving accounts of how reading pulled him through dark times, and even lists of books that particularly influenced him at various stages of his life, including grammar school, high school, and college. Listeners will be enchanted with his ruminations on reading and books and will want to own and share this perfect gift book for the holidays. And, come graduation time, *My Reading Life* will establish itself as a perennial favorite, as did Dr. Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 52 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Random House Audio

Audible.com Release Date: November 2, 2010

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B004ADM5U6

Best Sellers Rank: #248 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Language Arts & Disciplines #356 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Artists, Writers & Musicians #1243 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Personal Memoirs

Customer Reviews

Pat Conroy is impeccable in his beautiful descriptions. True to his stellar story telling ability, he makes one want to run out and devour the books that shaped his life and the people who were instrumental in directing him to appreciate great literature. I have read it twice, and I'm sure I will pick it up again this year. Like all of Conroy's books, treasures. His are some of my greatest

treasures. Now that he is gone, I grieve for the fact that he will never put pen to paper again. But alas, I'm confident that our great God, will not let Pat Conroy's gift go unused! Until we meet again, I will have to be satisfied with what I have and savor them over and over! Thank you, Pat Conroy!

This book speaks to me because I too love books. Conroy has the words to tell his deep involvement and life experiences with literature. He has revealed himself more as he speaks of books than in anything else he has written. He tells us more about his mom and her influence. There is also a chapter about Mr Norris his high school english teacher, mentor, and life along friend. The books that were meaningful to him were discussed and he told why they were meaningful and how they impacted his writing. About his own writing he says, "A novel is my fingerprint.". Also he feels that his writing is his way to approach the alter of God and creation itself. He is quite emotional about the books he loves. Needless to say I have noted many for my future reading. Sometimes Conroy actually runs amok with words and emotions as he tells about his collection of books. His mom is given all of the credit for making him a writer. Personally, I think it was inborn and there was no way he would not become a writer. This is a wonderful little book, 5 x 7 and 333 pages.

So I finished "My Reading Life," Pat Conroy's ode to the books (and the book people) that have shaped him. Completed the slim volume in one last gasp, just before 1 a.m., having passed the point of no return, the moment when a book screams "Finish me!" and you obey. Like my usual time spent with Conroy from Carolina, I left it feeling enraptured, engaged, delighted, and yes, a bit deflated. I'm not sure why. It made me want to hole up and hibernate for the winter, primed with a plethora of books, to tackle the tomes he loves. Thomas Wolfe and Tolstoy. Balzac. James Dickey. He even suggests another go around with "Gone with the Wind." I, too, know what it's like to feel the pulse begin to pound at the sight of a used bookstore. I, too, know what it's like when a book grabs you, stabs you, haunts your dreams, rearranges your life. I loved hearing Conroy's version in his curious way. But the best of the rest was his chapter about Gene Norris, a beloved English teacher who gave a trembling, terrified adolescent a gift he could never quite repay. Norris taught him, yes. He gave him books, indeed. But he drove him to the Wolfe boardinghouse in Asheville. He took Pat to meet a poet. He saw a spark and ignited an inferno. In a way, "My Reading Life" is almost elegiac. He laments being born in the century in which novels lost their stories, music lost its melody, art lost its form. He says he read something claiming that paper-printed books will be obsolete in two years. Maybe, maybe not. But I get his point. We no longer live in a literary age. Sound bites have

made us spastic. Can't sit still. No time for stories. No time for depth. We're a worse nation for it. Cheers to Pat Conroy for championing another, better way.

I loved this book--so Pat Conroy, so interesting, and as always, more revealing about him as a person and his family. Incredible all the books he has read, and you can easily make a long list of good books to read if you feel like it. I am so sorry Pat Conroy died--he suffered a lot in his life, had a wonderful time a good bit of the time, made wonderful friends (many you learn more about in this book)--plus, I read parts of this book out loud to my husband just because it is so beautifully written. His mastery of the English language shows how much he has read to make his own writing even better. I have read everything Conroy has written and am so sad we won't get more. I did see there are 2 biography-type books out on Conroy--one with interviews with several members of his family, and I am eager to get them & read them as well. I heartily recommend this book, and if you are already a Conroy fan, you will love this book.

When I was a young teacher, *The Water is Wide* inspired me. Over the years I have read some if not all of Conroy's books and identified with a person abused by a same sex parent, identified with a person saved by reading and just loved PC as a true comrade and age mate. Conroy, his father, and his whole family suffered and still suffer PTSD but now they have knowledge of it I hope. Oh, yes, in this book he does go off on skimmable tangents and raves, that echo Wolfe, and Whitman, but he knows he does it and all is forgiven. I can't agree that Dickey is the best American poet ever but he ever worshipped him. The book is worth reading for the references to books I haven't yet read, very much worth it. And for the communing with a kindred spirit. I did become Santini-weary, just as I became disillusioned with my own Marine, larger-than-life, bullying, WW2 era uncle. Mercifully, I didn't have to grow up with the big, handsome, charismatic SOB. Conroy did, and his survival is heroic. We loved those guys anyway, against our better judgment. (Jim Webb has interesting things to say about the Scotch-Irish heritage PC and I share by the way, in his *Born Fighting*. It explains a whole lot.)

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