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Annie: [00:00:00] Welcome to From the Front Porch, a conversational podcast about books, small business and life in the South.

All happy families are alike. Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

I'm Annie B. Jones, owner of The Bookshelf, an independent bookstore in beautiful downtown Thomasville, Georgia. And today I'm joined by my friend and bookstagrammer, Hunter McLendon, as we talk about Anna Karenina, the book we've been reading for our Conquer A Classic series on Patreon. Hi Hunter.

Hunter: [00:01:03] Hello.

Annie: [00:01:05] We just wrapped up our final episode of Conquer A Classic on Patreon. We have been reading Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina all year long, like literally all year long. And we just finished section eight, part eight of the book and recorded our final episode. And now we're here to talk a little bit about it with a broader range of readers. How do you feel?

Hunter: [00:01:32] I honestly, I'm mostly just excited to, like, I don't know, like, I'm just, I don't know. I'm excited just to be here.

Annie: [00:01:39] We are going to approach this kind of in a different way. So on Patreon, we have been reading each part of Anna Karenina per month. So. Over the last eight to 10 months, we've read all eight parts and then we've been recapping them.

Uh, this is going to be a little different. This is, is going to be where we obviously talk about the overarching themes of Anna Karenina. But specifically, we're going to talk about where we see Anna Karenina in pop culture. And this kind of comes from this idea that the conversations you and I were having, we also were tying into things like the office or sex in the city.

And so that's what today is going to be like. So hopefully if you've read Anna Karenina, you can join in the fun. And even if you haven't, there will be enough like pop cultural touchstones where this will be a familiar conversation to you. So let's dive in, shall we?

Hunter: [00:02:30] I'm pumped.

Annie: [00:02:31] Okay. I do want to take a page out of like our old, uh, Love it or loathe it days, uh, or backlist book club. Can you like briefly recap this 800 page novel and just tell people what is Anna Karenina and about?

Hunter: [00:02:46] Um, okay. Anna Karenina is about a bunch of unhappy people who are trying to figure out their life. Um, and then a happy couple who have it all together. But specifically Anna Karenina, isn't happy with her marriage. So she cheats on her husband and it's about how everything spirals out from there.

Annie: [00:03:08] Excellent. You did that in like less than a minute, which is very impressive.

Hunter: [00:03:12] I tried, I was like, how can I do this? Like, what's my elevator pitch.

Annie: [00:03:15] Okay. So I am going to start with who really, based on our conversations, we now, I think we agree on this, that the main character of Anna Karenina is not actually Anna Karenina, but this side character who winds up becoming in my view, the main protagonist or kind of the soul of the book for better or worse, I'm not saying it's. Entirely a good thing. Uh, but it's this character named Levin. Um, do you agree that Levin becomes kind of the center point?

Hunter: [00:03:46] Yeah, I do.

Annie: [00:03:48] I can tell you don't feel great about that. It's not maybe our favorite thing, but I do think it is the reality. Um, and we talked on our Conquer A Classic episodes about how maybe even Levin is, maybe even Levin is a type of Tolstoy. Like he may even be representing Tolstoy himself, but I wanted to throw at the audience and then you another specific thing, but like, The whole time I was reading Anna Karenina, Levin was like, kind of in the background and the entire time he reminded me, not just of the actor, Aiden Turner, I think that's his name, but he reminded me of Poldark specifically in the, Oh, for me, it's a PBS show, but it could be like a BBC show unclear.

Uh, but the show Poldark, have you watched Poldark?

Hunter: [00:04:38] I've like seen bits and pieces. I haven't seen the whole thing, but I know what you're talking about,

Annie: [00:04:42] I think you should at least watch seasons one and two of Poldark for the record. Um, it's very, um, it like flies by there's steamy parts. Uh, Aiden Turner's very attractive, but also there's just a lot happening there.

But the reason he reminds me of Levin is because he's a little bit broody. He's a little bit in his head. And cares a lot about the land, which boy does Levin love agriculture. Uh, he just loves dirt so much. And so the entire time I was reading and then Levin has this love story with Kitty that is really a slow burn and operates opposite of Anna and Bronski, in my opinion.

And so the whole time we were reading an Anna Karenina, not only was I picturing Aiden Turner as Levin, which I think is a perfect casting, but I was really envisioning Poldark himself. Like the character of Poldark seems very, very much in tune with Levin. And I wondered as you were reading, are there any like pop culture characters that you felt like you found these other major characters in, do you know what I mean? Like did Anna Karenina remind you of any other pop culture characters?

Hunter: [00:05:53] Yeah. So I will say Levin reminded me. Um, I I've mentioned this before. We've talked a lot about how a lot of these characters reminded us of characters from the office, but I will say, I do think that Levin and Kitty reminded me of Jim and Pam, but also I think that Levin's weird obsession with agriculture reminds me of. Um, Dwight Schrute's beet obsession.

Annie: [00:06:19] Yeah, I think in another life, or maybe even still Dwight has written like a beet cookbook or something and Levin, I feel like the next thing Levin's going to do is like write an agriculture handbook or something. Oh, absolutely. Or some kind of government treatise, which let's be real. I also think Dwight would do.

Yes, which brings us to my favorite comparison that I made. So the Levin Poldark one I'm proud of, but the one that I still stand by and I do think is accurate. And it especially would tie in with, if you think Levin and Kitty or Jim and Pam, which I do think that's hold that holds up. Vronsky and Anna are Ryan and Kelly from the office, like. They're so toxic. I

Hunter: [00:07:05] I still remember when you first said that to me, because I, for anyone who has not heard the Patreon episodes, I was obsessed with Anna and Bronski. I was like, yes, this is the toxic relationship of a lifetime. This is everything. And then like you put in my head Kelly and Ryan who are literally the worst,

Annie: [00:07:28] I feel like you were on such a high on Anna and Bronski and like you do, you, that's fine. But I did just want to bring you down to earth a little bit because Anna and Bronski are terrible people.

Hunter: [00:07:41] They did also remind me of it's funny. Cause they remind me of a lot of toxic couples like Carrie and Big.

Annie: [00:07:47] Yes, which I was in the middle of watching *Sex in the City* this summer, while also reading an *Anna Karenina*. And I kept texting Hunter, how much I truly hate Big. Like I cannot. I cannot stress my hatred for that character enough. Um, and I do feel like Carrie and Big are such a toxic relationship. Like she keeps returning to, to him in a way that I find absolutely confounding. And the truth is I think *Anna Karenina* is so much more interesting than Bronski I do not get it. I guess Bronski is really handsome.

Hunter: [00:08:21] Listen, Bronski. Okay. I don't think Bronski has is handsome in the book, but I feel like I say this way too often now, but Aaron Taylor Johnson, he, Oh

Annie: [00:08:34] yeah. Is he he's in the, um, film adaptation that starts Keira Knightley.

Hunter: [00:08:39] Um, yeah.

Annie: [00:08:41] Yeah. Can we talk about that next then? Can we just skip ahead of that? Um, you and I have not watched the movie yet. It's going to be our reward for finishing it, uh, finishing the book. So you're not going to watch the movie, but I do know that Keira Knightley, she plays *Anna Karenina* right? Yes. Okay. Tell me how you feel about Keira Knightley in general.

Hunter: [00:09:02] Okay. Um, how do I, I don't want to be mean because like, I don't think she's like awful, but like. I heard she's not. She's not for me.

Annie: [00:09:11] Okay. I can't figure out, like there have been times in my life. I truly haven't known who is who? Keira Knightley or Natalie Portman. Like I like, I truly get them confused. Um, I don't think I really love Keira Knightley as an actress.

And look, I liked *Pride and Prejudice*. I liked, um, *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*. Like, I love that movie and she's in that. Um, so I don't think it's that I just like dislike her, but the fact that she is supposed to be *Anna Karenina*, who is this complicated in my mind, like beautiful and kind of voluptuous, like, um, like character, like.

I just don't understand that, uh, Keira Knightley just seems like this gawky and I think she's beautiful. Don't get me wrong. But like, I feel like Keira Knightly is kind of this gangly. Yeah. I don't know.

Hunter: [00:10:06] Also, let me just say, I don't think it's fair that she gets to be both in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Anna Karenina* as the lead.

Annie: [00:10:15] Yeah. Yeah. Let's calm down. Like, I don't think she needed to be cast in both of those roles.

Hunter: [00:10:21] Well, and also I did notice everyone in that movie, like I, cause I watched the trailer frequently and a few clips and um, and everyone's British and they have the British accents. Yeah. And I'm like, yeah, This is a Russian novel.

Annie: [00:10:37] We can do better people. Do you, who would you cast as Anna Karenina instead?

Hunter: [00:10:43] Okay. Listen, here's my problem. My problem is, is that I now want to be Phoebe Waller-Bridge to do everything and I don't know if she would, I don't know how she would do it, but I just would love to see her do it.

Annie: [00:10:56] Okay. I do love Phoebe Waller-Bridge. I do, for some reason, my reading of *Anna Karenina* than, uh, is just that she is the most beautiful woman anyone has ever laid eyes on. She is like complicated and mysterious. And so I have a hard time picturing her as this like cerebral quirky character, which is how I associate Phoebe Waller-Bridge. But I also really like, and trust Phoebe Waller-Bridge.

So I could be here for this. Um, who is the actress? Jodie Comer. Is that her name from *Killing Eve*? I think she could be,

Hunter: [00:11:33] Oh, I have chills. They're multiplying.

Annie: [00:11:38] I didn't even put that in the notes. Cause I was like, I'm going to lay this on Hunter in the moment to see his reaction.

Hunter: [00:11:45] Well, I am grinning from ear to ear. Wow.

Annie: [00:11:49] Okay. Okay. So you're here for that. Let's move on to do, let's see, is this the most loathed character? Anna Karenina. Anna's husband, Alexi. Alex. Oh, I don't even know how to pronounce his last name. Really?

Hunter: [00:12:04] Alex Alexandra.

Annie: [00:12:06] That was it. Alexandrovich. Alexi Alexandrovich what a name? You hate him. I feel like, right. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but

Hunter: [00:12:17] listen, my, I have this problem where anyone's first husband just is not for me. I don't know what it is.

Annie: [00:12:26] You want take two. Let's see if they could do better on round two. Um, he is in the book. I think our really, and this is one thing that I do appreciate about Tolstoy and about this novel.

I think the characters are really nuanced. They're not always in depth. Like I don't think we fully get full character portraits of all of these people, but they're pretty nuanced because at first he just seems like your standard crappy husband kind of thing. And, and I'm not saying he's the picture of like, love and devotion, but I do think he's interesting in how he grapples with religion and the role religion and morality play in his life.

Uh, his wife is basically leaving him in a time where that would have been wildly, um, inappropriate is even not strong enough, a word to me, it just would have been scandalous to have his wife kind of leave him so publicly. Um, but then he's very kind of legalistic. Like won't grant her a divorce, even when it's apparent, he has moved on with his life and she has moved on with hers.

It's really messy. But by the end, you're just not a fan of his, like, even if you can allow for his nuances, he's just not the greatest. And that is why throughout the entire novel, he reminded me of Dawson Leery.

Hunter: [00:13:42] I tell you, you know, like I've been watching, I've been rewatching I'm on, I'm still, I've literally been on season two for like over a month because

Annie: [00:13:49] early shows, there are like 24 episodes of season. It is a commitment,

Hunter: [00:13:54] but I will. Yeah, I think that, that, I think it's so accurate because Alexi and Dawson are both. So. They feel so like they they're so possessive of their love.

Annie: [00:14:06] Yes, you're exactly right. Which is like my number one least favorite quality in a male character. Like they really hate it. I really hate it.

We really hate it. He could also be Dean from *Gilmore Girls* for that matter. But I do feel like the Dawson comparison is accurate because Dawson also seems to have a deep sense of right and wrong. It's not always right. Mind you. Um, but he seems to see things very black or white, like, um, I don't know. And so for me, I think Alexi is very much that same way where like he can not wrap his brain around his marriage ending and like maybe it's time to let her go in the same way that Dawson really can never let Joey go.

Hunter: [00:14:54] Okay. Okay. So giving, okay. So if we're thinking then about Dawson, um, and. Um, Jody Comer. Is that what you said, Jody Comer yeah. Yes.

Okay. So if you're picturing, picturing an older James VanDerBeek now James VanDerBeek with Jody Comer would you be upset if she left him to be with it? I mean, I guess I know I get it. You don't like cheating

Annie: [00:15:20] I don't like cheating, but if she left him, are you asking me if Jodie Comber left him for Joshua Jackson? Would I be okay with it? Yes, I would be okay with that. Okay. See,

we all have our limits. I just don't know why you would choose James VanDerBeek

Hunter: [00:15:38] recently. And whenever people chose teams, VanDerBeek I almost locked. I was like,

Annie: [00:15:43] it just is so foreign to me. I just truly don't get it. Um, okay then let's turn our attention to kitty who throughout the entire book. Kitty is. This, almost this really meek, minor character, she ultimately goes on to marry Levin.

Their relationship is by far the healthiest of the three relationships we're given the most insight into. They have their own struggles and complications, but the, this is the happy couple you were referring to at the top of the episode. Kitty look. And it was a joke as we recapped all of these parts that I consistently thought someone was going to die and I was always wrong.

Like, I, I have finished a *Anna Karenina* and I still think more people should be dead, but Kitty is one that I consistently thought she was going to die. And I think that's because she is sick toward the beginning slash middle of the book. Um, but I also wonder if it's, because there are in parts of this book, she reminds me so much of a Jane Austin, like side character, like too pure for this world.

Like, I'm almost thinking of Beth from *Little Women*. Does she give you best vibes too? Or is that just me?

Hunter: [00:16:52] She does. And, and, and it's so funny. Cause like, I think especially, um, Greta Gerwig, Beth in. That it's almost like she's like where it's kind of exposing how her goodness really is going to be her downfall.

Annie: [00:17:09] Right. She's too good for this world.

Hunter: [00:17:11] W right. Yeah.

Annie: [00:17:12] And yeah. Kitty in the book, she has this illness, which again, I think immediately does make you think of Beth, but she also has this. And it's so interesting to contrast it to Alexi because Kitty also has a deep faith and a deep sense of right and wrong, but hers never comes across quite so aggressive as Alexi's like.

Kitty's faith seems far more embedded in her in a way that is truly pure of heart. Whereas Alexi's feels really selfish and I could be being harsh on Alexi, but, um, that is how it feels to me. Like I have a lot more patience and grace for Kitty's character than I do for Alexi slash Dawson Leery.

Hunter: [00:17:52] Would you say that she like, cause in some ways she reminds me of Charlotte from *Sex in the City*.

Annie: [00:17:59] Okay. Yes, I could. I could definitely see that. Yes, because she wants, she also wants love so badly. And in the beginning of the book she is dating or like even maybe on her way to being betrothed engaged to Bronski and Bronski. You know, goes and has his affair with Anna Karenina and leaves Kitty in the dust.

And I think that's partly why Kitty gets sick, whatever. And so I do think, and then, you know, Charlotte, Charlotte winds up in this marriage that I do not understand. And even though I am here for Kitty and Levin, it does feel a little bit like, and I really am here. I'd like to be clear, I am team Kitty and team Levin, but it feels like a Bronski was like the dark and handsome guy and Levin is like the man she settling for. Although I think it's the better choice. Does that make sense?

Hunter: [00:18:55] I mean, I guess if you think about it, like, I mean, that would mean that McDougal was the Bronski, even though they got married, everything that Charlotte and McDougall got married, you know, he was the skeevy. He was kind of like that skeevy. Yeah.

Annie: [00:19:08] please use air quotes about whether or not that man is attractive,

I

Hunter: [00:19:13] dont not find Kyle McLaughlin. Like there's just something. And I think it's also, he was in a movie called *Showgirls*, which I don't think you ever need to see.

Annie: [00:19:19] Is that the one with the girl from *Saved By The Bell*? I just know that from the true Hollywood story or something,

Hunter: [00:19:25] If going to watch it, you might just want to go ahead and watch like a TV version of it.

Annie: [00:19:29] Yeah. I don't think I've ever got to watch that movie, but I did not know he was in that. I only know him from *Twin Peaks* and I just don't find him attractive at all.

Hunter: [00:19:36] No, he's, he's not, we agree on that.

Annie: [00:19:39] Um, Let's talk about, we've talked about like who, what kind of, sort of, who would we cast? And you've mentioned like Phoebe Waller-Bridge, like we have not yet watched the Keira Knightley version of *Anna Karenina*, but in 2020, or let's be real 2021, 2022. When movies are back in production, you should make the, the new *Anna Karenina* *Karenina* adaptation. Okay.

Hunter: [00:20:07] So I thought, I thought a lot about this and I feel like I actually, I want two versions and I want one of the versions to be, um, a HBO limited series that Phoebe Weller Bridge like writes and possibly stars in and like writes directs.

I want her to like be all in or, and I also, and, or I want Greta Gerwig to do a like three and a half hour film of it.

Annie: [00:20:32] Oh, okay. You know what? Look, I love Greta Gerwig. I think she's a little genius, but you know what I really do want and what I would actually watch, I would watch a limited series on HBO.

That's genius. That's what I want, because that's what it's made for. Right? Like Tolstoy may, it's a serial. Um, you and I have read it that way. I think that is the only way, honestly, to, to read it, um, because it is so long, but I also think you could get a lot more of the nuances if it was a limited series, instead of trying to pack it all into like a really lengthy feature, length film, or whatever.

Hunter: [00:21:11] Yeah. Yeah. And I do want to clarify though, I do think it would have to be a limited series of like eight episodes because. I think that in our experience of reading it, and I, I feel like the first, the first force, the first four sections to me felt like the first, like three or four seasons of like one of those really good TV shows that's on for, that's really good for the first four seasons. And it's on for like eight and then like the second half is kind of really rough.

Annie: [00:21:37] Yes. It goes back to the office. Right? Like I think we kept coming back to the office, reading *Anna Karenina*, which is a weird, weird thing to say. Um, but I think you're absolutely right. Cause the first four parts of this book are so compelling and plot driven.

Um, but I. I'm afraid the last four episodes would lag. But I think if they're just episodes and not like seasons of TV you're right. It needs to be a limited series and it needs to be in the hands of the right person. And I do think Phoebe Waller-Bridge is the right person, because I think she would focus on the relational aspects of this book, which I think would lend themselves more to TV or more to film than the uh, Russian history aspects of this book. Plus we already know Phoebe Waller-Bridge handles issues of faith really well.

Hunter: [00:22:27] That's the thing I would love. I would love to see her write it. Possibly like director co-directing and have a Jodie Corner star. Okay. This is why we're making it happen

Annie: [00:22:39] can, uh, you know who else I would weirdly cast, but I don't know where I cast him as maybe you could figure it out. I don't like him. Like at all, but I just, for some reason, picture him in one of these roles, which is Armie Hammer.

Hunter: [00:22:53] You don't like art? Listen than maybe its jsut a thing for the gays. I don't know.

Annie: [00:22:58] He's too handsome and so tall. He's just too tall. They made this tall

Hunter: [00:23:05] For people like me. I'm six four, he's six four. We are a perfect match.

Annie: [00:23:11] If you guys are the same height you are tall, he just seems like he looms.

Hunter: [00:23:17] Listen, do you know what? I will say this? If this is something I think I thought a lot about, because you talk a lot about like, um, blandly handsome men and I realized something, is that there's this, I mean, this is kind of like a joke in a stereotype, but you know, people joke about how like gay men are too attractive.

Well, I'm not he's gay, but I am saying that like, maybe because like, there's like this, like, like gay men sometimes have this like, tendency to want, like excessive attractiveness. Maybe that's why he just seems kind of like a, to me, I feel I could access him.

Annie: [00:23:51] Interesting. He's too handsome for me, but do you think then he could play a good Bronski?

Hunter: [00:23:57] Yeah. Oh, if you listen, if he played Bronski, I would immediately sign up to like, I'd be like, can I be Anna, please?

Annie: [00:24:05] I just think he would be a good Bronski. I think Aiden Turner would be great as Levin. I don't know who could play Kitty. I havn't thought it that far, but I think we're on our way here with something really great.

Hunter: [00:24:17] Absolutely.

Annie: [00:24:18] Um, okay. You mentioned kind of the fact that the book in our very humble opinion does stumble a bit like parts one through four are nearly perfect. Would you agree? Oh yeah, like they're really good. Part six, we think you could almost get rid of the whole

thing, which some Russian scholar, well, which if you're a Russian scholar listening to this, kudos to you, because it would be shocking if this is the podcast for you.

Uh, but some Russian scholars probably rolling over, but I do think there isn't it section five that we thought, just why is it here? I think that's right. It was section six, section six. I feel like you can get rid of, and then section seven was good because we get it's like the typical penultimate episode of something.

Right. Like, I feel like it's one of those TV shows where the episode before the season finale is better than the season finale.

Hunter: [00:25:18] Absolutely.

Annie: [00:25:19] 100%. How would you have felt if Anna Karenina had ended at part seven?

Hunter: [00:25:25] Honestly, I think I would have been shocked, but I'd have been okay with it.

Annie: [00:25:31] I think so too. I think you and I agree on that like where we don't need, um, things wrapped up in a pretty bow. Uh, I think we both are drawn to literary fiction, partly because of that. I liked part eight, but I almost like it as like a standalone investigation of faith and doubt. Like, I almost want it to be its own thing because I still am having trouble with how it entirely wraps in and ties into Anna Karenina.

And I think that is often true. I'm trying to think of a TV show, but I know I have watched a show where the episode before the season finale or the series finale, the second to last episode was better. And I think part seven, if you had ended it, if he had ended it right there, we would have been like shocked, but like in the best possible way,

Hunter: [00:26:12] like honestly, if that's how it would have ended, I'd have probably been like, wow. Five stars. Like,

Annie: [00:26:19] yeah. Yeah. I think you're right. And again, I like part eight, but not because really of anything it adds to the overarching, novel and acronym really only because of the themes it's dealing with, which are just the themes I'm attracted to as a reader.

Hunter: [00:26:33] Yeah. I think it would have been great as like, almost just like a companion piece. Like that was,

Annie: [00:26:39] yeah. Okay, you posed this question and I think it is worth addressing here, which is if cancel culture existed in the period, this books take place in the period. This book takes place in which characters would get canceled.

I love this because when you read classic literature, you do. When you read classic literature in the modern era, there are going to be issues, right? They're just, that's just the way that it is. And we, you and I could talk all day long about that, but we probably aren't really qualified enough to do it, but I am.

I feel like we are qualified to address this in a tongue in cheek kind of way. Cause that's what we do I

Hunter: [00:27:17] think. And you know, let me just say this. I think this should be a new thing. When we read classics, I feel like we should start saying who's going to get canceled.

Annie: [00:27:24] Yeah. Um, who do you have.

Hunter: [00:27:27] Well, all the men,

Annie: [00:27:32] even, even Levin.

Hunter: [00:27:37] I guess you can say, I mean, he's not, he's not canceling, he's not canceled for any cancelable reason other than he was a bore to me.

Annie: [00:27:45] Okay. That's fair. I'll give you that. And, and look, he's not perfect or anything, but yeah, you could cancel him for being a little dull. I liked Levin. Um, I won't cancel all of them in, although I kind of tend to agree because I really think Trotsky has got issues. And I don't really like him. The first person that comes to mind that I definitely think culture would cancel is Alexi.

Hunter: [00:28:09] Oh, for sure. He is to- is toxic masculinity. Personified.

Annie: [00:28:15] Yeah, I think he's gone. I think he's canceled. I'm trying to think who else. You know, who I think would be a fun side character and I don't think she would be canceled.

Do you remember? This is such a massive novel and there are so many Russian names, but do you remember the very minor character who weirdly befriends Alexi she's like this super hyper religious almost, um, Oh gosh, almost a Rachel Lynde character from *Anne of Green Gables*. Like she, like, she takes Alexi under her wing.

She's extremely legalistic religious, but also like is okay with affairs. It's weird. She's weird to me, but I think, um, it put in the right hands, she could be a really funny, minor character in a way that wouldn't get her canceled.

Hunter: [00:29:03] I absolutely agree. I'm trying to think if there, like, if there were any women who, um, I mean, I don't know, like I honestly, I think that in a 2020 lens. I don't, I don't think that Anna will get canceled. I think that, I think that people would for her as

Annie: [00:29:21] well. Yeah. No, I think you're absolutely right. I'm the only woman I would potentially cancel is maybe Bronski's mom.

Hunter: [00:29:30] Yeah.

Annie: [00:29:31] I feel like we don't get, she's not real. She doesn't come across real great in that last chapter, in that last section of the book.

Hunter: [00:29:37] Well, I mean, I don't know if anybody comes okay.

Annie: [00:29:40] That's true. That's fair. You don't even have to finish that sentence. I don't think anybody's, they're all you put it perfectly. Like this is a book about unhappy people. Forget unhappy families. These people are real, real complicated and a lot is going on in their heads.

Like that's why I wouldn't want to cancel Levin because I do feel like there's a lot going on in that guy's head that I would like to investigate.

Hunter: [00:30:00] You know what, Levin is your type, because he is, he's like, he's one of those, blandly handsome, emphasis on the bland. I'm just kidding.

Annie: [00:30:09] Um, while we're talking about Levin, I want to throw this at you.

The whole last section of the book, the whole part eight, I kept thinking, what does this remind me of what this does this remind me of? And it reminds me of Taylor Swift's Folklore, and it reminds me of the song "Mirror Ball". Uh, the lines that say I'm still a believer, but I don't know why. I've never been a natural. All I do is try, try, try. And I thought Levin, Taylor Swift is here for you.

Hunter: [00:30:40] That would be, he would get that tattooed on his back

Annie: [00:30:43] right? An ugly, Ben Affleck back.

Oh, a Hunter. I, I loved reading this book with you. I cannot imagine reading Anna Karenina with anyone else. In fact, now that I've read the whole thing, I feel like I can safely say I would never, I would never have finished it without your accountability. Um, do you think we did Leo Tolstoy justice today?

Hunter: [00:31:07] Oh, totes for sure.

Annie: [00:31:10] He'd be so proud. Um, okay. But the Anna Karenina HBO Maxx adaptation, directed by Phoebe Waller-Bridge and starring Jodie Comer coming to a streaming service near you.

Hunter: [00:31:22] Absolutely fingers crossed.

Annie: [00:31:38] From the Front Porch is a weekly podcast production of The Bookshelf, an independent bookstore in South Virginia. You can follow The Bookshelves daily happenings on Instagram @bookshelftigo and all the books from today's episode can be purchased online. Our store website it's www.Bookshelfthomasville.com.

A full transcript of today's episode can be found@www.Fromthefrontporchpodcast.com. Special, thanks to Dylan and his team at Studio D Production for sound and editing and for our theme music, which sets the perfect, warm, and friendly tone for our Thursday conversations.

This week, I'm reading *The Searcher* by Tana French. Hunter, what are you reading?

Hunter: [00:32:19] I just finished it, but *Memorial* by Brian Washington,

Annie: [00:32:22] which you want everyone to read?

Hunter: [00:32:24] Yeah. Like order it ASAP.

Annie: [00:32:28] If you liked what you heard on today's episode, tell us by leaving a review on iTunes, or if you're so inclined support Patreon, where you can hear our staff's weekly, new released Tuesday conversations, read full book reviews and our monthly shelf life newsletter follow along as Hunter and I they're a classic.

We just finished Anna Karenina and now we will be reading the young adult adaptation Anna K as our reward. And you can receive free media mail shipping on all your online book

orders. Just go to patreon.com/fromthefrontporch. We're so grateful for you. And we look forward to meeting back here next week.