

201029_FTFP_October Reading Recap_mixdown

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

[00:00:24] I offer you the story of my own explorations in service to this question, how can we care for this world? I have tried to reconcile my roles as one daughter, caring for one father as one woman attuned at times to only a single wild play while the planet is burning. How I long to change the world for the better. Susan Cerulean, *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird*.

[00:00:53] I'm Annie Jones, owner of The Bookshelf, an independent bookstore in beautiful downtown Thomasville, Georgia. And [00:01:00] today it's just me telling you all about the books I read in October. October, as it turns out was a really good reading months for me, I perhaps did not read as much as I grew accustomed to reading um, at the height, maybe of the pandemic.

[00:01:15] I say height, we're still, we're still very much in it. But earlier this summer, I feel like I was reading perhaps even surprising myself, by how much I was reading 10 to 12 books a month. It felt like maybe even more. I think I've settled back into a rhythm. And this really is the rhythm of my reading life.

[00:01:30] Once I hit the fall, it becomes busier at the bookshelf and therefore my reading life lessons a little bit, and I feel like this is normal and how nice to be able to say in 2020 that something is normal. So I'm going to take it. Um, so I read some really good books this month, again, kind of cross a wide range of genres, which I'm grateful for.

[00:01:49] So let's dive right.

[00:01:54] The first book I read in October was *Pumpkin Heads* by Rainbow Rollew and Faith [00:02:00] Erin Hicks. You have probably seen this book. I feel like it's popular on Bookstagram and it has a really in my mind, memorable cover. *Pumpkin Heads* is a graphic novel graphic, young adult novel by Rainbow Rollew and Faith Erin Hicks.

[00:02:12] This is about two teens. Dasia and Josiah, it spans one night, which I loved just one night in a really epic pumpkin patch, um, set in Nebraska. I think it is kind of based on Rainbow Rollew's own experience of a pumpkin patch in her hometown. And so this book is perfectly seasonal. I loved reading it right when I did.

[00:02:38] I think there are some readers, maybe even some people who I saw on Instagram comment that they read this every fall. And I can think of nothing better. What a delightful way to kind of kick off October. I also read this one, one of my favorite ways to read, and this is going to sound so weird, I think, but I love being curled up on the couch on a Saturday, Saturday night reading [00:03:00] while football plays in the background.

[00:03:02] Like I like college football. I have complicated feelings about college football, the older I get, but I still, there is something about it that I really enjoy. But halftime exists.

Sometimes games are boring. Like sometimes they're not super high scoring. And so it is never a waste of time when you have a good book.

[00:03:19] So I love one of my favorite ways that I feel like I know fall is here is when I am curled up on my couch, reading a book while ESPN commentators are chatting in the background. So I read *Pumpkin Heads* exactly this way. And it's beautifully illustrated. The illustrations are great. The color scheme is perfectly fall and the story is very cute.

[00:03:40] It's about these two teens who have every year come back to this pumpkin patch to work. Now they're seniors in high school. They're kind of looking down at what could come next, like looking down the road at what might be next for them. And they kind of, sort of maybe. Potentially have feelings for each other.

[00:03:57] I found Dasia to be by far the more compelling [00:04:00] character, but, you know, Josiah is not bad either. And I just really appreciated their relationship. Their kind of bantery friendship. Banter is one of my favorite things in a good romcom. Um, a lot of people asked if this one was appropriate for like an eight to 10 year old.

[00:04:15] I'm going to be honest as a non-parent as somebody who does not yet have children. That is a hard question for me to answer. It really depends upon your kid, but I will say this is very much a young adult book. The main characters are in their late teens. They are about to graduate and go to college. It is PG.

[00:04:30] There is, as I recall, nothing even vaguely inappropriate about this very sweet romance and sweet book, but if you're an eight to 10 year old, I'm just not sure you're going to care about what's happening. You've got these two teenagers who are kind of, sort of maybe addressing the fact that they have fallen in love, but they also are grappling with what it's like to be seniors in high school and what it's like to be worried about next steps.

[00:04:55] So just bear that in mind, as you're deciding, if this book is appropriate for [00:05:00] your maybe middle grade reader. Also, there are lots of really great middle grade graphic novels out there. So this one, I don't know, you'll have to kind of decide based on your kid. That being said, I thoroughly loved it. Firmly agree with all the readers who say this is a seasonal read for them also because it's a graphic novel.

[00:05:17] So I truly finished it in the span of one football game. I mean, I mean, what more could you ask out of a seasonal book. So this set the perfect tone for my October reads. I love to read seasonally particularly in October, and you'll see that with maybe, maybe one or two other books that I read this month, but I, I don't know.

[00:05:34] I find myself gravitating towards very fall themed things, whether that's movies, um, maybe true crime podcasts, spookier movies, like all of the media I consume in October feels very. Very seasonal. And so *Pumpkin Heads* was a great way to start that. So really highly recommend this book. Thought it was adorable.

[00:05:51] *Pumpkin Heads* by Rainbow Rollew and Faith Erin Hicks. Next up, I borrowed the book *To Have and to Hoax* by Martha Waters. I borrowed this [00:06:00] library book

actually from a friend of mine, Courtney, who you hear on the podcas. Actually, this makes total sense because Courtney is our resident Royals correspondent.

[00:06:08] And so naturally she loaned me this book that she had just read about kind of a Regency era romance. So *To Have and to Hoax* is the Regency era romance I didn't know I wanted or needed like Courtney handed it to me and I thought, sure, I'll try this. Like, what's the harm. And it was very cute and cute is the perfect word for it because it's very light.

[00:06:28] It's about, of course Lady Violet and Lord James. They fall in love immediately. I mean, I was almost. I did not know anything about this book prior to reading it, which is my friend Hunter's I think that's like the way he always reads, but I truly went into this book knowing nothing, except Courtney said, this is fun.

[00:06:47] And so I was startled by the fact that lady violet and Lord James fall in love so quickly. And then the real. Climax of the story is not their romance or not their initial falling in [00:07:00] love, but it is how they immediately have gotten married and then their marriage falls apart. The book flashes forward.

[00:07:06] And these, this is a couple who lives together and continues to be married, but certainly does not act married. They have fallen out of love with one another. And now through a series of bizarre and slightly, uh, kind of slap dash events, they kind of refined each other and rekindle their romance. This is very much a book filled with romcom tropes, only tropes I'm used to seeing out of a couple, not yet married, not yet wed to one another.

[00:07:36] And so what was kind of fun about this book is it kind of turns that idea on its head. This couple is married, but now they're kind of embarking on these kinds of hi-jinks and pranks to re fall in love.

[00:07:49] Although I don't even think they know that that's the goal. So the book is very silly in that there's essentially these prank wars and kind of tricking each other. There's a lot of trickery involved, [00:08:00] but really, really fun. So my friend Courtney was exactly right when she described this as a really fun read.

[00:08:05] One of my friends who also listens to the podcast, Kimberly, she is a big romance reader and she said, this was one of her favorite romance books of the year. I am not a romance reader so much as I am a romcom reader. I think this is a very satisfactory romcom. If you're wondering if it's PG or PG 13. I would put this in the PG 13 category.

[00:08:23] There are some real open door scenes here, and I just kind of skimmed along as I want to do ventured forward until the door was once again, close. So, so I totally think you can read this as a PG reader. You just need to go into it knowing there might be a couple of pages here and there that you may want to skip, and we're all adults here, so you can skip ahead as you see the need.

[00:08:42] But overall, very fun, very light romance. Here is one thing that I did notice. It is a Regency era book so if you love Jane Austin, Downton Abbey, these kinds of, I don't know these kinds of. BBC [00:09:00] types of stories. I think you will really like this. And

interestingly, what it made me want to do as much as I enjoyed *To Have and to Hoax* it really made me crave Jane Austin.

[00:09:07] Again, I think you forget how difficult the work that Jane Austin did really was like, I think we forget the level of difficulty she was able to accomplish in her work. And so. As much as I enjoyed the fun romp that *To Have and to Hoax* was it made me really grateful for Jane Austin and for her ability to write these books and these characters without ever making anybody seem ridiculous, even when they were definitely being ridiculous.

[00:09:34] And I think that's what was fun about *Lady Violet and Lord James*. This, the whole book is a little bit absurd. The plot and the setup for it is absurd. But like in a good way, I mean that in a really good way, but it made me crave. It may be finished and then crave Jane Austin for a little bit more heft and depth, if that makes sense.

[00:09:51] So I really like *To Have and to Hoax*, but it definitely made me grateful for Jane Austin and maybe want to tackle another one of her stories. So [00:10:00] *To Have and to Hoax* by Martha Waters, great for the romance reader, for the romcom reader or for somebody who. Maybe you're not in a head space right now to tackle Jane Austin. In which case, I totally understand. Maybe try this for something very fun and low stakes.

[00:10:17] Next up. I read, *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird* by author Sue Cerulean. I love this book. Here's what you need to know. I read this book because I was interviewing Sue for a, a virtual author event we were doing at The Bookshelf. Sue is a local author, Thomas Hill. She lives in Tallahassee. She has done in store events with us before we really wanted to do an in store event for this book.

[00:10:40] But alas. 2020. And so we compromised and decided to do this virtual event and she was very much on board and willing to participate. Virtual author events are so much harder than in store events and that doesn't, I feel like it should make sense. It feels like a virtual event should be easier [00:11:00] because it's less set up.

[00:11:01] It's less prep, but technology is so anxiety inducing for me. I, it just feels like a lack of time that I, that I really hate. However, Susan Cerulean was very gracious and delightful. She is such a thoughtful writer. She is most known for her nature writing. She writes beautifully about the Florida coast about kind of the Red Hills area.

[00:11:23] If you are from Georgia, you might recognize her friend Janisse Ray. Janisse Ray, I think does for Georgia writing what Sue Cerulean does for North Florida in Northwest Florida writing. I adore her books. My family loves her books. She's written several great ones, but the one my family really loves is *Coming to Pass*, which is a non-fiction nature book, all about Saint George Island, Cape Sandblast, St. Vincent Island, all of these places that my family is very familiar with because of where we are, geographically speaking. Places where we visited as kids. So. That's the book. My family fell in love with and adored by Sue.

[00:12:00] [00:12:00] This is her latest book it's called *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird*. The title brings such meaning. When you ultimately read Sue's words and you read these pages, there's a beautiful poem that she has included in the book, which is called *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird*. And it's basically this idea that the world around us is in

desperate need of our attention and care but sometimes our calling is simply to care for the single bird.

[00:12:26] And I love this idea so deeply and she talks beautifully. She writes beautifully about how hard that mission is that it feels so small and too small to make any sort of impact or difference. What I love about this book is it's also a memoir.

[00:12:42] So Sue is known for her nature writing, but in, *I Have Been Assigned The Single Bird*, she's also writing about her relationship with her dad. And so you get this juxtaposition of nature, writing and ecology and conservation and activism, but you get it alongside this [00:13:00] whole really gripping, thoughtful story and thoughtful look at what it was like for Sue to care for her father, as he struggled with, and ultimately died from dementia.

[00:13:11] And I. Cannot tell you if you are one of those people who loves as I do weirdly, I really do love books about grief and books that handle grief. Well, I now will put this book soundly in that category. I think the way Sue writes about caring for her dad is so touching and so moving and so realistic. I watched my mom be a caregiver and I watched my dad be a caregiver.

[00:13:36] And so she writes about the caregiving process in a way I found deeply moving. And I will now, you know, include this alongside Joan Didion, CS Lewis, as a book about grief that I highly recommend beyond that. It's a great book about ecology and preservation. And I do not read a ton of books about ecology, about nature, [00:14:00] about science.

[00:14:00] I just don't, I don't naturally gravitate toward them. This is my favorite way to incorporate. Real life lessons about science and conservation. And yet this book is not a science book. If that makes sense, this isn't a heady non-fiction title where you feel a little bit lost because you have no idea what this expert is talking about.

[00:14:19] Instead, Sue writes so well about nature and in our author talk, one of the things I really took away from that conversation was her emphasis on reading locally. So reading books set in your proximity set in your area because she believes that will make you more grateful and pay more attention to the world around you.

[00:14:40] And I had never thought about it that way. That one of the things I really love about this book is how I am immediately. I can place Tallahassee, like I'm from Tallahassee. So I know the place that she's talking about. I have visited St. George. I have been to Apalachicola. These are the places I love. And so I'm very familiar with them and it makes me love them and appreciate them and want to [00:15:00] care for them all the more.

[00:15:01] So if you are local, This book is a must read. Truly. I'm not just saying that I so highly recommend this book to you. And if you are not local, I can think of no better way right now to visit this part of the world where I am from the, to read this book. Um, because it's so encapsulates where I'm from and the places I am from, but also it's so.

[00:15:26] It's a book about a dad and a daughter. And as a daughter who happens to have a really great dad, I found this book deeply moving highly recommended, read it. You know,

when you talk to an author, I really want to be familiar with their work, but I am so glad I did. I am so glad I read this book. I'm so glad I had this conversation with Sue.

[00:15:44] If you buy the book from us, no pressure at all ever, but if you buy this book from us, you do get access to the author talk I had with Sue and she was so wise. I just felt like I was sitting at the feet. Of someone's so measured and purposeful and [00:16:00] intentional and the way she cares for our planet and the way she's encouraging readers to care for just one single bird, because that really does make a difference is so beautiful and profound.

[00:16:10] I love this book. I can't stress it enough. It's a, five-star read for me very different from maybe my typical books, although I'm, I'm drawn to books about grieving. I am not as often drawn to books about conservation and caring for our world, and this made me want to pay more attention and it made me want to read more books in this vein.

[00:16:31] Um, so if you also need kind of an entry point for environmental activism, but also tempered with a really loving story about caregiving, I think this is so good. *I Have Been Assigned the Single Bird* by Sue Cerulean. Good idea. So talking about it. Okay. Next up, I read *The Searcher* by Tana French. If you have listened to the [00:17:00] podcast for a long time, if you've been to the Bookshelf, if you follow me on Instagram, you will know that I am very devoted to author Tana French.

[00:17:09] I just love everything. She writes. I find her to be a really reliable crime writer. Somebody I really trust. And I adore her. So her new book is called *The Searcher*. This is a standalone book, much like her book that released last year called *The Witch Elm*. I think that book is fine. I was not disappointed by that book.

[00:17:28] However, *The Searcher*, I loved, like this will be a five-star book for me for sheer enjoyment. And also again, Tana French is such a good writer. If you're not familiar with her, she has a great series. She's an Irish writer. She has a great series of books, all kind of revolving around these detectives, but she bases each book on a minor character from the previous work.

[00:17:50] So you do not have to read these in any particular order. If you are new to Tana French, I would highly recommend that you start with *The Likeness* or *In the Woods*.

[00:18:00] Those are both great titles. Part of that detective series. Those are great places to start, or I think you could start with *The Searcher* which is Tana French's new book that just came out this month.

[00:18:10] I read this in, I don't know, a couple of days, but I remember distinctly coming back to the Bookshelf and telling Olivia I really want to go home so that I can finish this Tana French book. It is so good. So this is like I said, a standalone novel by her. And interestingly, she's an Irish writer. So all of her characters are Irish.

[00:18:30] The books are set in Ireland. This book is still set in Ireland. In fact, the setting is what makes this book I think so good. She writes so well about the country of Ireland. It makes you want to visit there even though murders are happening there, even though people are being killed according to these, according to these crime novels.

[00:18:49] Anyway, so this book is about Cal Cooper. And what is different about him as a Tana French protagonist is he is an American. He is a former Chicago cop who has [00:19:00] moved to Ireland to kind of start over. And so he lives in the small rural community. He is re kind of renovating this home, this kind of dilapidated place.

[00:19:11] His neighbors have sheep. Like you just very much, you can just picture it so well, you can picture it so vividly. So Cal is really unique though, for a ton of French protagonist because he is American. And so at first I wasn't sure if I was going to enjoy that or not, but I wound up really liking it because it was really interesting to read from another person's perspective, a non-American person's perspective about the American policing system.

[00:19:37] I thought it was just interesting to see that through her eyes and to see how an Irish writer might portray a Chicago cop. So I really liked Cal. I actually found him, I didn't know if I was going to find him to be super likable, but I really did. He's moved to this small town and then this young boy approaches him and tells him I need you to help me find my brother.

[00:19:59] [00:20:00] He's been missing and Cal is really trying to be very removed. He's this gruff, I feel like former cop who really has no desire to go back into police work and he doesn't really want to bring attention to himself. He's trying to fit in, into this community then, of course, as is the case in small towns, no matter your country or continent, there are lots of secrets that begin to kind of come to light.

[00:20:20] And I just thought this wasn't even. Maybe the most suspenseful of Tana French's books. In fact, probably about halfway through, I felt like I could potentially see where the suspenseful more crime part of the story was going. I felt like I could see the direction. There were a couple of twists and turns that I did not see, but overall I was like, okay, I'm here.

[00:20:42] I know what's happening. But the characters were so rich Cal and then the young boy, he kind of her friends, then Cal's neighbor. All of these people in this quirky, small town really came to life for me. And I really, I think that was perhaps one of the most enjoyable parts of the book besides the setting itself.

[00:20:59] So [00:21:00] if you are new to Tana French, I think this would be a great place to start. See if you like her, you could start with her detective series, which I obviously find equally compelling, but the searcher to me proved that ton of French will just be a must read author for me. I have not read other reviews of this book.

[00:21:14] I don't know if other people feel the same way, because I do think this is slightly different from what her readers may be used to. But I think it definitely showcases Tana French's talents as a writer. And again, the character building in this book, I just thought was really great. I really, I think she always has kind of this interesting protagonist I could picture so easily this being made into a really great TV show that all of us binge on Netflix one day.

[00:21:38] Almost like *Broad Church* or *The Killing* or something like that. I just find her characters to be really rich in general, but this one had a bunch of side characters. I fell in love with. I really like this book. I don't want to gush too much about it, but it'll be a five-star read for me, which is fun and a little bit unusual for a suspense novel.

[00:21:54] So *The Searcher* by Tana French, out now,

[00:22:01] [00:22:00] Next up. And I won't spend too much time on this one because by now you're probably sick of hearing me talk about it. But finally after, Oh, my word. After 16. 18 after 18 years, I have finished *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. Thank goodness for Hunter who came alongside me, took up this mantle, took up this mission with me.

[00:22:24] We tackled and conquered this classic together. For those of you who maybe aren't as familiar Hunter @shelfbysshelf on Instagram. He and I are dear friends in real life. And he graciously agreed to read *Anna Karenina* with me this year. And we decided to read it one part at a time it's divided up into eight parts and we then recap those eight parts on Patreon for our Patreon supporters and have a blast.

[00:22:50] You know, the first four parts of this book are really just a delicious. So Barbara and Hunter and I had a blast talking about it. And then the last four [00:23:00] are far more heady, I guess, and more about Russian agriculture, religion culture. And. Much of it. I am sure went over my head. I wish to some extent that I had read this under the guide of a professional, a professor of literature, of some kind, and yet I am so glad I read it so glad I read it with Hunter.

[00:23:20] We had a great conversation on last week's podcast episode, all about the ways and a current *Anna* weirdly reminded us of *The Office* and other kind of touch points in pop culture. But. I just wanted to put in one more plug for setting reading goals for yourself that are doable. Having somebody in your life, who you can kind of be accountable to.

[00:23:41] I've I've discovered that that is one of the best ways that I tackle and accomplish goals. I've been walking in the mornings and I do that because I know someone isn't relying on me to show up. I read this book because I knew our patron supporters were counting on it. And I knew Hunter was counting on me.

[00:23:56] And so I am so thrilled to be able to say that I finally read [00:24:00] this book. I do think it is worth your time. That being said, it is a really long, dense classic book. So if you are new to re exploring the classics, maybe you read them when you were in high school, but you haven't really read them since. I don't know that this is the one I would start with.

[00:24:16] It's not even my favorite classic I've read in the last few years. I think I would put *East of Eden* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* kind of more at the top of that list. Those are two books that I read for the first time in the last, I guess, three years. And I loved them. *Anna Karenina* does not for me belong in that category, but I definitely feel like I have accomplished something and the character of Levin who Hunter and I kind of teased about because he is, I think, far too, um, He, you know, he's a very, he's a very moralistic character.

[00:24:49] And I think you do either love him or are kind of bored by him. And so Hunter and I would tease back and forth about where we, where we fell on Levin and how we felt about him. But I do think his character is going to [00:25:00] stick with me for a long time. I know, that the story is named after Anna. And I think that's the way it should be, but the story really did for better or worse become Levins.

[00:25:12] And he is a character I'm very glad to have gotten to know. So if you have never read *Anna Karenina*, I think a good way to read it is to read it one part at a time. Read it alongside a friend or skip it and go back to it when you have more bandwidth, because I think that's also entirely possible. I'm astounded that I finally finished this book and finished it in the middle of a pandemic no less.

[00:25:33] So that is *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. Okay. Another five star book. I really did have such a good reading month. I'm so glad we're talking about this. It allows me to share my feelings. So I finished the book. *We Keep the Dead Close* by Becky Cooper. This book releases on November 10th. So not too long from when you'll be listening to this, you don't have to wait too long.

[00:25:53] This book I think is going to be in my top 10 of the year. And I cannot believe I'm saying this because it's certainly even the covers [00:26:00] screams true crime book. Now look, you know, I love true crime. I am after all a middle-class white female, it just feels like it is, uh, in the children's terms. Super basic.

[00:26:13] Like I just feel like it's one of the most basic things about me that I do in fact, enjoy a true crime podcast and a true crime book. Remember a couple of years ago, if you've been a long time listener, I read the Ann Rule book about Ted Bundy a couple of years ago in October. Okay. This book. With all due respect to Ann Rule, this book is so much better than that.

[00:26:33] *We Keep the Dead Close* is so much more than a true crime book. And I do not mean to disparage true crime. I think I have already now said how much I enjoy true crime, but this book goes so deep. In fact, I, the comparison that I think I'm going to make when I hand sell this is more to *Killers of the Flower Moon*.

[00:26:54] Because that also at its root at is at its core is a true crime book, but [00:27:00] it delves deeply into history into the history of indigenous peoples. And so it is tackling much heavier topics. *We Keep the Dead Close* behaves similarly. So Becky Cooper also is very much entwined in this story. A little bit like Anne Rule was right, Anne Rule had kind of personal, a personal relationship with Ted Bundy.

[00:27:23] Becky does not have a personal relationship with a *We Keep the Dead Close*, but. She does become innately involved with her subjects. So this book is sets primarily in 1969. We get a lot of flashbacks because this book is true crime, but it's also very much a memoir, a biography. It is all kinds of things.

[00:27:42] Becky Cooper is a grad from Harvard and she, while she is at Harvard learns about this 1969 murder of Jane Britton. Jane was a student at Harvard. She was studying archeology and anthropology and she died or was found dead the morning [00:28:00] of her exams. And the murder has gone unsolved. So the book kind of goes back and forth between 1969, but also touches has touch points in the 1970s.

[00:28:12] And then in 2016, 2017, 2018 went, Becky kind of comes across her story and begins writing it and working on it and really doing in-depth research about it. This book is

like a podcast come to life. Meaning again, Becky becomes so in meshed in the subject, she becomes so attuned to Jane and to the life of Jane Britton.

[00:28:35] She writes about Jane was such a kindness and a tenderness and a grace, and I think is what can often be missing from true crime books. And so I really appreciated that. The other thing I really liked about this book again, and the reason I'm kind of comparing it to *Killers of the Flower Moon* is because *We Keep the Dead Close* is really dealing with more than Jane Brittany's murder.

[00:28:54] Although an unsolved murder is obviously a horrific thing and something Becky [00:29:00] was dedicated to spending her time in. She also is writing about the Me Too movement. She's writing about the patriarchal society that exists within Ivy league and academia. She is writing about archeology. I never thought truly, never thought I would read a book that would make me want to be an anthropologist.

[00:29:20] I have, I have always known right that I went to college, got my journalism degree. I have never questioned being a writer, editor, somebody who loves English, loves the English language. Like. It never occurred to me to major in anything else. Until now at 34, when I'm like, should I have majored in anthropology?

[00:29:40] So Becky Cooper somehow made me care deeply about archeology and anthropology. I was fascinated, basically, Jane Britton, there are three kind of suspects in this case and this long, not even forgotten, but just left unsolved case of Jane Britton's death. There are three suspects, one [00:30:00] of whom is a professor at Harvard university and.

[00:30:03] One of whom kind of is a recognizable, I guess, in the archeology world. So she's writing a lot about the systems that exist in the Ivy league institutions or in academia in general. I think some of this could apply just across the board to academia. She talks about what women have to deal with and it's all I cannot stress you enough how well-written this book is and well compiled.

[00:30:26] And well-researched my gosh, I can't wait to see the final copy because in the arc I read, there were so many pages left blank for notes because it feels like Becky truly devoted. I don't know, five to 10 years to this topic. I feel like she did so much research.

[00:30:42] She's like Sarah Cain, *Egg and Cereal*. That's what I felt like. I love this book so much. I took probably a week to read it because I was so entrenched in it and wanted to take my time with it. Like I felt like I was becoming Becky. If that makes sense. Becky was so entrenched in this work. [00:31:00] And she often would, you know, in the book she talks about comparing herself to Jane and re-evaluating her own life through the lens of Jane's life.

[00:31:08] Also touching on other crimes that occurred around the same time as Jane's murder and what those women went through and endured. I was completely satisfied. The good news for Jane's family is that this crime was ultimately solved, I believe in 2018. And so. Becky was there for all of that for, for this case to finally be solved and be broken.

[00:31:34] And so you're going to be left totally satisfied because this does not remain an unsolved mystery. We know what happened to Jane. The, I don't do not want to spoil anything for you. I resisted so hard Googling anything about Jane's case because I desperately wanted to just go along with the narrative and the story that Becky Cooper was telling.

[00:31:55] I love this book so much. It will be in my top 10 of the year. I've got to figure out where I'm going to put it [00:32:00] because I've read so many really good books this year. What a gift in the middle of 2020 to have read such wonderful literature, but I will put, *We Keep the Dead Close* somewhere on that list because it deserves, it comes out November 10th.

[00:32:13] If you are worried about shelf subscriptions, I will just go ahead and tell you. I desperately wanted to pick this one for December, and then I decided not to. So you are free to check out from your local library to buy from your local bookstore to purchase from the bookshelf, to listen to an audio book from Libro FM.

[00:32:29] I think it would make a really great audio book. But one of the things I liked about the physical book was that there are lots of pictures of Jane and of the people she was friends with of these Harvard professors. The people she went on, archeological digs with. This story is so rich and I never felt bogged down in the detail.

[00:32:47] I think that's something important to note. This book is filled with different rabbit trails and storylines that are there for a reason. They're not red herrings. They're there to show the history of this case. And I loved every [00:33:00] single one. I thought this was so masterfully constructed. I can't get over it.

[00:33:04] I thought it was great. So that book is *We Keep the Dead Close* by Becky Cooper

[00:33:11] I am closing out the month with two books that I think I will read before it is all said and done. I'll touch base about them again in November. But I am reading the *Saturday Night Ghost Club* by Craig Davidson. This is a book that I saw on author, Carrie Winfrey's Instagram. I love when authors posts, books that they're reading or that they loved.

[00:33:29] And Carrie Winfrey really recommended this one. So I am reading it because of Carrie Winfrey's recommendation, but then my book club also selected it. And I don't know about you guys, but I don't go to book club meetings anymore. Our club meets on zoom, which is fantastic, but I have been so very overwhelmed by life and by the Bookshelf that I have not probably been to a book club meeting since, Oh, I don't know, may. Even virtually just have not attended, but I'm really hoping that I'm going to make it to our October meeting because this is the [00:34:00] book that we've been reading.

[00:34:00] So the *Saturday Night Ghost Club* by Craig Davidson, it is about a young boy growing up. Is there a nostalgic feeling kind of like the *Wonder Years* and *Stranger Things*. Basically, this kid is narrating looking back on his childhood in Niagara falls. It's a great book with a great sense of place. I have not, I'm not very far.

[00:34:18] I'm just probably 30 or so pages in, but I love. It being set in Niagara falls, other than Jim and Pam's wedding, I don't spend much time in Niagara falls. So, uh, it's been really fun to look at that through his lens and through the lens of childhood, he has an uncle who he loves, who was very eccentric and who kind of owns this store devoted to conspiracy and the occult and.

[00:34:41] Dark and devious things. And what that opens up in this young narrator's brain is really fun. So it's called the *Saturday Night Ghost Club*. I am reading it right now for my October book club. I, by the time you listen to this, I hopefully will have finished and attended the set of book club. We'll see, but I think it's great seasonal reading.

[00:34:59] And [00:35:00] then in preparation for podcasts, I'm doing it in a couple of weeks. I am reading *Mexican Gothic*. I am reading this because we are going to try to cast this book. So Juliana and Courtney are both coming back to help do a casting call episode for, *Mexican Gothic*. This book is by Sylvia Moreno-Garcia.

[00:35:17] And that is what I'm reading right now. So hopefully I will have those two books finished before October ends, but even if I didn't what a great reading month. I highly recommend these books, romcom graphic, novel nature, writing suspense, true crime. I just feel really lucky that I read so many books that were so good across a wide range of genres.

[00:35:39] So I hope this inspires your own reading and gives you some seasonal titles to maybe read as we wrap up the fall.

[00:35:55] From the Front Porch is a weekly podcast production of The Bookshelf, an independent bookstore in [00:36:00] South Georgia. You can follow the Bookshelves daily happenings on Instagram @BookshelfTville and all the books from today's episode can be purchased online through our store website, www.Bookshelfthomasville.com.

[00:36:13] 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 our transcripts, 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 *Mexican Gothic* by Sylvia Moreno-Garcia.

[00:36:35] If you liked what you heard on today's episode, tell us by leaving a review on iTunes, or if you're so inclined to support us on Patreon, where you can hear our staffs weekly, new release, Tuesday conversations, read full book reviews in our monthly shelf life newsletter, follow along as Hunter and I conquer a classic and receive free media mail shipping on all your online book orders.

[00:36:55] Just go to patreon.com/ from the Front Porch. We are so grateful for [00:37:00] you and we look forward to meeting back here next week.