

BookWorm

I was always an avid reader, but then I took an almost decade hiatus from reading books. Because I did (and do) my reading before bed, I think the hiatus was due to the combination of getting used to parenting and also being fresh out of college which meant that I wasn't used to getting to read what I wanted rather than what was assigned to me. But a few years ago, I took up the hobby once again, and I've been thoroughly enjoying it. I began by reading non-fiction because I liked the idea of learning something while I was reading. I read biographies and stories that ranged from fun to inspirational, and my favorite reading was centered on true crime.

I read [*In the Presence of My Enemies*](#), the inspiring true story of the Burnham couple who, after years of missionary work in the Philippines, were taken hostage during a vacation there and held for a year. I read [*My Lobotomy*](#), the biography of a man named Howard Dully who underwent a forced frontal lobotomy at the age of 12. I read [*How Many Hills to Hillsboro*](#), an account of a family of 5 who attempted and almost made a cross country trip together in the '60s – on their bicycles. I delved into fiction, reading the entire Harry Potter series and loving it. And now I call myself an avid reader with a “to read” book list a mile long – and by the way, all of the above mentioned books I enjoyed immensely, and I highly recommend them.

I think that's how I ended up reading 3 books at the same time. It began when I was looking for something to read that would compare to Harry Potter, so I tried C.S. Lewis' Narnia series and began with *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. While enjoyable, it wasn't quite the can't-put-it-down book that I was looking for, so I consulted my “to read” list and decided to try a Stephen King book that had been recommended by a local newspaper columnist – [*Under the Dome*](#). With the exception of some short stories, I haven't read Stephen King

before, but I've enjoyed a few of his movies. So far, *Under the Dome* has been exactly what I'm looking for – page-turning excitement that is hard to put down! The novel is about a small town in Maine that is suddenly and inexplicably cut off from the rest of the world by a mysterious, invisible – yet very real barrier. Between trying to draft and enforce their own laws, keeping lawless individuals under control and townspeople from going crazy – literally – and attempting to figure out what the dome is and how to get rid of it, the little town has more than its fair share of strife.

A few weeks before my request for *Under the Dome* came in at the library, I had decided I wanted to read the Bible, and so I find myself switching between two 1000+ page books in bed at night – I am so grateful we found a great sale on that e-book reader, which makes switching between these two books easy on my arms and my bed partner. I know a lot of people are intimidated by the complex language of the Bible, but the NIV version is fairly easy reading, and I really enjoy reading it and especially learning more about the chapters I've read when I go to church on Sunday.

As if reading two 1000+ page books at the same time weren't enough (though on the plus side, it's not like I can possibly get the characters in the Bible and those in *Under the Dome* mixed up – a complication I used to run into in my heavier reading days when I would try to read a book for pleasure and a book for school at the same time), another one of my requests came in at the library – *Caril* by Ninette Beaver. Being a more obscure book, I don't know that I will get the opportunity to get it from the library again, so I'm attempting the book-reading tri-ecta. *Caril* is the unauthorized biography of Caril Fugate, the alleged accomplice to [Charles Starkweather](#) who went on an infamous murder spree centered in Lincoln Nebraska in 1958. Although Caril was tried and convicted in a court of law, there has been much debate about her actual role in the murders because of her age

at the time – 14. The book follows the cases and Caril's incarceration and is written from the media's point of view in the 1970's before Caril was released from prison. It's been interesting to read about other news items of the day (breaking news items in 1958 included: Liz Taylor's husband killed in a plane crash and Elvis being drafted into the Army) and also how differently people reacted to news reporters taking interviews for the brand-new medium of the day: television. Family members of suspects, law enforcement, and attorneys were all much more willing and able to talk to reporters and share details for the camera than they are today. You may have seen one of a number of movies made about the Starkweather cases; the most famous is Natural Born Killers, although that movie DOES NOT follow the cases accurately and is, in my opinion, a terrible movie. I guess the reason I'm so interested in these cases is because Charles Starkweather was a different type of serial killer and one who has escaped the major notoriety of say, Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy. I also lived in the lovely city of Lincoln Nebraska for a year, and I've seen many of the places where the crimes took place for myself – including the penitentiary where Starkweather was electrocuted and the cemetery where he is buried.

I'm really enjoying all 3 of my books right now, but reaching my goal of re-reading the last installment of the Harry Potter series before the final movie comes out mid-July is going to prove to be quite challenging!!

And one more note – further encouragement to read Under the Dome is the movie being made due to come out this year – looks like a made-for-tv movie, which is difficult for me to imagine based upon the violence involved and intensity of the story. But if Stephen King's other tv mini-series are any indication, Under the Dome the movie version will not disappoint and is an excellent reason to pick up this great book for some perfect summer reading!

Lincoln Legends

Just in time for the Halloween season, as I mull over costume choices for myself and my two youngest, haunted places have come up in conversations recently. These recent topics have reminded me of a few such places in Lincoln Nebraska...

Back when we were a little family with only one toddler, we lived in Lincoln for a year. It was a great city – large yet rurally isolated and without the sprawling suburbs we had grown accustomed to after growing up in the Chicago area. After a few months in Lincoln, I was charmed by the city and began reading up on local history, which is where I found out about the interesting stories of Charles Starkweather and Robber's Cave.



*(Caril Fugate and Charles Starkweather
before the murder spree)*

Charles Starkweather was a young, lower-class, James Dean wannabe who dated a younger girl named Caril Fugate in Lincoln in the 1950's. There is some debate about Caril's role in the horrific events for which the pair is known, but Starkweather was convicted of the murders of 11 people in Nebraska and Wyoming during a 1958 eight-day-long murder spree.

Starkweather was executed by the state in 1959 at the age of 20, while Caril served some time and is now presumably living a quiet life. I think it would be interesting to see an interview with the now 68-year-old Fugate, but like everyone else involved in the horror, she deserves her privacy and probably guards it. So anyway, Starkweather is buried in a large, beautiful cemetery nestled amongst rolling hills in the heart of Lincoln called Wyuka Cemetery, and has the unusual (however macabre) distinction of being buried in the same cemetery as some of his victims. Caril's dilapidated house (where the first murders, those of her family, took place) no longer stands. But Starkweather had a huge grudge against upper class folks, and the beautiful house of the Ward family, a wealthy couple who along with their maid fell victim to Starkweather's massacre, still stands. Also interesting are the many works of pop culture inspired by the rampage; movies such as *Natural Born Killers* (though this one is very loosely based), *Badlands*, and books: characters in both Stephen King's *The Stand* as well as *Outside Valentine* are based upon Starkweather, Caril and some of the victims. Interestingly, the author of *Outside Valentine*, Liza Ward, is the granddaughter of the wealthy couple that were victims of Starkweather in 1958.

So anyway, if you're into that kind of thing, plenty to see in Lincoln based upon the Starkweather case alone, but that was actually a super-huge tangent that took me away from the original reason I wanted to write this post! Guess I'll save Robber's Cave for my next post...