

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!

Skipping Christmas

As a kid, I was a very avid reader – I would always read myself to sleep. Somewhere in my 20's though, I lost sight of my reading hobby; I guess that's when I got too busy and too tired to lie in bed awake at night and read. During my last pregnancy, however, I started reading before bed again, and it's something that I really enjoy, even though I often get too tired to make it through more than a few pages per night.

When I recently began reading again, I started by reading mostly non-fiction; it was really fun for me to unwind at night and learn something at the same time. I read a book about an Afghan girl who stepped on a land mine, lost her leg, and fled the Taliban by coming to America. I read a book about a family that bicycled across the country – they had kids who were 13, 11, and 3 years old, and they made it from New Jersey to Colorado on their bikes. There was also the book about the Burnham's; they were husband and wife missionaries who were held hostage in the Philippines for almost a year. The wife wrote a book about their daily struggles as hostages – it was fascinating. Then I switched to a few fiction books by Christopher Pike, an author best known for his young adult horror novels. I read those as a teen, so as an adult, I decided to try his novels for adults – one I really liked and one wasn't so good – *Falling* and *The Blind Mirror*, respectively. I then started a book about the plight of Terri Shiavo, a woman who collapsed in the early 90's and suffered brain damage. Her case was in the national spotlight because her husband insisted that she would have never wanted to live hooked up to machines while her parents disagreed. The governor tried to help, and even the President of the United States tried to step in, but ultimately Terri's

right to live became just another case in the courts and her husband won. Her feeding tube was removed and it took her almost 14 days to slowly starve and dehydrate to death. The case fascinated me at the time, and I found this book about it written by Mark Fuhrman of the OJ Simpson murder trial fame. Except that I'm having trouble reading the book since it's about a rather dark and depressing subject, and that's not really how I want to unwind before bed. Though I did learn something interesting from Mark Fuhrman: according to him, a coroner is an elected official who doesn't even necessarily have to have a medical degree. Hmmm...

A friend recommended the author John Grisham, and the other day I ran into the library, trying to be very quick since the family was waiting in the car. His books looked so large and lengthy and intimidating, so I grabbed the smallest one I saw called *Skipping Christmas*. I began to read it, and it's about a family called the Krank's who decide to skip Christmas one year. That sounds familiar, I thought, and after a quick trip to [imdb.com](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368561/), I discovered that the awfully panned movie of 2004 called [Christmas With The Krank's](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368561/) is indeed the movie based upon John Grisham's book, *Skipping Christmas*. So far the book is ok, but nothing that keeps me looking forward to reading it or anything. I have Grisham's only work of non-fiction on hold at the library, maybe I'll get up there today to get it because maybe I'm sick of fiction and it's time to go back to non-fiction... I hate to admit it, but I really like to read true-crime books before bed, mostly about murder. True, murder is a dark and depressing subject, but not in the same way as the story of Terri Shiavo; it's hard to explain. And it sounds kind of strange, but true-crime books are the ones I seem to be drawn to and I can't watch true-crime on tv in bed anymore – too many nightmares for my husband and I. One of the best true-crime books that I ever read was *The Stranger Beside Me* by Ann Rule. If you don't know, Ann Rule is a famous true-crime writer, and this book was extra-fascinating because it chronicles her relationship with the

famous psychopathic serial killer, Ted Bundy. Ann Rule was actually friends with Ted Bundy – they met working at a suicide hotline together. The book chronicles their friendship while working at the hotline, while the murders were taking place, and after Ted was caught – very interesting read, and crazy that one of the most famous crime writers had a friendship (unrelated to her ever writing a book about him) with one of the most prolific serial killers of all time.