

Ultimate Fall (Spooky, Cozy) Reading Guide - 2023

Short link: <https://amzn.to/3rczOc0>

Hello everyone and welcome to the SLP Happy Hour Podcast. For today, I'm going to be talking about something a little different. You know the question when people ask you - what would you do if you weren't an SLP? For me, I think it would probably be podcast editing, social media management or writing (website copy, email newsletters) but lately it's been this - I would do book tok.

This is where people talk about what they are reading (usually on TikTok or YouTube) and they typically have a genre that they enjoy. I love to read. Reading has been a big part of my mental health and self care plan and it's one of the things I do every single day to take care of myself. As an SLP, maybe 50% of me is my work, and I work hard to cultivate things outside of work to fill the other 50% - for me that's family, friendships, long walks, and reading. I haven't always been good about cultivating my out-of-work self, but I've found it's essential for my own contentment.

Today I wanted to focus on books that are perfect for Fall - a little spooky (but not scary), gorgeous settings and scenery, and characters you'll mostly fall in love with. Some of the books on my recommendation list are spooky, some are cozy - and they all have fall vibes.

A bit about my own reading and reading preferences. I'm a member of my local library, but I exclusively use the online options (honestly, because I dislike running errands like actually going to the library). I'm lucky that my library offers two ways for me to get books online - hoopla and libby. Hoopla has a lot of the regular mystery and has lots of audiobook options (for example, I'm currently listening to an Agatha Christie on Hoopla), and Libby has more current books, but there is usually a wait. I like audiobooks and I read on my Kindle, because I'm a fairly prolific reader and having that many physical books around my house (typically I read about 2 books per week), starts to stress me out and feel like clutter. I know people who need a physical book, and I do that also, but it's a smaller percentage of what I read.

So let's talk about picks discussed today. In general I like books that fall within the cozy genre - and are pretty PG rated. I like some thrillers, but don't like others. I love cozy mystery and cozy fantasy but don't like books with a lot of violence or that are actually really scary. But especially this time of year, I love a spooky read. So today I'll share ___ books that give me the autumn cozy and spooky vibes in hopes that you can find your next read and enjoy some of these books as much as I do.

I'll chat a little about what to expect from each book, and if you aren't sure if you'd like to read it - I recommend checking out reviews online like Goodreads for more information. If you enjoy this episode, please take a moment to rate and review us wherever you are listening.

Also, if you end up buying any of the books from Amazon, please consider using my affiliate links, which allow me to earn a small commission on purchases - it really helps with ongoing podcast expenses. Thank you!

Books

One - Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno Garcia

This book is set in the 1950s in a very atmospheric (and creepy) castle. If you already enjoy historical fiction, you'll love the description of the castle itself including the interior. This gothic-style book is incredibly atmospheric, features a mystery, has a strong female lead and is creepy without being outright scary. Once you start this book you'll be compelled to finish and figure out what mystery the house holds. I especially appreciated the mystery itself, the incorporation of Mexican folklore, and it's full of twists and turns. Of the books I'm reviewing today, this one is the scariest but as someone who doesn't like scary things, I found it compelling and interesting - not something that would give me nightmares.

Two - Anatomy: a Love Story by Dana Schwartz

This book is part historical fiction (Scotland in the early 1800s), part thriller, and part historical romance - and it qualifies as young adult fiction. One of the main characters, Jack, is a resurrection man, meaning he digs up dead bodies to sell. Most of these bodies are used for medical schools since it appears there's not a reliable and legal way to do this (at the time). The female main character Hazel is doing everything she can to get the medical knowledge to be a physician in a world that won't even allow her to enter medical school (at least as a woman). So after extensive studying, she begins enlisting the help of Jack so that she can understand human anatomy and further her knowledge by getting human bodies to dissect.

Jack and Hazel develop a friendship and together they seek to solve the mystery of why so many resurrection men are disappearing in the night, and encounter a deep and detailed mystery that I won't spoil here.

The details of the historical period, the strong female lead, and the main protagonists in this book are wonderful.

Warning, there are some very detailed descriptions of bodies and body parts on dead bodies in this book.

This is part one of a two-part series, and I haven't yet read the second book - but plan to. The second book is called *Immortality: A Love Story*.

Three - The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches by Sangu Mandanna

This book is what I'd call a cozy fantasy or fantasy romance. The book is set in a small witches-only community in the UK and it's uplifting, warm, cozy and heartwarming - not scary or spooky like the previous picks.

In this book, the main character Mika is a witch, but is hiding her skills. One day she gets a mysterious message asking her to travel to Nowhere House to teach 3 young witches how to control their magic. Mika works to support these newbie witches and get along with the prickly librarian of nowhere house, Jamie.

I'm currently reading this book (I haven't finished yet), but it's a clear recommendation nonetheless.

Four - Lost Coast Literary by Ellie Alexander

This book is general fiction with some suspense. Book editor Emily inherits a Victorian Mansion on the northern California coast. As a part of inheriting the estate, she has to edit old manuscripts. Over time, Emily realizes that something strange (and parallel) is happening between the manuscripts she's editing and the town residents. The setting - from the Victorian mansion to the charming (and fictional) town of Cascada, California drew me in, and the mystery here made this book a page turner. It's one I wanted to finish in one weekend.

You can hear an interview with the author Ellie Alexander (a former SLP) on episode 46 of this podcast, she also writes cozy mysteries.

Five - Murder in an Irish Village by Charlene O'Connor

The main character of this cozy mystery book Sioban (SHA-von), runs a bistro in a tiny town in Ireland. She also is a guardian for her 5 siblings, as her parents died in a car crash about a year before this book is set. When they find a dead body in their bistro, evidence leads to her brother James as the main subject. The family gathers together to solve the mystery.

The cast of characters is lovable and flawed (especially her siblings).

This book has a bit of a slow start as it sets the scene but is worth getting through.

This cozy mysteries series isn't fall-themed per se - but the murder story lines makes it ideal to include in this list.

In the genre of cozy mysteries, things are kept PG. There typically is a dead body with no real detail, a lovable cast of characters, there is sometimes a romance (but no spicy scenes), and no swearing.

This series is one I absolutely love and I find myself thinking about the characters and setting even when I'm not reading the book. This is a part of a series with 11 books (and counting) so if you fall in love with the characters too, you'll have more where this one came from.

Six - Ravenfall by Kalyn Josephson

This is categorized as a middle grade book/YA book. Two children investigate a double murder in a witchy house with magic of his own. 13-year-old Anna is a psychic (from a family of psychics) - but her gifts are much different from those of her family. She can

sense if that person has seen death, and she has these visions when she touches people. Anna's family runs a magical B&B. Fourteen-year-old Colin visits the B&B searching for answers about his family and together the duo (with the help of Annabella's family) work to solve the mystery. The world of magic and magical beings is compelling, there is some death in the book (Collin's parents have been murdered before the book starts, but there are flashbacks to the event, which is a pivotal part of the mystery). Between the B&B and the magical forest surrounding it, paired with the storyline and magical creatures - this book was full of Earl Grey tea, spooky witchy vibes, and Harry-Potter-like vibes of kids facing off against the bad guy.

Seven - The Wisteria Society of Lady Scoundrels by India Holton

This book takes place in the 1800s (or a time like it) and falls within the genre of historical romance with bits of fantasy. In this prim and proper world, Cecilia is a thief in a society of Lady Thieves. When she and Ned (a man hired to assassinate her) fall in love, they have to figure out how to fight the bad guys with wit, humor, and plenty of English tea.

This book has one spicy scene, if I remember correctly. If you don't like that, you can skip this book or just skip those pages if you don't want to read them.

This book is a whimsical trip, but some people don't like it as a read because they feel like it's a bit light on plot - and I don't disagree there. I still feel like reading this book was a bit like reading People magazine - effervescent, fun, and entertaining. I enjoyed it as well as the second book in this series - The League of Gentlewoman Witches.

Outro:

There were quite a few books I didn't get to today, but I find round ups with a ton of books to be a bit overwhelming (and that makes it hard to choose), so if you want even more recommendations, I'll make an online list and link it in the show notes, always available at slphappyhour.com

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I hope this episode has been a little slice of an SLP Happy Hour for you, until next time.