



The Front Porch Prophet

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What do a trigger-happy bootlegger with pancreatic cancer, an alcoholic helicopter pilot who is afraid to fly, and a dead guy with his feet in a camp stove have in common? What are the similarities between a fire department that cannot put out fires, a policeman who has a historic cabin fall on him from out of the sky, and an entire family dedicated to a variety of deceased authors? Where can you find a war hero named Termite with a long knife stuck in his liver, a cook named Hoghead who makes the world's worst coffee, and a supervisor named Pillsbury who nearly gets hung by his employees? Sequoyah, Georgia, is the answer. After a long absence, A. J. Longstreet finds his best friend since childhood, Eugene Purdue, on his doorstep. Eugene now has terminal cancer, and he confronts A. J. with the dilemma of executing a mercy killing when the time arrives. An adventure into the past begins for the both of them, and soon one must make a decision that will alter his life forever.

The Front Porch Prophet Details

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Author : Raymond L. Atkins

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From Reader Review The Front Porch Prophet for online ebook

Tasha says

I never usually give up on books, but this one I had to. I actually found myself skipping whole pages at a time. At first the book was awesome but then the author kept delineating from the main plot with all this nonsense stuff from the character past.

I'm all for using the past to tell a story but (an actually example from the book) I don't want to hear about the main characters Co-workers life from when he was born, then continue on to the girl the co-worker liked and he whole life story, which included her father and his whole life story. at that point I wanted to scream: I don't care about these other characters! I just want to know what happens with A.J. and Eugene.

Thank God I got this book as a Free Fridays book through Barnes & Noble.

Bob says

This book surprised me. When my Nook was new and short of titles, I worked to fill it up. Since this was a Nook Free Friday selection, I figured why not. So a quick download, the passage of a year and suddenly I'm reading an amazing story. The first thing that appealed to me was the fact that the story is set in the Northwest Georgia Mountains and has a wonderfully slow country feel. The characters are full and complete and even the minor characters have depth. The two main characters remind me of McMurtry's great duo of Augustus McRae and Woodrow Call from the book Lonesome Dove. Both are rough around the edges and somewhat abusive to each other, but are lifelong friends with a deep affection for one another.

More than a few times this story made me laugh out loud and I kept a smile going thru most of it. The ending is inevitable and emotional. The depth of friendship is tested. An incredible decision must be reached and in the end I think friendship prevails. It is a wonderful story about life and death. A reminder that life is a one way ticket and the destination is the same for everyone. It's the family and friends we travel with that count. This is an extraordinary story and I encourage you to give it a try. Well done Mr. Atkins.

Ken Medernach says

'Front Porch Prophet' kept me between tears, that is tears of human emotion and tears of laughter.

Up in the Northwestern corner of Georgia, live a folk like everywhere in Appalachia, torn between the old ways and the new, life in the country and "just makin' do" and the life in the 'mill town', these are the folks that Ray captures and inserts in the lines of "The Front Porch Prophet", I say that Ramond captures these characters because no one could "make them up" , he had to have been there.

Ray has nailed the country folk of this small North Georgia region with it's daily life and the down home humor. I am looking forward to Ray's next venture , there is a real literary talent lurking in North Georgia in the guise of Raymond L. Atkins.

Gail says

This book would have so much more enjoyable if some of the language had been cleaned up. The writing style is excellent, I just don't enjoy the 'F' word, I think it's crude and unnecessary. The story is about A.J. and his best friend Eugene and various family members and others in a small GA town. Mostly the wild escapades of the two. Eugene lives up on a mountain in a cabin, A..J. is married and lives in town. Some rather wild things happen such as a house being moved by helicopter and the porch falls off and lands on one of the characters dog. Rather unrealistic, but the writer adds a lot of humor from the situation. Not that having a dog die is funny, far from it, but the way the situation is handled is funny. Eugene has lived a rather wild & crazy life and A.J. is a stable guy with a wife, kids and a job, yet the two have been friends since they were young boys. Eugene gets cancer and A.J. manages his care giving. Eugene requests that when the time comes & the pain gets to be too much that A.J. will shoot him so he doesn't have to suffer. A.J. tells him that there's no way he will do it. But then toward the end he sees him in extreme pain and nothing left off him, but skin & bones, just a shadow of what he once was. Does he do it or not?

Amy says

Amazing. Loved the tone, the language, and the characters were incredible. A great read for a lazy summer afternoon--or any day of the week.

Benjamin Sobieck says

The most fun I've had in a long time. Give this book a chance. I wanted to write a lengthy review, but I finished it too long ago. The feeling I got from it is still fresh in my mind, though. It's sad and funny at the same time. One of my new favorites.

Kelli says

What a wonderful book of friendship, reconciliation, family, love, and a mean dog named Rufus. Porches drop from the sky, you can't bury dogs in the people cemetery, green jello is better than the alternative at Thanksgiving, you can't really hide a school bus. Read this one, y'all.

Heather says

This was a free download for the Nook a while back and it sat there on my Nook kind of rotting. I finally got around to reading it this week, and I was pleasantly surprised. The reason why I was putting off reading it was because I wasn't entirely convinced I was going to like it, but the more I read, the more I realized it was right up my alley. A book about a terminal cancer patient and his (and everyone else's) coming to grips with

the finality of his condition? What more could an aspiring nurse want, really?

There was humor interspersed throughout, and although I don't know anyone who I can directly compare to AJ or Eugene, I still felt like I could identify with them, which was a nice touch. The nook book had an excerpt from the author's next novel, Sorrow Wood - which I might end up borrowing from a Nook friend. (LendMe is a fabulous thing lol)

Diana says

I can hardly do this book justice, but I will try. If you are curious about this book, you truly need to sit down and absorb it. I can assure you that it will not be what you are expecting.

Atkins is a genius with words. His writing is Mark Twain, William Faulkner and Stephen King rolled into one.

Yes, I said Stephen King. I do not care for King's subjects and foulness, but I can't help but admire his way with words and describing scenes. Atkins has that same aptness, without the foulness.

Upon finishing this book, I find that I want very much to live in Seqouyah, Georgia and eat at "The Lord is My Shepherd; I Shall Not Want Thick and Frosty Milkshakes Drive-In."

Beyond bringing a fictional town and set of characters to life, Atkins gives the tough story of pancreatic cancer, a rough and tumble friendship and euthanasia a humorous, fair and poignant treatment.

I will definitely be returning this book-- both in thought and in re-reading it.

PS. Who knows, maybe someday I'll name a kid Ray Atkins Williams.

Jennifer Dunn says

I'm from North Georgia where this book is set and The Front Porch Prophet is the unicorn (Bigfoot?) of a novel that I look for - one that evokes the region without, as a professor of mine once called it, "too much country store." The characters are colorful but realistic, nobody kicks a good dog, and the main character, A. J. Longstreet could just as well be my dad. Heck, the town, known if it's cotton mill "famous for its denim products and its abuse of the hired help" could be my town!

Atkins is a true Southern wordsmith, and my Kindle version of this book is well-highlighted with phrases that rang true, such as "Billy was an old country boy who had done extremely well for himself by adhering to the simple belief that every vehicle had some problem that could be repaired by Billy."

I highly recommend this book to North Georgians and anyone who has suspected that their Southern fiction is stuffed with a little too much country store.

Maryann says

While *The Front Porch Prophet* is described as a humorous work of Southern fiction about two young men who come of age in North Georgia, it is at times as serious as a rattlesnake. In those moments, the author does not hold back when it comes to the tough issues of broken relationships, death and dying, divorce and a myriad of other not so pleasant moments along life's journey.

A.J. Longstreet and his friend Eugene Purdue have been through a lot since their carefree childhood days spent playing football, pulling pranks, and trying to be the first to lose his virginity. The most recent being a dispute over Eugene's ex-wife that left the friends estranged for several years. Yet, the toughest days are ahead.

One day Eugene asks A.J. to come to his cabin – no easy feat as A.J. has to get past Rufus to get there. Rufus is described as a “cross between a Great Dane and a bear” and he guards the mountain that is home to Eugene's cabin. A.J. does not even attempt the climb without his Louisville slugger.

The point of the visit becomes painfully clear when Eugene tells A.J. the latest news from the doctor. “I have cancer. I'm rotten with it. It's terminal.” After that pronouncement, there is a long silence described this way, “His words hung over the clearing like a gas attack over the Argonne. A gentle breeze blew through the branches, but the words would not disappear.”

There is much to enjoy in this wonderful book, and the use of language that is so precise and so evocative is just one aspect. The dialogue is some of the best ever written. It is natural, true to each character, and so funny in places readers will be hard pressed to stifle their laughter when finishing the book at work because they couldn't bear to leave the story at home.

On the flip side of the humor is the very serious matter of death and dying and the fact that Eugene wants A.J. to put him out of his misery at the end. “You must be crazy. If you want to shoot yourself or blow yourself up, go ahead. But leave me out of it.” A.J. felt like he was breathing mud. “I know ten or fifteen people who would be happy to accommodate you. Hell, Diane's daddy would pay you to let him do it.”

“I'd do it for you.”

For nearly six months, A.J. wrestles with that request, and during that time the two men visit weekly and sift through the experiences of their lives and try to make sense of it all.

The remembering is as poignant for the reader as it is for the characters.

Ann says

I stretched this book out as long as I could. That's what I do when I fall in love with characters. One of the best reads this year and that is saying a lot because I've read a lot of great books. Strongly suggest this book.

Steve Diamond says

A surprising gem. Beautifully constructed, very moving, and very enjoyable to read.

Atkins gives us deeply felt portraits of life in rural Georgia, alternately laugh-out-loud funny, deadly serious, and poignantly personal -- sometimes all three at once. Don't be put off by the setting if you think you don't like "southern novels." The message and the characters are universal.

Some of the set pieces are a little too pat. Otherwise I'd give it 5 stars. Highly recommended.

Lissa says

Not my usual read, but I rather liked this book anyway. I found the characters interesting and I enjoyed getting to know them all through flashbacks and the musings of the main character, AJ. More than once I found myself identifying with AJ's wife. I laughed out loud more than once and even teared up a couple of times. All in all, I'm glad I picked it up.

June says

A book to be read and absorbed. Mr. Atkins is definitely a "word craftsman." The characters were indeed, characters. Lots of back stories, very excellent character development. I especially loved the ever-changing names of the local diner.

I think the overriding theme of the book was loyalty to friends, and promises made, and how to fulfill them.

My very favorite character in the book was Rufus. Somehow I thought in the end he would end up not so much among the living, but Mr. Atkins surprised me. I liked the surprise.

A definite regional favorite, much along the lines of "Big Stone Gap."
