

'A BONE TO PICK: AN AURORA TEAGARDEN MYSTERY'

SYNOPSIS

Aurora "Roe" Teagarden is a smart and beautiful librarian in her small, quaint town of Lawrenceton, Georgia. She is also a master sleuth who is part of the Real Murders Club, a gathering of individuals who love to analyze real crime stories at monthly meetings. Aurora is the club's biggest expert, and she is even in consideration for the role of President of the club, which is currently led by handsome southern gent, John Queensland.

Aurora is friendly with an elderly member of the club, Jane, who wants her to come by her house to pick up a book about famous women murderers. Jane sees a lot of herself in Aurora—she was also a librarian with an intense interest in murder mysteries. Jane seems particularly nostalgic that day and praises Aurora's crime-solving talent.

That night, Aurora's close friend Sally comes over to break the sad news: Jane has died. At the funeral, Aurora meets Father Scott Aubrey, Jane's minister. Scott introduces himself and explains Jane always wanted to set the two of them up, and asks her on a date. In attendance, along with several of Jane's neighbors, Aurora sees her ex, Arthur, a policeman, with his very pregnant wife, Lynn, a homicide detective. Although she has moved on from the relationship, the friendship is icy, and Lynn and Aurora have never seen eye to eye. As she's leaving the service, Aurora is stopped by Jane's lawyer. He reveals to her that Jane recently revised her will and has left her entire estate—house, money, possessions—to Aurora.

Aurora is stunned. She takes the key and goes to Jane's house, where in the dark of night, it looks like it's been ransacked. Suddenly a figure crashes into her before fleeing into the kitchen and out the back door. Aurora immediately calls the police. Arthur is assigned to the case, and along with Aurora, he questions Jane's neighbors, Torrance and Marcia, who claim they didn't hear anyone breaking in to the house, but it sounds familiar.

Arthur explains the street had a string of break-ins two years ago, but no items were stolen and no one was ever caught. Aurora believes the perpetrator was looking for something. She excitedly wants to crack the case, but Arthur drags her out of the house. The next day, Aurora returns, determined to find whatever the shadowy stranger was looking for. She suddenly has a memory of Jane patting her window seat and realizes the woman was trying to tell her something. Aurora pries the seat open and sees a shocking sight: a human skull looking up at her. Aurora believes Jane left her a murder to solve!

That night, Aurora tells Sally about the skull, and finds a note written by Jane in the book she loaned her. Jane wrote that she thinks someone close by committed the murder. Sally urges Aurora to turn everything in to the police, but determined Aurora asks for one week to try to solve the case before they tell anyone. She sets up her investigation headquarters at Jane's and starts surveying the neighborhood and all of Jane's neighbors. Besides Arthur and Lynn, who just moved in, the neighborhood is also home to Sally's boss, an editor named Macon. Aurora learns that Macon's son disappeared on a school trip and was never found. She also meets Carey Reilly, a single mom whose husband, Brad, left her two years ago.

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She is a scorned woman who is angry her cheating husband could have left their young daughter.

Later, Aurora rushes to meet Scott for their dinner date, where she is tense and nervously distracted, especially because he is so handsome and sweet. At the end of the night, Scott walks Aurora out of the restaurant and they both agree they had a great time. As they share their first kiss, Aurora's mother, Aida, interrupts them. Aida, an elegant real estate maven, is always trying to set her daughter up with suitable men, and is thrilled to see this romance.

Sally meets Aurora later to go over her clues. Aurora wonders where the rest of the body was buried. Comparing a recent map with one from two years ago, she sees a bushy area at the dead end of the street that looks different. She convinces Sally to help her dig, and the two women stumble upon what they were looking for—a full skeleton poking out of the dirt. Soon, the neighborhood is swarmed with police and detectives, led by Lynn and Arthur, who urge Aurora to butt out of the investigation, although Aurora doesn't reveal she has the skull.

Then, Aurora runs into Macon's ex-wife in the library and learns Macon's son has been found. Now, Aurora has narrowed the identity of the skull to one missing person—Carey's husband, Brad. Under the guise of buying an outfit for her second date with Scott, Aurora visits Carey's boutique shop. When Aurora tries to suggest the body she found could belong to Brad, Carey is adamant it doesn't—Brad was a restless husband and a cheater, and couldn't wait to leave her. Carey also thinks he may have had an affair with Marcia, and she wasn't happy about it, even going so far as to warn Torrance.

With this new information, Aurora is certain that the body is Brad's—and that Torrance killed him. She explains all her evidence to Sally, thinking Torrance had the motive to kill Brad, and finally agrees it's time to tell the police. But when they get to the station, Aurora panics, and only hints to Lynn that her team should see if the skeleton is Brad's and question Torrance. Lynn, irritated and angry, tells Aurora to stay out of the case. Aurora, however, refuses to give up, but soon learns Torrance's alibi on the day Brad went missing is airtight.

Aurora returns to Jane's house, weary, and sees Macon digging a hole in his front yard, which seems suspicious. After doing some research and enlisting John to do some sleuthing, she suspects Macon is the killer; Brad was suing the newspaper for slandering his auto repair shop. Macon was worried he would lose his job, and Brad disappeared just days before the trial. As Sally confronts John and Aurora about snooping on her boss, Aida arrives to Jane's house—carrying the skull Aurora hid in her closet. Aida thought the skull was a replica prop for use in the Real Murders Club, but when Aurora tells her it is real, she demands they take it to the police. Aurora has a different idea—she wants to use it as bait to catch the real killer.

Aurora convinces Sally, John and Aida to go to a barbecue Marcia is hosting for the neighbors and put their plan in action. But when Aurora brings up the skull in front of Macon, he has no clue what she's talking about. Sally triumphantly proclaims she knew Macon had nothing to do with Brad's murder, and everyone overhears her.

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Carey, realizing the skeleton was Brad's, bursts into emotional tears, while Lynn furiously threatens to arrest Aurora and her group for obstruction of justice.

That night, Aurora takes down her investigation diagram in Jane's house, feeling like she failed. But then she sees the book Jane gave her about women murderers and has a revelation—Marcia is the killer! As she excitedly calls Sally to tell her, a gloved hand covers her mouth from behind. Aurora struggles free of the grasp and sees it is Torrance. As she tries to escape, she is met by Marcia, brandishing a baseball bat. Marcia coolly admits to killing Brad with the bat, because she was upset he was coming on to her. Torrance covered up the murder by burying Brad, but he got scared the body would be found and when he went to move it, the skull was already missing. He started breaking in to neighbor's houses to look for the skull, and when he heard Aurora discussing it at the barbecue, he realized she had it.

Marcia and Torrance plan to kill Aurora to prevent her from telling the police what they did. Aurora is in a panic when Lynn appears in the doorway, gun pointed. Sally heard everything through Aurora's dropped cell phone and called 911, prompting Lynn to respond. Marcia and Torrance are stunned, as Aurora helps Lynn handcuff them both and bring them to justice. Then, in the excitement, Lynn goes into labor, and Aurora successfully delivers her baby, putting their differences behind them.

At the next meeting of the Real Murders Club, John publicly congratulates Aurora for solving the murder, and turns over the coveted title of President of the club to Aurora. Everyone applauds and gets up to surround Aurora with praise, including Sally, who admits Aurora did good, even if she was skeptical. Scott congratulates her with a kiss, and even Aida is proud of her daughter. It's clear this is just the beginning of crime solving for Aurora Teagarden.

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