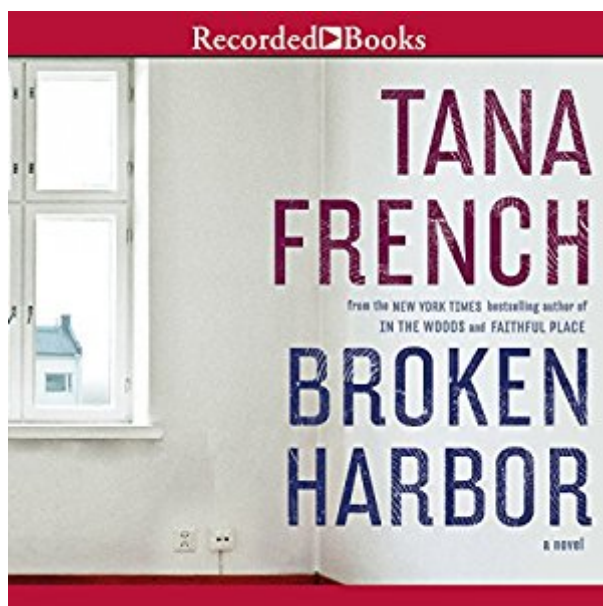


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Broken Harbor: Dublin Murder Squad, Book 4



Synopsis

New York Times best-selling author and Edgar Award winner Tana French grabs listeners with her chilling Dublin murder squad novels. In Broken Harbor, all but one member of the Spain family lies dead, and it's up to Mick "Scorcher" Kennedy to find out why. Mick must piece together why their house is full of cameras pointed at holes in the walls and how a nighttime intruder bypassed all the locks. Meanwhile, the town of Broken Harbor holds something else for Mick: disturbing memories of a childhood summer gone terribly wrong.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I like Tana French books. I have been catching up on all of her Dublin Murder Squad series. I really enjoyed the other books in this series, and was excited when this one was released. I was interested to hear that "Scorcher" Kennedy was the main character, and to get to know him is this book. The reader's experience of him was very different when reading Faithful Place. But the story got bogged down for me. The technicalities of investigating the crime can be very interesting, but in this story, they became tedious. The e-mails Pat sent to the online chat groups, the whole concept of various types of animals in the attic...was that supposed to be real, or were we to believe that was Pat's imagination? By the time I got to that part of the story, I didn't even want to bother pondering whether Pat had been hallucinating or not. It felt like several of the threads in the story were never weaved together. I like reading fiction, and especially mystery. But the plot was not believable to me. I finished the book, but near the end, it began to feel tedious to read, and the story became somewhat farfetched.

Let me begin by saying that I loved Tara French's first novel, so I thought that I would read more of her work. Second novel was okay, third was also okay and I could only hope that Broken Harbour would be as good as the first. Unfortunately it wasn't and in fact it got worse. I wanted to scream who they should be arresting. It would seem that I am an eternal optimist because French can write some powerful prose that makes you stop and think but should perhaps have stopped writing detective novels after the first book and gone on to writing in a different genre. I think she is a talented author but the plot of this novel was so predictable that I had guessed the ending a quarter of the way through.

This was a decent mystery up until the last 50 or so pages which made my rating plummet. I got the sense that the author was trying to stretch out the story near the end by adding far too many descriptions, rambling conversations and unneeded drummed up sentences. I got impatient with this style -- like the author was saying "I know you want answers but I'm going to dangle the carrot in front of you for a while first." All I wanted at the end was the answer -- all just to get to an anticlimactic disappointing ending.

There are two themes to this novel: how a family can disintegrate and the solution of a grisly murder mystery. In the first part, we have Patrick and Jenny Spain, along with their two children, striking out to establish the family in a new housing development near Broken Harbor. Jenny is an obsessive-compulsive person who wants everything in their new home to be picture perfect. Patrick prides himself on being the family breadwinner and overall handyman who will provide a tip-top home for his wife and children. Things start to go bad when Patrick loses his job. They get even worse when a real or imaginary animal, like a mink or stoat, gets into the house's structure and Patrick takes extraordinary measures to trap said creature. The second part is the murder of Patrick, his two children, and a critical attack on Jenny that sends her to the hospital's intensive care unit. This is when ace detective Michael "Scorcher" Kennedy picks up the case along with his rookie partner, Richie Curran. (We've seen Scorcher in another Tana French novel when Frank Mackey, an undercover detective, outperforms Kennedy on a different case.) Scorcher and Richie apprehend a fellow named Conor who's been watching the Spain's house through binoculars. Turns out Conor is a longtime pal of Patrick and Jenny and still carries a crush for her. When Conor is quite willing to sign a confession for the

murders, Kennedy thinks the case is in the bag but Richie has doubts. Complicating Scorchers work are distractions caused by the bizarre actions of his sister, Dina, and his own tragic memories of Broken Harbor where he lost his mother. Both parts of this novel eventually come together near the ending. It's an enjoyable reading experience but I'd call the exercise more of a detailed character study rather than a riveting detective mystery.

The plot in this book has haunted me, never has a book affected me in this way. All of the characters are victims who have met some degree of tragedy. I cried throughout the book and have found myself re-reading some of the chapters to try and understand why this book had such an impact on me. All I can say is read it, read it, read it. This book is brilliant. I have read all of Tana French's previous books (5 in the series), which are excellent but this book is by far my favorite.

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