



The Broken Shore

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Broken by his last case, homicide detective Joe Cashin has fled the city and returned to his hometown to run its one-man police station while his wounds heal and the nightmares fade. He lives a quiet life with his two dogs in the tumbledown wreck his family home has become. It's a peaceful existence - ideal for the rehabilitating man. But his recovery is rudely interrupted by a brutal attack on Charles Bourgoyne, a prominent member of the local community. Suspicion falls on three young men from the local Aboriginal community. But Cashin's not so sure and as the case unfolds amid simmering corruption and prejudice, he finds himself holding on to something that it might be better to let go.

The Broken Shore Details

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Author : Peter Temple

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From Reader Review The Broken Shore for online ebook

Rusalka says

I wish I had picked this book up earlier. For no other reason than that it completely and utterly immersed you into the setting of the book. I could imagine Joe Cashin's property perfectly. The lining of gums and scrub along the creek. The coast along the Great Ocean Road, some of the wildest and most beautiful I have ever seen. The invoking of the crazy autumn weather that can be calm and sunny one day, and then gale force winds and horizontal rain the next. Sometimes within the same day. For this alone, I found it a pleasure to read.

Throw in a well written, layered crime novel into the mix and you're on to a winner. The book doesn't shy away from the ugliness still prevalent in some parts of Australian life. And that is important and makes the book feel more real. Sometimes I did feel like it was pushing the envelope on the gritty elements and social problems more than it needed too, but this may be my own experience as a city kid instead of from out bush.

I really enjoyed the book and would recommend it for a read. Particularly if you like your crime/murder fiction, but want to read something not set in Sydney or Melbourne to get a better understanding of the more rural parts of Australia.

Paul says

"The Broken Shore" takes place in and around the small town of Port Monro, on Australia's southern coast. It's a threadbare place, populated by fulltime residents resentfully serving the wealthy, who come for the beach during the warm months, but leave as the Antarctic winds signal the arrival of winter.

Joe Cashin is the senior policeman in Port Monro, ostensibly on indeterminate loan from the largest nearby city, Cromarty, minding the shop while recovering from the psychological and physical effects of an arrest gone wrong that saw him severely wounded, his partner killed, and the perpetrator vanished without a trace. The days are long and largely uneventful - especially during the offseason - but the murder of one of the town elders quickly brings things to a boil.

Three aboriginal youths are identified as prime suspects, but when a rolling roadblock, led by another cop with a very checkered past, ends with all three boys dying in a hail of gunfire, the case surfaces simmering racial and class tensions, and invites interest from politicians looking to either leverage the event for their own benefit or tamp it down in the name of the status quo.

Temple writes beautifully - the sense of place and time in "The Broken Shore" reminded me of nothing more than what James Lee Burke might put to the page were he focused Downunder rather than on Louisiana. The characters are sharply drawn, the dialog crackles with a naturalness and a wit that is rare, and the overall experience is immersive.

A few cautions: The author includes a glossary of Australian slang - which is highly useful - but the non-Aussie reader may still struggle on occasion to follow every bit of dialog. Likewise, the plot is not entirely about the crimes - there are layers here devoted to loss and memory that are deeper than one will find in the run of the mill whodunnit. Finally, the first half of the book may seem a bit slow for some readers, as it is devoted to frustration and a lack of leads. It picks up momentum quickly, however, as a key clue suddenly begins to unravel what really took place.

For readers looking to go a bit deeper than a simple mystery - and who value "show" rather than "tell", "The Broken Shore" will be rewarding. I loved it and recommend it highly.

Ruthiella says

The Broken Shore was an immersive and often brutal book to read. It is a mystery in the hard-boiled tradition which takes place in Australia. Our detective is Joe Cashin, who used to work homicide in Melbourne but for reasons which come out later in the story has been re-assigned to a post in a small coastal town.

When a rich local is found near death after an attack in his country home, Joe is first on the scene. Eventually, the case is given over to the slightly larger police force of another precinct, but Joe keeps being drawn back to the case both officially and unofficially. What eventually unspools is a complicated web of deceit, complicity and depravity. Peter Temple provides a glimpse into modern Australia with class and racial divides that are deep and violent which may be all too familiar for many American readers, albeit couched in a slightly different accent.

I know that there is a second book focusing on a side character from The Broken Shore but I don't think this book is really part of a series, though it easily could be. I really had the sense of being dropped into an ongoing story and had to immediately start swimming for orientation. I imagine that might be frustrating for some, but I liked this aspect of the book.

Sara says

This was a dark and twisting noir with an impish heart that I thoroughly enjoyed despite the lingering questions it left me with.

We meet Joe Cashin, a taciturn, damaged cop "on leave" in the suburbs from the wilds of Melbourne after a dubious stake out left a fellow officer dead. He's going through the motions of rebuilding his families crumbling estate, a project that seems doomed to fail. His only company are two standard poodles (possibly the weirdest pair of pets I've ever encountered in a book like this) and a few friends as quiet and solitary as he tries to be.

When a local philanthropist is brutally murdered Cashin finds himself embroiled with the local police force, a rabidly racist bunch who are determined to pin the crime on a couple of local aboriginal teens. It isn't long before Cashin discovers the so called philanthropist may have been doing more than just providing poor teens with a chance to go to summer camp and it quickly becomes apparent that quite a few people might have wanted him dead.

This is a wide ranging novel with a huge cast of characters that occasionally gets super unweildy but despite a lot of twists and turns and some unresolved story lines I found myself really enjoying this. Its very much a character driven book with very sharp and often very funny dialogue that calls to mind an Australian version of a Bogey and Bacall movie. Author Peter Temple comes from a journalistic background and his sharp, staccato, David Mametish dialogue bears that out. There isn't a whole lot here visually, this was not a novel I "saw" in my mind as I read it, but it still works. Temple's characters linger. Cashin is an incredibly likable hero. He ticks all the "damaged cop with a heart of gold" check boxes but there's a certain je ne sais quoi that sets him apart. He's a good person, you just feel that in the way he deals with victims and perps and

witnesses and the people he cares about. He's an introspective, troubled man, but he isn't mired in his problems. You get the sense that he wants to be happier, more settled and comfortable with himself and you root for him to find that inner peace that seems to elude him.

Temple doesn't reinvent the wheel here but he certainly makes it spin faster and more elegantly than most of his fellow noir crime fiction authors. I might have known where things were heading but I still wanted to see how it all played out and Temple doesn't disappoint. The end is brutal, disturbing and not every loose end is tied up neatly but it somehow doesn't matter.

There's a bit of a tacked on romantic element and readers may be a tad bit confused by the motherload of Australian slang (there's a super helpful glossary at the back of the book) but this is straight up a very good book and I'm looking forward to reading more.

Trevor says

A lot of this was very predictable. I mean, Aboriginal kids are killed or harassed to death by police, the local Christian organisers of a boys' camp for orphans turned out to have been kiddy-fiddlers (it always surprises me how long it takes the police to figure out this connection – you'd think by now the phrase 'Christian Boys' Camp' might ring the same kinds of immediate warning bells as 'Danger – High Voltage' or 'Best of ABBA' do), the rich and powerful look out for one another and, you're never going to believe this, the hero (damaged as he might well be – even though with a good heart) sorts it all out in the end – even when you least expect it.

There are, admittedly, some interesting things going on here with the form, both of the writing and possibly also playing around with the genre – the prose is clipped and Spartan and some of the Aussie-isms are at least amusing. But overall I have to say that this hardly carried my interest. Look, at least the hero wasn't a loveable larrikin (so, at least we are spared one Aussie cliché, mates and sheilas) – but if anything he was a kind of cowboy come home seeking peace and quiet only to be destined to lift the lid on racism, corruption and a child sex ring. I thought the Opera was a little heavy-handed too, though, unfortunately.

Now, listen, far be it from me to endorse having sex with children – don't get me wrong here – I hate paedophiles as much as your average red blooded Aussie bloke. But I do get a little sick of the endless references to it in novels and how this is invariably then used as a kind of excuse for the most graphic and bloody tortures committed to the bodies of these new fiends and monsters. And - as with the Spanish Inquisition – we lesser sinners, we much lesser sinners, seem to be redeemed, to be washed clean by the blood and screaming torment of these wicked, wicked men.

And isn't there lots of blood and don't we get treated to lots of detailed screaming torment?

Thank goodness there is one class of person left to whom no extremity of torment is too much for them to endure to sate our need for revenge, especially now that torturing blacks to death like we used to in the good old days is only approved of by the sorts of people none of *US* would choose to be seen dead with. No, we cheer when a racist is punched in this – but do we give a stuff if the paedophile lives or dies at the end? If you are into eternal damnation, anal probes of red hot pokers or get-off considering the perfect punishments God has planned for those who transgress his narrow path to righteousness, then this book will give you quite a preview of the entertainment the Elect can expect for primetime viewing from Right-Hand-of-God-TV - after they've finished their daily chanting of "Holy, Holy, Holy", of course.

The metaphor of the 'broken shore' is interesting and a nice comparison with the destruction brought upon our society by the all too various forms of corruption the book details. However, I much preferred the more subtle idea in the title, that there is also a homophone working here – the broken sure. This is a book where certainties all come broken.

All the same, with the high-camp local café owner, the suicidal, homosexual brother, the extremely attractive girl from high school who remains just as attractive in midlife and whose knickers just fly off at the very suggestion of party pies (by the way, a lot of the food in this book is utter crap) all this, and the fact there were enough deaths, attempted deaths, suicides and near fatal woundings to make even a writer from *Midsummer Murders* blush, made this book a little disappointing.

This review is harsher than I had intended. Some of the writing is quite perceptive and some is even quite interesting. But I really don't think there needed to be quite so much death and destruction. From memory only two people die in China Town – but I left that feeling much more uncomfortable about both paedophilia and social corruption. All the same, I probably ought to read *Truth* at some stage. Unfortunately, in the end I can't pretend that I wasn't a disappointed with this.

LJ says

A BROKEN SHORE (Police Procedural-Australia-Cont) – Poor
Temple, Peter – Standalone
Quercus, 2006- UK Hardcover

*** Detective Joe Cashin is recovering from his injuries at his hometown in South Eastern Australia. He is there to run a one-man police station and is rebuilding the wreck of a home begun by his grandfather. A brutal attack on a local man is quickly blamed on a three young men from the Aboriginal community. When the plan to arrest and question one of the young men goes deathly wrong, Cashin starts taking a hard look at what is really going on.

*** This book has received a lot of great reviews. Unfortunately, it didn't work for me because of one main element—character development. The author doles out bits of Cashin, and other characters, past in very small doses well into the story. I found this incredibly distracting as it left me with the feeling I was starting a series in the middle and needed to read previous books. Unfortunately, there were no previous books with Cashin. I don't mind learning about a character as I go, but this felt too divisive to me, almost in the same vein as the cliff hanger at the end of the chapter. His reference to the background of a policewoman was almost a casual "okay, I'll throw this in to make her interesting" manner. For me, it destroyed the flow of the story and would cause me to stop reading. But, because of all the positive reviews, I continued and put aside my need for character development and just read for story, which was better. I did get into the plot, although it took me awhile. At a certain point I definitely saw where it was going, but the climax was suspenseful and somewhat horrific; however, a couple elements of the very ending were disappointing. Many people loved this book; I didn't.

Bree says

Ugh, this book was just plain bad...I had to stop. I tried, I really, really tried. The sentences were cut off half the time and I had a really hard time comprehending anything in it...I got about 100 pages in and the plot was moving along too slowly, so combined together, I gave up on the whole thing. I have NEVER, ever done that

before.

But, really...do people really talk like that? A lot of what I read were just broken sentences, without proper grammar. I found it very distracting.

Cam says

I love a good crime thriller, and this is better than your average good. I know I have a connection & I know, I know many of the locations mentioned in the book & that his lead character Joe Cashin - in 'The Broken Shore' has two huge black poodles & every morning Mon - Fri they scare the absolute crap out of my Son & I on our morning walk to school (they have built in stealth (the neighbour & I have discussed) & never hit you at the same point of the fence line). So yes lots of funny connections, but on a more serious note this book won what's deemed as the most coveted award internationally for best crime novel 'The Duncan Lawrie Dagger'. Awarded books & myself usually don't hit it off all that much of recent but this is an exception. It is very Australian very Victorian (the State not the era), but I think the personalities & humour are universally appealing. The second of which is not far from release.

The plot is your standard - somebody dies that shouldn't and you have to follow the story till the coppa catches the who & the why. However the writing and character development was far & above standard. I really enjoyed this & can't wait till the next. Would have given it 4 1/2 stars but can't so it gets 4 with a half for the dogs held over with their stealth like abilities.

Angela says

I love a book with short chapters and lots of dialogue so Peter Temple has definitely done us both a favour with 'The Broken Shore'. His protagonist Cashin, a Melbourne homicide detective, is living and working in a rural town that still holds firm to a racial divide and clings tightly to a 'cops and robbers' mentality. After the death of a long-standing social figure, the town is thrown into a chaotic and bloody aftermath with convalescing Cashin seemingly at the helm.

There are plenty of twists and turns to keep the reader guessing and like most crime dramas everyone seems suspect, if not just a little odd. Particularly intriguing are the parallels Temple draws between Cashin rebuilding his family property, the mending of his personal relationships, and his recovery from a work related motor accident. This is a man certainly trying to put together the pieces in more ways than one.

The first 100 or so pages, although well written, seem to just bumble along, but by halfway, pace escalates and the reader is exposed to some very shady dealings indeed. For one who hasn't read a lot of crime fiction, 'The Broken Shore' was a great hook-in: easy style, good crafting and genuine unpredictability. An enjoyable read.

Nancy Oakes says

When I finished this novel I realized two things: first, that I'd just read something outstanding and second, that (as it says on the dustjacket blurb), Peter Temple is a "master writer." This has to be one of the best and most beautifully-written crime fiction novels I've ever read, and I can't wait to get back to his next novel,

Truth, which I've only just started and am already loving.

Joe Cashin is a homicide detective who's recuperating from physical and emotional trauma in the small town of Port Monro on the south coast of Australia. Port Monro is not his normal beat; he's been posted there to put some distance between himself and the events that left another policeman dead and himself hospitalized. It's a perfect place for Joe; he spends a great deal of his time with his dogs, and to get his mind off of his recent troubles, he's rebuilding an old ruined house, as well as himself, with the help of a "swaggie" named Rebb. But his peace is shattered when he finds himself smack in the middle of an intriguing crime: one of the town's wealthiest citizens has been found dead and the police in charge of the investigation want very badly to pin the murder on three indigenous teens. Cashin is called to help with the case, but he's not convinced that the racially-prejudiced local police are correct in their assumptions.

What sets this novel apart, making it an outstanding read, is not so much the plot, which is believable and well executed, but the writing. The reader is plunged into an Australia that is divided over racial issues, plagued by corruption among government and local officials, divided between development that would create new jobs but would wreck the environment and the landscape. While a reader can perhaps find those sorts of problems in his or her own country, Temple keeps it Australian through his use of the local lingo (and then puts a glossary of Australian terms in the back for reference-- which is itself quite funny in parts), description of little things like food, and especially in terms of a sense of place. The small community's colorful characters and the small-town problems he's involved with ("a man about a neighbour's tree, the report of a vandalised bench...") set the stage, as do the vivid descriptions of the landscape. Take, for example, the description of Cromarty's Kettle, located in the Rip:

...the huge sea, the grey-green water skeined with foam, sliding, falling, surging, full of little peaks and breaks, hollows and rolls, the sense of unimaginable power beneath the surface, terrible forces that could lift you up and suck you down and spin you...the power of the surge would push you through the gap in the cliff and then it would slam you against the pocked walls...

as well as the descriptions of the small pubs, truck stops, the "roads smeared with roadkill ---" or the road to Port Monro:

the "pocked junctions where one or two tilted houses stood against the wind and signs pointed to other desperate crossroads."

The characters are also very well developed, especially Joe Cashin -- a broken and damaged, yet decent man trying to get it all back together, whose backstory and troubled past (including an unstable childhood) are unfolded little by little, interwoven with his present. He doesn't mind solitude, although perhaps not so completely as he would have you believe, and he's the consummate professional, yet willing to go with his intuition when the situation demands.

This is an excellent book, and although I've focused mainly on the writing here, the story itself will also keep you turning pages until it's over. And then, I think, you'll be left wanting more.

Πα?λος says

?να αστυνομικ? μυθιστ?ρημα με ιδια?τερη πλοκ? που σε μεταφ?ρει στην Αυστραλ?α, ?σως στην πιο ενδιαφ?ρουσα χ?ρα του σ?γχρονου κ?σμου.

Εκε? συναντ?με τον αστυνομικ? Τζο Κασιν ο οπο?ος αναλαμβάνει να λ?σει την υπ?θεση της δολοφον?ας εν?ς πλο?σιου μοναχικ? κατο?κου της περιοχ?ς. ?ταν τα πρ?τα στοιχε?α δε?χνουν ?τι για τον φ?νο ενδεχομ?νως να ευθ?νονται νεαρο? αυτ?χθονες (Αβορ?γινες, "γυφτοι" κατα τους λευκο?ς κατο?κους) η υπ?θεση πα?ρνει διαφορετικ? τροπ? καθ?ς β?μα β?μα αρχ?ζει και ξεδιαλ?νει το παρελθ?ν του θ?ματος. Ταυτ?χρονα, βρ?σκονται δολοφονημ?νοι και ?λλοι δυο ?νθρωποι με κοιν? παρελθ?ν με το πρ?το θ?μα.

Αστυνομικ? πλοκ? με ροπ? προς το κλασικ?, αλλ? με στοιχε?α σ?γχρονου κοινωνικ? ?ργου που καταφ?ρνει να σε εισ?γει στην τοπικ? κοινων?α.

3,5/5 γιατι κουρ?ζει λιγο σε κ?ποια κεφαλα?α με μακροσκελε?ς περιγραφ?ς που τελικ? δε χρησιμε?ουν σε κ?τι!

Agathafrye says

Wow. A very fine book indeed. With a nice tight prose style, this mystery transcends the genre with the quality of its writing, well drawn characters, and nuanced exploration of racial issues. Main character and homicide cop Joe Cashin returns to his economically depressed home town in Southern Australia to recuperate from a car accident that resulted in a dead partner, an escaped suspect, and chronic crippling back pain for Joe. A wealthy man is murdered in his home, and Joe is forced out of his recovery to work on the case, then forced back on leave when three young aboriginal suspects end up dead due to a brutally botched plan to take them into custody. This book explores race in a way that I never would have expected from a crime procedural. Almost reminds me of Raymond Chandler, but with better writing and a more interesting setting. Peter Temple, I'll be back for more.

Lyn (Readinghearts) says

This book was recommended to me by one of my GR friends (thanks Cam) and it was well worth it. It is the story of an Australian police man who has been re-assigned to what is supposed to be a sleepy backwater where he grew up so that he can recuperate from injuries. Instead, he becomes involved in a murder in the area. The novel has what all good cop mysteries have, interesting characters, plot twists, a little romance, political undertones, and a great story line. AND if you are like me (not Australian) you get to learn a new vocabulary. The American version of the book that I checked out from the library had a glossary of Australian terms in the back, thank goodness, which was very helpful. I really enjoyed the story and the characters were interesting. I am currently looking forward to reading more from this author.

Kristian Olesen says

Challenge: review "The Broken Shore" without mentioning how "Australian" it is.

There are a lot of reviews on this site expressing frustration with The Broken Shore for its dialectical idiosyncrasies. I won't take this opportunity to express my frustration at the way in which shit rolls downhill, obliging Australian readers to maintain a familiarity with British and American dialects, but rendering

Australian dialects "unreadable" to our northern cousins. I won't mention that gripe at all.

What I can say about the writing is that it is the best representation of everyday Australian speech I have ever come across. The dialect is there in all its glory - oblique, ungrammatical, swears, replete with bold references to taboo subjects and clever euphemisms for the most innocuous ideas, often dreamt up for the speaker's own amusement. Foreign readers - American readers in particular - should note that the word "cunt" is often employed in this book and in everyday speech in Australia. It's not a malicious word, more often than not, and is rarely accompanied by the sexist/misogynist connotations that it carries in other contexts. If it offends or shocks you, try substituting "bloke" for "cunt". Read the original sentence the same way you would read it with the substituted word; don't dwell on the language that offends you; read it as it was intended.

Mary says

This is a very dark book and I initially struggled both because of some of the confronting racist language and because some of the issues cut very close to the bone. It's both an excellent crime novel and a beautifully written literary piece but can happily be read as either.

Joe Cashin is a police officer who goes home to police in small town coastal Victoria. He's recovering physically and psychologically from a stake or gone wrong during his time with Homicide in Melbourne. Of course he now has to police people he grew up with. Pivotal to this includes the Aboriginal population in town. Then he's called to the murderous assault on the town's richest man and philanthropist. And then it gets political ... And there are more deaths.

This is also an excellent portrait of someone attempting to put life back together after too many shattering moments. The physical, emotional and mental impacts are faithfully represented. The impact of trauma on police, those they serve and those they attempt to protect the public from is beautifully portrayed. The irony of trauma having such disparate impacts is rarely so well drawn.

Much, much more could be written about the merits of this book but most importantly I found it hard to put down and I will think about it for quite some time to come.
