



Reading Group Gold

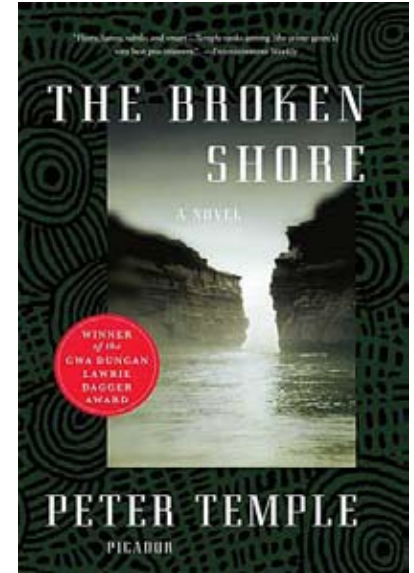
The Broken Shore

A Novel

by Peter Temple

About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Broken Shore* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *The Broken Shore*.



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About the Book

Hailed as the finest crime writer in Australia, award winner Peter Temple is now being recognized as a master of the genre. With *The Broken Shore*, he delivers his most powerful novel yet—a chilling tale of murder in a community where tensions over race, class, and politics have reached the boiling point.

Shaken by a recent scrape with death, his physical and emotional scars still raw, detective Joe Cashin is posted away from the Homicide Squad to the quiet South Australian town where he grew up. But his hometown offers little in the way of a tranquil recovery; Cashin is soon embroiled in a highly publicized murder investigation. Prominent local businessman Charles Bourgoyne was brutally attacked in his own home, and three Aboriginal boys have become the lead suspects. When a shootout erupts between them and Cashin's team, the truth itself becomes a moving target, and the evidence raises more questions than its answers. As the secrets of the Bourgoyne family begin to unfold, Cashin unravels a web of deceit while confronting his own haunted past. Racing to a riveting conclusion, *The Broken Shore* will transfix you at every turn.

Praise for *The Broken Shore*

“Flint, funny, subtle and smart...Temple ranks among [the crime genre's] very best.”— *Entertainment Weekly*

“A mature and measured account of the kind of crimes committed in the dead quiet of rural Australia... Temple offers some provocative and painful views of Australia's inner landscape.”— *The New York Times Book Review*



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“The extra emphasis on character, as well as subtle commentary on race and class divides, add many welcome layers to Temple’s already-outstanding acuity for plotting and pace and his almost musical ear for dialogue.”—*The Baltimore Sun*

“Having read the new novels of Michael Connelly and Martin Cruz Smith, I have to say that Temple belongs in their company...Murder, rape, suicide, child abuse, police brutality, shootouts—but always in the context of gorgeous writing...Throughout, Temple finds time to please us with flashes of writing that range from poetic to brutal.”—*The Washington Post*

About the Author

Peter Temple is the author of eight crime novels, five of which have won the Ned Kelly Award, Australia’s major prize for crime fiction. He is also a winner of the Colin Roderick Award for Australian writing and has worked as a journalist and editor for newspapers and magazines in several countries. Born in South Africa, he now lives in Victoria, Australia.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Joe Cashin decide to take a chance on Dave Rebb in the initial chapters? Is Joe a better judge of character than Mrs. Haig, or was he simply taking a gamble?
2. How are Joe and Michael affected by the Cashin family legacy? In what way does Joe’s understanding of his father and of Tommy shift throughout the novel?
3. What do you think happened on the night of the shootout? Would you have been more likely to trust Hopgood or Donny?
4. How has Joe’s community changed since his boyhood? What enabled Bobby Walshe and Helen Castleman to excel in careers that would previously have been closed to Aboriginals and women? How does Joe view his connection to Bobby and Helen now that they are adults engaged in high-stakes circumstances?
5. Discuss the novel’s title. How does the beautiful but dangerous segment of coastline called *The Broken Shore* serve as an appropriate backdrop for the Bourgoyne murder investigation? What has been broken at the Kettle and the Dangar Steps? Whose broken lives are mended in the aftermath?
6. How were you affected by the structure of the novel, featuring brief chapters comprising rapid-fire dialogue and almost cinematic visuals? What made *The Broken Shore* different from other thrillers you have read?
7. The novel features a glossary of Australian slang, with many of the entries describing various types of



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people. How does English-language slang vary around the globe, and what does a population's slang indicate? What were you surprised to discover about Australian culture? What commonalities exist between the dialogue of Australian and American crime novels?

8. How did race and class influence the way the case was handled? Without Joe's intervention, would the truth have likely been discovered? In what parts of the world do race and class play the greatest role in how justice is served? How are neighborhoods like the Daunt born?

9. Who was your prime suspect? Were you more swayed by evidence or instinct? Whom did you trust the least?

10. What does Jaime's story indicate about the nature of abuse? Why is evil sometimes allowed to flourish? What allowed this particular evil to affect multiple generations?

11. Why was Jaime's sister hesitant to reveal the truth? What realities was she trying to perpetuate? What would you have done in her situation?

12. In the end, Erica decides not to sell the camp to Fyfe, putting an end to the resort project. What did this clash between the old guard and new developers indicate about views of ideal life in this region? How is progress truly defined, in housing, law enforcement, and other aspects of community?

13. How did you interpret the novel's closing scene? What do you predict Tracy will find after she follows through on Joe's research request regarding the summer of 1988?

14. Just as literature and opera helped Joe recover from the incident with Raimond Sarris, what emotional repairs are accomplished through the repair work on Tommy Cashin's house?