



Punishment by Linden MacIntyre

About the author:

Linden MacIntyre's bestselling first novel, *The Long Stretch*, was nominated for a CBA Libris Award and his boyhood memoir, *Causeway: A Passage from Innocence*, won both the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Nonfiction and the Evelyn Richardson Prize. His second novel, *The Bishop's Man*, was a #1 national bestseller, won the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Dartmouth Book Award and the CBA Libris Fiction Book of the Year Award, among other honours. The third book in the loose-knit trilogy, *Why Men Lie*, was also a #1 national bestseller as well as a Globe and Mail "Can't Miss" Book for 2012. MacIntyre, who spent 24 years as the co-host of *The Fifth Estate*, is a distinguished broadcast journalist who has won ten Gemini awards for his work.

Source: <http://penquinrandomhouse.ca/>

About this book:

In *Punishment*, his first novel since completing his Long Stretch trilogy, Scotiabank Giller-winner Linden MacIntyre brings us a powerful exploration of justice and vengeance, and the peril that ensues when passion replaces reason, in a small town shaken by a tragic death.

Forced to retire early from his job as a corrections officer in Kingston Penitentiary, Tony Breau has limped back to the village where he grew up to lick his wounds, only to find that Dwayne Strickland, a young con he'd had dealings with in prison is back there too—and once again in trouble. Strickland has just been arrested following the suspicious death of a teenage girl, the granddaughter of Caddy Stewart, Tony's first love.

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Tony is soon caught in a fierce emotional struggle between the outcast Strickland and the still alluring Caddy. And then another figure from Tony's past, the forceful Neil Archie MacDonald—just retired in murky circumstances from the Boston police force—stokes the community's anger and suspicion and an irresistible demand for punishment. As Tony struggles to resist the vortex of vigilante action, *Punishment* builds into a total page-turner that blindsides you with twists and betrayals.

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Discussion Questions:

1. In *Punishment*, MacIntyre explores the nature of good and evil—specifically that good people can do bad things, and bad people can do good things. Thinking about Tony, Neil, and Dwayne, are these characters good people who have done bad things or bad people who have done good things?
2. Tony changes his name from MacMillan to Breau—what kind of statement about himself do you think he is making with this name change? To whom?
3. The landscape in *Punishment* figures strongly in Tony's ruminations about his past, present, and future. Did the Cape Breton setting in *Punishment* speak to you? If you were to pick a landscape that best describes your mood and personality, where would it be?
4. *Punishment* is a mix of literary fiction, Can-lit, mystery fiction and thriller—what aspect of the book drew you in the most? Does mixing genres like this make you want to expand your reading preferences?



5. Punishment takes place against the backdrop of the invasion of Iraq after 9/11. What purpose do you think this served in the story? How are Tony's difficulties in fitting in to his hometown highlighted by his and the townspeople's reaction to what's going on in the news?

6. Thinking about MacIntyre's journalistic work on the justice system in Canada, how do you think this informed his writing in Punishment? What message about justice do you think he is trying to convey?

7. Birch, Caddy's dog, serves as a sounding board for Tony as he is working things out. Has a family pet ever played the same role in your life? How do you think Birch changed Tony?

8. Both Dwayne and Tony have a similar background –both grew up as adopted children, and felt like they were outsiders in the same small town. What do you think the difference was that led Tony down one path, and Dwayne down another?

9. Neil Archie MacDonald takes on a significant role in the vigilantism against Dwayne Strickland. How do you view Neil? Is he a likeable character? Or a bully?

Source: Ontario Library Association Evergreen Award Nominees Book Club

Guide: https://olco.ent.sirsi.dynix.net/client/en_US/search/asset/10461

Other formats available at Halifax Public Libraries:

- eBook