Slip of the Knife

by Denise Mina



About the Book

Set in 1990, Mina's third thriller to feature Paddy Meehan (after 2006's Edgar-finalist **The Dead Hour**) finds the Glaswegian journalist embroiled in the most politically charged and personal story of her career. When the corpse of Meehan's ex-lover, journalist Terry Hewitt, turns up in the countryside near Port Glasgow, everything points to an IRA execution. After Meehan discovers that Terry willed her his notes and a house in the country, she decides to investigate his murder. Distracted by the imminent parole of Callum Ogilvy --- the young cousin of her ex-fiancé convicted for his role in a child's murder in **Field of Blood** (2005) --- Meehan soon realizes that everyone from the Scottish police to the IRA is intent on keeping the motive for Terry's death a secret. When Terry's colleague is killed and her own young son is threatened, Meehan knows she must uncover the men responsible before she becomes their next victim.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think Denise Mina chooses to begin the novel from Terry?s point of view? Is his death so early in the novel a surprise?

2. Paddy?s family members play important roles in this novel. How have the Meehan family dynamics changed since the death of Paddy?s father? What is the importance of Mary Ann?s vocation to her mother? Discuss the alternative forms of ?family? that the novel presents. How does Paddy?s own definition of family change in the course of the novel?

3. How does Paddy?s life as a single mother affect her relationship to her work? What does the novel suggest about the balance between personal and professional obligations for a character like Paddy?

4. Discuss the role Callum Ogilvy plays in the story. Does your opinion of him change from the novel?s beginning to end?

5. Discuss the ways in which religion limits different characters? views of each other in the novel.

6. Much of **Slip of the Knife** is concerned with changes to the journalistic profession and the economic difficulties facing newspapers today. Describe some of these changes, and discuss the ways in which they affect the kinds of journalism that gets published.

7. Discuss the differences between Brian Donaldson and Martin McBree. Is either of them ever a sympathetic character? Why do you think Denise Mina chooses to narrate parts of the novel from Martin McBree?s perspective?

8. Explain why the Scottish police are protecting Martin McBree. How does this novel change your understanding of present day relations between Scotland and Ireland? Among Scotland, Ireland, and England?

9. What is **Slip of the Knife** saying about the usefulness of revenge? Does the novel carry a message about what makes a political cause just or unjust?

10. What do you think the future holds for Paddy and Dub as a couple?

Author Bio

Denise Mina is the author of 20 novels, including the Reese Witherspoon x Hello Sunshine Book Club pick CONVICTION and its sequel, CONFIDENCE, as well as THE LESS DEAD, THE LONG DROP --- winner of the 2017 McIlvanney Prize for Scottish crime book of the year --- and the *Garnethill* trilogy, the first installment of which won the John Creasey Memorial Award for best first crime novel, among others. Mina has twice received the Theakstons Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year Award. She lives in Glasgow.

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