



Broken

Daniel Clay

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Skunk Cunningham is an eleven-year-old girl in a coma. She has a loving dad, an absent mother and a brother who plays more X-Box than is good for him. She also has the neighbours from hell: the five Oswald girls and their thuggish father Bob, vicious bullies all of them, whose reign of terror extends unchallenged over their otherwise quiet suburban street. And yet terrifying though they undoubtedly are, the stiletto-wearing, cider-swilling Oswald girls are also sexy - so when Saskia asks shy, virginal Rick Buckley for a ride in his new car, he can't believe his luck. Too bad that Saskia can't keep her big mouth shut. When, after a quick fumble, she broadcasts Rick's deficiencies to anyone who will listen, it puts ideas into her younger sisters silly head - ideas that will see Rick dragged off to prison, humiliated, and ultimately, in his fathers words, broken by the experience. From her hospital bed, Skunk guides us through the events that follow, as Saskia's small act of thoughtlessness slowly spreads through the neighbourhood in a web of increasing violence. Skunk watches as her shabby, hardworking father finds love, only for her courageous, idealistic teacher to lose it; as poor broken Buckley descends into madness, while across the street her brother Jed makes his first adolescent forays into sex; and as her own gentle romance with soft-hearted, tough-talking Dillon struggles to survive against a backdrop that seamlessly combines the sublime and the ridiculous. As we inch ever closer to the mystery behind her coma, Skunk's innocence becomes a beacon by which we navigate a world as comic as it is tragic, and as effortlessly engaging as it is ultimately uplifting, in this brilliant and utterly original debut novel.

Broken Details

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From Reader Review Broken for online ebook

Ewan says

I get your subtle (Or not) hints Daniel. Britain is Broken. Very clever that it is dressed up in a character called Broken but I get what you were saying. Comedy stereotypical shaven headed bullying state scrounging fathers with chav like lying scum slutty daughters take on everyone else. And no one in authority cares. The Police don't care, in all three interactions they are referred too not just "Police" but the "uninterested police", the Doctor doesn't care, the Social workers don't care, The community nurse doesn't care and the headmaster doesn't care. Does anybody care? Do I? Well actually yes I do. Because besides all this it's a very very good read. Fast paced, gripping, I wanted to see how it all turns out despite my mounting disbelief of what was happening and meeting yet another person who didn't want to get involved. I would have given 4 stars if only just one person in authority(oh I don't know, a kindly bus conductor or something)had actually stepped up to the mark and done their job without being lampooned. I'm pretty sure the last time I checked their were people left who help other people, called professionals. Or am I living in some utopian bubble? I'd give it 3 1/2 stars if I could give half stars but I defiantly recommend it to anyone bothering to read this drivel I am typing.

Ninitha (Niko) says

I think it's fair to say that Broken breaks you. It's such a heady combination of brilliant writing and touching themes. There are so many things in the book to ponder upon. Butterfly effect, mental health, misplaced or misguided love, the terrible state of government services. Each incorporated so well into the book that it breaks you, a little at a time. The last twenty or so pages is when the author puts your emotions through the wringer. The book becomes suffocating. It frustrates you and you want to tell the characters to hang on, that there has to be something better than what we think is about to happen. I had goosebumps and misty eyes when I finished. Truth be told, I did not want it to end. Broken is brilliant. It's a serious book told in an extremely engaging way with its fair share of chuckles and clever puns.

E.J. says

Page one - what the hell am I reading?

One third through - this isn't so bad after all.

Two thirds through - damn, I can't put this down.

Epilogue - wow, what a good book.

Well, that's my mini-review. The full review goes something like this: someone recommended this first novel from a British writer to me and wasn't exactly sure how to describe it. It's part drama, part comedy, told from the perspective of an eleven year old girl. There's a lot of British slang and street vernacular in it, which is why it was hard to get into at first. the story centers on a girl in a coma who recounts the story of her troubled neighborhood and how a series of crises developed. In this neighborhood, a wild family (a father and his five wild daughters) torment everyone around them and comedy and tragedy ensues. This is not a children's book, even though it centers on children. But it says a lot about innocence and aspirations. At 300 pages, I read it in two quick readings and while I don't see it become an award winning book, I'm glad I

took the time to read it. The characters are rich, the drama tangible, and the ending emotional. If you're in the mood for something light, but effective, give it a try.

Serena.. Sery-ously? says

Non ero psicologicamente preparata a questo libro, perché mi aspettavo una storia un po' dura sì.. Ma non così. Quanta cattiveria, mi ha afferrato senza lasciarmi andare :(Nonostante mi sia piaciuto molto, sono stata più volta tentata di abbandonarlo perché ad un certo punto mi ha fatto quasi male fisicamente, ecco.

La cosa curiosa è che il libro che ho letto prima di questo, "mani calde", parlava anch'esso di un bambino in coma e del suo POV ma i romanzi non potrebbero essere più diversi: dove lì ho trovato speranza, tenerezza.. Qui dolore, cattiveria, odio.

I personaggi, tranne un paio di eccezioni, sono tutti stranamente negativi, a partire da Bob Oswald, pigro e indolente vicino di casa di Skunk (la protagonista, perché la mamma amava gli Skunk Anensie..), alcolizzato, violento e disoccupato che va avanti con la vendita di droga e la previdenza sociale; le sue cinque figlie, cattive, prepotenti e nel degrado più totale.. Broken stesso, che povera anima mi ha fatto sì una tenerezza allucinante, mi ha spezzato il cuore ma non posso perdonare :(

Il padre di Skunk, Archie e Cerys, la ragazza alla pari che si occupa della casa dopo che la madre se ne è andata di casa, mi hanno messo in uno stato di profondo disagio. Forse sono esagerata io, ma alcuni loro modi di agire e comportarsi proprio non li ho accettati.. Le parolacce che Cerys dice a Skunk, il modo in cui a volta le risponde in malomodo.. L'indifferenza di Archie, il modo in cui questi due bambini stanno PERENNEMENTE davanti alla Xbox.. Mamma che disagio!!

La sensazione sgradevole è cresciuta ancora di più perché il romanzo mi ha ricordato spesso "Il buio oltre la siepe": Archie come Atticus è avvocato, Skunk come Scout ha un fratello più grande e non ha la madre (Qui è scappata verso la bella vita, ma ci siamo!); Cerys è Calpurnia, Bob Oswald ricorda sgradevolmente Bob Ewell, così come l'accusa (infondata) di stupro delle loro figlie.. Non da ultimo, Boo Radley (ahh Boo. Quanti mi manci :(♥) e Broken.

Proprio per questi continui e chiari richiami non sono riuscita ad apprezzare fino in fondo i personaggi perché Atticus e Calpurnia.. Andiamo, c'è bisogno di descriverli? Il paragone non regge e mentre leggevo dei loro comportamenti continuavo a dire: "Atticus non avrebbe MAI fatto così".. "Calpurnia è dura, ma è buona e giusta"..

Il romanzo comunque si discosta molto dal libro di Harper Lee (E per fortuna, direi! Quel capolavoro è inavvicinabile) e mi è piaciuto soprattutto per lo stile dell'autore, decisamente promosso!!

Mi piace che abbia scelto di essere il narratore onnisciente che a volte annuncia qualcosa che accadrà più avanti e che spesso interagisce con i suoi personaggi.. e' una tecnica che apprezzo molto, soprattutto se si è in grado di sfruttarla.. E Daniel Clay (tra l'altro all'opera di esordio, bravo!) sembra proprio capace di farlo :)

La storia è un grande flashback perché il libro inizia con Skunk che parla dal suo coma e ci fa sospettare il peggio (nonostante ciò, io al finale proprio non ero pronta.. Terribile :(). Qui c'è una frase che forse non avrei messo perché un po' ha fatto capire troppe cose 'fondamentali'.. Però vabbé, niente di gravissimo, ecco :D

A volte il libro è leggermente confusionario e alcuni passaggi troppo repentini.. Ma vabbé, anche qui, poca cosa!!

Jennifer says

I have to say I enjoyed this book more than an average 3 star rating would allow and was impressed that "To Kill a Mockingbird" was author Daniel Clay's main inspiration for finishing this 'debut' novel (he'd written others that just weren't published).

What truly works is the third-person omniscient POV and then also getting snippets of young Skunk's POV as she floats in limbo between life and death while in a coma. The characters are well developed, even the ones you despise being the Oswald family, and the relationships between people as they grow over the year+ that this piece takes place is perfectly plausible especially as several of the characters are growing into puberty.

As someone who is trying to immerse themselves in the British lifestyle for her own work it helped me a lot to further realize that elements of British life aren't that off from the U.S. Those who rely on the Housing Association can be no better off than those on welfare having kid after kid to get a bigger check. Learning that you can't always get away from your problems due to financial problems or housing issues. And for Mr. Clay to get so deep into the "tween" psyche to have the fear of being beaten up in school dominate one's thoughts so heavily thrusts the readers into a world where you can understand all the actions taken.

I have to say that I can see why it was so important for the ending to be what it was to provide hope after being with characters that you become attached to for just over three hundred pages or so. I'd recommend, especially for anyone who is a fan of Harper Lee's "Mockingbird".

Sally Boocock says

When I started this book I didn't think I could finish it as it was a grim reminder of what modern life is or could be like but it gradually reeled me in until I couldn't put it down. It made me angry, it made me smile and it made me cry. It is ultimately about love in all its forms and what drives people to do what they do in the name of it. I defy you not to feel all emotions when reading it.

Teresa says

fabulous book, made me laugh, made me cry (especially at the end). I'm not usually a fan of modern British novels especially those with chav type characters but this novel really drew me in and in the end I even felt a bit sorry for the head of the Oswald family (evil incarnate!) This is a real roller coaster first novel, not for the faint hearted but I feel the denouement leaves the reader with some sort of hope for the future or maybe I'm too much of an optimist!

Guillaume Robidoux says

Wow. This was amazing. I was really looking forward to reading this book, but I had no idea what I was in store for. Let me start by saying that I've finished this book, and I still feel in the pit of my stomach that something horrible is going to happen. Yes, it's one of those books. Now, I realize that some people are

going to hate this book because a lot of the stuff that happens is a bit over the top, but to me it all seemed to be reasonable. Sure, I'd hope people don't deal with shit the way they do in here, but that's what made this book all the better. I also adored Daniel Clays style of writing. The way he was able to transition from characters in the same sentence was done is geniously, and his dialect was, from what little I know of England English, very authentic. It's a very emotional book, and it could be considered disturbing to some, but goddamn is it worth it. One of the best books I've ever read. Go and buy it. Now.

Heather says

Definitely not for the faint of heart, not only because of the copious profanity and painful bully scenes, but also because of the heart wrenching finale. If you take *To Kill a Mockingbird* (the main character's name is Skunk, her brother is named Jed, her friend is Dillon, and then there is Broken) and set it in modern day South London, mix in a little *Silence of the Lambs* and a little *Heavenly Bones*, then you get a pretty good idea of what this novel reads like. It is certainly very unique and it only gets better after the first 1/4 of the book.

Janet Collings says

Drawn in from the get go. This isn't the most comfortable of reads but incredibly satisfying. The characters are well drawn, flawed and completely believable. It reminded me of the sadness I felt reading the *Lovely Bones*. Sadness at the loss of innocence and the everyday failings of ordinary people. This book reminds us that people can be cruel and thoughtless and not everyone has the ability to deal with that as well as they might do. I couldn't put this book down and read it in one sitting. Extraordinary.

Kerri says

I LOVED THIS BOOK. I have a feeling though that I'm going to rave about this book and other people will pick it up and say "it was ok."

In a novel with no chapters, Daniel Clay introduces us to Skunk Cunningham, an innocent, curious, loveable young girl who might remind you of Scout Finch from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In fact, Clay actually acknowledge's the book in the end. Skunk (I know Seana, I know), witnesses her terrifying, bully of a neighbor, Bob Oswald attack her other 19-year old neighbor, Rick Buckley, for what seems like no reason. It is discovered that Oswald's daughter Susan had made up a story that she had slept with Rick Buckley in order to explain why she had birth control pills. The extremely overprotective Oswald accuses Buckley of rape, and Rick is then arrested. Even though charges are eventually dropped, the neighborhood becomes uncomfortable when Rick Buckley returns, as he refuses to leave his room and eventually becomes mentally unstable.

The character Skunk is curious about Rick and eventually starts calling him "Broken" Buckley. This story is sad, humorous, violent, and invokes strong emotions in the reader. You can't help but imagine Skunk as a cute younger sister. Clay did an amazing job in capturing her voice.

Its a rare occasion when I find myself getting angry in a book, and the way Clay describes the Oswald

family, you just can't help but hate them. This is a book you won't be able to put down, and if the book did have chapters, it would destroy the wonderful, poetic, flow that Clay has created. Readers of *The Lovely Bones* would also enjoy this book as well.

Great book. But to each his own!

Christine says

I first picked up *Broken* because of the cover art (always a sucker) and because it was compared to *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, one of my all-time favourite books.

High accolades. High hopes.

Thankfully, it all lived up to - and surpassed - the hype, catapulting *Broken* into one of my top-five favourite novels of all time.

From the first sentence through to the last, I was drawn into the lives of coma-bound Skunk and her family and neighbours. The world Daniel Clay created has all of my favourite elements: the gritty neighbourhood setting, the melancholy vibe, the engaging characters.

Oh, the characters. It's not only Broken Buckley who lives up to his nickname. Each one of the characters has their own personal struggles they need to work through in the only way they know how. They're all just doing their best and facing life's challenges to the best of their abilities with varying results. Whether it's the Oswald family of bullies verbally steamrolling anyone unfortunate enough to cross their path or the adults each trying to process their own complicated episodes of grief and sadness and longing, this book showcases the thin thread of what mentally holds us together. The ways in which we all affect each other in big and small ways. How bottling up and internalizing our struggles can literally break us.

This book is full of love, yearning, sadness, horror and hope, which is why it had me gasping, smiling and wiping away tears in equal measures. The author also performs one of the greatest sleights of hand a writer can perform: making us initially loathe the neighbours from hell whose personal reign of hatred torments anyone they encounter to feeling a brush of sympathy for them and their circumstances by the end.

While the structure of the novel has no chapters and hardly even any breaks, the story flows seamlessly from one character to the next without ever jarring. These typical transitions were never missed, mostly in part because I didn't want to put the book down.

I highly recommend you pick this one up and don't think you'll want to put it down either.

I would give this book a constellation of stars, but since Goodreads only allows up to five, that's what I'll have to settle for. Five bright burning stars.

Dolceluna says

“Broken”, spezzato. E’ una vita spezzata quella delle cinque sorelle Oswald, adolescenti bulle e viziate, che

vivono con un padre tossico e altro non hanno conosciuto che il linguaggio della violenza, della minaccia, della calunnia. E' una vita spezzata quella di Rick Buckley, che, timido e impacciato, viene accusato da una delle Oswald di averla violentata. E' una bugia, ovviamente. Ma l'ombra della vergogna nel quale la calunnia lo getta agli occhi del paese, a poco a poco lo induce alla pazzia e alla distruzione della sua famiglia. E' una vita spezzata quella di Skunk, una bambina di 10 anni, che dal suo letto d'ospedale dove è in coma (il perché lo sapremo solo alla fine) ci racconta, con uno sguardo lucido, disincantato e a tratti ironico, le vite spezzate di questi personaggi miserevoli che la circondano, nella loro grigia periferia della provincia inglese. Un buco di mondo rovinato, che potrebbe essere un qualsiasi altro buco di mondo contemporaneo. Di fatto, questo di Daniel Clay, è un capolavoro di letteratura contemporanea, un romanzo di vita potentissimo, struggente, triste e vero come le cose triste e vere dei giorni nostri. Nei personaggi che lo animano ho riconosciuto tutte le tipologie umane con cui mi è capitato (e mi capita) di avere a che fare nella mia realtà, dalla ragazzina bulla al preside omertoso passando per il giovane professore tanto umano e tanto altruista e la coppia in ansia per il futuro da costruire insieme, fra tradimenti e incertezze economiche. Tutte le specie umane che popolano la nostra vita di oggi, con le loro debolezze, con le loro paure, coi loro vizi, con una giustizia di fondo tradita, persa, "spezzata" per sempre. Eppure, alla fine, può anche vincere la vita. Un romanzo contemporaneo di una bellezza sbalorditiva. Allo stato attuale candidato come uno dei romanzi più belli (se non il più bello) fra quelli letti quest'anno.

Erin says

I picked this book up for \$4.00 at a used book store. The cover is what drew me in, I love it. Then, I read that it was inspired by 'To Kill a Mockingbird', one of my favorites. This is a classic case of 'don't judge a book by it's cover'. I actually want my \$4.00 back.

The synopsis made it sound like a pretty good book. A neighborhood mystery. I started reading it and saw that the main character and narrator was in a coma, that just intrigued me more. Sadly, that was the high point and that was only about 10 pages.

The book isn't structured at all. There are no chapters and it would switch stories without even starting a new paragraph. There was absolutely no flow to it.

The characters were interesting but everything else made it hard for me to care and really get into the book.

And don't even get me started on the fact that this was inspired by 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. This book is in no way comparable to that classic piece of American literature. The closest the author got to it was the names of the characters, some of them did coincide with 'Mockingbird' but that is it. 'Mockingbird' went deep into social issues and it had guts, drama and mystery. This had some mystery but not much. I had it figured out before I was half way through the book.

Broken is an unpleasant story that shows how violence only inspires more violence. It's not an enjoyable book at all.

taken from my blog; www.theultimatebooknook.blogspot.com

Anne says

I'd call this a modern-day 'To Kill A Mockingbird' - and I'm sure that Daniel Clay has based his story on Harper Lee's original novel. Set in a street in modern day Southampton and narrated by Skunk who is laying in a coma and lives with her brother Jed and lawyer single father Archie - the 'Broken' of the title is nineteen year old Rick Buckley who plunges into a spiral of madness after being falsely accused by one of the Oswald sisters. The Oswald family are brilliantly depicted - five tearaway girls with an oafish, beer swilling, dope smoking Father who lets them run riot but will defend them to the end.

As the Oswald family become more and more uncontrollable, the consequences of their actions spread throughout the whole street. The novel shows how one dysfunctional family can affected a whole community. We watch Broken slowly descend deeper and deeper into madness - we see how this affects his Mother and Father and how the system sadly fails him. We watch the effect the Oswald girls have on the other youngsters in the area - some of the bullying scence are horrific and very violent, but so emotional, you can feel the fear.

Skunk is such a real and likeable heroine - at the start of the book she is laying in a coma and narrates her story from there. The story is told in a very real and intelligent way, yet so easy to read and be drawn in by. It is often painful to read as you see the inevitable happening, yet cant do anything to stop it but you have to read on. There are very touching moments and also some laugh out load funny moments.

Each character is perfectly formed and rounded. I really found it hard to put this book down once I'd picked it up and hope that Daniel Clay will write more, and very soon.

El says

This is one messed up little book.

I'm going to say something here now that I wasn't sure about until I finished the book and read the author interview at the end, but that I think could have helped me enjoy the book more if I had realized it sooner: This book was inspired by *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I thought it was obvious throughout, but then I started thinking that maybe Clay was going to try to pass it off like it's nothing like Lee's novel, and that concept turned me off. I couldn't get over the connections; the characters' names, their relationships, and certain situations were all so apparent. Had I known from the beginning that Clay was inspired by and admitted to these comparisons, I wouldn't have felt like I was being cheated and maybe would have had a better appreciation straight off the bat.

If *To Kill a Mockingbird* took place in modern England today, and Atticus's name was Archie, Scout's name was Skunk, Jem's name was Jed, Calpurnia's name was Cerys, Dill's name was Dillon, the Ewell family was actually the Oswald family, and Boo Radley's name was Broken; and if Atticus and Calpurnia got it on together; and if... oh, you get the point. There are a lot of similarities.

This doesn't make this a bad book. It's like *To Kill a Mockingbird* written in British slang where the story of *TKaM* that everyone knows and loves goes completely supernova on your face. I mean, there's a lot of melodrama in this little book. A lot. I remember being a younger reader and reading John Irving's *The World According to Garp* and thinking at that time "Holy crap, that's a lot of drama!" Looking back I do believe that

Broken takes the cake when it comes to cramming in as much melodramatic tension in such a small space.

Broken (of the title) is actually a young man whose real name at one time used to be Rick Bradley. A few years before the story starts, the reader learns that one of the Oswald daughters told her father that Rick raped her and Rick got his ass beat by her dad. Bob Oswald beat Rick Bradley so badly, something inside Rick broke. He was never the same again. He was, for all intents and purposes, a bit insane. He became Broken.

But that all took place *before* the story even started! It was referred to in flashbacks and memories, it's just the back-story. The story itself has no end of additional violence, drama, drugs, alcohol, sex, lies, violence, some more violence, then a bit more violence. I purposely didn't look up anything about this book before I started to read because I wanted to be surprised. It was recommended to me by one of my GR friends, and that's all I needed to know. By the end of the book, I was blown away. Quite a bit disgusted and upset. But blown away too.

This is a powerful book, and one that will stick with me for a while. Don't be distracted by the *TKaM* similarities, because it will distract you from the book itself. Just read it and enjoy it. There's a powerful message in there if you take the time.

Miranda Sherman says

Skunk Cunningham was a bright, curious young girl who was full of energy. She spent most of her free time playing Xbox with her brother Jed and dreaming of her beloved teacher Mr. Jefferies. One afternoon while playing, Skunk and Jed witness a fight between their neighbors. Bob Oswald a loud, widowed biker guy who enjoyed loud music, drugs and drinking ran across the square and beat Rick Buckley nearly to death.

After the incident and a demeaning investigation including a physical exam down at the police station Rick Buckley lost his mind and was never quite the same.

Skunk's brother warned her from the beginning that not only was the Oswald girl's trouble and dangerous, but Rick Buckley was too, he was broken and out to get her.....If only Skunk had listened.

I really enjoyed this book. There was so much going on yet it all seemed to revolve or involve Skunk in some way. Though Skunk was not a trouble maker, trouble always seemed to find or chase her. There are several very violent and disturbing scenes in the book but they are very necessary for the story. Nearing the end of the book I thought I had the entire ending figured out. Daniel Clay is very good at throwing readers off with a few good curve balls.

After the story there is a short section called P.S where the author writes a bit about himself, the story and books that have inspired him throughout his life.

I highly recommend this book. It is very well written and keeps you engaged taunting you with "just one more page" The magnificent writing and descriptions enable a reader to picture the story while reading, Visualizing the neighborhood and characters so well. I hope to read more by Daniel Clay in the future.

Excellent Book!

Asgar Abbas says

Broken people, beautiful somewhat subtle message. Different writing. Love the ending.

Lisa Burgess says

Wow. Holy shit.

Ich hab erst die Verfilmung gesehen und war schon sehr gefesselt, aber, hallelujah, das Buch ist nochmal um ein Vielfaches heftiger. Einige Dinge sind anders und echt...brutaler.

Der Schreibstil mich unfassbar stark beeindruckt. Das Buch besitzt keine Kapitel und die ständigen Übergänge zwischen den verschiedenen Handlungssträngen sind fließend und so genial macht, sowas habe ich noch nie gelesen! Also ich kann es echt empfehlen.

Das Buch bedarf diverser Trigger-/Contentwarnungen, hier eine Auswahl:

R*pe, false r*pe accusations, mental health issues, domestic violence, violence, death

ivana18 says

Shocking!!!!

This book jars the readers minds and emotions with the series of violent and unexpected blows. It tells the intertwining stories of three families and it reminded me of the movie Crash. I loved that movie and I absolutely love this book. It made me wonder why do some people learn how to survive and some don't. Can a lamb learn how to fight off a lion?

Eleven year old Skunk Cunningham (love the name) is playing on the curb in front of her house (on Drummond Square in the suburbs of London), when Bob Oswald beats a 19 year old Rick Buckley to a pulp. Bob is a sociopathic single father of five equally sociopathic daughters (Saraya is the eldest, Saskia is the second eldest, then Susan, Sunrise and Sunset). The Oswalds are ruthless, they move in for the kill and do not look back, they leave death stern in their path....basically they are a family of predators.

One of sociopath's daughters, a 13 year old Susan, steals her teacher's birth control pills thinking that they could get her high. After realizing that taking those pills is no fun at all, she hides them under her bed and forgets all about them up until the day the sociopath-dad finds them.

Bob Oswald punched the wall beside Susan's head. She screamed and fell down on the floor. Bob leaned down above her and pressed his bleeding fist into her face.

"I want a name, Susan. You're gonna give me a name. If you don't give me a name, I'm gonna count to ten, and if I've not got a name by the time I've counted to ten, I'll be punching you, not the fucking wall. You get me? I don't want to. You're my daughter. I love you. I'm out to protect you. But if you don't help me protect you, I'll break every bone in your body. Now give me the dumb fucker's name."

This guy should really write a parenting book.

The sociopath-dad doesn't believe her when she says that she's not having sex, so Susan tries to save her own ass by claiming that the guy she's sexing is Rick Buckley....hence the beating.

A large portion of the book is narrated by Skunk as she becomes fixated upon Rick and the ordeal the guy

goes through. Rick suffers a mental breakdown and becomes a ghost of a man he used to be. Skunk calls him "Broken Buckley". Her 11 year old innocent mind is trying to figure out what is happening to him and why is he "broken", and why isn't he getting better.

But "Broken Buckley" is not the only one in this book who's broken. Nearly every character is either broken or well on his way to be.

Skunk's dad, Cunningham's au-pair, Skunk's favorite teacher, Skunk's first boyfriend, the Buckleys, the Oswalds....

Daniel Clay wrote a shocking and very depressing book that will make you want to shout from the roof tops: "life sucks!!!!"

You know that saying "Shit happens"? Well, there are steaming shit piles all over Drummond Square. There are so many shitty things happening that at one point it almost got too much for me....I just couldn't believe that, in this day and age, certain things could happen (view spoiler) That there is probably the reason some readers didn't like the book.

Despite the melodrama, this is a great book. It was inspired by Harper Lee's classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, so if you liked Lee's book you might be interested to see if this is just a pale shadow of that book, or is it really a brilliantly written homage to Lee's classic.
