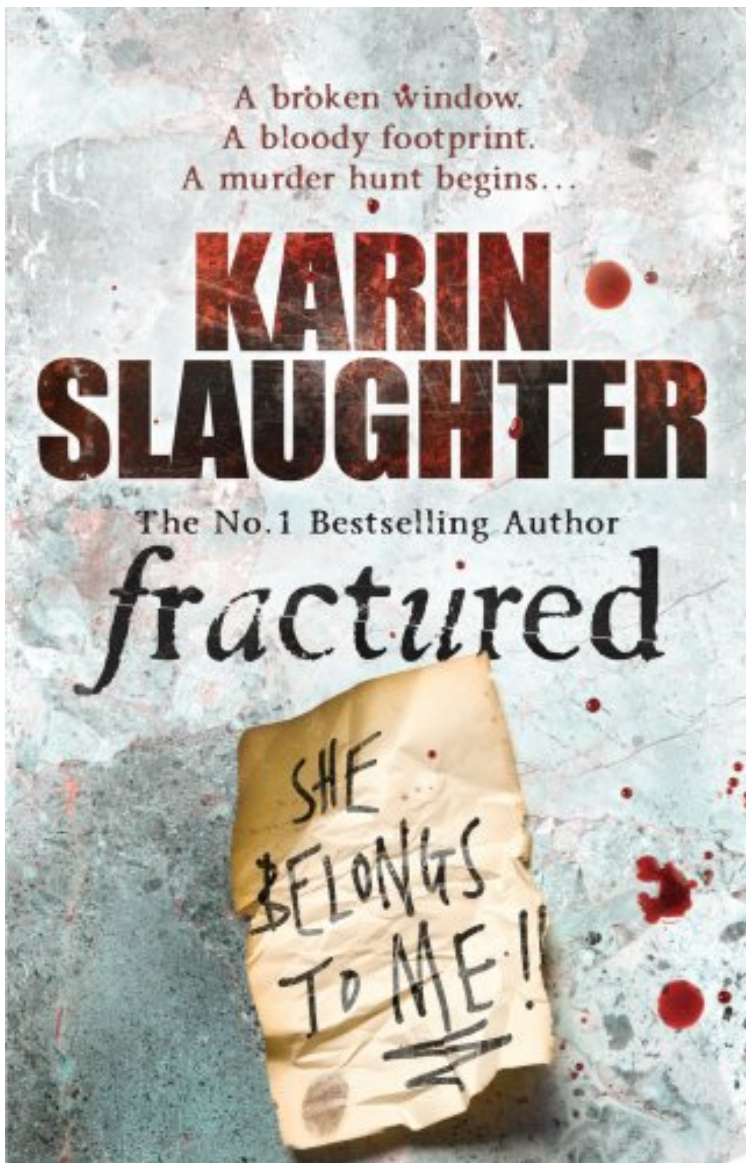


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Fractured: (Will Trent Series Book 2)



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Description : Description du produitThe breathtaking new thriller from the Number One bestselling author of Triptych.

Prsentation de l'diteurThe second Will Trent novel, from the No. 1 Bestseller.When Atlanta housewife Abigail Campano comes home unexpectedly one afternoon, she walks into a nightmare. A broken window, a bloody footprint on the stairs and, most devastating of all, the horrifying sight of her teenage daughter lying dead on the landing, a man standing over her with a bloody knife. The struggle which follows changes Abigail's life forever.When the local police make a misjudgement which not only threatens the investigation but places a young girl's life in danger, the case is handed over to Special Agent Will Trent of the Criminal Apprehension Team - paired with detective Faith Mitchell, a woman who resents him from their first

meeting. But in the relentless heat of a Georgia summer, Will and Faith realise that they must work together to find the brutal killer who has targeted one of Atlanta's wealthiest, most privileged communities - before it's too late...ExtraitChapter OneWill Trent stared out the window of the car as he listened to his boss yell into her cell phone. Not that Amanda Wagner ever really raised her voice, but she had a certain edge to her tone that had caused more than one of her agents to burst into tears and walk off an active investigation no mean feat considering the majority of her subordinates at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation were men. Were at she craned her neck, squinting at the street sign the Prado and Seventeenth. Amanda paused. Perhaps you could look up the information on your computer? She shook her head, obviously not liking what she was hearing. Will tried, Maybe we should keep driving around? We might find Amanda covered her eyes with her hand. She whispered into the phone, How long until the server is back up? The answer caused her to breathe out a heavy, pronounced sigh. Will indicated the screen dominating the middle of the wood-lined dashboard. The Lexus had more bells and whistles than a clown's hat. Dont you have GPS? She dropped her hand, considering his question, then began fiddling with some knobs on the dashboard. The screen didnt change, but the air-conditioning whirred higher. Will chuckled, and she cut him off with a nasty look, suggesting, Maybe while were waiting for Caroline to find a street map, you can get the owners manual out of the glove box and read the directions for me. Will tried the latch, but it was locked. He thought this pretty much summed up his relationship with Amanda Wagner. She often sent him the way of locked doors and expected him to find his way around them. Will liked a good puzzle as much as the next man, but just once, it would have been nice to have Amanda hand him the key. Or maybe not. Will had never been good at asking for help especially from someone like Amanda, who seemed to keep a running list in her head of people who owed her favors. He looked out the window as she berated her secretary for not keeping a street map on her person at all times. Will had been born and raised in Atlanta, but didnt often find himself in Ansley Park. He knew that it was one of the city's oldest and wealthiest neighborhoods, where over a century ago, lawyers, doctors and bankers had built their enviable estates so that future lawyers, doctors and bankers could live as they did safely cloistered in the middle of one of the most violent metropolitan cities this side of the Mason-Dixon. The only thing that had changed over the years was that the black women pushing white babies in strollers were better compensated these days. With its twisting turns and roundabouts, Ansley seemed designed to confuse, if not discourage, visitors. Most of the streets were tree-lined, broad avenues with the houses tucked up on hills to better look down on the world. Densely forested parks with walking trails and swing sets were everywhere. Some of the walkways were still the original cobblestone. Though all the homes were architecturally different, there was a certain uniformity to their crisply painted exteriors and professionally landscaped lawns. Will guessed this was because even a fixer-upper started at the one million mark. Unlike his own Poncey-Highland neighborhood, which was less than six miles from here, there were no rainbow-colored houses or methadone clinics in Ansley. On the street, Will watched a jogger stop to stretch and surreptitiously check out Amandas Lexus. According to the news this morning, there was a code-red smog alert in effect, advising people not to breathe the outside air unless they absolutely had to. No one seemed to be taking that to heart, even as the temperature inched past the one hundred mark. Will had seen at least five joggers since theyd entered Ansley Park. All were women and all so far had fit the stereotype of the perky, perfect soccer mom with their Pilates-toned bodies and bouncy ponytails. The Lexus was parked at the bottom of what seemed to be a popular hill, the street behind them lined with tall oaks that cast the pavement into shadow. All of the runners had slowed to look at the car. This wasnt the type of neighborhood where a man and a woman could sit in a parked vehicle for very long without someone calling the police. Of course, this wasnt the kind of neighborhood where teenage girls were brutally raped and murdered in their own homes, either. He glanced back at Amanda, who was holding the phone to her ear so tightly it looked as if she might snap the plastic in two. She was an attractive woman if you never heard her speak or had to work for her or sat in a car with her for any length of time. She had to be in her early sixties by now. When Will had first started at the GBI over ten years ago, Amandas hair had been more pepper than salt, but that had changed drastically over the last few months. He didnt know if this was because of something in her personal life or an inability to get an appointment with her hairdresser, but she had lately begun showing her years. Amanda started pressing buttons on the console again, obviously trying to work the GPS. The radio came on and she quickly turned it off again, but not before Will caught the opening notes of a swing band. She muttered something under her breath and pressed another button, which caused Wills window to slide down. He felt a blast of hot air like someone had opened an oven door. In the side mirror, he saw a jogger at the top of the hill, the leaves on the dogwoods stirring in the breeze. Amanda gave up on the electronics. This

is ridiculous. Were the top investigatory arm in the state and we cant even find the God damn crime scene. Will turned around, his seat belt straining against his shoulder as he looked up the hill. Amanda asked,

What are you doing? That way, he said, pointing behind them. The limbs of the trees overhead were intertwined, casting the street in a dusklike darkness. There was no breeze this time of year, just relentless heat. What he had seen was not rustling leaves but the blue lights of a police cruiser bouncing off the shadows. Amanda gave another heavy sigh as she put the car into gear and started a U-turn. Without warning, she slammed on the brakes, her arm shooting out in front of Will as if she could stop him from going through the windshield. A large white van blared its horn as it sped by, the driver shaking his fist, mouthing obscenities. Channel Five, Will said, recognizing the local news stations logo on the side of the van. Theyre almost as late as we are, Amanda commented, following the news van up the hill. She took a right, coming on a lone police cruiser blocking the next left. A smattering of reporters was already at the scene, representing all the local stations as well as CNN, which had their world headquarters a few miles up the road. A woman strangling the man who had killed her daughter would be big news in any part of the world, but the fact that the daughter was white, that the parents were wealthy and the family was one of the citys most influential gave it an almost giddy, scandalous tinge. Somewhere in New York City, a Lifetime movie executive was drooling into her BlackBerry. Amanda pulled out her badge and waved it at the cop as she rolled past the blockade. There were more police cruisers up ahead along with a couple of ambulances.

The doors were open, the beds empty. Paramedics stood around smoking. The hunter green BMW X5 parked in front of the house seemed out of place among the emergency vehicles, but the gigantic SUV made Will wonder where the coroners van was. He wouldnt be surprised if the medical examiner had gotten lost, too. Ansley was not a neighborhood well known to someone earning a civil servants salary. Amanda put the car into reverse to parallel park between two of the cruisers. The park sensor controls started beeping as she tapped on the gas. Dont dawdle in there, Will. Were not working this case unless were taking it over. Will had heard some variation on this same theme at least twice since they had left city hall. The dead girls grandfather, Hoyt Bentley, was a billionaire developer who had made his share of enemies over the years. Depending on who you talked to, Bentley was either a scion of the city or a crony from way back, the sort of moneyed crook who made things happen behind the scenes without ever getting his hands dirty. Whichever version of the mans story was true, he had deep enough pockets to buy his share of political friends. Bentley had made one phone call to the governor, who had reached out to the director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, who had in turn assigned Amanda the task of looking into the murder. If the killing had any markings of a professional hit or hinted at something deeper than a simple assault and burglary gone wrong, then Amanda would make a phone call and snatch the case away from the Atlanta Police Department faster than a toddler taking back a favorite toy. If this was just a random, everyday tragedy, then she would probably leave the explanations to Will while she toodled back to city hall in her fancy car. Amanda put the gear into drive and inched forward. The gap between the beeps got furiously short as she edged closer to the police car. If Bentleys got someone mad enough to kill his granddaughter, this case goes to a whole new level. She sounded almost hopeful at the prospect. Will understood her excitement breaking this kind of case would be yet another feather in Amandas cap but Will hoped he never got to the point where he saw the death of a teenage girl as a career stepping-stone. Though he wasnt sure what he should think of the dead man, either. He was a murderer, but he was also a victim. Considering Georgias prodeath penalty stance, did it really matter that he had been strangled here in Ansley Park rather than strapped to a gurney and given a lethal injection at Coastal State Prison? Will opened the door before Amanda put the car into park. The hot air hit him like a punch to the gut, his lungs temporarily straining in his chest. Then the humidity took over, and he wondered if this was what it felt like to have tuberculosis. Still, he put on his suit jacket, covering the paddle holster clipped to the back of his belt. Not for the first time, Will questioned the sanity of wearing a three-piece suit in the middle of August. Amanda seemed untouched by the heat as she joined Will. A group of uniformed policemen stood clustered at the bottom of the driveway, watching them walk across the street. Recognition dawned in their eyes, and Amanda warned Will, I dont have to tell you that youre not exactly welcome by the Atlanta Police Department right now. No, Will agreed. One of the cops in the circle made a point of spitting on the ground as they passed by. Another one settled on a more subtle raised middle finger. Will plastered a smile on his face and gave the officers a big thumbs-up to let them all know there were no hard feelings. From her first day in office, Atlantas mayor had pledged to weed out the corruption that ran unchecked during her predecessors reign. Over the last few years, she had been working closely with the GBI to open cases against the most blatant offenders. Amanda had graciously volunteered Will to go into the

lions den. Six months ago, he had closed an investigation that had resulted in the firing of six Atlanta police detectives and forced the early retirement of one of the city's highest-ranking officers. The cases were good; the cops were skimming cash off of narcotics busts but nobody liked a stranger cleaning their house, and Will had not exactly made friends during the course of his investigation. Amanda had gotten a promotion out of it. Will had been turned into a pariah. He ignored the hissed asshole aimed at his back, trying to focus on the crime at hand as they walked up the curving driveway. The yard was brimming with all kinds of exotic-looking flowers that Will was hard-pressed to name. The house itself was enormous, stately columns holding up a second floor balcony, a winding set of granite stairs leading to the front doors. Except for the smattering of surly cops marring the scene, it was an impressive estate. Trent, someone called, and he saw Detective Leo Donnelly making his way down the front steps. Leo was a short man, at least a full foot less than Will's six-three. His gait had taken on an almost Columbo-like shuffle since they'd last worked together. The effect was that of an agitated monkey. What the fuck are you doing here? Will indicated the cameras, offering Leo the most believable explanation. Everybody knew the FBI would throw a baby into the Chattahoochee if it meant getting on the nightly news. He told the detective, This is my boss, Dr. Wagner. Hey, Leo said, tossing her a nod before turning back to Will. How's Angie doing? Were engaged. Will felt Amanda's scrutiny focus on him with a cold intensity. He tried to deflect, indicating the open doorway with a nod of his head. What've we got here? A shitload of hate for you, my friend. Leo took out a cigarette and lit it. You better watch your back. Amanda asked, Is the mother still inside? First door on the left, Leo answered. My partners in there with her. Gentlemen, if you'll excuse me. Amanda dismissed Leo the way she might a servant. The look she gave Will wasn't that much more pleasant. Leo exhaled a line of smoke as he watched her go up the stairs. Puts a chill on things, don't she? Like fucking dry ice. Will defended her automatically, in that sort of way that you defend a useless uncle or slutty sister when someone outside of the family attacks them. Amanda is one of the best cops I've ever worked with. From Publishers Weekly Starred . At the start of bestseller Slaughter's heart-pounding sequel to 2006's Triptych, wealthy housewife Abigail Campano returns home one day to Atlanta's posh Ansley Park neighborhood to find a dead girl in the mansion's upstairs hallway, the apparent killer nearby. Thinking that the girl is her teenage daughter, Emma, the distraught Abby kills the alleged attacker only to realize that the murdered girl is not Emma, but Emma's friend, Kayla Alexander. Agent Will Trent of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation soon determines that he has a murder and kidnapping on his hands. Paired with Det. Faith Mitchell, Trent scrambles to put the pieces together and find Emma before it's too late. Slaughter brings the same raw energy and brutal violence that distinguishes her Grant County series (Beyond Reach, etc.) to this new series with chilling results, while Trent and Mitchell, a pair of complex and deeply flawed heroes, will leave fans clamoring for the next installment. (July) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.