

The Tin God by Chris Nickson

4 stars

Excellent historical mystery crime novel highlighting restrictions placed on women by law.

Tom Harper is a police superintendent in Leeds in the late 1800s. His wife Annabelle would be a powerful politician today. However, in 1897 all she can do along with six other women is run for the city of Leeds Board of Poor Law Guardians. Tom and his wife have a good relationship of understanding and love and they have a daughter Mary.

The women face enormous pressure in these prejudiced oppressive times. When they fight for their rights, they draw attention to themselves from men who do not approve of women's rights. Some men are more dangerous and determined to put an end to any women's rights at all. The threats start with letters warning the women to stop this practice and go back to being in their place - at home.

Once the threats take the shape of a bomb and lives being threatened, Tom needs his skills as a policeman to protect his wife and her team. His investigative abilities also have to be used to find the perpetrator because the hall's caretaker was killed in the bomb blast. Fortunately there is some evidence left in the aftermath that he can use for his investigation.

As Tom continues his investigation, the threats develop and become more frightening including threats of rape and death. It gets worse when Tom Harper's daughter Mary is also under grave danger. Tom's entire team gets involved with a greater sense of urgency to find the perpetrator they believe is a well-educated man. As this 'war' on women's rights intensifies, one of the women's husband is killed.

In spite of this, Annabelle whose character is built up very well, continues her speeches and work. Harper's character is of a man who perseveres under great pressure also builds up consistently and exponentially as the novel unfolds. The characters are excellent and their portrayal assists to understand that time in history.

An excellent historical crime novel including the development of women's rights.

BonnieK

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.