



The Breaking Point

Jefferson Bass

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Past, present, and future collide to throw respected forensic anthropologist Bill Brockton's successful, secure life into devastating turmoil in this poignant novel in the New York Times bestselling Body Farm mystery series

It's been ten years since Dr. Bill Brockton created the Body Farm—the world's first postmortem research facility dedicated to advancing the frontiers of forensic science—and the researcher is at the pinnacle of his career. Under his leadership, the University of Tennessee's forensic anthropology program has become the most prominent in the world, and Brockton's skills and knowledge are in high demand among top law enforcement. Calling him in for a number of high profile cases, the FBI now wants him to identify the charred remains of a maverick millionaire, killed in a fiery plane crash.

But a storm is about to hit Brockton with cataclysmic force. First, his identification of the crash victim is called into question. Then he receives a threatening message from the serial killer who attempted to murder the scientist and his family a decade ago. And from Brockton's beloved wife Kathleen—his lodestone and his source of security—he gets the most shocking news of all. Will Brockton be able to weather this deluge . . . or has he finally reached the breaking point?

The Breaking Point Details

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Author : Jefferson Bass

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From Reader Review The Breaking Point for online ebook

Carol Sandford says

Another great tale from Jefferson Bass. Threw me a bit as it was focused on Dr B's wife who had died years before but was very much alive - for a while - in this book. Good to read about his past though.

Jim says

The ninth 'body farm' novel from the writing team known as Jefferson Bass, (Jon Jefferson- Dr. Bill Bass) is another gem from this series. "The Body Farm", proves to be a heart wrenching tale of greed, philanthropy and death. The nationally well respected forensic anthropologist Dr. Bill Brockton is summoned once again by the FBI to help identify the remains of a millionaire who crashed his plane into the mountains near San Diego. Brockton suffers from an incurable and mostly devastating malady known as Meniere's Disease. Meniere's Disease is vertigo running wild as the inner ear is at war with itself. Brockton runs the anthropology department at the U. of Tennessee. For this read Brockton's Meniere's is in a 'stable' place and episode free. Set in 2004 this prequel is an action packed suspense thriller. Having read most of the previous body farm books I knew this plot would be strong. Jefferson Bass weaves a jigsaw puzzle of events that push Bill Brockton to his wit's end. Confronting an angry widow along the FBI brass who suddenly turn on him, Brockton must lean on wife Kathleen heavily. However Kathleen is having some medical issues that make her push away Bill to some degree. When Bill's beloved body farm gets attacked from a local news crew who seem angry about veterans unclaimed bodies as subjects in the body farm the university and town begin to turn on Bill. Seemingly Bill Brockton is forced to confront alligators at every turn. While walling himself off in his lab under the U. of Tennessee football stadium Brockton fights to make sense of the dilemmas he embroiled in. The well scripted plot along with Jefferson Bass's unique cast of characters make for an incredible read. I'd have to admit I didn't see the ending coming. It's nice to be wrapped up into a suspense thriller one is not sure how ending is going to play out. (No cheating and reading last chapter !). I'm giving, "The Breaking Point", four stars out of a possible five stars. I was unable to give this one five stars due to Brockton's Meniere's Disease. Having suffered many years with Meniere's I chuckled when Brockton flew around in circles, up, down, and sideways in a helicopter. Also, working on a cliff at high altitudes with no side effects from his Meniere's is not too likely. Most Meniere's patients only have very short 'stable' periods. Wicked head movement is the number one key to setting off Meniere's. When the dizzy hits it's all downhill for days or weeks. However, I did thoroughly this yarn. I'd highly recommend all of the body farm books from Jefferson Bass. "The Breaking Point" being a prequel is an excellent book in the series to start with. Be sure to check out this excellent series. Jefferson Bass craft some really good suspense thrillers. Check it out !

Pamela says

This was a great story. Not only in terms of the mystery, but also in terms of the life of the main character. Expressions of love and compassion were common in his marriage. It all serves to make him more human, to my way of thinking. This enrichment is a very welcome aspect of this novel.

Ellen says

The Breaking Point by Jefferson Bass.

This did not start off as I had expected in comparison to other books I've read in the body farm series. It did not capture my attention until well past half the book.

The the depth of uncovering the true identity of a body found in a plane crash and why it was being kept a mystery comes to light. Dr. Brockton is the chief investigator who finds even his body farm being brought into question. Threatening messages ensue as well as Brockton's credibility is hit from all sides.

The worst possible news hits home like a ton of bricks and saps the very strength from his existence.

The wait is over as we near the last 3 rd of the story. The concealed comes to the surface and all was not as we had been led to believe. It was worth the wait.

Aisling says

This is a great book if you like forensic type books. Most people reading this book do, as it's the 11th or so in the series about the "Body Farm" in Tennessee. Bad puns aside (and the first three chapters or so I thought they bordered on annoying), this book is great reading. It's dense and satisfying. Well plotted, likeable characters and lots of real information to satisfy those who love learning when they read.

Vickie says

Exhaustingly good. Poor Dr. Brockton is having a rough time of pretty much everything. His life, life's work, investigative abilities, everything he holds dear is now in turmoil. He begins questioning his place in the world and why everything is happening to him. And I think that's what I liked most about the book. The mystery was very good, but seeing the main character of a popular series be as human as Bill Brockton was during a good portion of the story, was superb. I alternated between wanting to smack him and wanting to hug him. The reader can empathize with Dr. Brockton as I think everyone has had some turmoil of some kind and can see what he's going through. How it sometimes seems one is being bombarded with more than can be handled.

I liked this one quite a lot and made me remember why I like this series so much.

Definitely recommend.

Dee says

Two-haiku review:

Good guy's plane crashes

Dr. Bill helps ID him

But then there's questions

Absolutely loved
Series better and better
Really tore my heart

Brenda says

Having read all the previous Body Farm books (except for #7 which I didn't finish), I was afraid this one might bore me. Indeed, after I read Chapter 11, I thought about giving up. There were two or three subsequent things that struck me as odd as well, but I will not spoil the book for anyone. However, I continued on. Eventually, the pace picked up, a personal upheaval for Dr. Brockton was sensitively dealt with, and the investigation came to a conclusion. Not an excellent book, but it was satisfying and I'm glad I read it.

John Cassian says

This book is a strange set of seeming contradictions. First off, there are vast tonal discrepancies between the sections. I know "Jefferson Bass" is a writing team, but it feels as though parts 1&3 were written by one author and part 2 by another author. It's truly bizarre.

Most frustratingly, part 1 -- all 175 pages of it -- is basically completely pointless. You could have completely cut part 1 from the book and not missed anything. You could have summed it up in one paragraph -- a page max -- and moved on. By showing all that boring detail rather than simply alluding to it in later sections, all sense of drama and mystery was removed from the story. I'd rather ask questions like "what happened" and "how did that go down" than know all the answers at the beginning and be left with no sense of mystery. There is also no drama or conflict in part one. It's like a journalistic account.....that just ends with a thud and a lack of drama.

Part 2 was the best part of the story, but also the sloppiest. It was all over the place in terms of story, with multiple useless plot threads that get wrapped up by single sentences in the denouement. Since they were useless, why were the plot threads in the book? Why waste our time with a serial killer who has no impact on the plot or the main character? Just for the Job piling-on reference? No thanks.

The strongest part of the book was the main character struggling with the revelation of his wife's cancer in part 2. It felt real and emotional -- and like a different author from part 1 -- but then that storyline, too, simply ends with a thud. Not only did the cancer storyline -- dramatic as it was -- not feel like it belonged in a mystery-thriller, but it ended so suddenly and unsatisfactorily that I was left disappointed. Yes, I realize that real-life pain and death are sudden and unsatisfying, but this is fiction.

Part 3 resumes the journalistic matter-of-fact tone, with no emotion and the main character seemingly having gotten over his wife's death without a care in the world. The ending was ridiculous and unsatisfying, and I felt almost offended that the 50-year old doctor seems destined to bang his 20-year old grad student now that his wife is dead. It felt almost like he was just waiting for a younger woman.

Overall, this felt like a poor episode of the TV show "Bones," with much worse dialogue, plotting and character interactions. Oh yeah, and what was with the opening few chapters switching back and forth

between third person and first person? That was super distracting and pulled me out of the story on multiple occasions.

Cindy says

Like the series and characters - well narrated, well plotted and recommended!

Matt says

Jefferson Bass returns with a throwback novel that hold the thrills to which series fans are accustomed as it further educates all about the wonders of forensic anthropology. After celebrating his 30th wedding anniversary, Dr. Bill Brockton, creator of the Body Farm, is summoned by the FBI and sent to the outskirts of San Diego. After bidding goodbye to his wife, Kathleen, Brockton heads west where he's asked to identify the remains of a well-known philanthropist, whose small plane crashed on a routine flight. As Brockton heads up the difficult identification of a body having been through tremendous force during the crash, media inquiries begin to cast the spotlight on the FBI and NTSB, demanding the results be made public. Brockton's discoveries lead to a positive identification, though it's rushed by those in power, which he delivers as the inter-Agency politics heat up. Talk of a drug delivery angle emerge as Brockton leaves the scene and heads back to the University of Tennessee and his loving wife, in the heart of Knoxville. Brockton's return is anything but calm as a local reporter begins poking around the premise of the Body Farm and asks difficult questions regarding the humane treatment of the bodies on the premises. These inquiries succeed in getting local politicians to wonder about the need for the Farm and threats of massive funding cuts leave the University scrambling. If that were not enough, a serial killer from his past has Brockton worried for his life, as well as that of Kathleen. When Kathleen delivers her own news, it is too much for Brockton to handle and he begins a swift mental and physical unravelling. With the case in San Diego blowing up and proving Brockton was completely wrong, he must face the music while juggling everything else and make it right, or face a permanent strain between himself and the Bureau. A wonderful story that fills gaps in the Bill Brockton narrative, entertaining as it teaches the reader more about the wonders of forensic anthropology.

When I began this novel, I could not wrap my head around why it had to be set in 2004 and not the current day. The more I read and using my powers of memory (this is not the only series I read, so I had to pull crumbs from past novels to recollect how things played out) I realised on ingenious Bass was in setting the novel in this time period. Much of Brockton's growth as a character takes place in this time period and this novel illustrates that better than any of the others. Kathleen and her struggles, as well as the constant queries about the necessity for the Farm are not lost on the attentive reader. With other crumbs useful for the novels set in the present day, Bass treats the reader to a thoroughly exciting and jam-packed novel. Perhaps too jam-packed, as some storylines fall silent in order to keep the book under 500 pages. If I could offer one suggestion, choose two storylines and focus on them. Write an additional novel down the road to return to the issues and add to the creation. And for God's sake, don't make us wait so long the next time for new material.

Kudos, Messrs. Jefferson and Bass for this wonderful novel and the ideas woven therein. I am so pleased to have taken the time to read it and hope more ideas make their way to the publisher soon.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:

Vicky says

Jefferson Bass' Body Farm Series is one of my favorite series, so I have really been looking forward to this latest release of *Breaking Point*. This novel is a prequel to the series and follows in the footsteps from the previously released novel, *Cut to the Bone*. It begins with Dr. William Brockton, founder of the Body Farm, investigating a plane crash south of San Diego involving a well-known humanitarian, Richard Janus. At first it seemed just a matter of recovering the body and determining the cause of the accident, but as the excavation continued it becomes apparent that something more sinister was taking place. After the excavation, it seemed that Brockton's contribution to the investigation was complete but then information came about that his findings were wrong and his career and the body farm were on the line. Brockton's luck turned from bad to worse as a series of events begin to take place that pushes Brockton to the edge of his own sanity.

I have mixed feelings about *Breaking Point*. The first half of the novel focused totally on excavating the crash site which became rather tedious. Unless you really wanted to know all the intricate details in the slow progression of excavating a crime scene, then I think you will find it a bit boring. However, for the second half of the novel, the drama of the story escalates as Brockton must deal with both professional as well as personal hardships and at the same time try to solve a perplexing murder which does make for an exciting read.

With the ending, it becomes apparent that the series has come full circle which may give a hint that the next in the series will take off from where *The Inquisitor's Key* ended. For those of you that have not read the whole series in order, some aspects of this novel may be confusing. *Cut to the Bone* followed with *Breaking Point* are prequels, the rest of the series then takes off with *Carved in Bone* with the rest of the series ending with *The Inquisitor's Key*. So with the exception of a slow start, *Breaking Point* won't disappoint particularly if you are a fan of the series.

I received my copy of *Breaking Point* through a Goodreads Giveaway.

If you are interested in learning more about the Body Farm Series check it out on my blog **A-Thrill-A-Week**

Kathleen (Kat) Smith says

Dr. Bill Brockton heads up the University of Tennessee's Anthropology Research Facility known by the media, press, law enforcement and others simply as the Body Farm. Taking donations of bodies that are unclaimed or donated, Dr. Brockton has been creating a way to help police define more detailed analysis of body decomposition to aid in murders through the research he conducts at the Body Farm. He even helps train law enforcement to know what to look for in determining things in advancing the frontiers of forensic science by looking at the types of insects found on the body to help determine details towards investigation of a murder victim.

Now the FBI have called Dr. Brockton in to help with a plane crash of well known millionaire who was killed in the crash in the mountains of San Diego county. What seems like a cut and dry investigation begins to get complicated when the wife of the victim shows up to aid in the search as well as the news media who want answers yesterday. But going through the fiery remains of a small plane and hoping to discover any human remains will be beyond challenging based on the devastation of the fire at the crash scene. Time is running out quickly in regards to identifying who was on the plane and only Dr. Brockton can provide those answers as the leading expert in his field. But will it be as simple as identifying some bone fragments and teeth without any DNA to back it up?

I received *The Breaking Point* by Jefferson Bass compliments of William Morrow, a division of Harper Collins Publishers for my honest review. I did not receive any monetary compensation for a favorable review and the opinions contained here are strictly my own. For fans of CSI or Criminal Minds, you will definitely LOVE the Body Farm series of novels. It shows how there is more to criminal investigations than we give our law enforcement credit for. What happens when they get it wrong based on the evidence they do have? You're about to find out in this novel as Dr. Brockton has some explaining to do of his own when his expert testimony uncovers something he didn't see and now a serial killer from his past is vowing revenge on his family even though he remains locked up in prison. It is a nail-biter all the way to the climatic ending in this novel. Well worth 4.5 out of 5 stars in my opinion. It does contain some profanity which might offend some readers but overall the writing is superb and just what you would expect in a murder mystery suspense novel. This is the 9th book in the Body Farm Series.

Teresa Crawford says

If I hadn't been so confused at first, I think I would have enjoyed this book more and given it a 4 1/2 or 5! I did not read the summary on this book as I don't usually do that on any book, actually though I think if I had it wouldn't have really helped me. I kept asking myself, "hadn't I read that Dr. Brockton's wife passed away already?" This is really bugged me and my mind kept wondering to the other books in the series. I think if I had known ahead of time that this book was taking a step back and giving us some information that we had not been told about Dr. Brockton's personal life before then my mind would have been able to stay with *The Breaking Point* instead of wondering if I had somehow missed something.

That being said, I love the mystery/who-dun-it part of this book, it really made you wonder. I really don't like bugs, but I find it very *fascinating* how bugs can actually help solve a crime: "Bad guys lie through their teeth. But bugs?" I pointed to the bloated face and the telltale maggots. "You can always believe them. Whatever they tell you, it's the truth."

Mason says

Author Jefferson Bass takes you on a roller coaster ride of emotions and suspense in the latest installment of the Body Farm series, *THE BREAKING POINT*.

Narrator Tom Stechschulte does a wonderful job giving voices to the numerous characters. His inflections and varied mannerisms keeps listeners on the edge of their seat with anticipation. His pace matches the story's emotions and heightened the suspense.

Dr. Bill Brockton is seemingly hit from all sides. The forensic anthropologist is called in to help identify the charred remains of a wealthy philanthropist killed in a plane crash. Brock's trouble begins when his identification of the crash victim is called into question. Following that he receives a threatening message from a serial killer who tried to kill him and his family a decade before. His handling of bodies donated to his Body Farm – the world's first postmortem research facility – is challenged. The final blow is the shocking news he receives from his beloved wife, Kathleen.

Amid the hardship Brock tries to find answers and solve problems before he reaches the breaking point.

The author quickly draws readers/listeners into the plight his protagonist is facing. He weaves a tale of suspense, frustration and despair.

The characters are well-developed, likable and extremely realistic. The emotional entanglement of the main characters is gripping and adds another level to the story. The author blends professional and personal calamities resulting in heart-wrenching moments.

This is the ninth installment in the series, but readers/listeners won't be left in the dark by unanswered questions from hints of prior stories. **THE BREAKING POINT** will hold you spellbound with the combination of forensic science, intriguing mystery, and personal tribulations.

FTC Full Disclosure – A copy of this audio book was sent to me by the publisher in hopes I would review it. However, receiving the complimentary copy did not influence my review. The thoughts are completely my own and given honestly and freely.
