
Cosas que brillan cuando están rotas (Things That Shine When They Are Broken)

This is a work of fiction based on a real-life event – the terrorist bombings that took place in Madrid on 11 March 2004, which resulted in the death of 192 people. It is part reportage, part emotional response to the horrific events, and part depiction of a functional but unhappy family unit and a faltering marriage.

The protagonist, Eva, is a newspaper reporter. In the days following the attacks, she is at the forefront of the action, on the streets and in the hospitals and morgues, eventually managing to secure an exclusive interview with the mother of the two brothers charged with the attacks. As well as describing the chaos in Madrid during that time, she lets us in on her feelings and reflections as she struggles to process what has happened and her own part in recording it for posterity.

Meanwhile, Eva's husband, Eric, has gone to Berlin for a week, taking their seventeen-year-old daughter Clara out of school to join him. The intention of this trip is to give him some space and a chance to ponder his marriage, the state of which is revealed through a series of email exchanges between the couple, where the distance seems to give husband and wife free rein to show their bitterness and dissatisfaction.

The two contrasting strands of Eva's coverage of the attacks and the depiction of a marriage on the rocks work well together. Indeed, the marital discord provides some reprieve from the horror of the bombings

... this is a well-paced, highly readable novel, written in an engaging, direct style. It has the feel of a crime novel, where the process of solving the crime is set against the detective's (in this case, journalist's) troubled personal life. This is not a book that attempts to unpick the reasons behind the attacks, nor does it offer any comment or analysis, it merely describes events and emotions as they unfold, but it is no less interesting or heartfelt for that.

... I think this is a subject that is very much at the forefront of public consciousness and would be of interest to British readers. I would therefore recommend this book for translation.

[From the reader's report by Beth Fowler](#) [1]

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