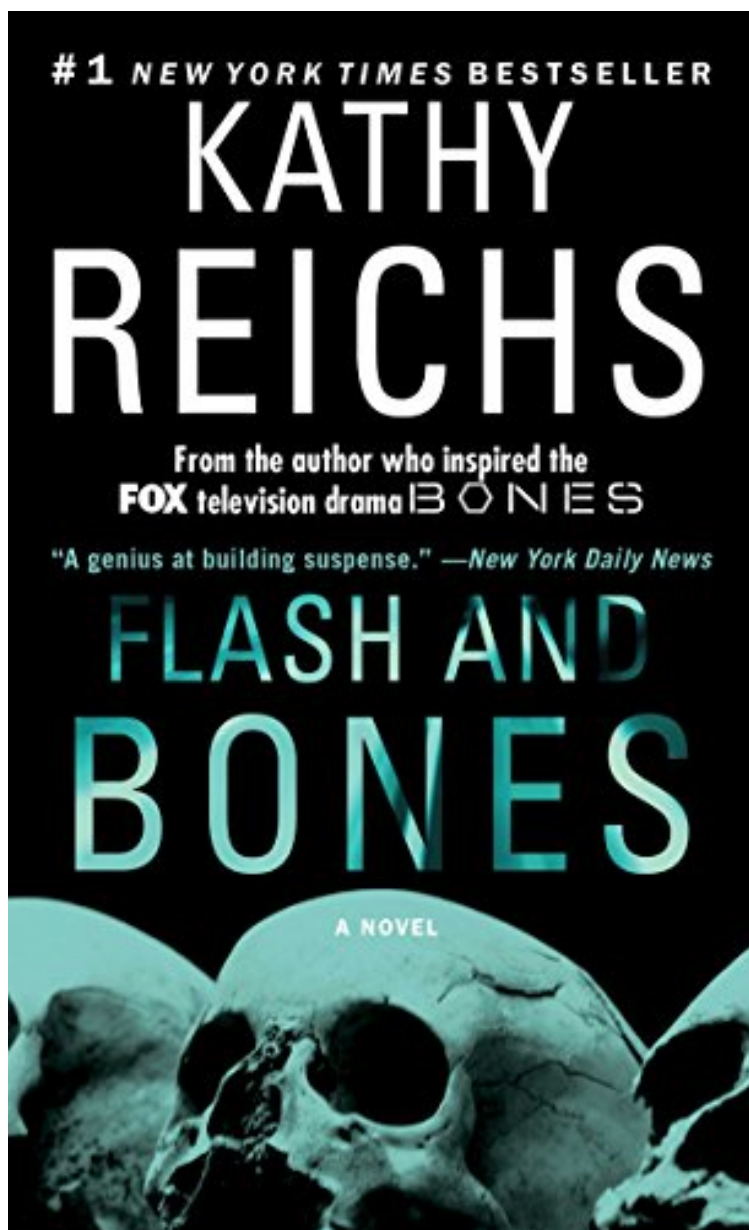


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## Flash and Bones: A Novel



*Par Kathy Reichs*  
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### Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurKathy Reichs#1 New York Times bestselling author and producer of the FOX television hit Bonesreturns with a riveting new novel set in Charlotte, North Carolina, featuring Americas favorite forensic anthropologist, Dr. Temperance Brennan. Just as 200,000 fans are pouring into town for Race Week, a body is found in a barrel of asphalt next to the Charlotte Motor Speedway. The next day, a NASCAR crew member comes to Temperance Brennans office at the Mecklenburg County Medical Examiner to share a devastating story. Twelve years earlier, Wayne Gambles sister, Cindi, then a high

school senior and aspiring racer, disappeared along with her boyfriend, Cale Lovette. Lovette kept company with a group of right-wing extremists known as the Patriot Posse. Could the body be Cindis? Or Cales? At the time of their disappearance, the FBI joined the investigation, only to terminate it weeks later. Was there a cover-up? As Tempe juggles multiple theories, the discovery of a strange, deadly substance in the barrel alongside the body throws everything into question. Then an employee of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention goes missing during Race Week. Tempe cant overlook the coincidence. Was this man using his lab chemicals for murder? Or is the explanation even more sinister? What other secrets lurk behind the festive veneer of Race Week? A turbocharged story of secrets and murder unfolds in this, the fourteenth thrilling novel in Reichss cleverly plotted and expertly maintained series (The New York Times Book ).

With the smash hit *Bones* about to enter its seventh season and in full syndication and her most recent novel, *Spider Bones*, an instant New York Times bestseller Kathy Reichs is at the top of her

game. **EXTRAIT: LOOKING BACK, I THINK OF IT AS RACE WEEK IN THE RAIN.** Thunderboomers almost every day. Sure, it was spring. But these storms were over the top. In the end, Summer saved my life. I know. Sounds bizarre. This is what happened. Bloated, dark clouds hung low to the ground, but so far no rain. Lucky break. Id spent the morning digging up a corpse. Sound macabre? Just part of the job. Im a forensic anthropologist. I recover and analyze the dead that present in less than pristine condition: the burned, mummified, mutilated, dismembered, decomposed, and skeletal. OK. Todays target wasnt actually a corpse.

Id been searching for overlooked body parts. Short version. Last fall a housewife vanished from her Cabarrus County home in rural North Carolina. A week ago, while I was away on a working vacation in Hawaii, a trucker admitted to strangling the woman and burying her body in a sandpit. Impatient, the local cops had sallied forth with shovels and buckets. They delivered the bones in a Motts applesauce carton to my employer, the Medical Examiners Office, in neighboring Mecklenburg County. Yesterday, my aloha tan still glowing, Id begun my analysis. A skeletal inventory revealed that the hyoid, the mandible, and all of the upper incisors and canines were missing. No teeth, no dental ID. No hyoid, no evidence of strangulation. Dr.

Tim Larabee, the Mecklenburg County medical examiner, asked me to have a second go at the sandpit. Correcting screwups usually makes me cranky. Today I was feeling upbeat. Id quickly found the missing bits and dispatched them to the MCME facility in Charlotte. I was en route to a shower, a late lunch, and time with my cat. It was 1:50 p.m. My sweat-soaked tee was pasted to my back. My hair was yanked into a ratty knot. Sand lined my scalp and undies. Nevertheless, I was humming. Al Yankovic, *White Nerdy*. What

can I say? Id watched a YouTube video and the tune lodged in my head. Wind buffeted my Mazda as I merged onto southbound I-85. Slightly uneasy, I glanced at the sky, then thumbed on NPR. Terry Gross was finishing an interview with W. S. Merwin, the U.S. poet laureate. Both were indifferent to the conditions outside my car. Fair enough. The show was produced in Philadelphia, five hundred miles north of Dixie.

Terry launched into a teaser about an upcoming guest. I never caught the name. Beep! Beep! Beep! The National Weather Service has issued a severe-weather warning for parts of the North Carolina piedmont, including Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Anson, Stanly, and Union counties. Severe thunderstorms are expected to move through the area within the next hour. Rainfall of one to three inches is anticipated, creating the potential for flash flooding. Atmospheric conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes. Stay tuned to this station for further updates. Beep! Beep! Beep! I tightened my grip on the wheel and goosed my speed to seventy-five. Risky in a sixty-five-mile-an-hour zone, but I wanted to reach home before the deluge.

Moments later Terry was interrupted again, this time by a muted whoop-whoop. My eyes flicked to the radio. Whoop! Feeling stupid, I checked the rearview mirror. A police cruiser was riding my bumper.

Annoyed, I pulled to the shoulder and lowered my window. When the cop approached, I held out my license. Dr. Temperance Brennan? Looking somewhat worse for wear. I beamed what I hoped was a winning smile.

Johnny Law did not beam back. That wont be necessary, indicating my license. Puzzled, I looked up at the guy. He was mid-twenties, slim, with an infant mustache that appeared to be going nowhere. A badge on his chest said R. Warner. The Concord Police Department received a request from the Mecklenburg County medical examiner to intercept and divert you. Larabee sent the cops to find me? Yes, maam. When I arrived at the recovery site, youd left. Why didnt he call me directly? Apparently he couldnt get through. Of course

not. While digging, Id locked my iPhone in the car to protect it from sand. My phone is in the glove compartment. No need to alarm Officer Warner. Im going to take it out. Yes, maam. The numbers on the little screen indicated three missed calls from Larabee. Three messages. I listened to the first: Long story, which Ill share when youre back. The Concord PD received a report of a body at the Morehead Road landfill. Chapel Hill wants us to handle it. Im elbow-deep in an autopsy. Since youre in the area, I hoped you

could swing by to check it out. Joe Hawkins is diverting that way with the van, just in case they've actually got something for us. The second message was the same as the first. Ditto the third, but more terse. It ended with the inducement: You're a champ, Tempe. A landfill in a storm? The champ was suddenly not so chipper. Ma'am, we should hurry. The rain won't hold off much longer. Lead on. I could not have said this with less enthusiasm. Warner returned to his cruiser, whoop-whooped, then pulled into traffic. Inwardly cursing Larabee, Warner, and the landfill, I palm-slapped the gearshift and followed. Traffic on I-85 was unusually heavy for Thursday, midafter-noon. As we approached Concord, I could see that the Bruton Smith Boulevard exit ramp was a parking lot. And realized what a nightmare this little detour of Larabees would be. The Morehead Road landfill is back-fence neighbor to the Charlotte Motor Speedway, a major stop on the NASCAR circuit. Races would be held there this weekend and next. Local print and broadcast coverage was extensive. Even I knew that tomorrow's qualifying would determine which lucky drivers made the cut for Saturday's All-Star Race. Two hundred thousand avid fans would pour into Charlotte for Race Week.

Looking at the sea of SUVs, campers, pickups, and sedans, I guessed that many had already hit town. Warner rode the shoulder. I followed, ignoring the hostile glares of those cemented in the logjam. Lights flashing, we snaked through the bedlam on Bruton Smith Boulevard, past the dragway, the dirt track, and a zillion fast-food joints. On the sidelines, the tattooed and tank-topped carried babies, six-packs, coolers, and radios. Vendors sold souvenirs from folding tables beneath improvised tents. Warner looped the surrealistic geometry of the Speedway itself, made several turns, then rolled to a stop outside a small structure whose siding might once have been blue. Beyond the building loomed a series of mounds resembling a Martian mountain range. A man emerged and issued Warner a yellow hard hat and a neon orange vest. As they talked, the man pointed at a gravel road rising sharply uphill. Warner waited while I received my safety gear, then we proceeded up the slope. Trucks rumbled in both directions, engines churning hard going in, humming going out. When the road leveled, I could see three men standing by an enormous Dumpster. Two wore coveralls. The third wore black pants and a long-sleeved black shirt over a white tee. Joe Hawkins, longtime death investigator for the MCME. All three featured gear identical to that lying on my passenger seat. Warner nosed up to the Dumpster and parked. I pulled in beside him. The men watched as I got out and donned my hard hat and vest. Fetching. A perfect complement to my current state of hygiene. We gotta quit meeting like this. Joe and I had parted at the sandpit barely an hour earlier. The older man stuck out a hand. Weaver Molene. He was flushed and sweating and filled his coveralls way beyond their intended capacity. Temperance Brennan. I'd have skipped the handshake, given the black moons under Molene's nails, but didn't want to be rude. You the coroner? he asked. I work for the medical examiner, I said. Molene introduced the younger man as Barcelona Jackson. Jackson was very thin and very black. And very, very nervous. Jackson and I work for the company that manages the landfill. Impressive pile of trash, I said. Sites got a capacity of over two and a half million cubic meters. Molene ran a dingy hankie across his face. Friggin' weird Jackson stumbled onto the one square foot holding a stiff. Or maybe not. Probably dozens out there. Jackson had mostly kept his eyes down. At Molene's words, he raised and then quickly dropped them back to his boots. Tell me what you found, sir. Though I spoke to Jackson, Molene answered. Probably best we show you. And quick. He pocket-jammed the hankie. This storm's coming fast. Molene set off at a pace I would have thought impossible for a man of his bulk. Jackson scampered after. I fell into line, paying attention as best I could to the uneven footing. Warner and Hawkins brought up the rear. I've excavated in landfills, am familiar with the aroma of eau de dump, a delicate blend of methane and carbon dioxide with traces of ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen, hydrogen chloride, and carbon monoxide added for spice. I braced for the stench. Didn't happen. Good odor management, guys. Or maybe it was Mother Nature. Wind swirled dirt into little cyclones and tumbled cellophane wrappers, plastic bags, and torn paper across the landscape. Our course took us the length of the active landfill, down a slope, then around a series of what appeared to be closed areas. Instead of raw earth, the tops of the older mounds were covered with grass. As we walked, the rumble of trucks receded, and the whine of fine-tuned engines grew louder. Based on the changing acoustics, I figured the Speedway lay over a rise to our right. After ten minutes, Molene stopped at the base of a truncated hillock. Though tentative grass greened the top, the side facing us was scarred and pitted, like a desert butte gouged by eons of wind. Molene said something I didn't catch. I was focused on the exposed stratigraphy. Unlike the sandstone or shale that make up metamorphic rock, the mounds' layers were composed of flattened Pontiacs and Posturepedics, of squashed Pepsis, Pop-Tarts, Pringles, and Pampers. Molene pointed to a crater in a brown-green layer eight feet above our heads, then to an object lying about two yards off the base of the mound. His explanation was lost to a clap of thunder. Didn't matter. It was

obvious Jacksons stiff had dropped from the mound, probably dislodged by the previous days storm. I crossed to the thing and squatted. Molene, Warner, and Hawkins clustered around me but remained standing. Jackson kept his distance. The object was a drum, approximately twenty inches in diameter and thirty inches high. Its cover lay off to one side. Looks like a metal container of some kind, I said without looking up. Its too rusted to make out a logo or label. Flip it, Molene shouted. Jackson and I turned the thing bottom up to protect the stuff inside. I tried. It weighed a ton. Hawkins squatted, and together, we muscled the drum upright. Its interior was filled with a solid black mass. I leaned close. Something pale was suspended in the dark fill, but the pre-storm gloom obscured all detail. I was reaching for my Maglite when lightning sparked.

A human hand flashed white in the electric brilliance. Dissolved to black. 2011 Temperance Brennan, L.P. Revue de presse "Youll want to keep turning the pages long after lights out to find out what happens next Reichs real-life expertise gives her novels an authenticity that most other crime novelists would kill for " (Daily Express)"Reichs' seamless blending of fascinating science and dead-on psychological portrayals, not to mention a whirlwind of a plot, make [her novels] a must read" (Jeffery Deaver)"With Kathy Reichs the reader knows they're in the hands of an expert" (Sunday Express)"Brennan is a winner, and so is Reichs" (Daily News)"A truly impressive writer" (We Love This Book)