

## Path into Darkness

**Lisa Alber**

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*A haunting tale rife with gruesome murders and secrets, Path into Darkness shines.*

In Lisa Alber's *Path into Darkness*, residents of an Irish county gather for a festival, but their ghastly past is about to come to light.

The mystery kicks off with the brutal death of one of the community's unsavory denizens, which Detective Danny Ahern tries to solve while also caring for his comatose wife. An outsider, Merrit Chase, is swept up in the mystery as well.

Connected to both is the Tate family, headed by a mentally unhinged patriarch and set off-kilter by the return of a beautiful daughter. Before long, all walk a thin line between light and darkness.

The dueling character arcs for Danny and Merrit lend the novel strong appeal. Danny's moral dilemma—should he let his wife go or hope that she wakes?—is heart-wrenching. The duties of his job and the perils of single fatherhood threaten to destroy him. Watching Danny wrestle and ultimately comes to terms with his wife's fate adds a touching layer to the story.

Merrit's own arc is less dramatic but is just as engaging. After moving from California to an idyllic Irish town, albeit a tight-knit and closed-off one, Merrit grapples with finding a purpose. Her quest for belonging despite the locals who seem hell-bent on driving her out results in an endearing complement to Danny's difficult quest.

The actual mystery behind the murder—and other sundry crimes—hinges on some hard-to-believe motives on the perpetrator's part. But intense character development is excellent and sets the story on an even keel.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (July/August 2017)

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