



Broken Ground

Val McDermid

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Number one bestseller Val McDermid returns with another gripping, unputdownable thriller.

Alice Somerville's inheritance lies six feet under in a Highland peat bog - a pair of valuable vintage motorbikes buried by her grandfather at the end of World War II. But when Alice finally organises their recovery, she finds an unwelcome surprise -a body with a pair of bullet holes . . . and Nike trainers. DCI Karen Pirie of Police Scotland's Historic Cases Unit is called in to unravel a case where nothing is quite as it seems.

Meanwhile an overheard conversation in a cafe draws Karen to the heart of a murder she thought she'd already prevented.

As Karen gets closer to the several truths, it becomes clear that not everyone shares her desire for justice. Or even the idea of what justice is.

Broken Ground Details

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Author : Val McDermid

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From Reader Review Broken Ground for online ebook

Carlissa says

Although this is the fifth book in the Karen Pirie series, it's the first one that I've read. I had no trouble following what was going on, but I'm sure it would have been better to start with the first in the series. I thought that Karen was a great character, except a couple times I thought she was a complete ass. I loved the story, but I thought the ending was a little too abrupt and the epilogue felt like it was tacked on at the last minute.

I wish to thank Netgalley, the publisher, and the author for the chance to read and review this book.

Kasa Cotugno says

This has become my favorite series. Val McDermid's style and attention to detail remind me mostly of Peter Robinson, as their novels usually involve unsolved, historical cases. Karen Pirie heads up the HCU or cold case division in Edinburgh's police department, and here she battles interior forces seeking to unseat her and denigrate her and the importance of the work she oversees. What McDermid does so well is keep at least four balls in the air, with occasional forays into the past. Pirie's attempts to deliver justice in these cases gives the books more than a usual sense of righteousness and purpose, holding interest until every loose end is bound off satisfactorily. McDermid dedicates this book to "... all the booksellers who love stories and thrust them into our hands and make addicts of us." Well, for us readers, books this good feed our addictions to a T.

Zoya says

I dig Karen. There is no more to it. I want to move in with her. I want to pick Val McDermid's mind for more, more, more and then some more. I just care so much for what happens to this woman. Unbelievable it's all fiction.

Gary says

This is the 5th book in the Inspector Karen Pirie series by award winning author Val McDermid. Val McDermid has now written over 30 novels and although I have only read a small amount of them I always finish her novels thinking I must read more of her work. This book was exactly the same, great writing, interesting plot and expertly timed.

Alice Somerville is trying to obtain her inheritance that lies six feet under in a Highland peat bog, buried by her grandfather at the end of World War II. But the bigger problem is that when Alice finally uncovers it, she finds a body with a bullet hole between the eyes. DCI Karen Pirie of the Historical Cases Unit is asked by her friend River Wilde who is a forensic anthropologist to take a look at the case believing that this is an historical crime.

This book is so well written and although the plot is twisty and multi layered Val McDermid makes it so

enjoyable to read.

I would like to thank Net Galley and Grove Atlantic for supplying a copy of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

I really must read more of Val McDermid's books.

Eric_W says

A Scottish police procedural (thanks to Net Galley for their free preview in exchange for an honest review.) I haven't read a ton of McDermid and I didn't much care for her protagonist DCI Karen Pirie who ostensibly is still suffering from the loss of her significant other and seems to be taking it out on everyone else. That her boss has it in for the Historic Crimes Unit and has planted a spy in her midst in the form of DS McCartney doesn't help. Her boss is but a caricature of the bitch boss. I would have liked to understand her more. But I suppose seeing her only through Pirie's eyes the view we get is biased in the extreme.

A body has been found by a couple with the help of a crofter. They had been trying to dig up two Indian motorcycles, presumed now to be worth a considerable sum, that had been buried by the woman's grandfather who was "taking" them rather than let them be destroyed as post-war trash. Unbeknownst to them, the pannier of one also contained a slug of diamonds that another GI was trying to smuggle out of Europe. I was a bit surprised they hadn't bothered to look in the pannier before burying it, but never mind.

I was a bit disappointed with this book. The characters just weren't particularly likeable, not that it's a necessary criteria for liking a bit. They just seemed a bit "off."

Note that the formatting in this ARC for Kindle is really awful, but I assume it will have been fixed by the time of publication.

Bonnye Reed says

GN Broken Ground is an excellent who-done-it, set in Wester Ross, Scotland in the peat bogs during three different time periods. We follow Austin Hinde and Kelly Pasoc who were training future spies how to exist behind enemy lines at Clachtorr Lodge ending in 1944, with the European Theatre closing shop. We visit Joey Sutherland as he competed in the Invercharron Highland Games in 1995, and the attractive American woman who accompanied him. Detective Chief Inspector Karen Pirie and her side kick Jason 'the Mint' Murray of the Historic Cases Unit in Edinburgh retrace the whole historic story as told by the peat in 2018. The time changes are easily followed and the pace is fast. There is enough conflict and angst in the cop shop to entertain, and an attractive Highlander, Hamish Mackenzie, often in the mix as the clues are buried on the land he inherited from his grandparents.

This is a tightly wound mystery, with captivating characters and well defined environs. Val McDermid is an exceptional author I am happy to recommend to friends and family.

Netgalley
pub date Dec 5, 2018
Grove Atlantic, Atlantic Monthly Press

Joyce says

4 and 1 / 2 stars

Detective Inspector Karen Pirie is currently investigating a series of rapes that took place several years earlier. They have identified a red Rover as the suspect car. She and her teammate DC Jason “Mint” Murray have been going through the list of registered red Rover 214 owners for that time period.

Also foisted upon her by her very unlikeable boss, is one DS Gerry McCartney.

Meanwhile, her good friend River Wilde who is a forensic anthropologist is investigating the case of a body found in a peat bog. All cases under seventy years old are referred to DCI Karen Pirie’s Historic Cases Unit. As soon as River sees the body, she knows it is more contemporary than the 1944 date thought to be the burial date. The victim, a large man, is wearing Nike Air tennis shoes. She phones Karen and tells her it is now her case as well.

A successful match for their photo-fit ID provides a name and occupation for the deceased man. He is Joey Sutherland. He competed in strong-man type competitions and was very good at it. He traveled all over Europe and North America competing. An interview with one of his friends reveals a sister and Joey’s parents are still living.

Meanwhile, Karen hears something that confirms for her that DS McCartney is a plant by her contentious boss. The problem is what to do about it.

Mint and Karen follow the clues in Joey Sutherland’s case and it leads them to a surprising and very well-known suspect. Their leads in the other cases also bring them to a head.

This is a fine book. It is well written and plotted as are all of Val McDermid’s novels. I like the character Karen Pirie in spite of her tendency to go off script. And with her new boss, Ann Markie, she has a lot of reason to do so. Karen’s passion for justice for her victims, though long dead, is amazing. I applaud her. I like Mint too and don’t think that he is quite the numpty that Karen thinks he is. They work well together.

I like McDermid’s descriptions of Edinburgh, Scotland and the surrounding mountains and countryside around Edinburgh. They sound lovely and I would very much like to travel there. But alas... I can hardly wait for the next book in this series.

Hannah says

Complicated cases have a way of finding DCI Karen Pirie, whether she is having coffee at a refugee run cafe she helped establish, called by her friend and forensic anthropologist, Dr River Wild, or in her capacity as head of the historic cases unit at the Police Scotland. While this is not a fast-paced novel, I was hooked instantly and devoured the book in less than two days. I particularly liked the mix of new murder and cold case.

This thriller has it all, inner city hipster baristas, police department politics, cutting edge forensic technology,

and a mysterious body in a peat bog found during the hunt for World War II nazi loot. This was my first Val McDermid novel and I particularly liked the complex main character, DCI Karen Pirie, along with her nightly city runs, love for artisanal gin and coffee addiction. This is also the first novel set in Scotland that I have read in a long time. I'm looking forward to reading more books from this series. Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for proving me with this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Beata says

Broken Ground by Val McDermid will not disappoint those who will decide to spend several hours with this book. The author, who has written over thirty novels, uses the recipe which always works with lovers of the genre: a mystery going back WW2 blended together with the descriptions of stunning landscapes of Scotland and characters who show both their strengths and weaknesses. Karen Pirie, in charge of Historic Cases Unit, tries to solve the case of a body found accidentally in a peat bog.

I have read several novels by McDermid and her latest one is another good read for her fans. I got the book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!

Gwen McGinty says

Well, this was my first Val McDermid book and it certainly won't be my last!

I was a mite concerned coming in at book five of the Karen Pirie series, but I shouldn't have worried. While there are a few nods to events of the previous books, it didn't affect my enjoyment of this one.

Broken Ground is a fast paced, immaculately written, beautifully structured crime novel that kept me hooked right until the end.

It tells the story of the murder of Joey Sutherland and DCI Karen Pirie's investigation to bring his murderer to justice. Karen investigates cold cases for the HCU, and when a colleague calls her about a body in a peat bog in Wester Ross, she's on the case.

Set between 1944 and the present day, the flashbacks slowly reveal the reason for the murder of Joey Sutherland, and Karen follows its trail to the present, culminating in a finale involving the First Minister!.

Alongside this, Karen finds herself embroiled in a current murder and attempted murder case, and has to deal with the interference of the "Dog Biscuit", the new ACC of her unit, who for some reason, wants her out.

The plot was great, the structure was brilliant, the prose was elegant, and it reads as unashamedly Scottish which is a big plus for me! Loved the nods to our current First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon!

5 Stars!

Thank to NetGalley and the publishers for the e-arc of this.

#BrokenGround #NetGalley

Joyce says

This is a British procedural. The heroine is DI Karen Pirie who is in charge of a cold case unit with the Scottish Police. The first murder took place in the mid '90's and was the result of a crime committed at the end of WWII. There is a second murder with which Pirie gets involved because of something she overheard in a restaurant and finally a third murder caused by the arrogance and incompetence of a DS put into her unit to report to her superior about her actions . The plot is obviously complex but it is well written and will grasp the reader's interest. It covers the murders, office politics, Pirie's uncompromising personality and the solution to all. Thanks to Net Galley and Atlantic Monthly Press for an ARC for an honest review.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Grove Atlantic for an advance copy of *Broken Ground*, the fifth novel to feature DCI Karen Pirie of Police Scotland's Historical Crime Unit.

Karen is out chasing leads on a series of historical rapes when she is asked to divert to Wester Ross where a body has been discovered, buried with some Long sought treasure. As the victim is wearing modern clothing he obviously wasn't buried at the same time as the treasure so who is he, how did he get there and who shot him? Questions that Karen intends to answer.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Broken Ground* which is a meticulously plotted novel with never a dull moment. I loved everything about it and sat up far too late to finish it in one sitting. It has a bit of everything with the body in the peat bog taking centre stage and occupying much of Karen and her assistant, DC Jason "The Mint" Murray's time but there are a couple of other cases simmering away in the background, an ongoing feud with her boss and a cuckoo in the nest in the shape of DS Gerry McCartney who has been foisted on them. There is also a healthy dose of delicious Scottish black humour.

I am in awe of Ms McDermid's skill in building a credible case from almost nothing. Karen starts slowly with identification of the body and once that's done she starts picking apart his life. As information trickles in it leads to more lines of enquiry, which added to some smart conjecture brings them to a solution. It's all very logical and credible if you accept the basic premise (which probably has some truthful roots). It certainly had me hooked. Helpfully Ms McDermid inserts a narrative of events in 1944 early on in the novel so the reader is better informed on the background than Karen is.

Karen Pirie is an excellent protagonist. She is a caring, smart and resourceful detective who wants to do right by the victims and their families. This does not make her a pushover and I loved her interactions with her boss where, quaking in her boots, she gives better than she gets.

Broken Ground is a great read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

Andrea says

Another cracking, page turner from Val McDermid. The author expertly weaves the main story and two sub plots together. It is great to have another series besides Tony Hill/Carol Jordan to look forward to and fill the void between books. Great characters and look forward to the next instalment.

Joan says

Alice Somerville travels to a Highland peat bog to claim the vintage motorbikes her grandfather buried there at the end of the Second World War. But a body entombed with one of the motorbike crates short circuits her plan to claim the bikes and return home. Detective Chief Inspector Karen Pirie, working the Historic Cases Unit and still grieving the loss of her lover, begins an investigation.

But this isn't the only case landing on Karen's desk. There's new evidence in a cold case involving several violent rapes. And an overheard conversation in a coffee shop gives her cause for concern. Can she solve the cases and bring justice to the victims as she deals with a difficult boss and an underhanded investigator newly-assigned to her unit?

With a strong sense of place, well-defined, believable characters, and a twisting plot, tension mounts as the narrative unfolds, slowly revealing the backstory as it follows the present-day investigations. Seamlessly woven into the narrative, the storyline for all three of the crimes maintains both interest and suspense; the accurately-detailed process of investigating a crime adds depth and realism to the story.

Although the story is well-told and readers are likely to remain involved in the telling of the tale, the often-recurring, offensive expletives are likely to be particularly off-putting for many readers.

I received a free copy of this eBook from Grove Atlantic and NetGalley
#BrokenGround #NetGalley

Patricia says

I love Val McDermid. Her books never let you down. Not only do I get a great mystery but I feel like I just vacationed in Scotland. McDermid describes a situation so effectively that I swear I smelled cookies when she mentioned them in one chapter. I seriously kept sniffing. It was like brain muscle memory.

I'm always a sucker for a woman written as strong and competent as Karen Pirie. As much as I like Karen, I dislike equally her boss, Ann. But then you're supposed to.

This book has everything: WWII, Suspense, Cold Case Protocol, you name it, it has it. You definitely come away with more knowledge than coming in.

In this book, we are actually gifted with two mysteries in one. I've read many a book that I have to keep rereading parts to figure out where I'm at. Absolutely no confusion here. It's written so clearly that you never lose track of which story or which tense you're in: past or present. So refreshing.

I have one complaint about this book. And quite frankly, its the same complaint I always have with this writer. The book ends.
