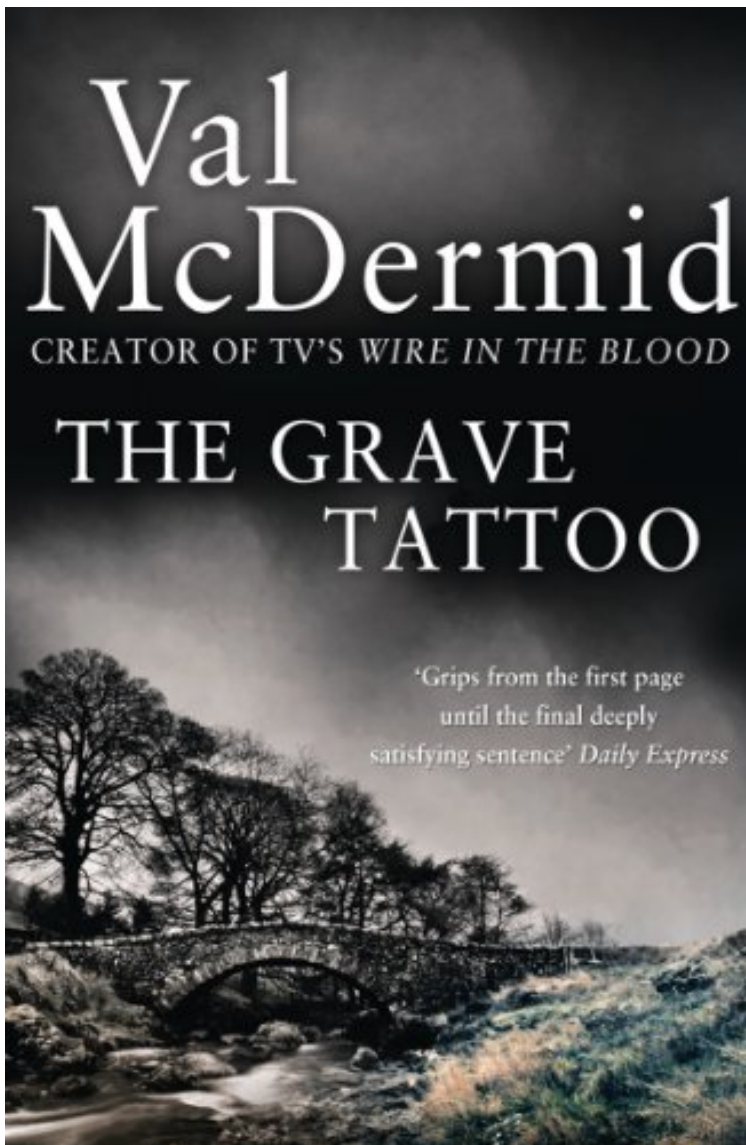


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The Grave Tattoo



Par Val McDermid
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe award-winning and Number One bestselling Val McDermid crafts an electrifying psychological suspense thriller that mixes history, heritage and heinous crimes.A 200 year-old-secret is now a matter of life and death.And it could be worth a fortune.It's summer in the Lake District and heavy rain over the fells has uncovered a bizarrely tattooed body. Could it be linked to the old rumour that Fletcher Christian, mutinous First Mate on the Bounty, had secretly returned to England?Scholar Jane Gresham wants to find out. She believes that the Lakeland poet William Wordsworth, a friend of Christian's, may have sheltered the fugitive and turned his tale into an epic poem which has since disappeared.But as she follows each lead, death is hard on her heels. The centuries-old mystery is putting lives at risk. And it isn't just the

truth that is waiting to be discovered, but a bounty worth millions .co.uk It's a time-honoured tradition that the best crime writers begin to chafe at the constraints of their area of the genre and feel a need to stretch their literary muscles. With *The Grave Tattoo*, the estimable Val McDermid demonstrates that she, too, has felt the need of a change from her contemporary novels of crime and detection, and here takes on a truly ambitious panoply. Not that McDermid has been afraid to tackle unconventional subjects before--it's just that the scale of this novel is even more impressive. A corpse is discovered on a hill in the Lake District, adorned with bizarre tattoos. Wordsworth expert Jane Gresham finds herself distracted from her studies of the great Lakeland poet when another mystery surfaces, involving the Pitcairn Massacre and the events of the mutiny on the *Bounty*. Is it possible that Fletcher Christian, who led the rebellion against Captain Bligh, faked his own death and clandestinely returned to England? Jane makes a connection between the tattooed body and the tattoos on sailors who served in the South Seas--is this the body of Fletcher Christian? And

Jane has another problem on her hands--a young girl who she has tried to help finds herself a murder suspect, and tracks her down to the Lakes. And as Jane closes in on a Wordsworth manuscript that may be a direct transcription of Fletcher Christian's confession, she finds herself with someone else on her trail--an ex-lover with similar designs on the precious document. As all this might suggest, McDermid has set herself a truly daunting task here, with a canvas so crammed with incident, colour and character. And when the reader learns that the central narrative is counterpointed with sections from the Fletcher Christian document, it's clear that we are a long way away from the medical and criminological puzzles of *Wire in the Blood*. It is to

McDermid's credit that she draws so many strands together with such assurance.--Barry Forshaw
From *Publishers Weekly*
An intriguing, 200-year-old mystery propels this multilayered stand-alone from British author McDermid set in England's Lake District. Scholar Jane Gresham pursues her theory that HMS *Bounty* mutineer Fletcher Christian returned secretly from exile to his homeland in the late 18th century. A shriveled body found in a bog seems to bear resemblance to this dashing hero, right down to the South Sea tattoos that blacken his buttocks. Jane searches relentlessly for a lost manuscript by the poet Wordsworth that relates Christian's tale in tantalizing excerpts between chapters. Various subplots complicate her quest, including a fraught friendship with precocious 13-year-old Tenille, a lonely, mixed-race girl who also loves Romantic poetry. With a feminist, socially conscious spin, McDermid (*The Distant Echo*) vividly contrasts marginal subsistence in London's dismal Marshpool neighborhood with the Lake District's bucolic lifestyle. Boasting blurbs from such notable authors as Harlan Coben, Tess Gerritsen and Joseph Finder, this could be McDermid's break-out book. 100,000 printing; author tour. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.