



A Place of Execution

By Val McDermid

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A Place of Execution By Val McDermid

Winter 1963: two children have disappeared off the streets of Manchester; the murderous careers of Myra Hindley and Ian Brady have begun. On a freezing day in December, another child goes missing: thirteen-year-old Alison Carter vanishes from her town, an insular community that distrusts the outside world. For the young George Bennett, a newly promoted inspector, it is the beginning of his most difficult and harrowing case: a murder with no body, an investigation with more dead ends and closed faces than he'd have found in the anonymity of the inner city, and an outcome which reverberates through the years.

Decades later he finally tells his story to journalist Catherine Heathcote, but just when the book is poised for publication, Bennett unaccountably tries to pull the plug. He has new information which he refuses to divulge, new information that threatens the very foundations of his existence. Catherine is forced to re-investigate the past, with results that turn the world upside down.

A Greek tragedy in modern England, Val McDermid's *A Place of Execution* is a taut psychological thriller that explores, exposes and explodes the border between reality and illusion in a multi-layered narrative that turns expectations on their head and reminds us that what we know is what we do not know.

A Place of Execution is winner of the 2000 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and a 2001 Edgar Award Nominee for Best Novel.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Penzler Pick, August 2000: Val McDermid, better known in England than in the U.S., is a well respected writer of crime fiction. Her three ongoing mystery series feature red-haired PI Kate Brannigan; Lindsay Gordon, a lesbian socialist journalist, and Tony Hill and Carol Jordan, clinical psychologist and detective inspector respectively. *A Place of Execution* is McDermid's first stand-alone mystery, and with it, she redefines the term "village mystery."

It is 1963, the Beatles are becoming wildly popular in England, and the Swinging Sixties are about to change the post-war Western world. But in the village of Scardale in the Peaks District of Derbyshire, a desolate area beloved of hikers and climbers, nothing has changed for hundreds of years. The village has remained small and insular--most villagers are related, and the most common second names are Carter and Lomas. When Alison Carter, aged 13, disappears while walking her dog, the case is given to a young detective inspector named George Bennett. As Bennett gets to know the families in the village and their concerns, he realizes that this case is not as simple as it first seems. The villagers seem to be closing ranks, and Bennett suspects they may be protecting one of their own. Central to his investigation are Alison's mother and her husband. When Ruth Carter remarried, she chose Philip Hawkin, an outsider who is now the current squire of the village. As Alison's stepfather, he raises all kinds of red flags for Bennett. But so does Alison's close relationship with her cousin Charlie who, too conveniently, it seems, finds a vital clue.

All this is complicated by the fact that the police and the villagers cannot find Alison's body; there are also other disappearances in the area which may or may not be connected. To reveal more about this riveting mystery would be to give too much away. McDermid takes the reader through a maze of conflicting facts and theories, and when Bennett, with the help of local police, solves the case, the real story is only just beginning--especially for Bennett, who will question not only his own part in solving this case, but ultimately the profession he has chosen. --*Otto Penzler*

From Publishers Weekly

This superb novel should make Gold Dagger-nominee McDermid's reputation and bring her new readers in droves. It's December 1963 and teenage girls all over Britain are swooning to the Beatles' "I Want to Hold Your Hand." In the tiny, remote village of Scardale, Derbyshire, 13-year-old Alison Carter is envied by her peers because her stepfather buys her all the latest records. When Alison goes missing one dark night, Dist. Insp. George Bennett takes control of the case, despite being new to the job and the district. Other children have gone missing recently from towns and cities in the north, but somehow Alison's case is different. Although the police feverishly track down clues and organize searches over the moors, any hope that they'll find the girl fades as the days go by. Obsessed by the case, George is tormented by his lack of success and by the suffering of Alison's mother. Little more can be said without giving away key plot points, but McDermid spins a haunting tale whose complexity never masks her adroitness at creating memorable characters and scenes. Her narrative spell is such that the reader is immersed immediately in the rural Britain of the early '60s. She clearly did extensive research on how police work was done at the time, and it has paid off beautifully. The format of the novel is unusual, with much of it purporting to be a true crime book, but McDermid keeps the suspense taut, and her pacing never flags. This is an extraordinary achievement, and it's sure to be on many lists of the best mysteries of the year. 10-city author tour. (Sept. 20)

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From [Booklist](#)

Readers will be reminded of the real-life Moors Murders and of Stephen King's fictive eerie-village tales as they make their way through this compelling, funhouse-mirror mystery. McDermaid turns the English village cozy on its head as she presents Scardale, a village whose hard-bitten inhabitants try to keep the world out and their secrets in. Part of the mystery is set in the '60s, when several children disappeared and were later found murdered in nearby Manchester. The stepdaughter of Scardale's leading citizen goes missing next. The local police investigating the disappearance are met with byzantine resistance from the villagers at every turn. The mystery deepens throughout, even extending, with a shocking ending, 30 years into the future. McDermaid, who won the British Gold Dagger Award in 1995 for *Mermaid Singing*, brings some cunning new twists to the psychological-suspense genre. *Connie Fletcher*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

George Valentine:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the free time or they will get great deal of stress from both lifestyle and work. So , whenever we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the actual book you have read is usually A Place of Execution.

Bradley Loy:

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Aaron Martinez:

Is it you actually who having spare time in that case spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just lying down on the bed? Do you need something new? This A Place of Execution can be the solution, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this brand new era is common not a geek activity. So what these publications have than the others?

Cinthia Jacobsen:

A lot of book has printed but it takes a different approach. You can get it by net on social media. You can

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