



## A Darker Domain

By Val McDermid  
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### Introduction

Fife, Scotland, 1984. Mick Prentice abandons his family at the height of a politically charged national miners' strike to join the strikebreakers down south. Despised and disowned by friends and relatives, he is not reported missing until twenty-three years later.

Fife, Scotland, 1985. Kidnapped heiress Catriona MacIennan Grant is killed and her baby son vanishes when the ransom payoff goes horribly wrong. In 2008, a tourist in Tuscany stumbles upon dramatic new evidence that reopens the investigation.

Already immersed in the Prentice affair, Detective Karen Pirie, newly appointed head of the Cold Case Review Team, wants to make her mark with this second unsolved 1980s mystery. But two decades'

worth of secrets are leading Pirie into a dark domain of violence and betrayal—a place darker than any she has previously entered.

### Questions for Discussion

1. The investigation into Mick Prentice's disappearance is opened after his daughter, Misha, attempts to track down living family as a bone marrow match for her son. Would you seek out a family member who had abandoned you in order to help your child? Would you take it to the police in the way that Misha brought her search?
2. The 1984 miners' strike in Scotland was a landmark dispute in the United Kingdom. The resulting poverty for the miners and their families was often extreme. How does the strike affect the relationships described throughout the book, whether it is ties between family or friends?
3. Do you sympathize with the miners that left Scotland for work in England? Do you feel the stigma attached to the wives and children left behind by those that did flee was unfair? Would you have stayed behind and waited out the strike, which would eventually come to an end after a year?
4. Did Jimmy Lawson's retelling of the night of the hand-off in the MacIennan Grant case affect your opinion of Sir Broderick or Catriona or the circumstances of the kidnapping?
5. Why do you think Catriona's mother had such a hard time handing the bag to Catriona that night?
6. Knowing what he did about the circumstances of the kidnapping and the death of his mother, did you expect Gabriel / Adam to seek out his grandfather?

### About the Author

Scottish crime writer Val McDermid is the author of twenty-three novels. Her books have won the Gold Dagger Award for Best Crime Novel of the Year and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, been named *New York Times* Notable Books, and been nominated for the Edgar Award. She lives in the north of England.