



## Island of Bones

*Imogen Robertson*

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Cumbria, 1783. A broken heritage; a secret history...

The tomb of the first Earl of Greta should have lain undisturbed on its island of bones for three hundred years. When idle curiosity opens the stone lid, however, inside is one body too many. Gabriel Crowther's family bought the Gretas' land long ago, and has suffered its own bloody history. His brother was hanged for murdering their father, the Baron of Keswick, and Crowther has chosen comfortable seclusion and anonymity over estate and title for thirty years. But the call of the mystery brings him home at last.

Travelling with forthright Mrs Harriet Westerman, who is escaping her own tragedy, Crowther finds a little town caught between new horrors and old, where ancient ways challenge modern justice. And against the wild and beautiful backdrop of fells and water, Crowther discovers that his past will not stay buried.

## **Island of Bones Details**

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Author : Imogen Robertson

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## From Reader Review Island of Bones for online ebook

### Suzanne says

Cumbria, 1783. A broken heritage; a secret history...The tomb of the first Earl of Greta should have lain undisturbed on its island of bones for three hundred years. When idle curiosity opens the stone lid, however, inside is one body too many. Gabriel Crowther's family bought the Gretas' land long ago, and has suffered its own bloody history. His brother was hanged for murdering their father, the Baron of Keswick, and Crowther has chosen comfortable seclusion and anonymity over estate and title for thirty years. But the call of the mystery brings him home at last. Travelling with forthright Mrs Harriet Westerman, who is escaping her own tragedy, Crowther finds a little town caught between new horrors and old, where ancient ways challenge modern justice.

This is the third novel in Imogen Robertson's Crowther and Westerman series, having not read the previous two, or any other work by this author, I was a little concerned that I would find this book hard work but enough information is given to let this book stand on its own. The historical setting gives an extra area of interest and sets the story apart from many other murder mysteries available. I found the book to be well written and liked the level of description given and atmospheres created throughout. I would certainly now consider exploring the earlier books.

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### Katie says

A broken heritage. A secret history. A bitter death.

A gripping thriller!

Island of Bones is the third offering from Imogen Robertson's Western/Crowther novels, which follows Instruments of Darkness and Anatomy of Murder.

Island of Bones is clustered around a mystery in Gabriel Crowther's family history. A secret that has been buried for 300 years resurfaces, challenging and confronting Crowther's present. Everything that Crowther thought he knew is thrown into turmoil as his family's bloody history is exposed in this historical thriller.

Island of Bones is exciting, enthralling and a refreshing interpretation of the thriller genre. The extremely well written and well-researched novel shows Robertson as an author to watch.

Robertson's delicious descriptions entice the reader to fully immerse themselves into the novel, placing you firmly alongside the characters with the story line entwining the reader emotionally.

It's always a promising sign when a prominent thriller author, such as Tess Gerritsen, gives an enticing review, stating that Robertson is an "exquisite writer, and this is an extraordinary novel". I wholly agree, this truly is!

Disregard that this is the third novel in the series. I read this before any of the others, and I felt as intrigued and immersed in the story line and characters as if this was the first novel in the series, without feeling left behind, as can often be the case.

I can't praise Robertson's writing enough. If you don't own this book then you need to! This is definitely a novel that needs to be firmly in your collection.

Island of Bones is full of intrigue, mystery, thrills, history and has enticed itself into my imagination and my book collection!

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## Petra says

Ke knihám Imogen Robertson jsem se dostala díky tomu, že mi obálka prvního dílu p?išla tak krásn? tajemná. Samoz?ejm? m? zaujala i samotná anotace, nic m? ale nep?ípravilo na to, jak hutná a propletená tahle kniha bude. A tak to platilo i u druhého a t?etího dílu. A ten t?etí mi kone?n? vysv?tlil n?které mé velké otázky, které m? trápily celé dv? p?edchozí knihy! Juch????

Harriet Westerman se bohužel ješt? tak úpln? nevyrovnila se smrtí svého manžela, ale ví, že se musí postarat o své d?ti a být silná... Vezme zavd?k únikem z utrápených myšlenek na minulost i budoucnost a rad?ji se hrne ?ešit další p?ípad. Tentokrát se vše za?ne motat okolo života jejího ve spole?nosti ne zrovna oblíbeného p?ítele a také „spoludetektiva“ Gabriela Crowthera.

Ten se totiž bude muset vrátit do svého rodného kraje, aby odhalil pravdu své minulosti. Jeho bratr totiž možná nebyl vinen a mluvil pravdu, naopak jeho otec se nejspíš nechoval vždy tak úpln? ?estn?. Do toho všeho se ješt? zamotá jeho povýšená sestra a její povedený syná?ek, trocha místní ?arod?jné smetánky a dva cizinci... a o záhadu je rázem postaráno.

Musím se p?iznat, že v tomto díle mi jindy sympatická Harriet p?íšern? lezla na nervy. Není se ale ?emu divit. Jsem ráda, že autorka ji nenechala se jen tak lehce ze všeho oklepat a prost? jít dál. To ovšem neznamená, že m? konec druhého dílu nešokoval. Myslela jsem si totiž, že Harriet bude mí klasické „žili š?astn?... a ob?as vy?ešili pár vražd“, ale prd z toho. Proto doufám, že si ji š?stí zase brzy najde, protože by to byla vážn? škoda.

Kone?n? jsme se dostali na kobylu Gabrielovy minulosti! Ano, ano, stokrát ano! I když teda musím ?íct, že mi n?kterých v?cí bylo neskute?n? líto, jako mi bylo líto i jeho. Ani se mu nedivím, že byl spíše nespole?enský a zahled?ný do své v?dy, užil si toho až až. Svým zp?sobem chápu i jeho sestru, ale to neznamená, že mi nepila krev. A spolu s ní i další postavy... že.

Tak jako tak jsem se vážn? bavila, i když jsem ob?as ztrácela pozornost. Ale to se mi u téhle série ob?as stává, protože je tam n?kolik linií, které se proplétají, takže musíte dávat dobrý pozor, aby vám n?co neuniklo. Pak je hodn? zajímavé sledovat, jak se vše spojuje dohromady a utvo?í to na konci jeden celek... a vám pak všechno kone?n? zapadne do sebe. T?ším se na další díl a v??ím, že si svou úrove? udrží.

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-----Reakce po do?tení knihy-----

Další skv?ly díl. Ta autorka m? nep?estává p?ekvapovat.

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## **M. Langlinais says**

<http://spooklights.blogspot.com/2013/...>

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## **Carol Anne says**

I am a newcomer to the Crowther and Westerman books, and when I realised that this was the third in the series I was concerned that I would have trouble getting into the story. This was far from the truth - Robertson provides enough back story to let you understand the characters, but not so much as to slow the pace of the story at hand. This is hard to achieve, and it's lovely to see it done well. This is typical of Robertson's style on the whole; she doesn't talk down to the reader, giving enough information to keep you engaged in the plot but not so much as to spell out the solution to you before the first chapter is over.

I thoroughly enjoyed Island of Bones, finding it to be good fun and very much in the spirit of Conan Doyle. The characters are well drawn, flaws and all, and it is refreshing to see a strong female character like Harriet Westerman. I thought the book was well paced and was satisfied by the conclusion, finding it neither obvious nor contrived - though I'm no detective myself, I must admit.

I will be ordering the first two books immediately on concluding this review. It has been a while since I had a book I hated to put down as much as this one, and I look forward to spending more time with the characters.

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## **LJ says**

First Sentence: There was a peculiar hush around the Tower the night before an execution.

Scientist and anatomist Gabriel Crother is something of an enigma to neighbors and acquaintances, which has been fine by him. Thirty years ago, he turned his back on his family tragedies, but now must face them. His estranged sister and her son are staying at the estate once owned by their family. Upon encouraging the current owner to move the tomb of the first Earl of Greta from the Island of Bones to the local church, an extra body is discovered within. Crother and his friend, Mrs. Harriet Westerman, are summoned and Crother must confront the past finding that what was thought to be true in the past may not have been and that a brother was falsely executed. Can the truth be learned before others die as well?

Having well-developed, interesting, appealing characters is so critical and Robertson has more than met that requirement. Each of the characters, whether principal or secondary, comes alive under Ms. Robertson's deft hand; so much so that Mrs. Westerman is someone one would like to be, and her 12-year-old son, very believable. The relationship between all of the characters is perfectly correct and appropriate for the period, including the depth, trust and friendship between Crother and Mrs. Westerman. At the same time, each character is flawed making them realistically human. For those who've not read the previous books in the series, ample history is provided to each character, thus avoiding feeling lost.

There is no confusion as to where the story is set, either in period or in location. The period details of social propriety and customs are always interesting but don't make either the story or the characters seem stiff. We are reminded that this was a time when the old beliefs and legends still held their place beside

Christianity. At one point, the vicar's daughter acknowledges this blending..."I'm sure the Lord will forgive a few shreds of the pagan hanging on the souls of such good Christian people." There are wonderful descriptions that both allow you to see the environs yet make you want to pack a bag and see them for fact. The weather is used very effectively as is the dialogue, which both shows the restraint of the time but occasionally acts as a vehicle for some delightful humor..."We might have managed that better. Your poor sister will soon run out of rooms to leave in high dudgeon."

The story is wonderfully plotted. The prologue is significant to the story and absolutely compelling; drawing one in so completely as to resent ever having to put the book down, even for brief breaks. There are enough threads for it to be interesting but never confusing. It is remarkable the way in which Robertson occasionally picks up pieces and places them into the story in a new direction, thus changing the image of the puzzle in an unexpected way leading us to a wonderfully satisfying ending.

"Island of Bones" is the third in an excellent series which should be read in order but, most of all, should be read.

ISLAND OF BONES (Hist Mys-Gabriel Crowther/Harriet Westerman-England-1783) – VG+  
Robertson, Imogen – 3rd in series  
Headline, ©2011, UK Hardcover – ISBN: 9780755372027

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### **Nicole says**

After book number two, I wondered how long Robertson could continue to write two unconnected narratives before it made the book seriously unbalanced. Perhaps she too wondered that, for she changes things up a little and basically restrains herself to one interconnected group in her third Crowther and Westerman novel. I appreciated this, mostly, I think, because I always had a hard time feeling a sense of attachment to the non-Crowther-Westerman group, and by eschewing a side story about completely new characters with no connection to the main cast until the very end, I felt a greater sense of dread and suspense. My only complaint is that sometimes she enjoys too much of a happy ending, and I have to roll my eyes a little at how perfectly nice and convenient some things work out.

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### **Diane S ? says**

One of my favorites of the newer series, this is only the third book but so far the author is keeping her plots interesting. This one is set in the Lake District, in Cumbria in the late 1700's. AS tan historical note explains the story is based on actual history, though of course all changed around to suit the story. The Jacobites, plots and fortunes made and lost, all the requisites for these very atmospheric mysteries. I am always amazed at how firmly entrenched in the time period and location I become when reading these slower paced but detailed mysteries. The characters and their colorful pasts lend so much to these stories. Highly recommend this series.

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## **Siria says**

*Island of Bones* is to historical murder mysteries what Subway is to sandwiches. Sure, it'll do when you're stuck in an airport, its constituent parts are what you'd expect to find in something of its type, and you can't complain that it's anything other than what you expected it to be—but it's largely lacking in substance, flavour, and texture.

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## **Mary MacKintosh says**

Mrs. Westerman and Gabriel Crowther make an unlikely pair, and they would in modern times, but in Georgian England their interest in solving crimes makes every level of society uncomfortable. This time, in order to distract herself from grieving the recent death of her husband, Harriet is pleased to go with Crowther back to his ancestral home. Crowther sold it just after his brother hanged for the murder of their father. The finding of an old corpse in an even older tomb is what triggers the invitation, and it starts the unraveling of what Gabriel Crowther believed about his family. If Jane Austen had written mysteries they would have read like Robertson's books do.

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## **Madonna says**

While I enjoyed this book--as I have the others in the series--I found the story to be buried in the narrative. I liked learning about Crowther's past and family, but going back and forth between time periods and with the size of the cast list, I found myself forgetting and getting lost. I don't know that it was longer than the others in the series, but it seemed "denser."

I'm enjoying the evolving relationship between Crowther and Harriet. I'm liking their developing familiarity, but I'm hoping Robertson doesn't push them together into a romantic--as romantic as Crowther can be--relationship to "get that over with." Their differences, as many as they may be, are what make them successful as a team; to move beyond some of that may make their ability to solve crimes incredible. I appreciate Robertson's situation in needing the relationship to change since they've been together for a while, but I'm not sure making it what neither may be ready/capable of, at least at this time, may ruin their relationship. All of this is only my opinion. I trust Robertson to be correct in her plotting, so she may have something completely different in mind. My apologies in advance.

I really enjoyed Stephen's character. Given his age, I think the character rang true all the way around. Boy, is Margaret a sour one; wonder if she'll show up again? Felix and Miss Hurst might also show up again since Crowther has involved himself in resolving their situation. Enjoyed Miss Scales--interesting name choice given her physical condition--and how she contributed to the story and the history part.

As always, a great blend history and fiction. I enjoy reading the series because of that. I also enjoy the insights to the "plight" of women and the social structure of the time. Nicely shown this time at the beginning with the comments about the differences between Rachel and Harriet.

I found the ending a bit fantastic with the arrival of the entire cast from Harriet's neighborhood and the arrival of Jocasta. Of course, Casper didn't know where Jocasta was, but if she cared wouldn't she have come "home" to look around at some point? And how good natured can Mrs. Blair remain with all these extra people??? I'm sure she'll cope.

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### **Pamela says**

I enjoy this series, but I felt this story became bogged down a bit. The past and the present life of the family took over the mystery. I just did not feel it moved along smoothly. I picked it up, read, and put it down. I did not feel the desire to keep reading into the night. I still like this author, and will try another in the series. I understand other viewers felt this was her best book yet. I Love murder, and mystery, and in this time period, but this moved a little to slow for me to give it a higher rating. Good but not great

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### **Krisette Spangler says**

Island of Bones is another fantastic addition to the Crowther and Westerman series. Lord and Lady Greta's remains are to be removed from their crumbling resting place to a more secure location in the church. During the removal an extra corpse with an unknown identity is discovered. Mr. Crowther and Mrs. Westerman are called upon to travel to Crowther's childhood home to discover the secrets of the corpse. Crowther must face the ghosts of his past and learns that all was not as it seemed in the murder of his father.

I love this author, but I still have the same complaint I had with the other books. These books are set during the late 1700's. The people did not use such harsh swear words during this period. I feel like it's the only time, she steps out of the period. Otherwise, it would have been a 5 star novel. The swearing is always brief, and there are not more than 5 uses of foul language, but it just feels particularly jarring in a book set in this time period.

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### **Hadenmaiden says**

I was sent this book from the Real Readers website - my first book to read and review, and what a winner! I hadn't read any of Imogen Robertson's work before, but will definitely read more now.

From the first page, she engages the reader in the characters and the story line. What initially appeared to be a fairly straightforward murder mystery, turns out to have more twists and turns than a twisty-turny thing, and is a real page turner.

I'm often tempted to skip the 'extras' in novels - preface, prologue, additional notes... but decided I'd go straight in with this one to give me the best chance of getting into the story. This is a must! Don't skip the prologue - it's short, but perfectly formed, and relevant!

The prologue is set in 1751, some thirty years earlier than the main part of the narrative. It is the night before a public hanging; quite an event because it is one of the gentry being hanged for the murder of his father.

Lucius Adair Penhaligan is visited in prison by his brother Charles the night before the hanging. Even at this early stage, the characters become real. Adair is despairing that he cannot convince even his own brother that it wasn't he who murdered their father; he is terribly afraid of what is to come, and all the Charles can offer him is a payment to slip to the hangman to try and make sure he does a good job.....

1783, and we're straight into the main story - Charles has relinquished his title[Baron of Keswick] and now lives and works by the name of Gabriel Crowther. He is called back to his old home, to try and discover the identity of a body found in a tomb on St Herbert's Island on Derwentwater. Nothing surprising about finding a body in a tomb, perhaps, but this is an extra one - and the island belonged to Gabriel Crowther's family before the death of his father and subsequent hanging of brother Addie.

The characters are eminently likeable, and very human. It was a bonus that the bulk of the tale took place in Keswick, a place we visit often; indeed, on our last visit we stayed on Chestnut Hill and walked up to what

Ms Robertson calls the Druidic Stones.

In many ways it reminds me of an eighteenth century version of 'Silent Witness' but I would have to say that I got far more from this book than from the last two series of Silent Witness!

Excellent, absorbing read - now I need to find more tales involving the Crowther/Westerman duo.

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## Richard Derus says

**The Book Report:** Mrs. Harriet Westerman, Royal Navy wife, and Mr. Gabriel Crowther, anatomist and aristocrat manqué (albeit with a very good reason to have missed the mark), are back in these two volumes, succeeding "INSTRUMENTS OF DARKNESS". Mrs. Westerman is, in "Anatomy," in London because her husband has suffered a grievous injury in the process of taking a very rich prize ship (an eighteenth-century Royal Navy captain made his own and his crew's fortune by capturing enemy ships, not sinking them). Mrs. Westerman has confined him to a hospital to recover, but her friend and neighbor Crowther has followed her to Town, ensuring she will not be bored. In fact, Crowther and Westerman find themselves looking into a series of ever-more-suspicious deaths, embroiling themselves and the families of Westerman and Thornleigh (County neighbors also in London while Thornleigh Hall is restored to its former magnificence after being burned down in the first book) in the terrifying toils of a spy conspiracy taking place during the closing days of America's war for independence.

While there can never be a doubt that Crowther and Westerman will prevail, the cost to them both is always a source of suspense. Mrs. Westerman, a respectable Captain's wife, yet again charges around acting MOST unfeminine and brash, asking questions that powerful people do not want answered and demanding that everyone around her allow her to be herself (horrors!) and follow her own path (gadzooks!). Her proper, missish younger sister informs Mrs. Westerman in no uncertain terms of her behavior's cost to all her family. Crowther is drawn back into the world of aristos and wastrels he left behind without a shred of regret many years before. And, to make matters worse, while he is working out the solution to the dangerous puzzle at hand, he is required to dig up the ghosts of his murdered father and executed brother. All is resolved in the end, of course, but the personal lives of the sleuths are altered in some very significant ways. The stakes rise....

And in "Island," the newly upped ante is raised still further! Now Crowther and Westerman are summoned to Crowther's childhood home in the Lake District by none other than Crowther's unpleasant, spoiled, snobbish sister, unseen by the man for more than thirty years. (Thank GOODNESS, one can hear Crowther--and the author--thinking.) Her brat son is involved in some sort of scrape; bones are discovered in the family's old home that should most definitely not be there; and here Mrs. Westerman is, assisting with the anatomization of several of the corpses that pile up wherever the pair appear. Crowther has reason to suspect his nephew of murder, not a great stretch as the said nephew reminds him of his executed murderer brother; Mrs. Westerman's son Stephen, brought to the Lake District for enlightenment and education, is embroiled in the dangerous business of ferreting out truths that the great and the good do not wish to see out; and all concerned are, of course, inalterably changed by their researches and investigations.

At the end of this book, the entire series *dramatis personae* are assembled...it is a very moving finale. What Robertson plans for the next installment in the series, I cannot imagine. It will need to be a doozy to top this one.

**My Review:** I don't have a lot to say about the books, except I think any mystery lover who is also a history buff will enjoy the series. I very much enjoy the books myself. I suspect that the author's somewhat

stately choice of style, no contractions, no anachronisms, could pall on some readers. For me, it was a genuine pleasure. I like these books, and find them quite involving and well-made in novel terms. As mysteries, they are quite good enough...but not first-rank puzzlers. It's not why I am reading them, so I'm not disappointed. More of the Christie style, where the journey is the point, than the Sayers tradition, where the puzzle is very tightly crafted. Go in with your expectations properly calibrated, and these are delightful entertainments.

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