



The Tattoo

By Chris Mckinney

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“A book about ‘the sins of the fathers.’ . . . A gritty, troubling book.”—*The Honolulu Advertiser*

“The other Hawai’i, the one tourists never get to see.”—Ian MacMillan

Ken Hideyoshi is the new guy in Halawa Correctional Institute. He’s tough looking, a hard case, observes his cellmate Cal—the mute tattoo artist of the prison, a wife murderer. *SYN*, a gang symbol, is tattooed on his hand, and he has a Japanese emblem inscribed on his left shoulder. He asks Cal for a tattoo on his back, in kanji script, of Musashi’s *Book of the Void*.

While he is being worked on, he tells Cal his life story, a tale of hardship and abuse. Motherless, he was raised by a distant father, a Vietnam War veteran, in the impoverished hinterlands. In his teen years he hung out with the native Hawaiian gangs and was drawn into the Hawaiian-Korean underworld of strip bars and massage parlors. His ambition and proud samurai spirit seem, inevitably, to lead to his downfall.

Chris McKinney is of Korean, Japanese, and Scottish descent. He was born in Honolulu and grew up in Kahaluu. He portrays the native Hawaiian experience from the inside, where children of mixed ethnicity grow up far from the clear water and pristine beaches of the rich visitors’ resorts.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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The Tattoo By Chris Mckinney Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—This is the story of one prisoner's life told to another. The listener is Cal, a white, onetime racist tattoo artist who lost his voice when his throat was cut in a prison fight. He is serving a long sentence on one of the Hawaiian Islands. Over the years, he has become the kind of man other prisoners feel safe talking to—partly because he can't repeat what they say, but also because they trust the sense of peace he has found in his own silence and the time he has served. Cal's new cellmate is Ken, a Japanese man raised in Hawaii—and an outsider like Cal. He has Cal give him a large, symbolic tattoo on his back as he tells his rich though troubled tale. Ken recounts his childhood friendship with a doomed, modern-day Hawaiian prince and the decaying world he ruled. He found himself the muscle man for a bar-owning, prostitution-ring-running, loan-sharking Korean woman. Falling in love with her daughter was just one of the reasons that he ended up behind bars. Teens will appreciate the many deep, complicated relationships. The language and realities are rough, but there is much compassion and wisdom to balance them.—*Will Marston, Berkeley Public Library, CA*

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Review

"A book about 'the sins of the fathers'.... A gritty, troubling book and he's done it well. The issues he raises are key to Hawaii today and for future generations." --*Honolulu Advertiser*

"Unforgettable.... If McKinney's ultimate achievement is his portrayal of Hawai'ian culture in a way that mainland Americans - those who've never seen, nor ever will, anything but the touristy side of Hawai'i - can identify with, then the ultimate failure belongs to the mainland American publishing houses for ignoring the book for so long." --*San Antonio Current*

"McKinney excels in his descriptions of the Hawaiian landscape.... In Ken Hideyoshi, McKinney has created a character both gritty and complex." --*Small Spiral Notebook*

"Rough-and-tumble, rife with fully drawn badass characters and plenty of action, McKinney's novel is powerful and strong." --*Time Out Chicago*

"McKinney's very first novel is thought provoking and revealing to say the least. The way this first-time novelist keeps the story moving is a credit to his skill as a writer... We highly recommend this book to those who enjoy contemporary fiction... ." --*The Dispatch*

From the Inside Flap

Set in contemporary Hawaii, *The Tattoo* reveals a side of paradise not usually seen as it traces the life of Ken Hideyoshi, a young man with a troubled past. Orphaned by his mother at an impressionably young age, Ken grows up with an abusive, distant father unable to communicate anything but anger. His teen years are spent on a roller coaster as he tries to deal with a growing inner rage. Far from the sunny beaches and crystal blue ocean, Ken's world is one of mud shores and polluted waters. Drawn into Hawaii's underworld, with its hostess bars, strip bars, and massage parlors, Ken falls in love with Claudia Choy, the daughter of the rich and powerful Korean woman who presides over an empire built on the peddling of flesh. This sets in motion a chain of events that has unexpected consequences as Ken continues his struggle to control the samurai spirit that haunts and teases him into action. Told by Ken from inside the walls of Halawa Prison, this is the story of a man searching for truth. And, ultimately, for the answer to the most human of all questions: do we

have the power to shape who we ultimately become?

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lois Silvey:

What do you regarding book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. The doctor has to answer that question because just their can do this. It said that about book. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this kind of The Tattoo to read.

Candice Sharkey:

The knowledge that you get from The Tattoo could be the more deep you searching the information that hide within the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to know but The Tattoo giving you excitement feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood through anyone who read that because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your vocabulary increase well. Therefore it is easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this specific The Tattoo instantly.

Bradley Harshbarger:

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Donna Nichols:

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