



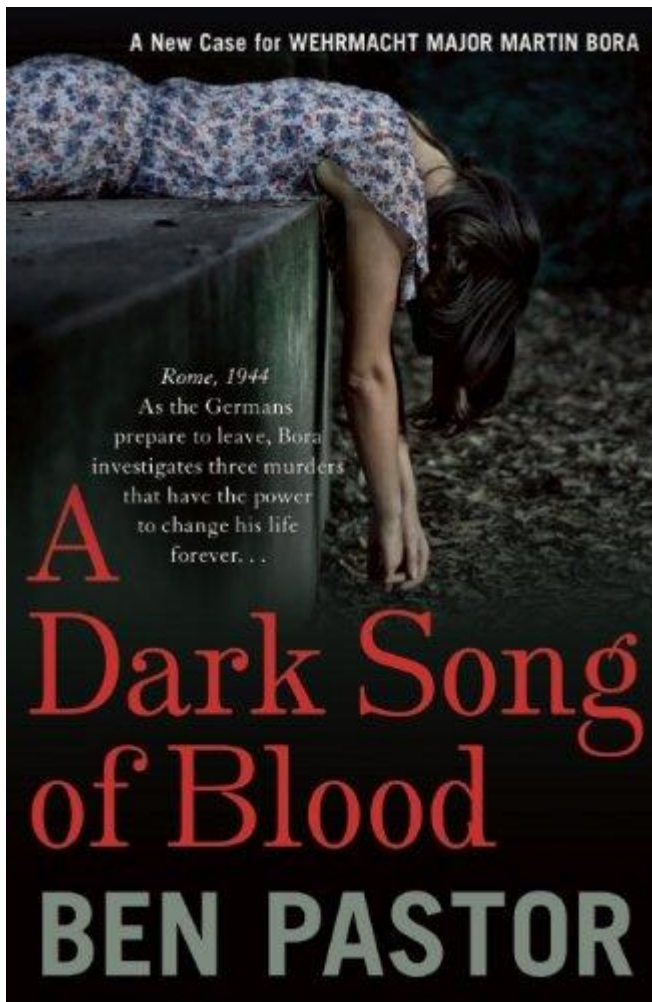
Mike Ripley's
GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER
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I am very familiar with the work of another Italian who has chosen the war years as a setting for her crime fiction: Ben (Verbena) Pastor, one of the stars of last year's *Chianti Crime Festival*.



Unlike Lucarelli's Inspector De Luca, Ben Pastor's detective hero is not Italian, but a German aristocrat – Wehrmacht Major Martin von Bora – whose fabulous debut, investigating the death of a saintly nun in Nazi-occupied Poland, *Lumen*, took an incredible 12 years to find an English publisher, the astute Bitter Lemon Press. Bora's second case, in occupied Italy, *Liar Moon*, took only 11 years but after another 12-

year gap, the third in the series, *A Dark Song of Blood*, set in Rome in 1944, appears once again thanks to Bitter Lemon Press.



Martin von Bora, a figure clearly inspired by Count Claus von Stauffenberg, is a fascinating character – crippled both physically and morally by the horrors perpetrated by the Gestapo and the SS in the name of the country he still cares for. In *A Dark Song of Blood*, Bora has to team up with the reluctant Italian Inspector Guidi to investigate the suspicious death of a secretary at the German embassy despite a stone wall of internal politics and corruption and the fact that outside the walls of Rome the Allies are advancing, the Wehrmacht is retreating, Italian partisans are on the offensive and German reprisals are bloody and infamous.

The Martin Bora series is a remarkable achievement and bears comparison (although different) with the Bernie Gunther books of Philip Kerr. There are more in the series still to be published in the UK, but please don't make us wait so long for them.

Mike Ripley