



THE SUNDAY TIMES

The American author Ben Pastor has produced a fine series of novels featuring a conscience-stricken Wehrmacht officer in the Second World War. Her latest, *A Dark Song of Blood* (Bitter Lemon £8.99/ebook £8.99, ST Bookshop price £8.54), places Major Martin von Bora in Rome in 1944.

While each day brings news of allied advances, Bora is ordered to look into the death of a secretary at the German embassy. The investigation brings him into conflict with the SS, but he also has to weigh the significance of one unexplained death against a mass execution carried out by the Germans on the outskirts of Rome.

This is historical crime fiction at its best, vividly recreating the atmosphere of a city occupied by an increasingly desperate army.