



A Dark Song of Blood

Ben Pastor.

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Pastor's atmospheric third Martin Bora mystery (after 2012's *Liar Moon*) finds the German counterintelligence officer in Rome in January 1944. There Bora teams with Insp. Sandro Guidi of the Italian police to investigate the suspicious death of German embassy secretary Magda Reiner, who fell from her apartment window. Since the prime suspect, Rodolfo Merlo, the victim's lover, is head of the National Confederation of Fascist Unions, pursuing the case against Merlo is complicated. Meanwhile, two more high-profile city residents—one a cardinal, the other a society woman—die under unusual circumstances. The whodunit aspect balances logic and surprise nicely, and the puzzle is enhanced by the setting, perfectly rendered by Pastor, and her depiction of an honorable man dedicated to solving crime in the midst of war. Readers will look forward to the next in the series, *The Horseman's Song*, a prequel that chronicles Bora's experiences in the Spanish Civil War.

Meryl Zegarek

