



A very intriguing premise and storyline! The location is the Republic of Salo – a German puppet state in the north of Italy. Well, that got me interested straight away. This novel is one of a series and although you do gain from reading the previous ones, this is a good novel on its own.

I found it fascinating that the story is set in the fascist stronghold in the country. Wehrmacht colonel Martin Bora is on the hunt of a precious painting of Venus. Trouble is that three dead bodies complicate somewhat. Things become sinister very soon. There is an odd beauty in the death scene however – for the women's bodies have been displayed artistically.

Bora is a good man who wants to find the truth. He goes through a lot to try and wrestle with his research as well as his conscience. He starts to feel backed into a corner and becomes nervous when he appears to feel targeted. As if he is being set up.

This is an intriguing read. So many red herrings and difficult paths. I loved the mystery and the way Bora went about his investigation. There's a lovely thread about his love life too and so it all feels very fleshed out and realistic.

It was the art links and art history that really made this novel though. We have all read about the way the Nazis banned or burned art unfortunately. This way, we learn of the history, various art pieces and the Nazi attack on the cultural heritage of Italy and elsewhere.

You have to remember reading this, is the fact that Bora has been followed by the Gestapo accused of doing things that were considered anti-Nazi activities. A man in his position has a lot to lose – and he fears for his life.

A unique and compelling read.

