



The Dark Heart of Florence

Michele Giuttari

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After enduring years at the mercy of an infamous serial killer, the people of Florence are relieved at the news of his death - until a senator and his butler are found brutally murdered. Chief Superintendent Michele Ferrara suspects that the case isn't closed and as he becomes trapped in a spiral of vendettas and corruption, a powerful adversary is conspiring against him from the shadows. When he's confronted with dead ends and unreliable theories, discovering the truth is only the beginning for Ferrara as he finds himself face-to-face with something rotten at the heart of the city

The Dark Heart of Florence Details

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Author : Michele Giuttari

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From Reader Review The Dark Heart of Florence for online ebook

Jane Crampton says

I really enjoyed this book. I've read all of the series and have enjoyed them all. Michele Giuttari's knowledge and experience shine through in all his novels and brings depth to his characters.

Ellen says

Best of the series. Only three stars because of cliched predictability.

Judith says

I wish we could do 4.5 stars. For me, a little too much centering on sexual predators and sadism. I understand that these books are focusing on the renegade Freemason sub-group "the Black Rose", but are all of them focussed on sexual predation and sadism? There are other crimes. At least Giuttari does not detail all of the sadistic acts; some mysteries do and these I will not continue reading. In this one we do know the perpetrator; the tension is how will he be caught and how much damage to lives will he do.

What I find interesting in mysteries written in other countries is the point of view of crime and/or police. Example: Nordic mysteries vs. British vs. Italian (really only the alternate countries whose mysteries I have read). Has anyone written a comparative analysis?

Kathleen Heady says

When a prominent Italian senator and his butler are found murdered, Chief Superintendent Michele Ferrera of the Florence police cannot help but recall "the monster of Florence," a serial murderer who had plagued the city some years before. Thus begins a tantalizing story of murder and madness, told through a varied assortment of characters -- police, politicians, members of organized crime, as well as a couple of women who just want to start a new life together.

Even as Chief Superintendent Michele Ferrera is told to stay out of the case of the Senator's murder, he soldiers on. He is refused search warrants by the authorities, but is always one step ahead of the game. He has already obtained the information he requires.

Then when a young Cuban would-be model is found murdered, and it becomes clear that the man who calls himself "Genius" is taunting the police, and especially Ferrera. And he is smart. He leaves no clues. Is this "the monster of Florence," returned once again to kill and terrify? Is the murderer of the model and the senator one and the same person?

Ferrera and his colleague Teresa Micalizi continue to search for the criminals, uncovering ties to Germany when the DNA of a criminal dead for several years shows up at the scene of the Cuban model's murder. Writing from the background of his experience as head of the police force of Florence, author Michele

Guittari paints a picture of a city of beauty with an underlying heart of evil. Translated from the Italian, the novel retains the color of the original language. I found this a tremendously satisfying book, a travelogue and murder mystery rolled into one. (As published in Suspense Magazine)

Alison Kennedy says

I love this author. However, I found this to be the weakest of his books. The descriptions were overly simplistic, the writing was very basic and often spelled out things the reader should figure out for themselves. The plot seemed to amble along slowly, with a lot of references to a character hoping for a breakthrough which seemed to be a superfluous statement, only to come to a very abrupt end.

It was entertaining enough and perhaps the translation is the weakness in what is usually a very engaging series.

I'll continue to read his books but I hope for better next time.

Peter Anderson says

Review added in error!

Sorry,
Peter

Sally Seymore says

Crime novels are not usually my first choice, but I read this book because of its setting, being Florence. I enjoyed it! Michele Giuttari was a former head of the Florence police force and his knowledge of how they operate is evident in his writing, which is clear and to the point.

Chris M. says

Half way through this novel I gave up reading it. The writing feels like its still at an early stage in the creative process and should have been kicked back by the editor for more work. The plot wasn't interesting enough but that might be because I haven't read the other books. The location of Florence prompted me to pick the book up but I didn't feel the magic of the city in the writing. Maybe some things are lost in translation and there were pressures to rush it. Quite simply it wasn't very good.

Gordon says

Well now... cautionary note to all readers. The Dark Heart of Florence is very definitely part of a series, and it was my great good fortune that I picked up the right one (The Black Rose of Florence) first.

This story involves sinister plots, secret societies and the return of a lot of characters from the previous novel. Someone dies, and Commissario Ferrara has to find out what's going on while at the same time pick his way through the labyrinthine structure of the competing Italian police forces.

I could write more, but I think I'd either be giving away too much of this book or the previous one – or else I'd say nothing at all. So I'll settle for saying that at times Ferrara wasn't the only one who struggled to follow what was going on.

Of course I'll read the next one. But approval of this depends on how it plays out. Get the order right here, for goodness' sake.

Jill says

Somewhere between okay and really liked it, this is really a 2.5 star rating. Billed as the leading Italian crime writer, something was either missing or lost in the translation. Our crime fighting Commissioner seems a dashing fellow but is so sketchily drawn I couldn't get a handle on him. We have touching scenes with his wife at home, drinking red wine and smoking cigars on the patio in the evenings and having his breakfast 'lovingly' prepared for him each morning (are they newlyweds? If not, the 'lovingly' part may well have worn off)... And then we have our main man at work, taking names and dishing out orders. But in between all the action, we don't really get a sense of who he is or what motivates him. He just does stuff.

The other members of law and order are a sketchy bunch too. Some are evil-minded and intentioned, out to get Commissioner Ferrara who, for reasons unexplained, has ruffled more high-ranking feathers than he should have, and now has powerful enemies within the government structure within which he strives. But these nefarious souls are also like ghosts in fog, trying to get a handle on them is challenging.

The crimes are awful, and even though I now know who perpetrated them, it's all still a bit ... hazy. There's a revenge motive, but blink twice and you'd miss it. It's all a bit too convoluted and because I didn't care too much about anybody, I haven't bothered to sit down with some graph paper and a slide rule to try and work it all out. Certainly our perpetrators motives are deep and opaque.

The characterisations were sometimes strange, and I put this down to possibly the translation into English. Perhaps in Italian some of these idiosyncracies made more sense. Why the perpetrator had such a small penis (yes, this was pointed out to us) is one such idiosyncracy. It made for, let's call it, quirky reading.

I normally give my novels away to friends and family once I've read them. This one, I'm not so sure as even by giving away a book you're sort of endorsing it... and this one is difficult to put a stamp of approval on. It's just a little too whimsical and wispy to recommend.

Desiree says

Unlike the previous books in this series the story is more closely linked to the previous book (which I have

not read) and, I suspect because of the unsatisfying ending, to the next episode. I liked the first few books and although this one is ok there was just too much conspiracy theory for me and too much harking back to the monster of Florence.

Giuttari seems to become obsessed with the mason's. Also different storylines just don't seem to be completed at the end.

Helen Ruth Harris says

Step by step policing

What a jumble the Italian police system seems to be! Guitar creates a character it's easy to have deep respect for. Can't wait for the next one.

Ernesto Ammerata says

Un bel libro, facile da leggere e per niente noioso.

Una storia intrigata, che cela protagonisti potenti e pericolosi, la cui condotta nella realtà è ben diversa dalle apparenze.

David Gill says

Could not quite follow what was going on, and thought the ending did not explain a number of things. Got the feeling it ended like this as a starter to another book, a practice I do not like.

Mary Warnement says

I first saw this series in the gift shop of the Uffizi. Because it was published by Penguin, I thought I could easily find it once back in the US and not have to carry another item during my trip. It proved difficult to find, a reminder to get something when you see it. A police procedural written by a former police officer appealed. The first few books were good, although the writer's sense of self-worth was a bit much at times. In this book, he refers multiple times to the main character as "legendary," and perhaps it's missing in translation, but I don't think his tongue is in his cheek.

The writing is not excellent; in fact, sometimes it's bad. (I skipped one of the books on advice.) But I'm a sucker for a virtual trip to Florence and Tuscany.
