

THE MYSTERY GAZETTE

LIAR MOON

Ben Pastor

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Wehrmacht Major Martin von Bora survived the cruel Russian front as a hero though to the SS he is an enemy for his inquiry in Poland five years ago (see Lumen). In September 1943, the Baron is assigned to Verona in German occupied northern Italy; where ironically a grenade launcher destroys one of his hands and left a leg filled with shrapnel. Though his doctor prescribes rest, Martin refuses.

His superior Colonel Habermehl sends Muti Battalion Centurion Gaetano de Rosa to direct Martin to investigate the death of a powerful Fascist, wheelchair bound Camerata Vittorio Lisi in a car accident that is clearly a murder. Martin asks Police Inspector Sandro Guidi to help him. In turn, Guidi asks the German officer to assist his investigation into a serial killer who leaves a shoe behind. Bora, who misses his wife, knows the SS is watching him hoping to eliminate him at a time when the Holocaust trucks through Verona and partisans with help from the allies to the south will do anything to liberate the occupied north.

The two historical mysteries are cleverly designed to bring to life an occupied divided Italy in the Fall of 1943. Both cases are entertaining due to the lead sleuths working sort of together but not quite trusting one another as their agendas appear different. Bora is a hero who conceals his activities to prevent atrocities. Guidi has problems understanding the seemingly cold aloof German. Readers will relish Ben Pastor's

strong WWII mysteries with its superb historical background.

Harriet Klausner