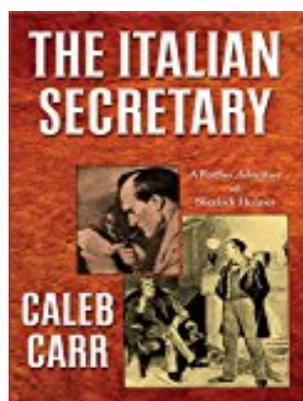


[PDF] The Italian Secretary: A Further Adventure Of Sherlock Holmes

Caleb Carr - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Author: Caleb Carr

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Description:

Although Sherlock Holmes categorically dismissed, in "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire," supernatural explanations for corporeal crimes ("This Agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. ... No ghosts need apply"), one of the most popular among Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Holmes tales is (1902), in which the fate of a Devonshire family supposedly hangs on the savage appetites of an apparitional beast. More than a century later, in *The Italian Secretary*,

Caleb Carr again presents the hawk-faced consulting detective with a yarn woven of paranormal plot threads, the mystery this time rooted in the fatal 16th-century stabbing of David Rizzio, a music teacher and confidant to Mary, Queen of Scots.

For Holmes and his affable annalist, Dr. John Watson, this spirited escapade begins sometime in the late 19th century with their receipt, in London, of an encrypted telegram from Sherlock's eccentric elder brother, Mycroft, "a senior but anonymous government official." It summons them to Edinburgh, Scotland, where architect Sir Alistair Sinclair and his foreman, Dennis McKay, have been slain in the midst of rehabilitating the medieval west tower of the Royal Palace of Holyrood--the very wing where Queen Mary had lived, and where Rizzio had met his brutal, politically motivated end. Mycroft fears these murders portend new threats against Britain's present monarch--the elderly Queen Victoria, who infrequently lodges at the palace--by a known assassin, perhaps in nefarious league with the German Kaiser. En route north, Holmes and Watson are menaced aboard their train by a red-bearded bomb thrower (supposedly a rabid Scots nationalist), only to discover that still greater dangers await them, and others, at Holyroodhouse. The plaintive drone of a weeping woman, cruelly punctured and shattered corpses, a pool of blood "that never dries," and a disembodied Italian voice with unexpected musical tastes all imply the wrath of wraiths behind recent atrocities. But Holmes and Watson deduce that greed, rather than ghosts, may be to blame.

Carr, who earned renown with his historical mysteries, (1994) and (1997), apparently intended *The Italian Secretary* to be a short story; however, he couldn't stop writing. The result is a fleet-footed, atmospherically gothic, and often amusing Holmes tale (with an exposition scene in Watson's bed chamber that's truly priceless), but one that makes scant attempt to enhance our understanding of Conan Doyle's characters--a less ambitious undertaking, in that respect, than Mitch Cullin's concurrently published . And while Carr displays a gift here for adopting another author's literary techniques, it is really his own style and series players that his fans are waiting to see more of in the future. --J. Kingston Pierce --This text refers to an alternate edition.

From Publishers Weekly Writing a Sherlock Holmes tale is, for popular writers, equivalent to playing Hamlet for male actors: a challenge that few refuse and many regret. Bestselling author Carr (*The Angel of Darkness*, etc.) acquits himself with honor, though not high honors, in this short novel that pits Holmes, Watson and Mycroft Holmes against conspirators at Queen Victoria's Royal Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh, Scotland. When the men are killed at Holyrood in a fashion similar to the slaying centuries before of David Rizzio, an Italian confidant of Mary, Queen of Scots, Mycroft, who is Victoria's head of intelligence, calls upon his brother and Watson to help solve the mystery. Are the killings the work of Scottish nationalists? Or perhaps the sign of a restless ghost? From the latter question, and the novel's primary setting of the dank castle, emanates a well-drawn atmosphere of gloom that makes this story a nice companion to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Holmes fans and scholars should be pleased with this novel, which generally hews to "the Canon" (unlike, say, Nicholas Meyer's *Seven-Per-Cent Solution*) and reflects a deep knowledge and understanding of Holmesiana, but the primary base for this novel will be, of course, Carr fans, who won't be quite as thrilled—for while the novel captivates, it matches neither of Carr's previous megasellers in plot invention or depth of character. Still, this should hit bestsellers lists, though not in a major way. (May 10).

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