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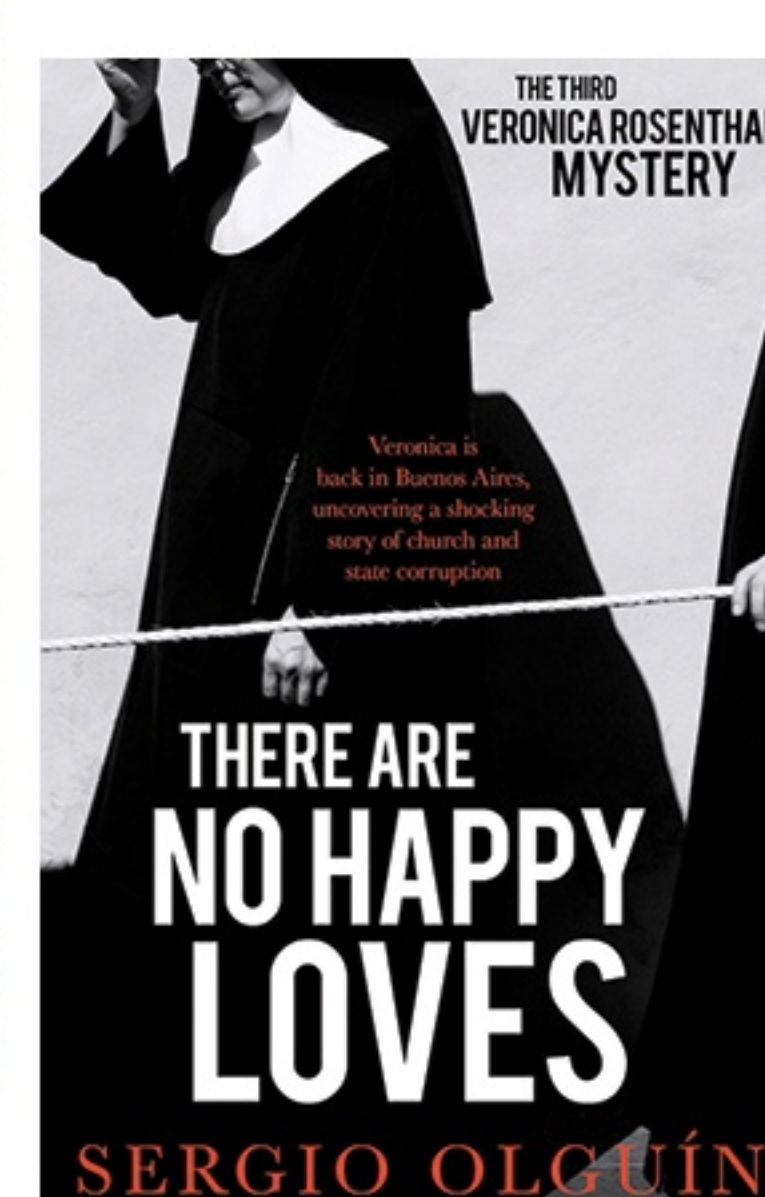
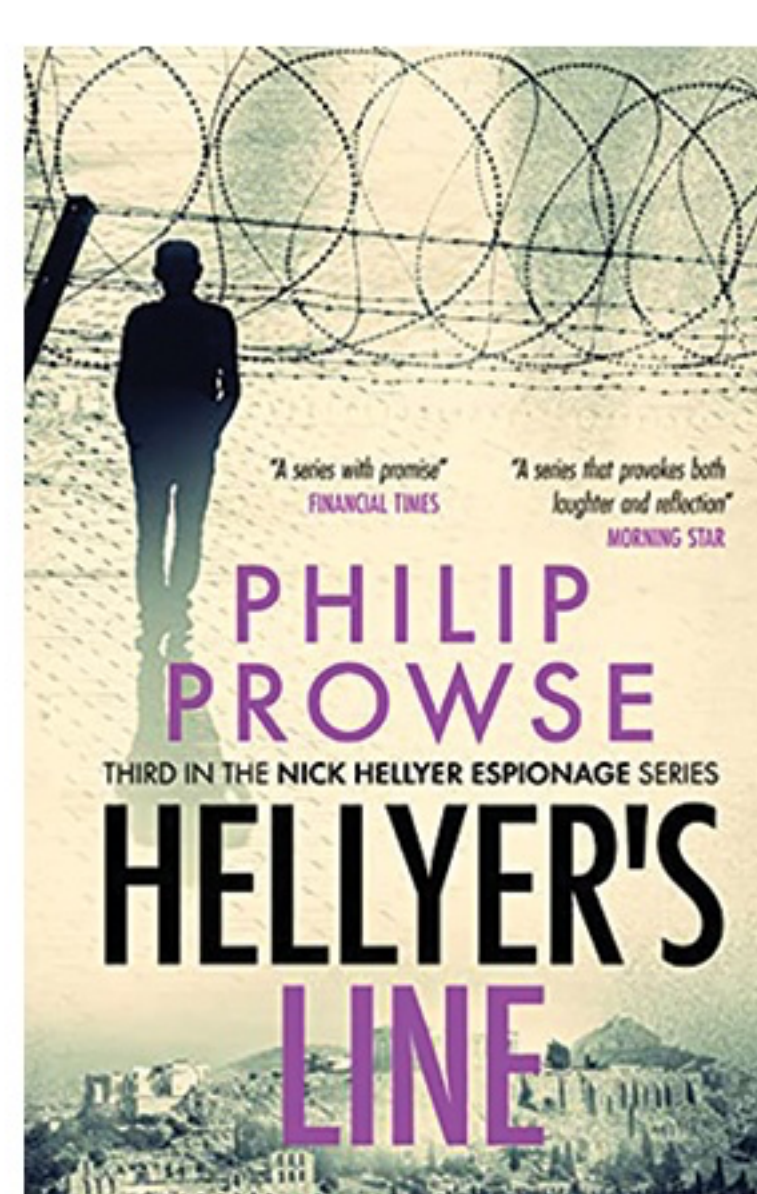
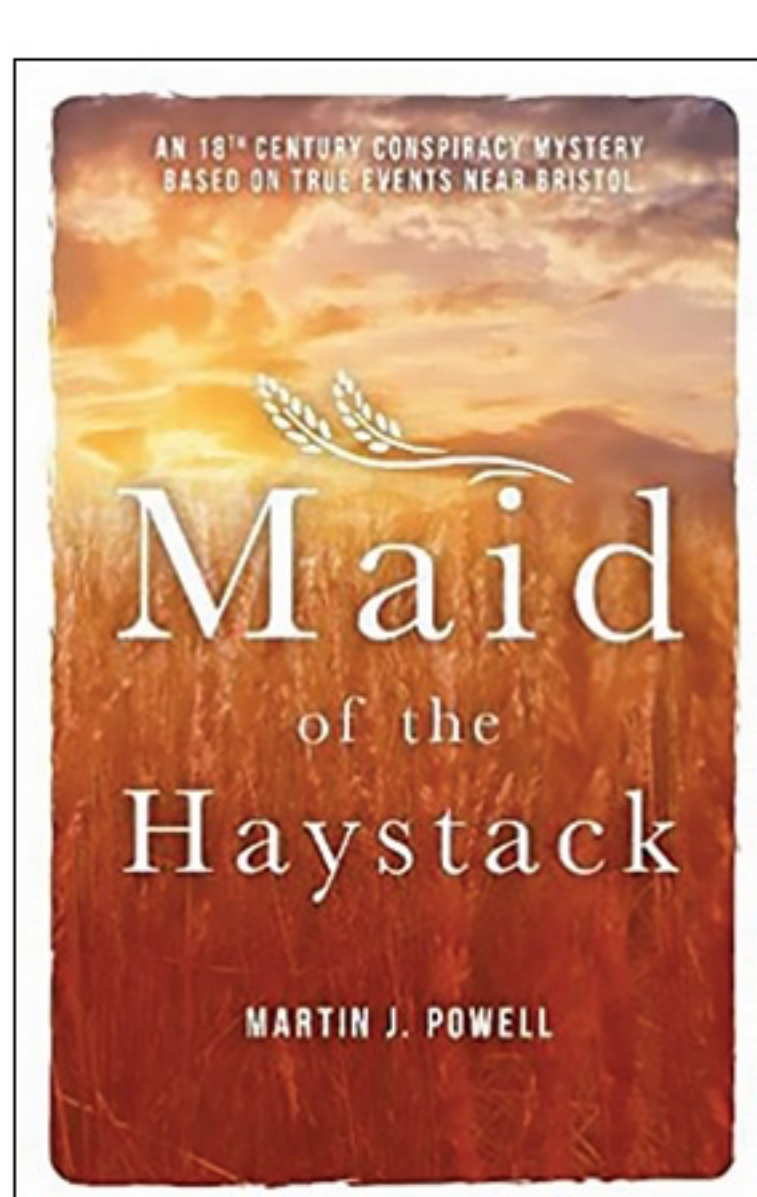
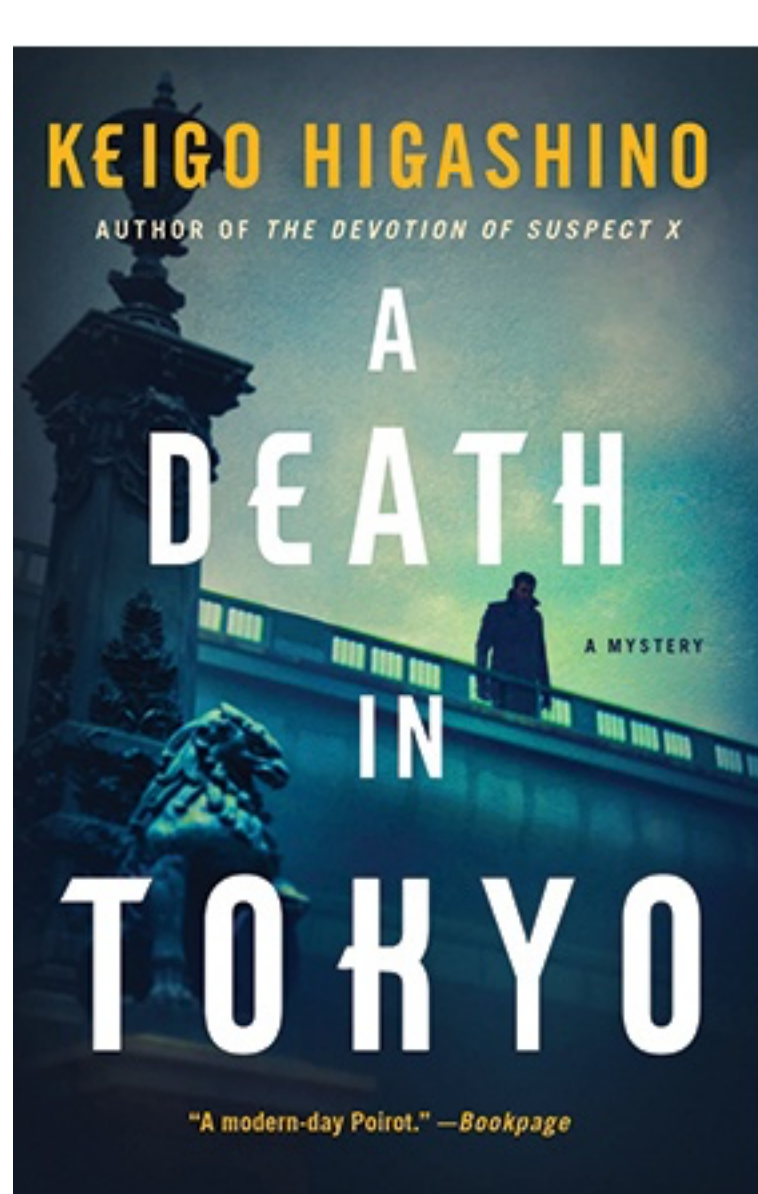
# Sale now on!



## Book Review

# Crime Fiction with Mat Coward: December 4, 2022

New titles from Keigo Higashino, Martin J Powell, Philip Prowse and Sergio Olguin



**O**N ONE of Tokyo's most famous landmarks, the Nihonbashi Bridge, a man staggers to a halt beneath the statue of a kirin, a mythological beast, in *A Death in Tokyo* by Keigo Higashino (Abacus, £12.59).

The man appears drunk but is in fact dead, with a stab wound in his chest. Nearby, a young unemployed man is knocked down by a car while fleeing the police — in his pocket is the wallet of the stabbing victim.

Higashino's enigmatic serial character, police detective Kyoichiro Kaga, is unsatisfied with the common view that this is an open-and-shut case. He wants to know the why of the murder as well as the who — and come to that, he's not entirely convinced about the who, either.

Alongside mastery of the traditional, clue-rich mystery, Higashino's books deliver revealing insights into Japanese urban life.

*Maid Of The Haystack* by Martin J Powell (Bristol Books, £14) imagines an international conspiracy involving royalty, revolution and Freemasonry to account for a strange episode in West Country history which has, in real life, never been properly explained.

In 1776 a strikingly beautiful young woman took up residence in a haystack in Flax Bourton, near Bristol. She seemed to be of high birth, and possibly foreign, but was unable or unwilling to tell anyone her name, where she came from, or how she had ended up in Somerset.

Refusing to live indoors, she spent four years in her peculiar lodgings, through all weathers, cared for by kindly locals, becoming a minor tourist attraction in the process.

This is an intriguing mixture of fact and speculation, with an enticing story at its heart.

*Hellyer's Line* (Kernel Books, £6.29) is the third episode of this hugely enjoyable and distinctive series. As before, Philip Prowse blends the almost absurdist complexities required of the espionage genre with honed humour and meticulous historical research.

The story sees Nick Hellyer sent to Athens to uncover a double agent at the British embassy. As ever, Nick's official assignment turns out to be the least of his problems. The military junta is in its last weeks, Turkey is about to invade Cyprus, and it's really not a great time to be British in Greece.

On the streets many see British functionaries as merely junior Americans, and therefore legitimate targets, while some still remember Churchill's wicked, blood-soaked betrayal of Greek democracy in 1944.

There's also a historical basis to *There Are No Happy Loves* (Bitter Lemon Press, £9-99), third instalment in Sergio Olguin's series of conspiracy thrillers featuring Buenos Aires journalist Veronica Rosenthal.

A man who's convinced his wife and child didn't die in the car crash that he survived, but are living in hiding, sets Veronica on the trail of ultramontane Catholics, ultra-right politicians, and ultra-greedy gangsters.

I don't think there's a character in all of crime fiction quite like "Vero." She's irresistible and mesmerising — though it has to be said, neither she nor her adventures are for the faint-hearted or easily offended.

### OTHERS LIKED



**ZAHAWI'S PUTIN JIBE IS A DISGRACEFUL SMEAR ON WORKERS FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVELIHOODS**

**HANCOCK SLAMMED FOR ATTEMPTING TO DENY RESPONSIBILITY FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF COVID DEATHS**

**TORY ATTEMPTS TO PAINT NHS STRIKES AS HELPING PUTIN ARE 'NEW LOW FOR THIS GOVERNMENT', UNION SAY**

**WHEAT**

**NURSES' REP CALLS FOR 'EVERY TRADE UNIONIST' TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH UPCOMING HOSPITAL STRIKES**

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## Hancock slammed for attempting to deny responsibility for tens of thousands of Covid deaths

National Care Association chairwoman Nadra Ahmed says former health secretary's recollections 'bear no resemblance to the facts'



**Zahawi's Putin jibe is a disgraceful smear on workers fighting for their livelihoods**



**Fuel poverty campaigners stage 'warm up' protests across Britain**



**Iran's morality police has been dissolved, according to the country's attorney general**

## 'I became interested in jazz after listening to Indian classical music'

**ARTS** Chris Searle speaks with trumpeter HENRY LOWTHER



### LATEST STORIES

**COST OF CHRISTMAS DINNER HAS RISEN THREE TIMES FASTER THAN WAGES THIS YEAR, SAYS TUC**

**SCOTTISH UNIONS CALL FOR 'PROGRESSIVE WEALTH TAXES' AHEAD OF SCOTTISH BUDGET**

**SIR KEIR LOOKS TO DEVOLVE POWER 'FROM WESTMINSTER TO THE PEOPLE'**

**MBAPPE PRODUCES MOMENTS OF MAGIC AS FRANCE EASE PAST POLAND**

**FAMILY OF THREE SPENT FIVE YEARS STUCK IN MOULD-INFECTED COUNCIL FLAT**

**HUNDREDS OF RENTERS PROTEST OUTSIDE LETTING AGENTS ACROSS LONDON CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO FREEZE RENTS**

**PELE SAYS HE IS 'STRONG WITH A LOT OF HOPE' AMID HEALTH CONCERNS**

### Others liked



**Zahawi's Putin jibe is a disgraceful smear on workers fighting for their livelihoods**



**Hancock slammed for attempting to deny responsibility for tens of thousands of Covid deaths**



**Tory attempts to paint NHS strikes as helping Putin are 'new low for this government', union say**

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"We've got to make sure this era is not a footnote in our..."