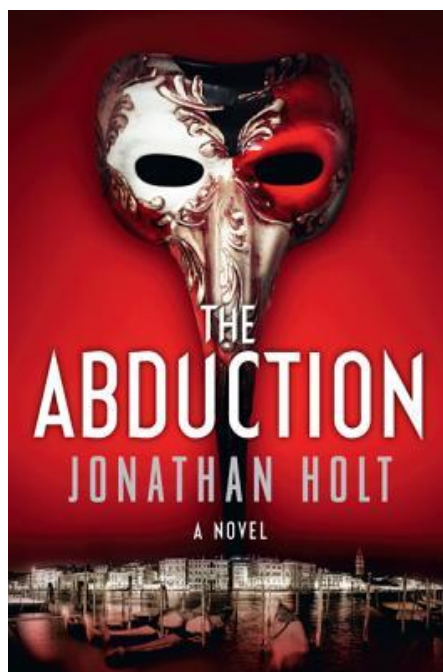




The Abduction

Jonathan Holt

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"Breathtaking . . . truly haunting." -Marilyn Stasio, New York Times, on The Abomination

The Abduction is the heart-pounding, adrenaline-fuelled follow up to Jonathan Holt's highly acclaimed international thriller The Abomination-a modern tale of mystery, treachery, and intrigue that moves between the physical and virtual worlds of Venice, Italy, blurring the boundary between dark fantasy and terrifying reality

An unlikely trio must form an alliance to save a kidnapped young girl and untangle a nefarious plot that reaches back decades.

Second Lieutenant Holly Boland is an intelligence analyst trained to look for clues ordinary investigators miss. When a U.S. army officer's daughter is kidnapped from an American base in Venice, Holly is sure that the mysterious abductors want more than a ransom.

Venetian police captain Kat Tapo has found a webcam feed embedded in the encrypted website Carnivia.com, a virtual Venice. It streams video of a terrified teenage girl, hooded and tied to a chair. A strand of text scrolls across the screen: "Sensory deprivation is not torture." Is the girl the missing daughter of the American military officer? Who is behind the cryptic message?

Daniele Barbo, the genius webmaster and creator of Carnivia, has never let the government access his servers, and finding the missing girl is not his problem. But then secrets from Italy's dark wartime past begin to surface-revelations that could put them all in danger. To save his own skin, Daniel must decide how far he's willing to let them in.

In a race against time, Holly, Kat, and Daniel must find the shocking truth . . . or watch as more than one innocent life is sacrificed.

The Abduction Details

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From Reader Review The Abduction for online ebook

Papatya ?ENOL says

bu seriyi çok sevdim. üçüncü kitabı okumak için de sabırsızlanıyorum.
antiamerikan ve feminist yaklaşımlar bu kitapta da mevcut. artan gerilim ve sürükleyicilik çok başarılı. ilk kitapta kiliseye odaklanırken, burada Amerika'nın sınırdışı uygulamaları ve iktidare kabül edilmeyen iktidareleri ele alıyor.
polisye meraklılarına tavsiyemdir.

Kerstin says

"Triff eine Entscheidung. In einer Krisensituation sterben die Unentschlossenen als Erste.
Direkt gefolgt von denen, versteht sich, die sich falsch entschieden." // **Seite 510**

"Folter" hat mir nicht ganz so gut wie "Marter" gefallen. Es ist ein gutes Buch und auch hier verpackt der Autor geschickt mehrere problematische Themen, vor allem (wie der Titel verrät) in Bezug auf Folter, aber die Geschichte war weniger spannend und fesselnd.

In "Folter" gibt es wieder verschiedene Handlungsstränge, die langsam zusammenlaufen. Es gibt Ermittlungen in Bezug auf einen Leichenfund, denen Aldo Piola zugeteilt wird, die Entführung der Tochter eines Angehörigen des amerikanischen Militärs, die von Holly Boland und Katerina Tapo untersucht wird, geheimnisvolle Andeutungen auf ein Geheimnis im Vatikan und natürlich auch Zusammenhänge zu Carnivia, der von Daniele Barbo entwickelten Seite. Dabei entstehen unterschiedliche Konflikte, sowohl im Privatleben der Personen (was mich weniger interessiert hat) als auch in Bezug auf aktuelle politische Ereignisse. Sehr erschreckend fand ich dabei, was dem entführten Mädchen angetan wurde und was alles offiziell nicht als 'Folter' eingestuft wird... und dass diese Methoden wohl, wenn man dem Autor Glauben schenken darf, tatsächlich mit dieser Rechtfertigung praktiziert werden. Dies regt definitiv zum Nachdenken an. Auch die anderen Handlungsstränge sind interessant, auch wenn mir einiges zu detailliert war; die komplexen Verbindungen untereinander und auch zu der Geschichte des ersten Bandes hat mir aber gefallen, da man so den Eindruck bekommt, es mit einer groß angelegten Verschwörung oder einfach einer sehr korrupten Welt (was wohl leider zutrifft) zu tun zu haben. Ich hoffe aber, dass Band 3 die offenen Fragen endlich klären wird.

Die Figuren waren ebenfalls wieder recht gut ausgearbeitet, auch wenn ich sagen muss, dass ich diesmal keine wirkliche Bindung zu ihnen aufbauen konnte. Vielleicht lag es daran, dass die Hauptfiguren in Band 1 ausgiebig charakterisiert wurden und hier nur noch Ansätze, quasi wie 'Erinnerungen', eingestreut sind. Gerade bei Katerina Tapo war dies der Fall; obwohl sie im Moment einiges durchmachen muss, konnte ich kein Mitleid mit ihr aufbringen. Im Gegenteil, obwohl sie sich auch in diesem zweiten Band als kompetente Ermittlerin erweist, gab es ein paar Stellen, an denen sie für meinen Geschmack zu weit gegangen ist, was sie mir nicht sympathischer gemacht hat. Allerdings muss ich sagen, dass die Figuren wieder alle mit Stärken und Schwächen ausgestattet wurden und der Autor es auch geschafft hat, dass einer der Entführer nicht nur wie ein Bösewicht, sondern *menschlich* wirkte.

Insgesamt hat "Folter" mir ganz gut gefallen. Es ist eine komplexe Geschichte, die leider ein paar Längen hat und die nicht ganz so spannend wie Band 1, aber dennoch interessant war. Gerade die Darstellung dessen, was offiziell nicht als Folter gilt, war beklemmend und dem Autor ist es gut gelungen, schwierige Themen

wie unrechtmäßige Inhaftierungen anzusprechen.
Auf den Abschluss der Trilogie bin ich schon gespannt.
3,5/5 Sternen

Robin says

Can't remember the last time – if ever – I read a thriller so packed with conspiracy, incident and intrigue. This has a historical murder, contemporary murders, vast CIA conspiracies, the abduction of the title (though that's not the only one), secret societies, an orgy, internet manipulation, a planned uprising, rogue soldiers, a military drug racket – I better stop there. I'm out of breath.

The focus of this enjoyable and fascinating story is the abduction from a Venetian orgy of teenager Mia, the daughter of a high-ranking US army officer. It would appear that activists against a new American base in Italy have snatched her. They rather cruelly and ingeniously use the CIA's own directives on the use of waterboarding and other coercive techniques to abuse the young woman before an internet audience. The implication being, the Americans don't like a dose of their own medicine. 'At 9pm she will not be tortured...' the captors chillingly announce on the internet, meaning that at 9pm they will use near-lethal US methods of non-torture on her.

A good chunk of the intrigue is taken up with cyber spying, hacking, how a site called Carnivia is hijacked to show Mia at the hands of her captors, while Facebook is also thrown in there. It occurred to me that anyone reading this book 20 years ago would have it and the issues it touches on about freedom of expression in the digital age almost incomprehensible. Things have changed mightily...

Pitched against the evil-doers are a varied bunch of protagonists – Captain Kat Tapo of the Carabinieri, her colleague and former lover Colonel Aldo Piola, and US intelligence analyst Holly Boland.

This is book 2 of author Jonathan Holt's Carnivia trilogy. Interestingly, he is the director of an ad agency and lover of Italy. The flavour of Italy and its culture is captured well in his book.

Abduction is a tale rich in mystery, all the better for being inspired by the CIA's postwar subterfuges in Italy, when it was determined not to allow the country turn to communism via the ballot box, and joined forces with the Vatican to prevent this happening. At the same time, the Obama administration's lacklustre efforts in stamping out the excesses of 'rendition' gives it a powerful contemporary twist.

My only criticism would be that the narrative has so much going on in it that the characters' feet barely touch the ground, so fast are they flung about by events. But it's a thriller that's gripping and far more stimulating than most. Boring it ain't.

Chuck says

Received this book as a birthday present. Great gift! This is the second book of a trilogy and I will need to purchase the first as soon as possible. Jonathan Holt is a great new writer.

The book focuses on the kidnapping of a young American girl and takes place in Venice, Italy. It features Carnivia, a on-line virtual world that duplicates the city, and both bad guys and good use the site. This is also a very political book as it deals with current issues of torture and rendition by the United States and historical

issues of how the CIA was involved in keeping Italy from communism after World War II.

A very intelligent book, but also sexy, beautiful, dangerous, and full of excitement! Can't recommend this one enough!

Liz C says

Good read

A good, fast paced read. I knew very little about American involvement in post war Italy but this story is good in explaining how it developed and it's effect on Italy today built around Mia's kidnap. I like the differences between the two female characters and recommend it to anyone.

Kitapbocegim says

?lk kitap kadar be?enmedim :(

Serhat says

?lk kitaptan eksi?i olmayan üçlemenin ikinci kitab?. Kitapta en çok ho?uma giden ?ey; olay örgüsü ve kurgusu oldu.

J.F. Penn says

A conspiracy thriller that explores the depths of what humans do under the umbrella of power. A girl is abducted and subjected to what is NOT defined as torture by the US, as the world watches through Carnivia, a website that guarantees anonymity. Kat, Holly and Daniele must work together to find the girl ... And unravel the plot behind it all.

I'm desperate for the next book. Brilliant.

Kerstin Stutzke says

Capitano Katerina "Kat" Tapo hat derzeit keinen leichten Stand bei den Carabinieri in Venedig. Nachdem sie die Affäre mit ihrem Vorgesetzten Colonnello Aldo Piola aufgedeckt hat und sich an die Dienstaufsicht gewandt hatte, da sie gegen ihren Willen versetzt wurde, wird sie von den übrigen Polizisten gemobbt und muss sich derzeit wieder um Diebstähle und ähnliches kümmern. Dann meldet sich Second Lieutenant Holly Boland bei ihr. Die beiden haben nach ihrem letzten gemeinsamen Fall kurz zusammen gewohnt, doch das hat einfach nicht funktioniert und auch ihre aufkeimende Freundschaft zerstörte dieses Wohnexperiment, doch Holly braucht Kats Hilfe. Die 16-jährige Mia Elston wurde entführt. Bei Mia handelt es sich um die Tochter von Major Elston, welcher auf dem Stützpunkt Camp Ederle stationiert ist.

Kurz nach Mias Entführung wenden sich die Kidnapper an die Öffentlichkeit. Daniele Barbo, der Erschaffer von "Carnivia" erhielt schon vorher Nachrichten, hat diese allerdings in keinen Zusammenhang bringen können. Nunmehr prangern sie öffentlich die NICHT-Folter der US Army an und werden diese NICHT-Foltermethoden an Mia praktizieren und die Öffentlichkeit mit Filmen über die Cyberwelt "Carnivia" veröffentlichen. Tatsächlich geht das erste Video online - und es werden weitere folgen. Die Entführer bekennen sich zur ADM (Azione Dal Molin). Doch was bezwecken sie damit?

Derweil ermittelt Colonnello Aldo Piola auf der Militärbasis. Dort wurde von einem Demonstranten ein Skelett gefunden. Zwar handelt es sich um kein "neueres" Skelett, doch anhand einer Schusswunde im Schädel ist ersichtlich, dass das Skelett auch noch nicht "so alt" ist. Wer war der Tote und wie kommt es, dass das Skelett erst jetzt wieder auftaucht, auf einem Schaufelbagger? Auf Grund einer Besonderheit am Skelett stellt sich schnell heraus, dass es sich bei dem Toten um den Partisanen Massimilio "Max" Ghimenti handelt, der eines Tages einfach von der Bildfläche verschwunden ist. Hartnäckig hielt sich das Gerücht, dass er in ein Lager gebracht wurde und von dort an verliert sich seine Spur. Das dem nicht so war, ist offensichtlich, denn auch das Grab wird gefunden, er hat diesen Ort niemals verlassen. Wer hat ihn umgebracht? Eine weitere Frage, mit der Piola konfrontiert wird: Sowohl die Entführer bekennen sich zur ADM, wie auch der Demonstrant, der das Skelett gefunden hat. Was haben diese beiden Verbrechen miteinander zu tun? Piola wird zusätzlich mit den Ermittlungen zur Entführung von Mia betraut, doch was wirklich hinter der Entführung des Mädchens? Warum wird das Augenmerk so auf die NICHT-Foltermethoden der USA gelenkt und wird Mia diese Prozedur überstehen?

Der 2. Band der Carnivia-Trilogie! Der Plot wurde spannend und interessant erarbeitet. Faszinierend empfand ich vor allem, wie die 16-jährige Mia auf ihre Entführung reagiert und mit ihren Entführern agiert. Mein Hochachtung, davon bin ich anfänglich nicht ausgegangen. Die Figuren wurden wieder authentisch erarbeitet, wobei mich hier gerade die Figur der Mia regelrecht begeistert hat. Einerseits ist sie wie jede normale Heranwachsende, die Geheimnisse vor ihren Eltern hat und Neugierde auf das Leben der Erwachsenen entwickelt, andererseits wirkt sie, gerade in der Interaktion mit ihren Entführern deutlich reifer, als es ihre 16 Jahre auf den ersten Blick errahnen lassen. Den Schreibstil empfand ich sehr angenehm zu lesen und ich freue mich bereits jetzt auf den finalen Band, der hoffentlich noch einige offene Fragen aufklärt.

Elisa Schiorlin says

mi è piaciuto molto

James Rye says

I read thrillers on holiday for the same reason that people watch Soap Operas at lunchtime or of an evening. I want to be entertained and temporarily drawn away from the demanding routine of my life into another world. If I vaguely care about the people in that world, that's a bonus. If I learn something in the process, either about life or myself - well, that's a double bonus.

The is book is the second in Jonathan Holt's Carnivia trilogy and I bought it on the strength of really enjoying The Boatman (the first in the series). It shared many of the qualities that brought me enjoyment of the first novel.

The reader is drawn into the book by a very skilful abduction of a teenager, and the attempts of the police to find her. Straight away there is tension to be resolved. The kidnappers keep ratcheting up the suffering they are imposing on their victim. Two of the main police protagonists are at odds with their superiors about how to proceed, and also at odds with each other, making any successful resolution look difficult. Finally, the straightforward kidnap starts to look less than straightforward. In a sense we think we know who did it, but then that certainty also starts to unravel. Read more...

For me, the genius of the book - the moment where I stopped reading and thought, "Wow, that's clever! Why didn't I think of that?" happens about two-thirds of the way through where someone outside the police force brings an entirely different perspective on the case by asking a simple question. And that question ultimately leads to a resolution.

But the book is so much richer than a very skilfully told kidnap and find story. There are at least three other layers operating alongside, underneath, and above the story. The author successfully weaves an historical perspective linked to the case involving the possible loss of Venice to the Communists after the Second World War. There is an historical who-dunnit to solve as well as information about the political corruption up to the present. There are moral questions for priests to face as the involvement of the Catholic Church in the emerging cover-up is revealed. And finally, there are the Americans. To be honest, the Americans don't come out of this too well. This is a very rich book.

I was entertained by being taken in detail into other worlds. In one sense this was relatively trivial (but satisfying) material. I found myself Googling some of the recipes for the dishes eaten in the restaurants. As a minor techo-nerd I was fascinated by the descriptions of the techniques employed by the computer wizards and the attempts by the police to frustrate one of them in particular. I was intrigued by the insights into the Vatican archives, and into the US military training techniques and equipment. I was horrified by the detailed information about the deniable torture techniques employed by the Americans on their detainees. But most of all, I learned a lot of interesting general information about post-war Italian politics. And, at the end, the author carefully lays out the genuine historical material which he used to create the backcloth to the initial kidnap story that became so much more intriguing.

I can thoroughly recommend this book. I've already purchased the third in the series.

Paul says

The Abduction – Stunning Story

The Abduction is the eagerly awaited follow up to The Abomination by the secretive Jonathan Holt the pseudonym for an already successful British author. This is the second in his Carnivia trilogy and keeps up the pace The Abomination started and brings to life some of Italy's murky post-war past and the aid that the Americans and the Vatican gave the country not to fall in to the communist's hands. The historical notes that Holt has drawn on a number of real conspiracies from the cold war and has used some dramatic licence in the process.

The Abduction takes that murky past and centres it on Venice and gives us a breathtaking thriller that leaves you hungry for more and glad that you have read this instalment. The Abduction carries on shining a light in to those dark corners of Italian and Papal history and gives us a high voltage, double dealing, absolutely fascinating thriller.

It is carnival time in Venice and a young girl is kidnapped from a club where one of the hottest parties is

taking place. The only problem is that the girl Mia is an army brat and her dad is based just outside Venice at the local military base. The kidnappers reveal themselves to be an activist group who want an end to all military bases in Italy and to help their cause they use the CIA torture memos to inflict a living nightmare upon Mia.

With our returning heroes Captain Kat Tapo of the Venice Carabinieri and second Lieutenant Holly Boland of the liaison unit or commonly acknowledged in the USA army as an Intelligence Analyst. The kidnappers are coming across as well organised amateurs but there is something about this kidnap that does not seem to be amateur to Kat and Holly; it is this that they investigate having to use their acquaintance Danielle Barbo hacker extraordinaire and the genius behind Carnivia the virtual world of Venice where anything goes.

We see the pervasive hand of the CIA and US military always hovering in the background of the Carabinieri investigation and sometimes using the power of the mis-direct to cover their aims. As the investigation continues both Kat and Holly feel they are not being told the full story of why Mia was targeted and it is down to them to investigate this and it could endanger them both.

As the politicians and media press for the closure of Carnivia.com and the Italian anti-terrorist team attempt to shut it down it is through Carnivia and Barbo that Kat and Holly can investigate fully. Whether either of our intrepid investigators are able to save Mia and find the truth may have a very high dividend but both are equally determined to discover the truth of both the past and the present. Even though they know that it is a great risk to themselves.

This is another fantastic part of the Carnivia trilogy and no reader will be disappointed, but it will leave them breathless and gagging for the final part of the trilogy. This is a brilliant blend of the past and the present made in to a thriller and the dial has been turned up to 11. Holt again shows that he is a master of his research, while making no political statement shines a light into parts of Italian history some wish would stay in the past. This is a winner of a book with very engaging characters and you are able to see how things unravel for the kidnappers in a very believable way. Simply brilliant.

Annabee says

[Gerecenseerd voor www.hebban.nl/crimezone]

'Het schandaal van Venetië' is het tweede deel van de Carnivia-trilogie van Jonathan Holt (1963), die na een studie Engelse literatuur zijn maatschappelijke carrière begon als toneelschrijver en tegenwoordig creative director is van een van Englands grootste reclamebureaus. Holt is een italofoon, zoals al bleek in deel 1, 'Het labirint van Venetië', dat doorspekt is met gedetailleerde wetenswaardigheden over de cultuur en historie van Italië en specifiek Venetië. De auteur geeft aan dat deel 1 de hoofdpersonen introduceert, dat deze in deel 2 in een gezamenlijke race tegen de klok belanden en in deel 3 gedwongen worden elk een andere partij te kiezen.

Op de Amerikaanse legerbasis nabij Venetië worden menselijke resten gevonden. Tegelijkertijd wordt de 19-jarige Mia Elston, dochter van een Amerikaanse legerofficier, ontvoerd. Werk aan de winkel voor kolonel Aldo Piola en de zijnen, waartoe niet meer Kat Tapo gerekend mag worden, die vanwege een akkefietje in deel 1 zo ver mogelijk uit Piola's buurt gehouden wordt. Maar Kat zou Kat niet zijn als ze daar niet iets op wist te vinden. Tweede luitenant Holly Boland gaat zich ook met de zaak bemoeien, evenals Daniele Barbo, de man achter Carnivia.com. Het viertal is compleet en bindt vanuit verschillende disciplines met vereende krachten de strijd aan tegen Mia's ontvoerders. Het team stuit tijdens het onderzoek naar de verblijfplaats

van het meisje op geheimen die menig betrokkene liever niet wereldkundig ziet worden. Welke rol speelt het leger in dit kat-en-muisspel op hoog niveau, wie beschermt wie en waarom, zijn de CIA en/of de kerk betrokken?

"'Het schandaal van Venetië' is een actuele thriller over mensenrechten en omstreden verhoortechnieken die wereldwijd worden toegepast door de Amerikaanse overheid." Aldus de cover van het boek. Het is echter meer, Het schandaal van Venetië is een regelrechte aanklacht tegen de praktijken die de Amerikanen toepassen jegens hun gevangenen in onder andere Guantanamo Bay. President Obama heeft weliswaar in 2008 beloofd het beruchte strafkamp te sluiten, tot op heden is dat niet gebeurd. De CIA hanteert een protocol waarin beschreven staat hoe ver je mag gaan bij het aanpakken van gevangenen, zonder het etiket 'marteling' opgeplakt te krijgen. Mia's ontvoerders werken volgens dit protocol. Shockerend, in de wetenschap dat fictie en realiteit nauw verweven zijn! Ter illustratie: "Het tegen de muur gooien is een van de meest effectieve technieken omdat het de gevangene (naakt, kap over het hoofd) fysiek uitput en er een angstgevoel ontstaat wanneer de gevangene weet dat ze op het punt staat opnieuw tegen de muur gegooid te worden. Zo nodig volgt er een klap in het gezicht. Een gevangene kan twintig tot dertig keer achter elkaar tegen een muur worden gegooid tijdens één sessie. De tijdsduur tussen sessie één en sessie twee hoeft niet langer te zijn dan één uur. ..." Maximaal dertig dagen lang. Onmenselijk wreed.

De gevangenschap van Mia is het kernprobleem in deze thriller. Daaromheen lopen meerdere verhaallijnen, die zodanig sterk zijn dat ze elk voor zich overeind blijven. Jonathan Holt geeft een lesje (hedendaagse) geschiedenis om U tegen te zeggen, evenals in 'Het labyrint van Venetië', deze keer echter niet tenenkrommend langdradig, maar kernachtig en ter zake doend voor de onderbouwing van het spannende verhaal. Zijn liefde voor Italië blijkt onder andere uit zijn beschrijvingen van overheerlijke maaltijden. De virtuele wereld Carnivia.com vervult een centrumfunctie en stelt Barbo voor dilemma's. Piola, Tapo en Boland moeten omzichtig te werk gaan tijdens het onderzoek, ze stuiten her en der op lange tenen en ingewortelde gebruiken. Hun privélevens zijn interessante bijzaak, op facebook zou je het 'het is ingewikkeld' noemen.

Jonathan Holt is een bekwaam auteur. In een schrijfstijl waar niets op af te dingen valt en met kennis van zaken stuwt hij je voort in de eerder genoemde race tegen de klok en weet hij te overtuigen. Holts visie getuigt van intelligentie en inzicht. Zeer acceptabel, zoals hij zijn kijk op de materie over het voetlicht brengt. Top!

Meg says

After reading the first in the series, I decided I should grab the second while I was at the library last week. The story continues with the same characters and the same setting....Venice. Technology continues to play a role in the story.....and the American military base continues to be a problem. In this book an officer's daughter is kidnapped and treated as a prisoner---- using the documented tortures American made....certain parts of the story are confusing. But in the end the story is interesting....and I enjoyed reading another mystery by the author. It helps that I like the characters.
Read if you are looking for a mystery....

(I apologize for the opaque description of the book....I can't remember the characters' names....and I returned the book to the library already. Gah!)

Amy says

At the end of Holt's *The Abomination*, the first in the *Carnivia* trilogy, Kat Tarpo and Aldo Piola have faced the fallout of their affair, and Kat has decided to file charges of harassment against her boss and lover. American Holly Boland has helped them crack a case, and the three go about their lives.

The Abduction picks up a few months afterwards. Kat has been ostracized by her coworkers, blamed for accusing the beloved Piola of any impropriety. She was a willing participant, wasn't she? How can she charge him with anything when she was fully aware, all along, that he was (a) married and (b) her superior? Kat is nothing if not hard-headed, though, and she resists questioning her decision.

When a new case falls to her, she attacks it as she does everything in her life: with no inhibition and full belief that she will be successful.

As the daughter of a high-ranking US military official stationed in Venice, teenaged (and sheltered) Mia is an easy target. She's anxious to break free from her father's watchful eye and experience life. That the Italians are none too pleased to have an American military presence completely escapes her, as it would most teenagers. She wants to smoke, drink, and maybe have sex. She yearns to just be free.

Similarly, Holly craves freedom, even if she doesn't know what form it should take or even from what she wants to be free. She's a proud American who was raised in Italy. She's staunchly patriotic, yet she acknowledges her country's faults in Italy. Yes, she loves being in the military, but she feels constrained. While she enjoys abiding by military precision, she wants something ... different.

Also returning is Daniele Barbo, a kidnapping and torture victim who has created interactive website *Carnivia*. When Mia goes missing, Kat and Holly ask Daniele for help, and the three are reunited. Also, meanwhile, pursues an apparently unrelated case of a skeleton found on the base.

What is fascinating about this book is the way Jonathan Holt takes the American treatment of POWs and uses it to propel his story. He also makes a point about what is torture and what isn't, but we'll get to that in a little bit. His primary focus is on Mia's kidnapping, taking us from one "experience" to another. Her kidnappers are intent on showing just how cruel Americans are, not just in how they treat their prisoners, but in how they are treating Italy. One begets the other.

The bad guys go step-by-step through the interrogation manual (so to speak) that guided how the US military handled prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. Mia is waterboarded, sleep deprived, nearly starved, and struck harshly. Her abductors videotape each, airing the tapes through *Carnivia*. As Mia reacts to each ill treatment, we get a deeper, more affecting understanding of how torturous non-torture can be.

As Kat, Holly, Daniele, and Aldo race to free her, the mystery deepens and widens. Who is behind Mia's abduction? What is their purpose? What do they hope to achieve? Can she be saved?

Holt writes with taut precision, keeping you riveted and turning the pages. There is quite a bit of history here as well, which helps us better understand the Italian (and international) perspective of US military encroachment and intervention. There is also some background on the Catholic church and its role in world events and wars.

I love - and I do mean love - the way Jonathan Holt writes. I can't wait for the third installment, and the romantic in me wants Kat reunited with Aldo. Both of his books cast an unflattering eye on the United States military (and political) machine, and I wondered if Holt wasn't making a point about that as well. So I did what any curious reader would do: I sent him a message, asking him about casting Americans as the bad

guys and if he was concerned about a perceived anti-American bias.

Mr. Holt kindly replied, and here is what he said:

When I started writing the Carnivia trilogy I really didn't know a lot about US Cold War foreign policy, other than that in Italy there had been some kind of secret anti-communist army called Gladio that was set up by NATO. It sounded like good background for a conspiracy thriller, so I stole it. But as I did more research, I became more and more amazed by the things the US had done in Italy in order to keep the communists out of government. From letting the mafia out of the prisons where Mussolini had put them, to creating and bankrolling newspapers and political parties, to recruiting or bribing government ministers or Vatican officials, there was almost nothing they wouldn't do.

So on one level, I was just thinking 'Wow, this is great material'. But on another, I was genuinely surprised by the extent of the US's interference in the democratic process of a sovereign country.

Now, you could argue that Italy was already so chaotic, and so corrupt, that it needed to be interfered with. Or you could argue that the chaos and corruption partly stemmed from the interference.

I try, as a thriller writer, not to take sides in the debate, only to milk it for drama... and of course, the parallels between 'the war on communism' and 'the war on terrorism' also make for some thought-provoking plotlines.

All of which is a longwinded way of saying that I really hope my books don't come across as anti-US, just as interesting and topical. THE ABDUCTION actually ends with one character admitting to another, an ex-CIA agent, that he jumped to an anti-American conclusion at one point which turned out to be wrong. But where I find a good fact that reveals how the most powerful country in the world operates, I use it.

And thank goodness he does.

If you enjoy a gripping mystery and exceptional writing, you will love The Carnivia Trilogy. And you will join me in anxiously awaiting the third one. You may even join me in hoping that Aldo and Kat realize they belong together (that's a hint to Jonathan Holt, by the way).

Light up the comments and let me know what you think of this fantastic series.

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