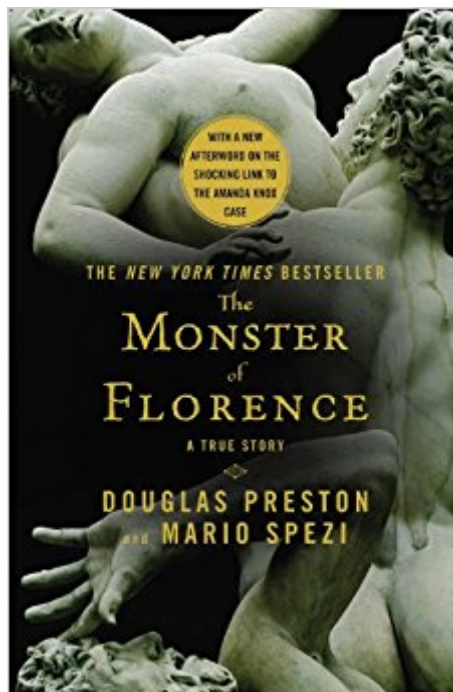


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The Monster Of Florence



Synopsis

"With a new afterword on the shocking link to the Amanda Knox case"--Cover.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

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Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, June 2008: When author Douglas Preston moved his family to Florence he never expected he would soon become obsessed and entwined in a horrific crime story whose true-life details rivaled the plots of his own bestselling thrillers. While researching his next book, Preston met Mario Spezi, an Italian journalist who told him about the Monster of Florence, Italy's answer to Jack the Ripper, a terror who stalked lovers' lanes in the Italian countryside. The killer would strike at the most intimate time, leaving mutilated corpses in his bloody wake over a period from 1968 to 1985. One of these crimes had taken place in an olive grove on the property of Preston's new home. That was enough for him to join "Monsterologist" Spezi on a quest to name the killer, or killers, and bring closure to these unsolved crimes. Local theories and accusations flourished: the killer was a cuckolded husband; a local aristocrat; a physician or butcher, someone well-versed with knives; a satanic cult. Thomas Harris even dipped into "Monster" lore for some of Hannibal Lecter's more Grand Guignol moments in Hannibal. Add to this a paranoid police force more concerned with saving face and naming a suspect (any suspect) than with assessing the often conflicting evidence on hand, and an unbelievable twist that finds both authors charged with obstructing justice, with Spezi jailed on suspicion of being the Monster himself. The Monster of Florence is split into two sections: the first half is Spezi's story, with the latter bringing in Preston's updated involvement on the case. Together these two parts create a dark and fascinating descent into a landscape of horror that deserves to be shelved between *In Cold Blood* and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

--Brad Thomas Parsons --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Starred Review. United in their obsession with a grisly Italian serial murder case almost three decades old, thriller writer Preston (coauthor, *Brimstone*) and Italian crime reporter Spezi seek to uncover the identity of the killer in this chilling true crime saga. From 1974 to 1985, seven pairs of lovers parked in their cars in secluded areas outside of Florence were gruesomely murdered. When Preston and his family moved into a farmhouse near the murder sites, he and Spezi began to snoop around, although witnesses had died and evidence was missing. With all of the chief suspects acquitted or released from prison on appeal, Preston and Spezi's sleuthing continued until ruthless prosecutors turned on the nosy pair, jailing Spezi and grilling Preston for obstructing justice. Only when *Dateline NBC* became involved in the maze of mutilated bodies and police miscues was the authors' hard work rewarded. This suspenseful procedural reveals much about the dogged writing team as well as the motives of the killers. Better than some overheated noir mysteries, this bit of real-life Florence bloodletting makes you sweat and think, and presses relentlessly on the nerves. (June 11) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

"The Monster of Florence" is the first non-fiction book I've read by Douglas Preston and it is nothing like his works of fiction. This book covers not only the serial murders that took place in Florence and near by but also examines the political atmosphere that influenced the investigation. While the story is sometimes difficult to follow because of all the suspects involved. The investigation is as compelling as the crimes, the investigators and courts often as diabolical as the criminals. Offering insight into the judicial system of Italy and the corruption hidden within, Preston carries the reader along through dark and dangerous paths. When even Preston and his journalist friend become targets of the courts the tension rises. While the details of the murders are revealed they are not as important to the plot as one might expect. The point of the tale does not seem to be whether or not the killer is ever apprehended and tried but rather the process used to track the killer or killers down. This is not a book for readers who want a mystery with a neat solution nor is it a tale that examines the psychology of the murders in any depth. It is more an expose of the Italian, especially the Florentine, criminal justice system. If you can get past the multitude of criminals on both sides of the law it is an interesting read.

The topic--a serial killer of loving couples--is not one to find enjoyment in reading. I was compelled

to read it because I love the Preston/Child Pendergast books and wanted to read something else by Mr. Preston. I was also about to travel to Florence and while this didn't serve as my tour-book, it gave me background on the city and the people. That's one thing I liked about this book--history that unraveled as only master story tellers can do. The events that unfold to wrap Mr. Preston and Mario Spezi into the story were amazing. I had to stop a couple of times and remind myself that this happened in the recent past...not fifty or more years ago. So a good read, even though the subject matter is tough. Ah, and a note on that. Occasionally the Pendergast books get a bit gruesome. I have great respect for Preston and Spezi that they did not glorify the crimes of this serial killer by exploiting the details any further than they had to.

A true story, researched and written in a format that explains the reasons he was able to kill so many over so long a period...Mr. Preston is a prolific writer who never scrimps on the research.

I have not enjoyed a book so much for a long while. Note, I prefer non fiction and have recently been intrigued by serial killers or false guilty cases (Amanda Knox). I do admit the first half of the book reads quicker than the second.

This book horrifies, but it is not the murders which cause this reaction. The terrible state of the Italian legal system, the abuses, the hysteria, and the corruption are shocking. If the events depicted here, and in the afterward, are accurately described, then Italy is not a civilized country despite its art, language, and cuisine. Vergogna, Italia.

I enjoyed the back story on the Monster of Florence. I had never heard of Italy's 'Jack the Ripper' and was instantly sucked into the horror and mystery of the horrific crimes. This book moves along at a good pace and tells the story of two journalist who wanted to solve a string of horrifying murders only to find themselves in the eye of the storm. This book gives you an amazing look into a corrupt legal system. Florence sounds like a great place to visit but I sure don't want to live there.

I also bought this book for research after it was recommended by a friend. It is a good read, but it also has an interesting discussion of the nature of evil.

Brilliant!! What a tour de force!! This incredible TRUE story will reveal the utter corruption of the Italian justice system.

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