



The Rainaldi Quartet

Paul Adam

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Who would want to kill Tomaso Rainaldi, an elderly, unassuming violin-maker in the quiet Italian city of Cremona? For his friend and fellow violin-maker Gianni Castiglione, the murder is as mysterious as it is shocking. Rainaldi had few possessions, no enemies and little money. No one – least of all the police – can fathom a motive for murdering him. All he really had was an obsessive love of violins and an encyclopedic knowledge of them.

But what if he knew more than anyone else – not just about famous violins, but about missing violins? Ones of the caliber of the fabled Messiah, Stradivari's most sublime creation, the *Mona Lisa* of the music world. A violin now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford – and worth millions...

Aided by his friend, policeman Antonio Guastafeste, Gianni starts to investigate the dead man's affairs. Affairs that reveal an appointment in Venice with the eccentric and exceedingly rich violin-collector Enrico Forlani, and a trail that winds back to a mysterious musical past – and a far from harmonious future. Retracing Rainaldi's steps, the two men find themselves involved in a sequence of startling events -- another murder, a mysterious Englishman, and an unscrupulous violin-dealer. A chain of events that careers across Italy and England as they become players in a game where musical instruments change hands for millions, forgery is an art form, and the preferred method of negotiation is murder.

Accompanied by two centuries of myth, music, and mystery, *The Rainaldi Quartet* provides a fascinating glimpse into a closed world – played at a rhythm that is fast-paced, furious, and unforgettable.

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