

History as Mystery

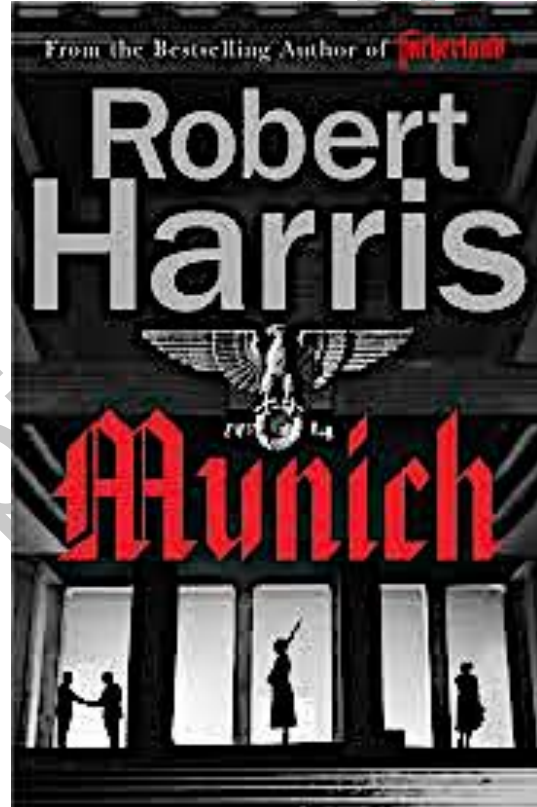
Robert Harris delivers another thriller

Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

Prizewinning author of eleven bestselling novels and five non-fiction works, Robert Harris has delivered a compelling thriller about the interwoven fate of two men, one British, one German, brought together on the eve of the Second World War. Students at Oxford two decades earlier, during four eventful days in May in 1933 they find themselves on opposite sides of the growing tensions in Europe, each trying his utmost to head off yet another global war. Hugh Legat is a junior private secretary to Prime Minister Chamberlain; his friend Paul von Hartmann is a German diplomat and member of a resistance movement aiming at committing a coup in Germany before Hitler can put his cataclysmic plans for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in motion.

But both men must contend with formidable opponents. Legat faces the naïve commitment of a leader whose sole aim is to prevent another global war, and who refuses to accept the fact of Hitler's deviousness; his intransigence is aided by Cabinet sycophants and senior War Office figures who realize that Britain is woefully unprepared for war and are playing for time.



For his part, Paul Hartmann is surrounded by Nazi loyalists who mistrust him and watch his every move. The familiar faces of Hitler, Ribbentrop, Göring, Mussolini, Ciano, are there, of course, but they take second place to SS-Sturmbannführer Sauer, a Gestapo officer who suspects Hartmann remains far too close to his former college friend. It is a tale of individuals pitted against historical forces that go back to a fatally flawed treaty ending the First War, and

whose friendship—and indeed whose very lives—are at risk in this compelling examination of loyalty and betrayal, family and country.

Meticulously researched and drawing on historical figures and events that he seamlessly interweaves with characters and actions of his own creation, Robert Harris has written a fine account that is only fictional in

the details. A gripping account of power, deception, and self-deception, it is an insightful portrait of the people, attitudes and events that led to the outbreak of the Second World War.

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Since 2005 more than 500 of Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on such websites as *Spinetingler*, *The Rap Sheet*, *Shots Magazine*, *Crime Time*, *Reviewing The Evidence*, *January* magazine, the *Montreal Review of Books*, the *Ottawa Review of Books*, and *Amazon.com*, as well as on his own award-winning crime fiction site, *Deadly Diversions*. His own crime novel, *Legacy*, was published in April of 2017. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com



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