



## The Lizard's Bite

*David Hewson*

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## **The Lizard's Bite** David Hewson

On an August night on a small island near Venice, a fire explodes in a glassmaking shop. When help arrives, two people are dead, a rich Englishman is implicated, and investigators from Rome are assigned a case no one wants them to solve....In this spellbinding new novel featuring Detective Nic Costa, author David Hewson weaves together the rich fabric of Europe's most beguiling city with a riveting tale of passion, corruption, and the poisonous bite of betrayal.

On their private island, the Arcangelo family defy the world: living in a decaying palazzo, making glass in a terrifying, archaic furnace, watching their absurd exhibition hall sink into disrepair. But now the world is coming to their dying outpost in a crumbling corner of a Venice that tourists never see. Police boats and vaporetta bring investigators, curiosity seekers, and one man who plans to own the property himself. With two family members consumed by the foundry fire, both mystery and opportunity have been bared to the bone.

On special assignment from Rome, Detective Nic Costa, along with his partner, his boss, and a dogged pathologist named Teresa Lupo, is getting in the way of progress, Venetian-style. They know that Uriel Arcangelo and his wife were murdered. They know that a predatory Englishman must be a suspect, as is the family of the murdered woman. And while everyone wants the Roman cops to give up and go home, they can't—because a matter of desire, death, and lies has just turned murderously on one of them....

A tale as bewitching as its lush backdrop, **The Lizard's Bite** is an astounding alchemy of superb writing, vibrant atmosphere, and sheer, gripping suspense.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **The Lizard's Bite Details**

Date : Published May 29th 2007 by Dell (first published January 1st 2006)

ISBN : 9780440243007

Author : David Hewson

Format : Paperback 528 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Cultural, Italy, Thriller, Detective

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## From Reader Review The Lizard's Bite for online ebook

### Lisa says

Overall a good book however I wouldn't say it gripped me!

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### LJ says

THE LIZARD'S BITE (Pol. Proc.-Ensemble-Venice-Cont) – G

Hewson, David – 4th in series

Dell Suspense, 2006, US Paperback – ISBN: 9780440243007

First Sentence: In the shifting darkness of the vessel's bowels, low over the undulating black water, the animal waited, trembling.

\*\*\* Roman police officers Nick Costa and Gianni Peroni think they are going to get some time off with their girlfriends, former FBI agent Emily Deacon and pathologist Teresa Lupo. But things change when their boss, Leo Falcone shows up and the three of them are told they are to investigate the deaths of a Moreno glass worker and his wife. But the pressure is on as wealthy Englishman, Hugo Massiter is about to buy the island currently owned by the victim's family. The three policemen are told to investigate the deaths quickly and verify the man killed his wife and then died of spontaneous combustion. With the help of their girlfriends, the three policemen finds things are not as simple as hoped.

\*\*\* As a big Donna Leon fan, this was an interesting perspective of Roman policemen working in Venice. Many of the things Leon's Insp. Brunelli loves about Venice, these detectives hate. However, the corruption of some of the Italian police remains a consistent theme. There are a lot of interesting characters, but the story was short on character development. It was really the twists and turns along the way that kept me reading.

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### Alan Williams says

Falconi, Peroni, Costa, Lupo & the former FBI agent Emily Deacon return.

A fire in a glass foundry leaves two dead, but is it an accident, a murder/suicide, or double murder? Falconi and his team having been banished from their Roman home to the city of Venice slowly uncover a tale of deceit and murder in the ancient city. With Massiter the intriguing Englishman all is not as it seems, and as further murders follow, Falconi's men must uncover the truth.

This is the fourth "Nic Costa" book, and the series goes from strength to strength, from the horrific opening scenes to the satisfying final chapters, this entry in the Costa series is by far the best of the first four, in my opinion. As I have read the series out of order I know that it goes from strength to strength from here on, but I am trying to start and read/reread the series from the beginning.

For me, whilst these are very much of the crime crime/mystery genre, they are also about art, culture, architecture, travel, good food and good wine. One of my favourite weekend pastimes now is to sit with a Nic Costa tale, and a glass of Italian white that I have read about in a previous outing.

The Lizard's Bite also sits alongside David Hewson's standalone novel, "The Cemetery of Secrets", although

I have yet to read the latter, and either book can be read without the benefit of the other, some characters appear in both books.

Ah, Venice and murder, another outstanding Nic Costa tale from David Hewson, recommended!

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### **Arthur says**

Has the most impressive story and its characters are believable and livable.

The reason the two venetian cops and their wives are involved, its rather a life style for them, and is because they're leading in investigations, it wasn't to get involved with the family, which nearly seemed to become the point. But where as Falcone takes a sudden infatuation for the miss Arcangeli during the investigation, and falls for her. Supposing to be a old family, who once had wealth, now living remotely on their own island, and with their own buisness of shaping glass figurines for a living.

Massiter is a project-a-holic of quailty type, while bearing a mark of indifference, his difference is of a cover-up getting slowly exposed of his personal involvement, maybe blame. He appears all cool headed about his work though, meanwhile, and takes a chance now and then to achieve what he's believing in.

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### **Deb says**

Two Italian detectives become involved in a bizarre double murder that occurs in Venice. The victim is a member of an eccentric family sur-named Arcangeli. They live on an island where they operate a glassmaking furnace, the art of glassmaking having been passed down to them from their father. The two cops are called in to shuffle papers and rubberstamp the opinion of the town fathers, which is that the glassmaker and his wife died as the result of a domestic dispute. But, being who they are, the cops cannot let their doubts about the truth of the matter rest.[return]The story is full of detail and moves rather slow. I had a hard time getting into it and didn't find it that suspenseful. Those looking for a 'literary' read and who would enjoy immersing themselves in the Venetian setting would probably enjoy it more.

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## **Nina says**

3,5 stars for this one!

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## **AV AV says**

Het openingsverhaal staat als een huis. Zeer beeldend en prikkelend beschreven. Dat staat. Goed verhaal met een leuk plot. Maar waarom dingen soms gebeuren zoals ze gebeuren wordt niet altijd goed verklaard.

Waarom willen twee hoofdgetuigen plotseling wel meewerken?

Ook weet ik inmiddels bij deze schrijver wanneer bepaalde delen uit het verhaal iets gaan toevoegen of juist niet, teveel beschrijvend soms. Dus dan dat deel maar overslaan? Doe maar niet, karakters en omgevingen zijn vaak ook... gewoon... interessant.

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## **Ed says**

This is my second David Hewson/Nic Costa novel. It is a bit overlong but grabbed me and held me waiting for the next surprise.

The story opens with Nic Costa and Gianni Peroni, Nic's partner looking forward to the end of a humiliating exile in Venice and the beginning of a long-awaited vacation with their girl friends, Emily Deacon and Teresa Lupo. Unfortunately they are ordered to investigate a case, in which a fire in a glass foundry has claimed two lives. They want to wrap it up quickly, but as they get more and more involved with the people of Murano, a glass-making region, the weird Arcangeli family, and British millionaire Hugo Massiter, they realize the case isn't as open and shut as it first appeared. They resist the pressure from above to close the case quickly for political and economic reasons, precipitating a series of events that quickly spiral out of control, including the near death of their boss, Falcone. The plot unfolds quickly at that point and comes to a somewhat satisfying conclusion.

Hewson makes Murano and Venice almost characters in themselves. He also does a great job of exposing the corruption and emptiness of this once great city. His other characters are always well drawn and their motivations and actions understandable within the constraints of the story.

I will continue to read other books in the series.

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## **Rosrn Nunamaker says**

The next in the Nic Costa series, the detectives Costa and Peroni along with their boss Falcone are 'exiled' in Venice following their disregard for following the rules in the Sacred Cut.

In Venice they are joined by girlfriends, Emily Deacon and Teresa Lupo for holiday that is postponed when a glass factory furnace overheats and kills two people. The pair are husband and wife, the wife is found to be pregnant and her husband is medically impotent. Compounding matters, the family is near bankrupt and a

buyer is a wealthy Englishmen who deals in both legal and illegal ventures.

I had also taken out Hewson's Lucifer's Shadow, which was not in the Costa series, but as it turns out Lucifer's Shadow is a pre-story to The Lizard's Bite. I'd suggest reading Lucifer's Shadow first even though it does not feature the detectives, it does the villain and gives context to the Lizard's Bite.

I've enjoyed these books but found them tough to get into during the first third before they pick up and really grab you.

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### **A.M. says**

I am reading these out of order. I started with book six and now I've leapt back to four.

The three Roman Questura(fictional) police have been sent to Venice as punishment. Of course, they can't keep out of trouble and when there is a serious accident at the Murano glass foundry, they are called in to investigate. It seems like a simple accident until a skull is found inside the glass oven and a half burnt man on the floor outside. All the doors are locked.

Nic Costa is a detective, in love with Emily but he's not good at telling her. Leo Falcone, the somewhat aloof if well-meaning father figure who's Costa's inspector. His partner and friend, Gianni Peroni, is an older, bluff former officer knocked down to the ranks. Gianni is dating a doctor Teresa Lupo, who is a forensic expert and both women help them out in this case.

The Archangeli family have made glass in their extraordinary building for decades but the local islanders still see them as newcomers. They are aloof, proud and all named after angels: Michele, Gabriele, Uriel, and their sister Rafaella.

Another newcomer, Englishman Hugo Massiter, is trying to buy the whole property but the family are against it, the Venetian councillors for it, and the locals are disinterested. He is ruthless; perfectly willing to destroy whoever gets in his way by whatever means necessary. He's becoming more and more powerful and the Murano purchase will make him effectively untouchable.

Tell these three to wind something up quickly and they are highly likely to keep investigating just to be perverse. But Teresa nearly freaks when the local coroner wants to mark Uriel's death as spontaneous combustion. Uh huh. In a glass foundry in front of the furnace? The body in the furnace is his wife, Bella, and she's pregnant but it can't be his child; her husband was sterile.

\*\*\*

Hewson has a way of making his settings gritty and real. I didn't know Venice spoke it's own language, for instance.

Falcone is very interested in Rafaella Arcangelo, which is unlike him.

Emily, with her FBI training, accepts a job as architect for Massiter and tries to find evidence on his yacht. Putting herself in harm's way in the process.

The ending is very much a 'shades of grey' solution. There is a kind of justice, but not true justice.

4 stars

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### **Jan Derksen says**

In een augustusnacht breekt een felle brand uit in een Venetiaanse glasblazerij. De volgende dag zijn er twee doden, is een rijke Engelsman gecompromitteerd en worden twee Romeinse agenten opgezadeld met een zaak die men snel wil begraven. Op hun privé-eiland tarten de Arcangelo's de wereld: ze bewonen een vervallen palazzo, maken glas in een enorme ouderwetse oven en zien langzaam hun grandeur in verval

raken. Maar nu komt de wereld naar deze vergeten hoek van Venetië: politieboden en vaporetto brengen onderzoekers, nieuwsgierigen en een man die het eiland wil opkopen. Bijgestaan door de vasthoudende patholoog Teresa Lupo blijken rechercheurs Costa en Falcone blind voor gevestigde belangen. Ze weten dat er moord in het spel is. Ze weten wie de verdachten zijn. En ze kunnen niet opgeven - niet nu deze zaak van verlangen, dood en leugens zich tegen een van hen gekeerd heeft.

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### **Jessica says**

De ontknoping vond ik goed en vertaste me. Verder kwam ik lastig door dit boek heen. Van wat ik me herinner vond ik de Vaticaanse moorden veel beter.

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### **Jody says**

A bit bloody, but like all of Hewson's books, well researched and written. Nic Costa is a seriously flawed main character, who always manages to find the reason behind the crime.

This book takes place with Nic and his cohorts transferred to Venus as a punishment. In the last week of their exile, a seemingly open & shut case takes place on the island of Murano, where the Venetian glass is made. Of course Nic, Falcone, Emily, Peroni & Theresa, never do things the easy way and they soon have the bones of a real case which seems connected with Hugo Massiter, a character from Hewson's book "Lucifer's Shadow".

Although I would rather think of Venice as being under the sole protection of Guido Brunetti (Donna Leon's main character in her series of mysteries), Hewson does a very credible, vivid story full of Venice's street (canal?) life, corruption, and the ebb and flow of life in a city that is always on display, almost a character itself.

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### **Jemina says**

Nic Costa -sarjan neljäs osa siirtyy Roomasta vaihteeksi Venetsiaan. Hewson vie laguunikaupunkiin koko aiemmista seikkailuista tutun tutkijatiimin, aina patologia myöten. Tulipalo lasikaupassa on vaatinut kaksi kuolonuhria ja Costa päätyy selvittämään tapausta. Venetsian vanhojen sukujen rappiolla ja ulkomaalaisten romantisoinnilla herkutellaan koko rahan edestä.

En voi sanoa tuntevani omakohtaisesti Venetsiaa kovin hyvin, mutta jossain vaiheessa kirjaa mieleen hiipi ajatus, tunteeko Hewsonkaan. Siinä määrin Donna Leonin kirjojen kliseitä englanninkielisestä dekkarista tuli vastaan. Voi toki olla sattumaakin...

Hieman turhan venytetty, mutta juoneltaan mukiinmenevä dekkari. Ei herätä suuria intohimoja, mutta täyttää asiansa viihdyttävänä lukukokemuksena.

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