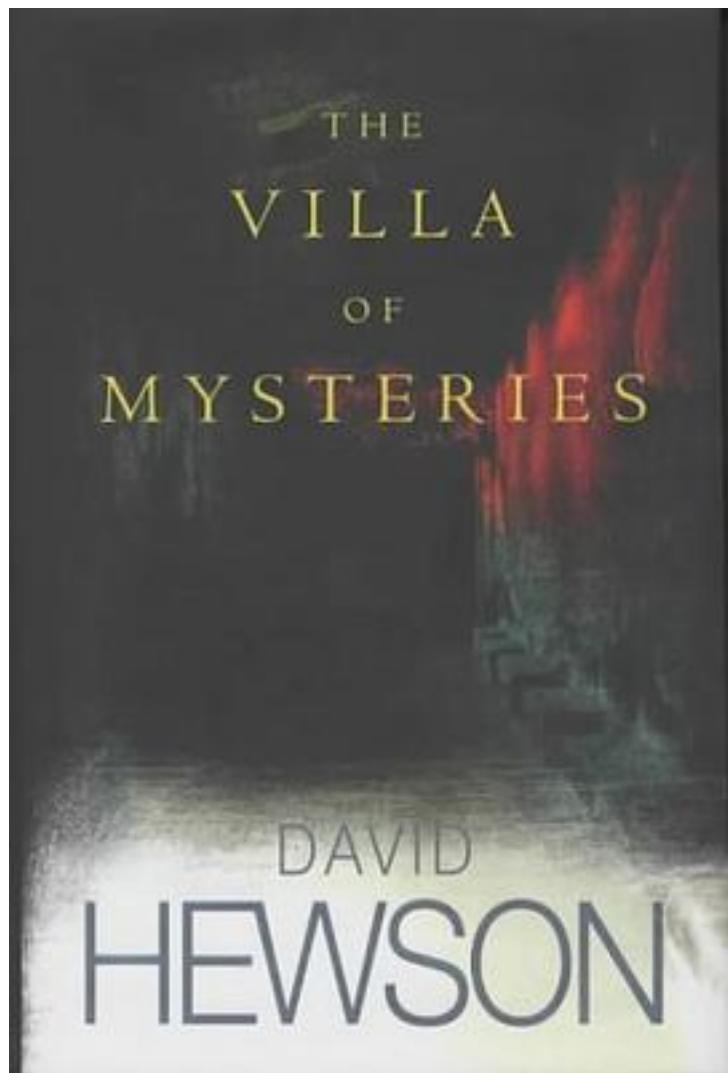


The Villa of Mysteries



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In a thriller of astounding menace and power, the acclaimed author of *A Season for the Dead* returns to the landscape he has made his own—the seething landscape of modern-day Rome—where ancient crimes lie hidden beneath colorful, bustling avenues. Here a teenage girl has disappeared, a detective is exploring a 2000-year-old ritual—and an astonishing mystery is about to unravel in a city of secrets and rage….

In Rome's crowded Campo dei Fiori, a woman rushes up to two carabinieri lounging in their sunglasses and uniforms, insisting that her sixteen-year-old daughter has just been abducted. Detective Nic Costa sees the scene unfold and intervenes. Because Costa knows what the two officers don't: that in the morgue at Rome's police headquarters, a forensic pathologist is examining the strange, mummified corpse of another

girl, whose disappearance and death bear haunting similarities….

Police pathologist Teresa Lupo is Nic's colleague, friend, and his only equal when it comes to breaking the rules to get results, whatever the cost. Now, after years of living with the dead, Teresa insists that her superiors move quickly to save a life. Poring over the body of the girl in the morgue, she has found too many similarities between the girls, including a unique, leering tattoo. Lupo is sure that the vanished girl is headed for a bizarre ancient Bacchanalia involving virgins and sacrificial murder—a ritual that is only days away.

As Nic and Teresa claw at the case from two sides—and as Nic finds himself at once puzzled and beguiled by the missing girl's seductive mother—a chilling picture is beginning to emerge…of secret relationships and sexual depravity, organized crime and unimaginable corruption. With the clock ticking down on a young girl's life, Nic and Teresa are about to make the most horrifying discovery of all—in a pit of human darkness, where an age-old malevolence still endures, evil has consumed innocence…and a very modern vengeance has begun.

A spellbinding mix of suspense, forensic science, and human drama, *The Villa of Mysteries* will catch you off guard at every turn—a novel that is at once heartbreakingly beautiful and impossible to put down.

作者介绍:

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