

The Callaghan Endgame Trilogy: The Callaghan Septology, V – VII

Kim Ekemar

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Kim Ekemar's *The Callaghan Endgame Trilogy V-VII* is a two-fisted, explosive, and twisting tale of treachery, organized crime, and global violence in the world of Russian mafia dons, London crime firms, and wanted fugitives. This is the very definition of a twenty-first-century thriller—a quintessential page-turner.

This trio of short novels concerns the exploits of Matthias Callaghan, a man whose past has made him the target of organized crime. A Russian mob outfit in London is run by the psychotic Vasily Ivanovich, whom Callaghan must eventually face. The problem is that Ivanovich is powerful, and the forces of law and order are also after Callaghan.

The writing is sharp, fast moving, and very professional. There are no wasted words in this thriller. Every character is imbued with equal parts heroism and malice. After all, white-hat heroes would not be entirely appropriate in a story about assassins, gangsters, and human smuggling.

Matthias Callaghan is a unique contemporary lead—a millionaire who must retrace the lines of his past while also dodging gangsters and the police. Callaghan's story also touches on some of the major social issues currently facing Europe, including the rise of global and organized crime, especially crime coming from Russia, terrorism, and the unprecedented wave of migrants who arrive daily at ports in Italy, Spain, and Greece.

Blood is shed aplenty, and wanton violence is common. The dialogue gives all of this brutality a poetic, nihilistic quality. The one major drawback to this novel is its complexity; there is not just one story here but rather multiple tales intertwining with each other constantly. It can sometimes be hard to see the bigger picture; it is too easy to get bogged down in the minutiae of all of the criminal enterprises and intrigue that surround Matthias. Still, this narrative difficulty does not adversely impact the entertainment value of the book.

The Callaghan Endgame Trilogy is part of a series; this entry starts *in media res*, and inferring Matthias's background is sometimes a confusing undertaking. While this book can be read on its own, reading the previous books would be advisable.

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BENJAMIN WELTON (July 26, 2018)

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