



The Lost Concerto

Helaine Mario

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With a musician's attention to the emotions that help us create a picture of our world, Helaine Mario weaves imagery with a thrilling plot.

A grieving musician must come to grips with the guilt she feels about the deaths of her husband and best friend in Helaine Mario's haunting thriller, *The Lost Concerto*. Filled with lyrical ruminations on grief, this is a mystery replete with plot twists.

Maggie O'Shea has retreated from her life as a concert pianist following the deaths of her husband, Johnny, and best friend, Sofia, and the disappearance of her young godson. She's thrust into that world again when a CIA agent shows up at her door with an impossible and recent photograph featuring Maggie's first love, Zach, a man who died thirty years ago in Beirut. The photograph is a catalyst that sends Maggie on a European tour, hunting down a dead man who seems inexplicably linked to her missing godson.

When she learns that Zach is alive and that she might be the only one who can help locate him, Maggie agrees to travel to France under the guise of a visiting musician. The CIA thinks that he is the key to finding Maggie's godson and identifying Sofia's murder. But all is not as straightforward as it seems, as the CIA has its own ulterior motives. It isn't long before questions begin to arise about a missing concerto, a professional hit man who stalks Maggie, and just what Johnny, an investigative reporter, might have dug up in his work. Maggie will also have to contend with a three-legged dog suffering from PTSD and Colonel Michael Beckett, her grouchy, doesn't-want-her-around partner, whom she seems to be falling for despite her best efforts.

Even with flowering prose and well-detailed characters, this thriller moves at a fast pace. The sights, smells, and sounds of France come alive under Mario's skillful hand. Mario also clearly knows music, a theme that runs passionately through the heart of this intriguing mystery. Though it might be a thriller, the story is equally strong in its discussion of grief and loss, illuminating how, and why, moving on can be so hard.

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