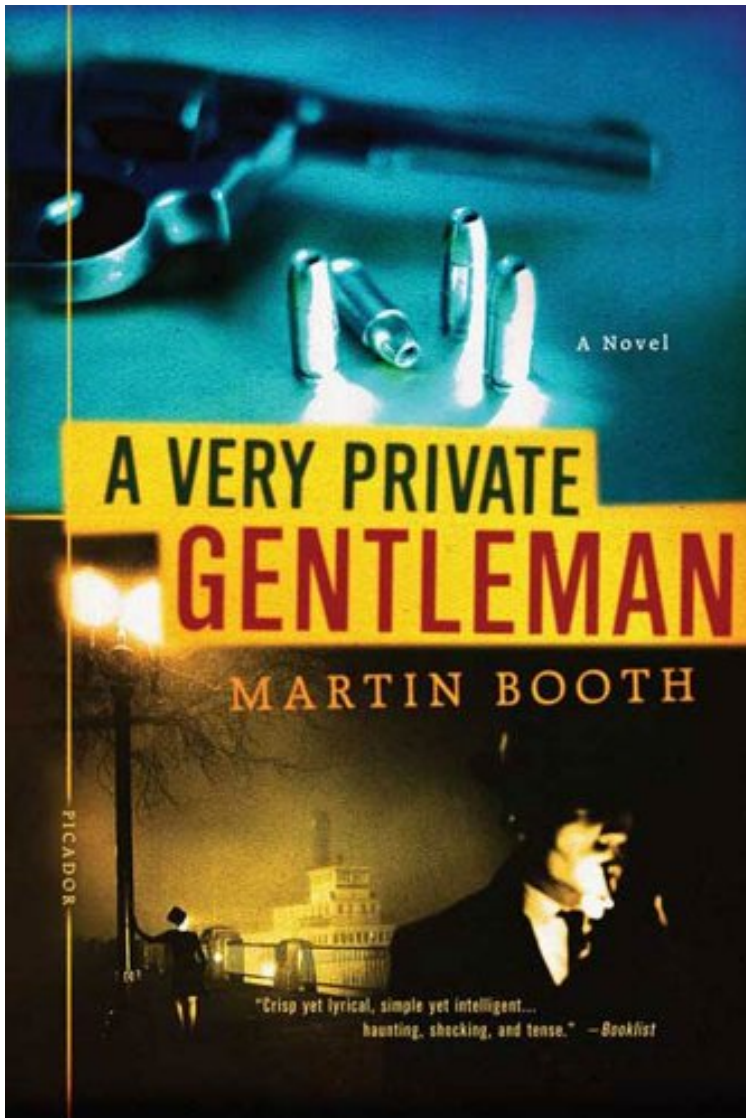


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# A Very Private Gentleman: A Novel



*Par Martin Booth*  
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[Free pdf] A Very Private Gentleman: A Novel

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**Description :** Description du produitThe locals in the southern Italian town where he lives call him Signor Farfalla--Mr. Butterfly: for he is a discreet gentleman who paints rare butterflies. His life is inconspicuous--mornings spent brushing at a canvas, afternoons idling in the cafes, and evening talks with his friend the town priest over a glass of brandy.Yet there are other sides to this gentleman's life: Clara: the young student who moonlights in the town bordello. And another woman who arrives with \$100,000 and a commission, but not for a painting of butterflies.With this assignment returns the dark fear that has dogged Signor Farfalla's mysterious life. Almost instantly, he senses a deadly circle closing in on him, one which he may or may not elude. Part thriller, part character study, part drama of deceit and self-betrayal, A Very Private Gentleman shows Martin Booth at the very height of his powers

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Butterfly: for he is a discreet gentleman who paints rare butterflies. His life is inconspicuous--mornings spent brushing at a canvas, afternoons idling in the cafes, and evening talks with his friend the town priest over a glass of brandy. Yet there are other sides to this gentleman's life: Clara: the young student who moonlights in the town bordello. And another woman who arrives with \$100,000 and a commission, but not for a painting of butterflies. With this assignment returns the dark fear that has dogged Signor Farfalla's mysterious life. Almost instantly, he senses a deadly circle closing in on him, one which he may or may not elude. Part thriller, part character study, part drama of deceit and self-betrayal, *A Very Private Gentleman* shows Martin Booth at the very height of his powers. From Publishers Weekly: Booth's brilliantly creepy psychological suspense novel follows a so-called "shadow-dweller" (a technical weapons expert who creates and supplies the tools for high-level assassins) to a rural village in southern Italy where he poses as "Signor Farfalla," a quiet artist who paints miniatures of butterflies and has traveled to the area to capture a unique native specimen. As the artist, whose real name is Clark, settles into the local scene, most of his new acquaintances accept his enigmatic alias, with the notable exception of Father Benedetto, the priest who pushes him to reveal himself in a series of confessional conversations over glasses of Armagnac. Between painting the minutely detailed butterfly studies and preparing for his next job, Clark carouses with a pair of local prostitutes, Dindina and Clara, eventually slipping into a serious affair with the latter. As he gets weapons specs and begins constructing a new gun, he learns that his latest customer is a woman whose next target may be Yasser Arafat. Suddenly he senses another "shadow-dweller" on his trail; this anonymous figure remains a mystery to Clark until their climactic showdown. The lazy, languid setting is an eerily effective backdrop for the fresh and beguiling murder intrigue, and the flashbacks into Clark's cold, brutal past are cleverly juxtaposed against his budding romance with young, naive Clara. With first-rate characters and a gradual buildup of suspense, Booth constructs his most focused, tightly written novel to date, reminiscent of William Trevor's classic *Felicia's Journey* and the late Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley* novels. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Booklist\*Starred

\* Those in the Italian village where he currently lives call him Sr. Farfalle--Mr. Butterfly--but he never reveals his real name. He has few friends, only business contacts. He is constantly on the move and always watching his back. He considers himself an artisan, not for the butterflies he paints as his cover but for the guns he creates for cunning assassins. He sees nothing wrong with what he does and feels he has helped shape history. But he is getting older and promises himself that his current job will be his last. Then, perhaps, he can settle down comfortably in the Italian village he has grown to love and enjoy the remainder of his life without constantly looking over his shoulder for the "shadow-dwellers" who are always there, waiting for him to slip up. Haunting, shocking, and tense, Booth's story is a charismatic blend of psychological thriller, vivid drama, searing morality tale, and profound psychological study. His writing is crisp yet lyrical, simple yet intelligent. Readers looking for thought-provoking literary fiction can't do any better than this. Emily Melton Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved