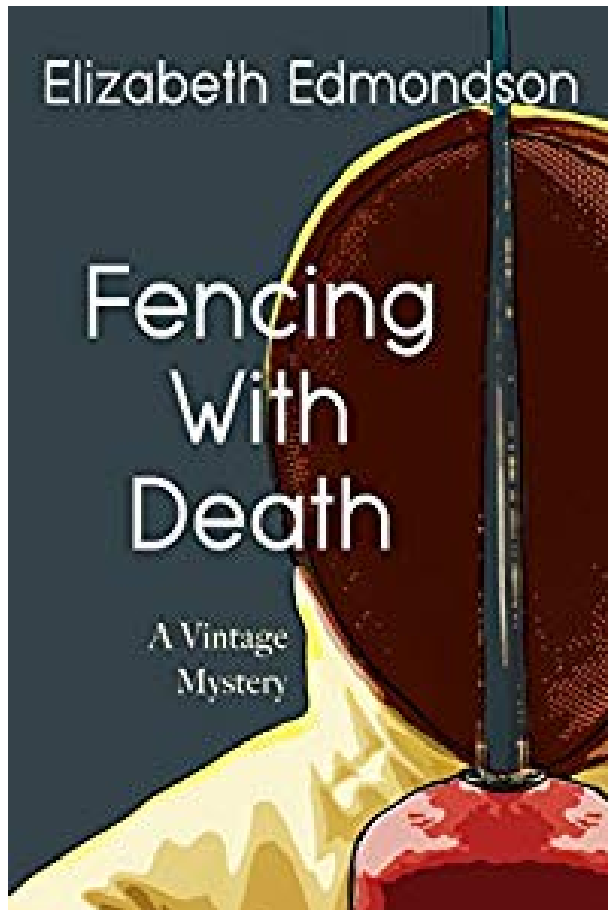


Fencing With Death: A cold war mystery with a twist of fun



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Budapest in the late nineteen-fifties is no place for an innocent abroad. Londoner Larry Dunne divides his time between writing bad avant-garde poetry, working in a Bloomsbury bookshop, arguing with his upper-class girlfriend Pamela and putting the world to rights in a dive off the Strand named Joe's Club in honour of Stalin. Until one day he applies for a job in Hungary, where he imagines he will at last breathe the purer air of an ideal Socialist State and enjoy universal fellowship and equality.

Off he goes to Budapest, to find that the State runs on envy, paranoia and two-stroke. And soon, despite the attractions of an elegant Hungarian ballerina, Larry wants nothing more than to get back to cosy Bohemian London. Not so easy, when a neighbour is stabbed to death with a fencing sabre. On the run from ultra-clever investigator Major Nagy, Larry realises he might be in Budapest for a very, very long time.

Un the murderer is caught. A man in a long grey coat stood there. At the sight of Larry he clicked his heels together, extended a hand, announced that he was Major Nagy and strode past Larry into his apartment. Larry was rooted to the spot. 'What is it? Has something happened?' 'Indeed you may say it has, Mr Dunne. A body has been found in an apartment in this block, and it is necessary to ask you some questions.' 'A body? What

kind of body?' 'A dead body, Mr Dunne.

This is the only kind I am interested in.' 'No, I mean, whose body? And how, has someone had a heart attack?' 'Not at all, Mr Dunne. Please sit down. This is a case of murder.' Originally published as LOSING LARRY by Elizabeth Pewsey