



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

EALING

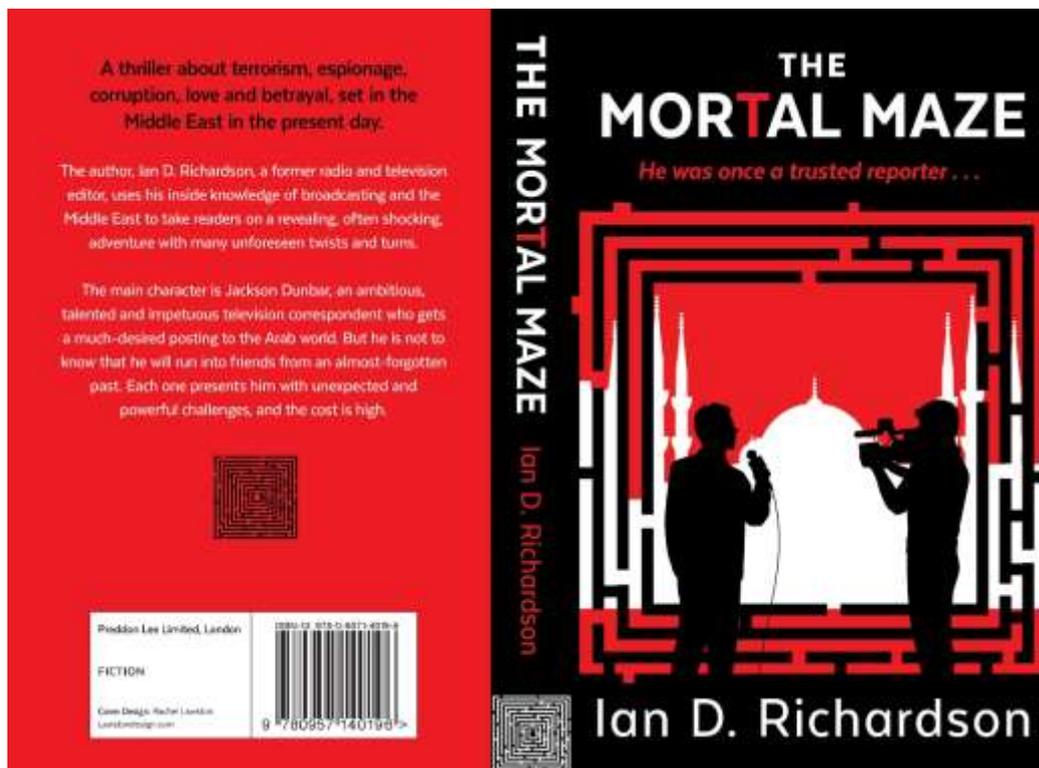
BOOK REVIEW by Colin Emmins The Mortal Maze

A new novel from Ian D. Richardson, a former radio and television editor (and a member of Ealing U3A), is a thriller dealing with broadcasting and terrorism in the Middle East. The central figure and anti-hero is a gifted and eager television reporter posted by the BBC to Armibar, capital of the fictional country of Central Arabia. There two acquaintances from the past catch up with him: one now working for western intelligence, the other who has become a committed 'freedom fighter'. Each of them manages to use him for their own widely different purposes in a series of unexpected events with ultimately disastrous results.

All three characters are convincingly drawn, as indeed are the other characters supporting the story. The most exciting and realistic plot conveys not only the drama of a reporter's life but also the routine of the job without ever slackening the pace of the narrative. Neither the plot nor the dialogue is for the faint-hearted and whatever reservations there may be about the use of the historic present throughout, it certainly adds to the dramatic tension and makes the possibility of a screen version easy to envisage.

The author's knowledge of broadcasting and of the Middle East sets the novel against a colourful and authentic background, making the startling twists and turns of the plot all the more believable. His view of management at the BBC and in the intelligence services is all too believable.

The moral and ultimately mortal implications of the story provide a compelling theme running through the whole work. They are strikingly illustrated by the book's cover where its title *The Mortal Maze* has the 't' of mortal picked out in red against the otherwise white lettering to dramatic effect.



The Mortal Maze by Ian D. Richardson is published by Preddon Lee Ltd of London. Available here on [Amazon](#) or from the Pitshanger Bookshop, 141 Pitshanger Lane, Ealing, London W5 1RH