

The Pindar Diamond by Katie Hickman.  
Bloomsbury 2010.

The Pindar Diamond concludes the story begun so memorably in The Aviary Gate.

Katie Hickman takes her readers back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, though this time centring the story on Venice rather than Constantinople. Paul Pindar, the Levant Company merchant, is on a self-inflicted downward spiral of gambling and alcohol as he continues to grieve for the loss of his love, Celia Lamprey, his servant John Carew continues to machinate in the Venetian demi-monde, and Annetta, the former servant in the Sultan's harem is now ensconced in an island convent.

Add to this the appearance of a superb diamond that formerly belonged to the Sultan's mother, and a group of itinerant woman acrobats and magicians making their tortuous way towards Venice with a mysterious mother and baby whom they have picked up along the way and you have all the ingredients for a superb and gripping story.

Katie Hickman writes in such an evocative way that the reader can almost see, hear and smell the sights of 17<sup>th</sup> century Venice, and the twists and turns of the story hold the attention throughout.

If you have not read The Aviary Gate you can still read and enjoy The Pindar Diamond, but if you have not my advice is to read it first and then move on to The Pindar Diamond.

This is marvellous story-telling from a writer who gets better and better.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh