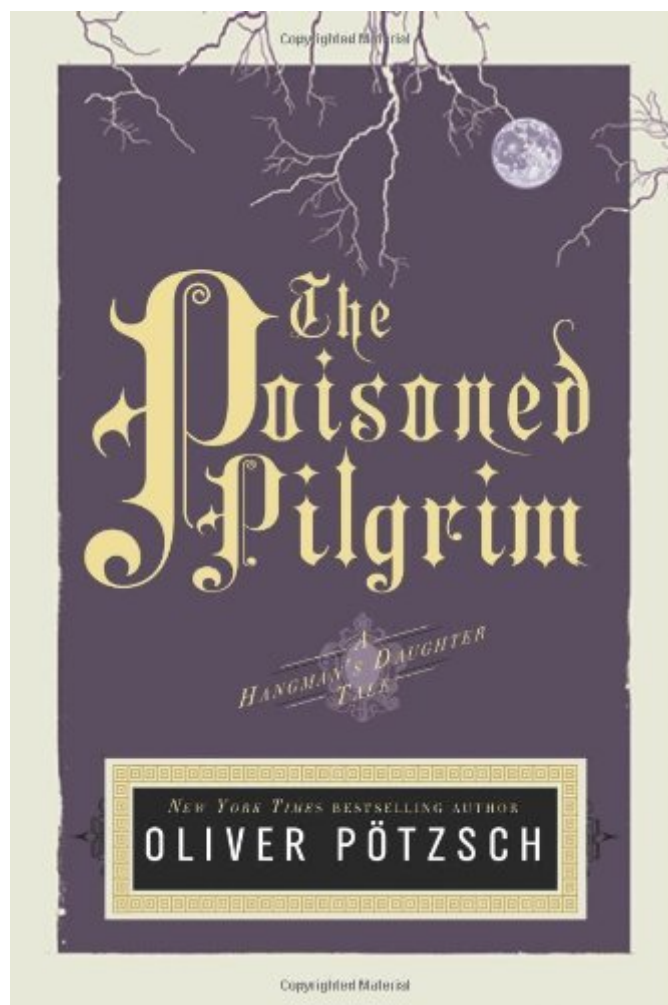


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The Poisoned Pilgrim (US Edition) (A Hangman's Daughter Tale Book 4)



Synopsis

1666: The monastery at Andechs has long been a pilgrimage destination, but when the hangman's daughter, Magdalena, her doctor husband Simon, and their two small children arrive there, they learn that the monks have far larger concerns than saying Mass and receiving alms. It seems that once again, the hangman's family has fallen into a mysterious and dangerous adventure. Two monks at the monastery experiment with cutting edge technology, including a method of deflecting the lightning that has previously set the monastery ablaze. When one of the monks disappears and his lab is destroyed, foul play is suspected. Who better to investigate than the famed hangman Jakob Kuisl? But as the hangman and his family attempt to solve the mystery of the missing monk, they must deal with both the eccentric denizens of the monastery and villagers who view the monks' inventions as witchcraft that must be destroyed at all costs. This thrilling fourth entry of The Hangman's Daughter series features scheming monks, murderous robots, and the action and intrigue that never seem to cease when the Kuisls are on a case.

Book Information

File Size: 2496 KB

Print Length: 512 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0544114604

Publisher: Crossing (July 16, 2013)

Publication Date: July 16, 2013

Language: English

ASIN: B00B7NY4U6

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #6,070 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #10 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > German #12 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > German #27 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > German

Customer Reviews

Let me begin by saying that Oliver Potzsch has quickly become one of my very favorite authors. I

waited with anticipation for this fourth installment in The Hangman's Daughter series, and as with all previous books in this series, I was not disappointed. I am thrilled to say that The Poisoned Pilgrim was everything I had hoped for from Mr. Potzsch. This story takes place in the year 1666 at the monastery at Andechs. The monastery is a favorite pilgrimage site, and Jacob Kuisl, the hangman of Schongau, finds himself embroiled in a dark mystery involving an old friend who took refuge as a monk some years previous. This friend finds himself the suspect in a triple murder and he is suspected of being a warlock working with the dark arts. He knows that the only person who has a chance to save him is his old wartime friend, Jacob Kuisl. He puts all his faith and trust in the hangman, and as the story unfolds, it seems his faith is not misplaced. The sharp mind, keen senses and experience as a hangman all come to play to assist our reluctant hero in solving yet another puzzling mystery. Joining him in the sleuthing are his intrepid daughter, Magdalena and her husband, Simon Fronweiser. Together they search for clues and risk their lives to assist Jacob's friend who, while performing scientific experiments has placed himself under suspicion, due to fear and superstition. I doubt these times were easy, even under the best of circumstances with illnesses decimating whole villages and the rigid beliefs and prejudices making anyone a little out of the ordinary fodder for gossip and as we see in this tale, even at risk for far worse.

Something is rotten in Bavaria, particularly at the monastery at Andechs, and it's not just the weather. The Schongau hangman's daughter, Magdalena, and her "bathhouse surgeon" husband, Simon, take a pilgrimage to the monastery for a holy festival. Their arrival is heralded by dreadful storms and an unfortunate string of corpses. Simon suspects foul play and it's not long before he calls on his father-in-law, Jakob, for assistance. Their investigation is complicated by the outbreak of a mysterious illness and the general shiftiness of the various monks. As the tide of pilgrims entering Andechs increases, the festival itself is threatened when several holy relics go missing. "The Poisoned Pilgrim" is the fourth entry in the "Hangman's Daughter" series. It takes place in 1666, approximately seven years after the events of the first installment of the series. Although the reader would naturally benefit from having read the prior novels, this tale can stand alone. The ominous portents and foreboding are laid on thickly from the outset. More pliable readers or those pining for dark atmosphere may be quickly engaged. Others will likely be alienated by how artificial it all appears. A storm isn't just a storm. A light in a belfry isn't just a light in a belfry. It's like the characters know they're in a murder mystery. Surely no one is always just that suspicious. This sets the stage for a rather poorly executed (ha!) novel. The writing is frequently clumsy. In some instances, this is likely due to lazy translation. Much of the dialogue is unnatural and awkward.

Analogies are mercilessly overdone and the pace is plodding. The characters, a highlight for me from the first novel, were shells of their former selves.

I've enjoyed Oliver Potzsch's Hangman's Daughter series, but the fourth installment, "The Poisoned Pilgrim," fails to hit the same high marks as its predecessors. Potzsch's fourth novel is a tedious, sloppy affair. On the good side, the book opens with a sinister murder and a horrific thunderstorm. Magdalena, the titular hangman's daughter from the first book, is making a pilgrimage to the monastery at Andechs with her husband (the surgeon/dandy Simon) for a holy festival. Andechs is famed throughout Priest's Corner for its holy relics, but Magdalena and Simon have no idea how notorious the place will soon become as murder and witchcraft will soon run rampant. A trumped-up accusation of witchcraft soon has the Schongau hangman, Jakob Kuisl, tramping to Andechs to save a long-lost friend from torture and death. All that sounds fine as a set-up, but this fourth installment has serious flaws in its writing and logic. I hate to spoil books, even mediocre ones, so I'll leave the logic flaws for you to discover. The writing, however . . . I've never been a huge fan of Potzsch's dialogue. I don't know if he's to blame or translator Lee Chadeayne, but the dialogue remains wooden and literal. Potzsch isn't a particularly funny or witty writer, so he underlines his dialogue with "he joked," "she grinned," "he growled", etc. (incidentally, people growl in Potzsch's books *a lot*). Characters sound like characters in a book rather than real people - there are lots of lines that are the equivalent of "How could I have been so stupid?" when nobody in the real world ever uses that line in a moment of realization. There are also lots of mistakes in the book that reveal a lack of attention to detail.

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