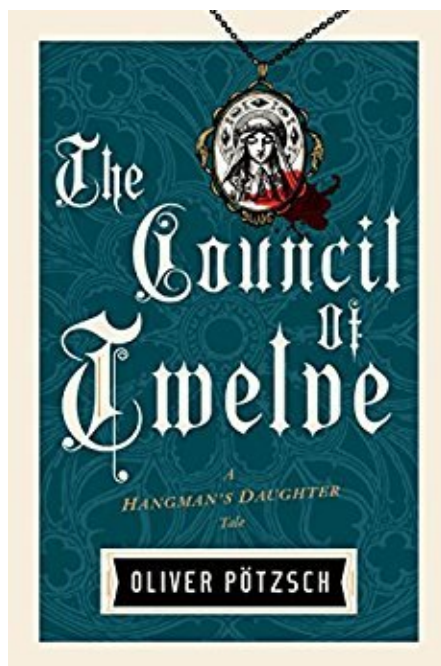




The Council of Twelve

Oliver Pötzsch , Lisa Reinhardt (Translator)

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The seventh chilling mystery in The Hangman's Daughter series

The year is 1672. Hangman Jakob Kuisl and his family travel to Munich, the cosmopolitan heart of Bavaria, for a meeting of the prestigious—for dishonorable hangmen, at least—Council of Twelve, the leaders of the empire's hangmen's guild. But something dark is happening behind the scenes: in the past weeks, young women have begun turning up dead. At first, the authorities assume they are a rash of suicides, but when Kuisl notices that each woman possesses a matching amulet, suspicions arise that someone is murdering these women. With no suspects, the superstitious townsfolk of Munich blame the hangmen's guild, certain that they have called the devil upon the city. Joined by his daughter Magdalena, son-in-law Simon, the rest of his extended family, and a slew of eccentric hangmen, Kuisl must solve the mystery of who is murdering these girls. If he fails, the consequences could reverberate across the empire, affecting all the hangmen in Germany.

The Council of Twelve Details

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From Reader Review The Council of Twelve for online ebook

Monica says

I love this series! Set in the 17th century in Germany I am always left wondering who did it. The characters are well thought out and I really care what happens to them. I highly recommend this series to anyone who loves historical fiction and mystery.

Heatherinblack says

i saw it coming.

too many odd references to the murderer. still and great story. complex mystery. and good things happen to good people.

Susan Crowe says

I love Jakob Kuisl!

Yes, he's a hangman. And yes, I love him.

I love this series so much. I seriously squeal with joy when I see the newest one announced every year at this time. I'll get the paperback, the kindle version and the audiobook. So yes, I love Jakob Kuisl.

Archer says

Der alte Kuisl könnte hochzufrieden sein, ist er doch endlich in den erlesenen Kreis des Rats der Zwölf gewählt worden, in den nur die besten Henker Bayerns aufgenommen werden. Aus diesem Grund tritt er mit der ganzen Familie die Reise nach München an, und prompt gerät er in einen Fall von ermordeten jungen Mädchen. Als wäre es damit nicht getan, beschäftigen ihn und seine Familie Geldfälscher, der verschwundene Hund der Erzherzogin, brutale Mädchenhändler und dass Kuisls jüngere Tochter nicht nur ungewollt schwanger ist, sondern auch dringend einen Ehemann benötigt - nur ist unter Henkern das Ehemannmaterial eher rar gesät, zumal der TOD auch ihnen mit der Sense winkt.

Ein ganz schöner Wälzer, das Buch. Und doch hatte ich es extrem schnell ausgelesen, was für den flüssigen Schreibstil spricht. Das ist zwar nicht mein erstes Pötzschbuch, aber das erste, das ich mit der Henkersfamilie Kuisl verbracht habe - und ich hatte null Probleme, der Handlung oder den Verbindungen untereinander zu folgen. Höchstens, dass ich jetzt bereue, nicht schon vorher mit der Reihe angefangen zu haben. Die Personen wirkten auf mich sehr authentisch, keiner von denen kam mir wie vom Reißbrett vor, und obwohl ich nicht alle Familienmitglieder sympathisch fand (Simon, Paul), konnten sie mich überzeugen. Absolut gelungen ist auch der sehr präsente Nebendarsteller namens München - in die Stadt ein paar Jahrzehnte nach dem dreißigjährigen Krieg einzutauchen hat schon Spaß gemacht und zeugt von Pötzsch' super Recherche und seinem Können, anschaulich zu erzählen, ohne zu klingen, als würde er von Wiki abschreiben. Kriegt eine fette Empfehlung.

Wal.li says

Die Gangs von der Au

Im Jahr 1672 wird der Schongauer Henker Jakob Kuisl in den Rat der Zwölf berufen. Dies ist eine Versammlung der zwölf wichtigsten Henker Bayerns. Auf die Reise folgt ihm seine ganze Familie, wann hat man schon einmal die Gelegenheit in die Kurfürstenresidenz zu reisen. Besonders Kuisls jüngere Tochter Barbara ist froh, aus Schongau herauszukommen. Sie ist, nachdem sie gegen ihren Willen genommen wurde, schwanger und weiß nicht, wie sie aus ihrer misslichen Situation herauskommen soll. Der Plan des Vaters, sie zu verheiraten, könnte ihr zupass kommen. Doch eigentlich möchte sie sich ihren Gatten lieber selbst aussuchen. Und wie man es von dem Kuisl beinahe schon erwarten könnte, stolpert er bald nach der Ankunft über die erste Leiche.

In diesem siebten Band um die Schongauer Henkersfamilie Kuisl unternehmen eben jene zum ersten Mal einen Besuch nach München. Jakob Kuisl, ein wenig verstimmt, dass man in nicht früher eingeladen hat, aber auch stolz nun zum Rat der Zwölf zu gehören, spürt so langsam sein Alter. Doch im Grunde ist er immer noch der sanfte allerdings manchmal zum Jähzorn neigende Riese, der eigentlich ein besserer Heiler denn Scharfrichter ist. Seine Tochter Magdalena erhofft sich für ihren feinsinnigen und intelligenten Sohn, dass sie ihn in einer Schule in München unterbringen kann, wo er vielleicht in die Fußstapfen seines Vaters, des Arztes Simon Frohnwieser, treten kann. Und Barbara hofft, sich irgendwie aus ihrer verzwickten Situation herauswinden zu können. Rätselhaft sind jedoch die Todesfälle unter den jungen Frauen, denn schnell stellt sich heraus, dass das Mädchen, welches ertrunken aus dem Auer Bach gezogen wurde, nicht das einzige Opfer war.

Bestens unterhalten schließt man dieses Buch nach fast 700 Seiten kurzweiliger Lektüre. Zurückversetzt in eine Welt, die von Standesdünkeln, unsinnigen Vorschriften und grausamen Strafen viel mehr bestimmt wurde als die Heutige. Die ehrlosen Henker und ihre Familien, die von vielem ausgeschlossen wurden, deren Dienste man dennoch brauchte. Die Adligen und Patrizier, die ein mitunter dekadentes Leben führten und deren Gier kein Ende kannte. Eine ideale Kulisse scheint die Stadt München zu bilden, die die Versammlung der Henker auch nur vor ihren Toren erlaubt. Staunend wandeln die Kuisls durch die Straßen und Gassen, Kirchen, Theater, Paläste - wo hat man das schon in dieser Zusammenballung gesehen. Und das gemeine Volk in engen Vierteln oder in Vororten wie der Au. Die Ränke im Rat, die Familienangelegenheiten der Kuisl sehr spannend und interessant verwoben mit den Morden an den jungen Frauen.

Dieser historische Kriminal- und Familienroman gefällt durch die fein abgestimmt eingeflossene Recherche und seine packende Geschichte.

4,5 Sterne

Susan says

This is number seven in the Hangman's Daughter series and it just keeps getting better with each installment. The Council of Twelve starts with the Kuisl family on their way to Munich for a meeting with the area hangmen. Upon arriving it's not too long before the bodies of young women begin to turn up. This is one of

my favorite series and I highly recommend each and every one of them.

Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for an honest review.

Hannelore Cheney says

Thank you NetGalley and AmazonCrossing for the eARC.

It's the year 1672 and the extended Kuisl family are in their way to a meeting of the Council of Twelve, the prestigious guild of hangmen in the Empire. Jacob Kuisl is proud to have been elected to the Council, but as they arrive, they are not staying in Munich, but instead in Au, a disreputable town full of suspicious and unwelcoming townsfolk. They fear the hangmen are bringing the devil to town, a fear that's only strengthened by the brutal murders of young women. The killings are all mirrored in the fashion of hangmen executions. The Council meetings become more and more contentious, as the members become suspicious of each other. That and his pregnant daughter's refusal to marry are not what Jacob had looked forward to as a newly elected member of the Council. As more girls are killed, he decides to hunt for the killer. His oldest daughter Magdalena helps him by going undercover working for a suspicious silk factory, which almost costs her her life. As one by one Council members are also murdered, this much anticipated trip has turned into the trip from hell.

Both daughters barely escape alive and the final uncovering of the murderer's identity was a total surprise...I didn't see that coming!

Many characters in the book are based on real historical figures and the descriptions of life and the people in those days are fascinating and chilling. At the same time I felt that man and the world may have evolved and improved, you only have to scratch the surface to find not much has changed. All in all this was an absorbing read and highly recommended for fans of historical suspense.

Schuyler Wallace says

German writer Oliver Pötzsch seems intrigued with his family's history of a long line of executioners. "The Council of Twelve" is the seventh mystery he's produced about the Kuisl family of hangmen who pursued murderers in the 1600s, a task sometimes indulged in as part of a hangman's duties. I read his first book in the series, "The Hangman's Daughter," a few years ago and was greatly impressed. This novel further strengthens my opinion of his work.

Hangman Jakob Kuisl and his family travel to Munich for a conference of eminent executioners known as The Council of Twelve. Concurrent with the meeting, young women in the area are being found murdered in gruesome fashion, all bearing a common medallion on their bodies. With no other suspects, and the hangman's profession not being highly regarded to begin with, the townspeople begin to cast blame on the attendees of the meeting. Kuisl and his family members band together to solve the murders and attempt to clear the executioners' names. If they fail, the noble line of work will be further denigrated all over Germany.

I find Pötzsch's descriptive writing and enlightening information about the profession highly entertaining. I didn't know, for example, that several options for executing people were available for hangmen to choose. Apart from the noose normally ascribed to them, there was also poisoning, beheading, torturing, impaling, drowning, and other niceties available depending on the crime and the proclivity of the executioner. Death

wasn't the only pursuit of the hangman; healing, birthing, medical, and pharmaceutical duties were often assigned to them. Needless to say, the doctors of the era also resented them, another black mark.

The premise of putting people to death by various means is not a radiant idea and one might expect the book to be morose or maudlin. It's true that there is much descriptive writing about smells, sights, and sensations that might be upsetting, but I sensed an almost lighthearted atmosphere around these normally gagging details. It was not an off-putting reading experience. The writer seems to have a rather jovial spirit and conveys it.

There is much to like about this book. The characters are well defined. The dialogue is realistic and faithful to the timeframe. The atmospheric descriptions put the reader on location. The historical information is eye opening. It's easy to read with no distracting ruminations from the characters. Read it. I think you'll enjoy it as something different and well done.

Aleshanee says

Man nimmt ja an, dass hier die Henkerstochter Magdalena im Vordergrund der Geschichten steht - doch bisher war es vor allem ihr Vater, der Henker Jakob Kuisl, der im Mittelpunkt des Geschehens stand. Und ich hab den grüblerischen, wortkargen und zum Jähzorn neigenden Alten wirklich sehr ins Herz geschlossen! Aber er wird alt - mittlerweile ist zählt er schon 60 Jahre und er rückt auch in der Handlung immer mehr in den Hintergrund.

Einerseits etwas schade, andererseits hat Oliver Pötzsch gerade in diesem Band die komplette Familie Kuisl mit einbezogen, was ich wirklich toll fand!

Die Einladung nach München zum Henkertreffen war ja nicht für alle Familienmitglieder ein Grund zur Freude, aber auch an große Hoffnungen gebunden. Natürlich stolpern die Kuisls wieder über einen üblen Mord und es scheint so, als würde ein Serientäter schon seit vielen Jahren sein Unheil treiben. Während die Münchner am liebsten die Henker selbst als Täter sehen würden, machen die sich auf Mördersuche: allen voran Jakob Kuisl, doch dieses Mal beteiligt sich auch der Rest seiner Familie damit und gerät dadurch zusehends in große Gefahr!

Ich fand es großartig dass ich hier viel mehr Einblick auch in alle anderen Figuren erhalten hab, denn die Perspektiven wechseln zwischen den verschiedenen Kuisls und man erlebt eine spannende Jagd auf verschiedenen Ebenen. Nicht so, dass man durcheinander kommen würde, sondern in einem sehr gut durchdachten und komplexen Handlungsablauf, der sehr viel Spannung gebracht hat!

- Barbara zum Beispiel, seine jüngste Tochter, will der alte Kuisl unbedingt endlich verheiraten. Dabei ahnt er nicht, wie dringend eine baldige Hochzeit tatsächlich ist, denn sie erwartet ein Kind, von dem der Vater auf und davon ist.

- Simon Fronwieser, Arzt und Ehemann seiner Tochter Magdalena, erhofft sich eine Möglichkeit, endlich sein Traktat zu veröffentlichen und sich einen besseren Namen als Arzt zu machen

- Peter, der Sohn von Magdalena, ist ein schlaues Kerlchen und möchte unbedingt eine Chance, auf eine bessere Schule in München zu kommen

Magdalena selbst steht zwischen allen Fronten und versucht ihr bestes, um die Familie zusammen zu halten und alles zu einem guten Ende zu bringen. Dabei lässt sie sich auf ein gefährliches Spiel ein und

Die Handlung spielt ja in München - nicht nur die Heimatstadt des Autors sondern auch meine, und das war natürlich ein ganz besonderes Erlebnis, "meine" Stadt im 17. Jahrhundert sozusagen hautnah zu erleben. Oliver Pötzsch hat wirklich großartig recherchiert und die damalige Zeit mit vielen Details und einem fundierten Hintergrund aufleben zu lassen. Dabei zeigt er das einfache Volk ebenso wie auch die gehobene Gesellschaft und die große Kluft und den Aberglauben, die damals geherrscht haben.

Eine rundum unterhaltsame, vielseitige und vor allem sehr spannende Geschichte, an der ich absolut nichts auszusetzen habe - ich hoffe sehr, dass Jakob Kuisl noch lange lebt und es noch einige Fortsetzungen Henkersfamilie geben wird!

Das Nachwort beinhaltet wieder einige Erklärungen zu den Personen und den Einzelheiten aus der Region und den Verhältnissen, was ich als Münchnerin besonders toll fand; sogar ein kleiner Stadtführer findet sich im Anhang.

© Aleshanee
Weltenwanderer

Die Henkerstochter Reihe

- 1 ~ Die Henkerstochter
 - 2 ~ Die Henkerstochter und der schwarze Mönch
 - 3 ~ Die Henkerstochter und der König der Bettler
 - 4 ~ Der Hexer und die Henkerstochter
 - 5 ~ Die Henkerstochter und der Teufel von Bamberg
 - 6 ~ Die Henkerstochter und das Spiel des Todes
 - 7 ~ Die Henkerstochter und der Rat der Zwölf
-

Christen Moore says

Each time I read the newest installment of The Hangman's Daughter series, I feel as if I am reconnecting with old friends. To me this is the mark of an excellent series. With every new book readers feel welcomed, eager to catch up on the recent life events, and happy to reflect on times gone by. In The Council of Twelve, book seven of the series, Pötzsch continues this cheerful trend bringing readers along on the latest adventures of the Kuisl family.

The Council of Twelve is the exclusive gathering of the twelve most respected and feared hangmen in Bavaria. In 1672 they welcome Jakob Kuisl, the Schongau executioner. Jakob, his daughter Magdalena, her husband, and their family travel with Jakob to Munich to attend the Council of Twelve meeting. Upon their arrival in Munich, the Kuisls learn that young girls are being killed. Very quickly the Kuisls are thrust into the investigation of the deaths. They soon realize there is much more to these deaths and the consequences of not solving the murders could affect not only the Kuisls but all Bavarian executioners.

I have read and loved all of the books in The Hangman's Daughter series. In each book Jakob and his family are somehow dragged into a murder investigation. While Jakob and his family are considered dishonorable amongst their fellow citizens; they are an important and vital part of the community. Jakob is clever and his knowledge of healing herbs has saved many lives in his hometown of Schongau. The rest of the Kuisls are

responsible for keeping the streets of Schongau clean. Despite being essential to the town, the Kuisls are treated as outcasts, avoided, often ridiculed and belittled. The very presence of the any Kuisl in any setting causes towns people to cross themselves as the family is believed to bring misfortune. One would think this would make the Kuisls bitter, while they are guarded, they are still kind and willing to help anyone who is in need. This is what makes the Kuisls endearing and why readers will always cheer for the hangman and his family.

One hangman is bad luck, twelve is a death wish. This is the shared attitude of most citizens in Munich. As all hangmen are dishonorable and the cause of misfortune, Munich is already on edge. The deaths of the young girls is quickly blamed on The Council of Twelve. Potzsch does a great job portraying the paranoia which follows the hangmen and the Kuisls while they are in Munich. While the paranoia may seem ridiculous and sometimes comical, one must consider this story takes place just twenty-one years before the Salem Witch Trials. This story takes place in a time when unexplained events were met with extreme and unreasonable actions.

As with all of books in The Hangman's Daughter series, The Council of Twelve is narrated so that readers are transported to Bavaria during the sixteen hundreds. Potzsch's vivid descriptions of dirty streets and the constant smell of rot and decay allow readers to become fully immersed in the time period.

The central mystery is intriguing and left me stumped until the culprit was revealed. I could relate to Jakob's frustration with solving the case. I, like Jakob, thought I had identified the guilty party and each time I was wrong. Potzsch makes several mentions of Jakob's age throughout the story, how he is growing tired and weary with his job as executioner. Although I know it would be unrealistic for Jakob to go on forever, with everyone aging except him, but I really hope there are many more stories of Jakob Kuisl and his family.

**** Thanks to Amazon Publishing for my free copy of The Council of Twelve ****

Murder and Moore Rating :

5 out of 5 Stars

Carmina Valdizán says

Being the 7th book in the saga I was worried it will not be as good as the previously ones, I was sorely mistaken, is better, Mr Pötzsch never fails to deliver a solid mystery.

This is the story of a serial killer that has been killing for at least 20 years without anyone noticing, no one even bothered to make the connection between the brutal killings until Jakob Kuisl and his family arrived to Munich for the Council of Twelve; his curious mind found these similarities and the story begins. The story revolves around killings, the forged of coins and a prostitution network. I never see the ending coming, the killer was concealed until the very end.

This book opens the door to many possibilities for the saga to be kept alive, a new generation will take over, I'm sure. In fact, more than a half of the members of the Kuisl clan are moving to Munich. I like Peter and Max duet as well as Paul, Peter and the street urchins gang in action.

"During this hour, just before the floodgates opened, the silence was the most profound — and the despair the greatest. It was the best time to hunt".

I received an advance copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Many Thanks to AmazonCrossing, Oliver Pötzsch and Netgalley for the opportunity.

eyes.2c says

Consternation in the Hangman's Guild!

The Kuisl family travels to the Munich of 1672. Jakob, has a Hangman's Guild meeting--The Council of Twelve. However as usual nothing is ever simple with the Kuisls. But then that's the norm for the empire's executioners. Needed and yet despised, seen as the lowest of the low by the empire's citizens. It seems a serial killer is at large murdering young women in a series of bizarre ways. Simon, Magdalena's physician husband has written a treatise on cleanliness and well-being that he's trying to bring to the attention of a famous physician in Munich. Jakob has decided to marry his daughter Barbara to a fellow hangman (against her loud protests!). Magdalena gets caught up in a Bavarian silk factory scandal that takes her into danger, her son Peter meets a prince and Paul makes the acquaintance of a lively gang of street boys. As murder stalks the streets of Munich, the Hangman's Guild becomes entangled. A fabulous look at the times, laws and customs of Munich and Bavaria. Well researched and as always with the Hangman's Daughter series, a fascinating and strong read!

A NetGalley ARC

Linda (Miss Greedybooks) says

I loved it! #7 in the series, I think there is another one coming...

Kathy says

Well, that helps me in my decision to give up Kindle Unlimited. The end of my subscription is coming up so I have tried to find something worthwhile to read. Slim pickings. Some years ago I think I liked the first couple books but I am not going to check. It is pretty ridiculous stuff.

Laurie says

In 1672, the executioners of Bavaria are having a meeting of the Council of Twelve, a prestigious group--well, as prestigious as a hangman can be in a time and place where they are considered dishonorable and tainted. Jakob Kuisl takes his entire family there--his married daughter Magdalena, her physician husband Simon, her three children, and his unmarried daughter Barbara, with the thought of finding her a husband there in Munich. The fact that Barbara is already pregnant, and doesn't even want to get married, complicates matters. Jakob's son Georg, apprenticed to a hangman of a different city, is also there. Simon is there in hopes of finding a sponsor for his thesis about preventing infections. These strands weave around and into the mystery, which is that young women are turning up dead, all with a certain medallion and all killed in ways that executioners use on female criminals. Of course, the town's suspicions turn to the group of hangman in their midst. They fear the despised executioners have unleashed a devil on the town.

As Jakob tries to unravel the mystery before the executioners become the executed by mob, more women are found dead- as is one of the hangmen's own. How are these women connected? What is the common thread? Meanwhile, Magdalena has become embroiled in another mystery and has gone undercover in a silk mill, from which there may be no escape.

I loved this book. I did not realize when I asked for the book that it was the 7th in a series, but the author made the family relationships clear right away and I was able to jump right in without feeling I was missing anything. Potzsch deftly handles the multiple threads of plot (I haven't mentioned them all; there are simple too many) and never drops the many balls he's juggling. He paints a vivid picture of the time and place- all too vivid at times, a lot of things being rather gross and grim back then. From street girls to the royal court, everyone seems to be involved. The story is full of action and the characters all come to life. Five stars.
