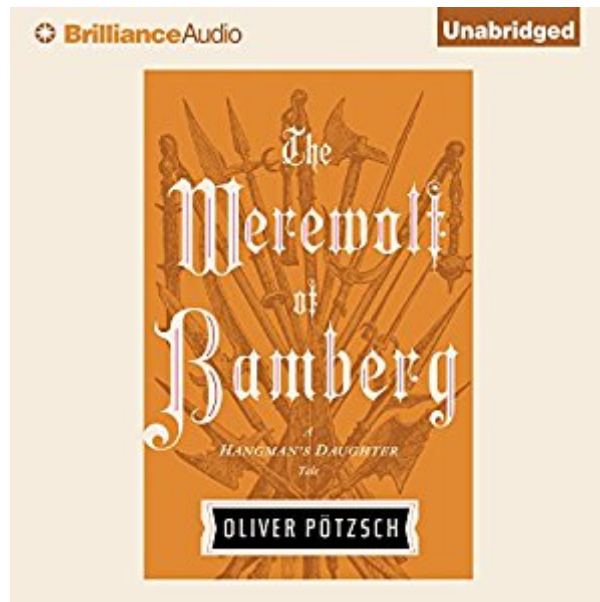


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The Werewolf Of Bamberg: The Hangman's Daughter, Book 5



Synopsis

In 1668, hangman Jakob Kuisl, his daughter Magdalena, and her husband Simon are traveling to the town of Bamberg. But what was planned as a family vacation soon becomes a nightmare: there is a murderer in Bamberg leaving the severed limbs of victims in the trash outside the city. When rumors quickly spread that the murders are the work of a werewolf, Jakob Kuisl must prove the superstition wrong and embark on a search for the "devil of Bamberg". This thrilling fifth entry in Oliver Pötzsch's Hangman's Daughter series follows the continuing adventures and mysteries that surround the Kuisl family.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This series, A Hangman's Daughter, is entertaining. I'm not sure I would recommend this book as a one-off. The central characters were well developed in the first book and have evolved ever so slightly with each new publication. This particular book lacked a bit of character description that, if you hadn't read any of the previous works, would have made the character seem a little hollow. The first, A Hangman's Daughter, is a quick read and sets out the characters, history and context nicely. If you're new to the series, perhaps do a quick read on that one first. Besides that, this was enjoyable, if not one of the more interesting of the series. The premise is virtually the same as previous stories as the hangman is once again a somewhat unwilling protagonist, stumbling into another mystery of murder and secrecy. There are new and newish characters who play pivotal roles this time but even while I was sipping lukewarm beer on a Greek beach I couldn't help but feel

they could use a little more development. It's good holiday, train, and travel fodder. It kept my interest without being a page-turner, which can be nice on a beach if you want to stop reading occasionally and admire beautiful people in beautiful bikinis until your wife notices. Then you pick the book back up and enjoy it without missing a beat.

I've only read two other books in Oliver Potzsch's Hangman's Daughter series, those being "The Hangman's Daughter" and "The Beggar King". Luckily, I didn't feel like I had missed an important part of the story while reading this installment. This novel opens up with Jakob Kuisl and his family on the road from Schongau to Bamberg, where Jakob's estranged brother has invited him to his wedding. Nobody knows why Jakob and his brother Bartholomäus, the hangman of Bamberg, have not spoken much in all of these years. On the way, the family encounters rumors and signs of an evil mythical creature terrorizing the very city they're headed to. Severed body parts are being found around Bamberg, and inevitably Jakob and his family end up involved in yet another murderous mystery. At the same time, Jakob and Bartholomäus struggle not to bicker over their murky past. I was so excited when I started reading this book. It's a long book so I figured it was going to be a good one. It was only okay, especially compared to the others. There are several narratives and they tend to be repetitive as they weave together, almost as if the reader is expected to have a terrible memory. There's really not all that much happening at any given time. Without the repetition and fluffy parts, at least a third of this book would be gone and the plot wouldn't be as drawn out. However, the slowness and predictability didn't stop me from trying to guess the exact details along the way. As usual, there are plenty of suspicious characters and a whole lot of death. One thing that makes zero sense to me is Bartholomäus' real reason for being upset with his brother. It doesn't fit into the narrative and seems forced and unlikely. Overall it's a decent historical fiction mystery, just not my favorite so far in the series.

. . . and is less than willing to mend family ties with his brother Bartholomäus Kuisl, the hangman of Bamberg, with whom older brother Jacob has been estranged, lo, these forty years. Our Schongau hangman nevertheless takes his daughters Magdalena and Barbara, grandsons Peter and Paul, and Magdalena's husband Simon Fronwieser with him to Bamberg to attend the wedding of his younger brother to Katharina, daughter of prominent clerk Hieronymus Hauser. Bamberg forty years before had been the scene of an intense witch hunt that eventually brought about a thousand citizens to burning or beheading, and the disappearance of several citizens over a few days' time, along with recovery of mutilated bodies and body parts, give rise to the strong possibility that

this search for a werewolf will have a similar outcome if the mystery is not solved soon. All Potzsch fans will enjoy anticipating the clever search in the well-constructed mystery as well as the detailed depiction of life in 17th Century Germany. Science, superstition, ambition, revenge, and sleuthing all mix together as Jacob blunders, actors proclaim, Bartl blusters, and Magdalena manages, all the while Simon proves he's wiser than Jacob gives him credit. Pleasurable Potzsch!

Set in 16th Century Germany, the book begins with the arrival of the Kuisel family in Bamberg to attend the wedding of the Bamberg executioner, Jacob's brother Bartolmeus. Things do not go well, mainly because there is a werewolf prowling the nighttime streets horribly killing some people and snatching others away to a horrible fate. Bodies have been found floating in the river; pieces of bodies in the fields. Ferocious growling and howling alarms everyone. Soon, even those who reject the idea of a werewolf as superstition are frightened, either of the wolf, or the calls for an inquisition. Everyone in Bamberg remembers the witch trials of 30 years previous in which a thousand innocents were tortured and executed. Will it happen again? Seems so. The story unfolds in a greatly entertaining fashion as the Kuisel family finds itself in the center of the werewolf hunt and in the effort to prove that the murderer is human, or rather an inhuman, crazed, man stalking people for reasons known only to himself. As the mystery is unraveled, and the danger grows, this reader found it difficult to tear himself away. As always, Mr. Potzsch develops a fascinating picture of medieval Germany: the stench and filth of the streets and rivers, the ignorance of the people of both low and high rank and the fear and superstition that passed for religion. There are some passages that are not for the faint or squeamish; just remember, it is a crime novel, not a horror one. The true horror is what is in men's hearts. Note: the book actually begins with a flashback of 30 years previous describing the reason for the estrangement of the brothers. The wedding celebration was supposed to heal the rift. Did it? Read on.....

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