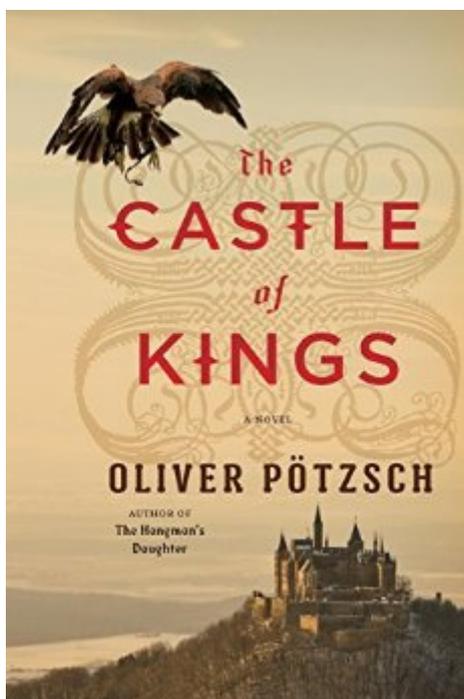


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# The Castle Of Kings



## Synopsis

An epic tale of murder, treachery, bravery, and love In 1524, in what is now Germany, hundreds of thousands of peasants revolted against the harsh treatment of their aristocratic overlords. Agnes is the daughter of one of these overlords, but she is not a typical sixteenth-century girl, refusing to wear dresses and spending more time with her pet falcon than potential suitors. There is only one suitor she is interested in: Mathis, a childhood friend who she can never marry due to his low birth status. But when a rogue knight attacks Agnes and Mathis shoots the knight to save her, the two are forced to go on the run together, into the midst of the raging Peasants' War. Over the next two years, as Agnes and Mathis travel the countryside, they are each captured by and escape from various factions of the war, participate in massive battles, make new friends both noble and peasant, and fall in love. Meanwhile, Agnes's falcon finds a mysterious ring, and Agnes begins having strange, but seemingly meaningful dreams. Dreams that lead the two lovers to revelations about their place in the world and in the emerging German states. With *The Castle of Kings*, Oliver Pötzsch has written a historical yarn that calls to mind Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth* and Bernard Cornwell's *Agincourt*.

## Book Information

File Size: 5691 KB

Print Length: 656 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (July 19, 2016)

Publication Date: July 19, 2016

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00QPHKQZQ

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #36,622 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #35 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > German #75 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > German #136 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers > Historical

## Customer Reviews

About a hundred pages in, as the historical references piled up, I took a detour to my friend wikipedia to see how much was true and consult some maps. To my slight surprise, the specific castles actually existed and still do, with the story set when they had already fallen to ruin. As someone who is not an expert in medieval German history, despite ancestry in that area at the time, the line between truth and fiction wasn't always obvious, which turned out not to matter. (The author has a handy summary on that very point in the afterword.) The story occurs in a time of turmoil, with a peasant revolt because of economic challenges, the nascent rise of Martin Luther against the Church, and oppressive regional leadership under the German Reich. Our heroine Agnes has it all as a 16-year-old when the novel opens: she is the motherless daughter of minor nobility living in a deteriorating castle with little money, smart, beautiful, strong willed, adventuresome and literate. Almost like a modern striver, with some bitchiness thrown in and not a lot of charm. Of course, that is too much for her father to handle and scary for most potential suitors. Her long-time friend and eventual soulmate is Mathis, a smith and budding weapons maker from a lower rank, and thus ineligible as a partner. Mathis is forward looking compared to most people, perceptive about changing means of battle and sympathetic to Luther's position. A bit on the naive side, as he comes close to disaster several times. The first of two books paints the local society and times in interesting detail, moving along at a modest pace, developing the characters and setting up the more dynamic second book.

I decided to read this book because I enjoyed Potzsch's Hangman's Daughter series. Since his books are being translated from German, it is hard to know for sure but I suspect "The Castle of Kings" was one of his earlier books. I say this because I thought the heroine, Agnes, is somewhat clichéd in that she is a young woman out of step with her times, preferring her falcon to the usual young womanly activities. This is a bit much for her widowed father to handle, probably accurate but still a bit clichéd! In addition, as is usual in these type stories, she falls in love with Mathis, a young man born beneath her status. None of the clichés appear in his Hangman's Daughter books, hence my guess that this novel was early. If so, one can see that he would become an even more successful novelist. Agnes leaves the husband she married because her father needed money (for instance their castle is deteriorating) and joins the peasant revolt going on at the time. The story recounts her adventures along with those of Mathis who is trying to save her. There was a lot of bickering between the two but one has to consider their age. At 16 one is still not an adult (not that adults don't bicker LOL). I liked the book but it is a little long. After awhile I started shrugging at the

encounter of another "adventure." I wanted the dark forces to stop appearing. i wanted the dreams better explained and the significance of the ring to become clear. I did enjoy the book and if one likes historical fiction, then this book will satisfy many of those readers as it is well researched and historically accurate taking place during the 16th century peasant uprising in Germany.

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