



## **A Murder in Auschwitz**

*J.C. Stephenson*

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An SS officer is found standing over the body of a comrade, a smoking pistol still in his hand, a murder in a place of murders. His pleas of innocence force a court martial and he knows that there is only one man in the camp capable of defending him; a Jewish prisoner called Manfred Meyer.

Manfred Meyer is forced to build a defence for him in his court martial. Drawing on his years of experience as a criminal lawyer in Berlin, Meyer must unravel the deceit and interpret the lies that infect the concentration camp and work to have him found not guilty.

Following Meyer and his family through their lives in Berlin, the Nazi rise to power and their inevitable arrest and incarceration in Auschwitz, Meyer will do almost anything to see his wife and children. Almost anything.

Can his abilities as a lawyer interpret the facts of this seemingly impossible case? As a Jew, should he even defend an SS officer? And is he actually guilty of this crime?

But the officer must be found innocent if Meyer is to see his family again.

This story follows Manfred Meyer, from his beginnings as a lawyer in 1930s Berlin after being taken under the wing of the city's most capable defence lawyer in the most prestigious law firm in Germany, Bauer & Bauer.

Meyer's confidence and experience build as his cases become more complex and more difficult to defend. His success is widespread and he, his wife Klara and their twin daughters live a comfortable life in the capital.

But Germany is changing. The Nazi Party has come to power and Meyer's Jewish heritage has become a crime. Life becomes more and more difficult until even in spite of Meyer's connections he is forced to leave his position as Bauer & Bauer's pre-eminent lawyer.

Then, one night, the inevitable knock at the door heralds the long train journey to the east and the death camps of Poland for Meyer, his wife and his children.

Split from his family on arrival, Meyer does what he can to survive in a place designed for death. He stays alive with help from the other inmates he has befriended, helping each other through the long days of hard labour, his only wish being that he could see his family again. A forlorn hope until circumstance throws a real chance his way.

## **A Murder in Auschwitz Details**

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# From Reader Review A Murder in Auschwitz for online ebook

**Alisha Tarran says**

Auschwitz 1944, an SS officer is found standing over the body of a comrade, the smoking pistol still in his hand, a murder in a place full of murders. The officer is adamant of his innocence. With no confession, a court martial is forced, asked to pick a fellow officer to defend him, he picks the only man he can feel he can trust. But, he makes one other request, to have a prisoner, a Jew, also a lawyer to help his defending officer build his defence case. In exchange for the chance to see the family he was separated from, former criminal defence lawyer Manfred Meyer is forced to build a defence for him. Meyer must unravel the deceit, the lies and the secrets surrounding the SS officer murdered, and the defendant.

Berlin 1929, we start to follow Manfred Meyer and his family through their lives in Berlin. We follow Meyer as he rises from intern, to assistant to a leading Criminal Defence lawyer at a highly respected law firm, following along his cases get more complex. We follow the lives of Meyer and his family as the Nazi party eventually comes to power, things slowly start to change, life becomes more and more difficult for Meyer as a Jew in Berlin. Then when the knock comes at the door, we follow Meyer on a terrifying train journey to the place where so many lost their lives. Where so many innocents were murdered.

I was sent a copy of this book that I had one from Goodreads in exchange for a review, and it's one of the best I have received. This book for me, brought so many memories flooding back. When studying History at school, we went to visit a concentration camp in Berlin, and while not exactly the same as Auschwitz, it bore many of the same hallmarks, the shooting wall, the chambers where experiments were carried out, crematoriums, and similar bunks. As I was reading, I kept flashing back to that trip and everything I had seen which made this book even more emotional for me.

Stephenson must have done a hell of a lot of research for this book, there was lots of detail about the process entering Auschwitz, and the day to day life of the prisoners, as well as the build up to Nazi power and what went on once they were in power. Everything described I could picture so clearly despite never having been to visit Auschwitz myself. The story is a cycle, starting with Meyer and his life leading up to the ending when he first arrives at Auschwitz in alternating chapters with the second thread of the story starting with him arriving, and his life at the camp including the murder trial of the SS officer. It was really very brilliantly written, with lots of threads, historical accuracy and the alternating chapters kept it fresh and engaging.

The flow of the book was very smooth, moving easily between the different years in the chapters. The book was very fast paced, lots happened, and everything fit together perfectly. I was hooked right from the first page, the writing was very atmospheric and very haunting. The characters were also very well written, and had plenty of depth, I also got the impression that a certain SS soldier, may not agree with what was going on, but didn't want to be killed himself so went along with it, something I'm sure many of them felt. There was a very authentic and real feel to the book, when I started reading the book, I briefly wondered if this wasn't a history book, and not a work of fiction.

A Murder In Auschwitz is incredibly well written and researched, expertly weaving the many threads in to one complex plot. The mystery is very intriguing, I'm no Sherlock Holmes, but I couldn't tell who the killer was, I was at the author's mercy, believing everything I was presented with. I couldn't put the book down, the love Meyer had for his wife was truly beautiful, and the mystery kept me intrigued right up until the end. While the processes of Auschwitz are described in concise detail, some of the details are truly horrifying to think about, but there wasn't too much in depth detail, or dwelling on the more gruesome aspects of life at the

camp.

A Murder In Auschwitz is an incredibly emotional read, I ended up finding myself crying once or twice, and the entire book has a huge impact on you, even after you've finished reading. A truly beautifully written book, by a very talented author. I'd never have guessed this was his first book!

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### **Kathe Coleman says**

Murder in Auschwitz by J.C. Stephenson

A legal thriller that follow the life Manfred Meyer and his family beginning in 1929 when he began his law practice in Berlin through the end of his days at Auschwitz in 1943. I am kind of left speechless but I book I will remember for a long time. Very good. 4.5

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### **Xanthi says**

I listened to this one on audiobook. The narrator did an amazing job - especially with the very long, and frequently used German words!

This story skips backwards and forwards, following two timelines of the protagonist's life. This does not get confusing - if anything, it works remarkably well. The two timelines bind together well and meet beautifully (all be it tragically) in the end.

I am not going to say too much more about this book except that it was obviously written very well. The reader gets a real feeling for life in Berlin before and during the war. The story touches on so many facets of this period of time but does not get bogged down in any area. (There is so much historical WW2 material, that this would have been easy to do.) Instead, the author concentrates on the personal life of one man and his family. The result is an intimate and touching story. Times it by millions and you have true life Tragedy.

Brilliant. One of my favourite reads of 2014.

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### **Judy says**

My Review: Such a different type of who done it. I absolutely loved it. Set in Germany before the war and during the time of the concentration camps. Told from the view point of a prominent Jewish lawyer, who in spite of his success and friends, ends up being sent to the death camp. Love how his past life was woven in. Cried at the end was hoping for a good one but as with most of the people that ended up at the camps the endings were not happy. Editing needs a little attention so I give this a 4 star. Highly recommend it to anyone.

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## **denise says**

### **Murder**

Absolutely stunning!!! For anyone that reads books on WWII, this is a must read book. I fell in love with the people in this book, the author is magnificent!

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## **Diane says**

This is a rather amazing book, and I was caught up in reading, to the point where I stayed up till 0230 in the a.m. to finish it! A self-published novel set in Auschwitz during WWII, with frequent flashbacks to the main character's life in pre-war Berlin during the Nazi rise to power. It has a fair number of typos, but the story itself is so interesting that they didn't bother me as much as usual. Not really a happy ending, but realistic, and I hope to see more from this author.

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## **Kathy says**

Written from a perspective that I never would have thought of. I highly recommend this to any WWII buffs. All of the emotions are there, and the ending is exceptional!

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## **Sandie Bishop says**

Brilliant storyline. Deals with the human tragedy that happened at Auschwitz with an excellent murder story running alongside. Well paced with a couple of good twists

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## **Barbara Camelford says**

What an amazing book and what an amazing Author. It created a wonderful story amid such dreadful circumstances and yet the horrifying goings on in Aushwitz were never far away.

The ability to weave such a brilliant story and keep the horror of the holocaust intertwined was the best feature.

The people became so real and you could almost imagine being there with them and understand the situations they found themselves in very easily. It also showed of course that not everyone was the same; with love and fellowship peeping through regularly. Your heart soared with pride at man's ability to show the best in times of trouble against those who showed nothing but contempt.

I couldn't put it down and have lost a good few hours of sleep reading well into the night just to see 'what happens next'.

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## **Julie says**

A Murder in Auschwitz is a January 2013 publication. The is a self published novel. This is a legal thriller set in Germany, before, during, and little after the war.

The story alternates in time between 1929 and 1943 Auschwitz, Germany. We meet Manfred Meyer as he is just starting his career as an attorney. He is a family man, married to his beloved Klara who is expecting their first child. Manfred is mentored and taught to be a good defense attorney. His law firm is like a second family to him. He is given his first murder case, a case that will solidify him as a defense attorney, but will also have a drastic effect on him in the future, a future he could never have predicted.

The alternate chapter set in 1943, we find Manfred in a death camp. He has been separated from his wife and twin daughters. He doesn't know about their well being. He finds out right quick what the score is and what his future would turn out like. His only wish is to see his family again.

The last thing that Meyer ever expected was to come face to face with a man who he had successfully defended against a murder charge. Now an SS soldier, the man finds himself once more charged with murder. He makes the unusual request to have a Jew participate in his defense. When Meyer is approached about the situation, he makes one demand- to see his family one more time.

The author does a great job of separating the time frame of past and present. The normal life Manfred had and the wonderful mind he has. Then the stark contrast of being in the death camp.

Now, there is no way to get around the depressing atmosphere of the camp. It is not easy to read these chapters in the book. It is a heart wrenching account of a man's life being reduced to the death sentence of the camp. The depiction is very realistic, but it's not overly graphic. However, it is still disturbing. These chapters were emotional, so be forewarned.

Manfred is a great guy. He's devoted to his family and takes his job seriously. He takes pride in preventing innocent people from going to prison. He is honest and hardworking and is well liked by his co-workers and boss. He is also very, very smart and clever. Although is realizes his life is doomed no matter what, he makes the best of his dire situation... and perhaps has the last laugh?

There are a few really shocking twist in the plot involving both murder cases, past and present.

Manfred suffers some gut punching revelations and those are some of the hardest things to get over.

After all is said and done, the book ends on an uplifting note and with a wonderful twist of irony.

I received this novel from the author for an honest review.

If you like historical mysteries or historical fiction in general or legal thrillers, you will like this book.

As with many self published novels, there may be a few typos here and there, and maybe some sections could have been cut down a bit to hasten the pace of the novel. Other than that, this was a very well written novel with a compelling and emotional story. Overall a B+.

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## **Mervin O'Sullivan says**

Many stories have been written about Auschwitz and other death camps. All very sad. Very good story but at the same time very sad. Having visited the Holocaust Museum at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington shows all visitors the real extent of the atrocities. This must never happen again.

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## Steve says

There have been many novels written about the atrocities in concentration camps during the war, all thought provoking, and most worth the read..this novel is one of those

A story of a Jewish lawyer sent to auschwitz with his family. The story is told in two sequences, one on his life before the war and leading up to his arrest, the other from his time of arrival.

He is eventually asked to help a ss officer who has been accused of murder.

The story is good, full of little twists which keep you intrigued, but it is the continual story of how mankind can sink to such depravities, and inflict such injustice on fellow human beings that keeps you reading!

It is easy to merely read what occurred at this time and have sympathy, but the author strives to allow you to imagine a normal man, and his love for his family to permeate throughout. How such innocent people were rounded up and massacred on an industrial scale, and you can't help wondering what if you had been born at the wrong place at the wrong time!

The author tells the story without deliberately trying to overdo the injustice of it all and the depravity of man, he merely tells how it was and the feelings of a normal man and let's your mind do the rest.

An excellent read, not quite on the level of schindlers list.....but not far off!!

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## Leslie says

I do not think my review can sufficiently convey how amazing this book is. But I will try.

This may be one of the best, disturbing books I have ever read. I don't know how to properly classify it. It isn't a mystery, but it has mystery elements. It isn't suspense though it has suspense in excess.

The book is told in a unique style, part 'real time', part flashbacks.

The book begins with the main character arriving at Auschwitz in 1944 as a prisoner. As the story progresses and regresses we learn that thanks to the intercession of powerful men his family has managed to stay in Germany mostly unscathed until this time. He was a defense lawyer at a powerful firm and had influential colleagues. As the Nazi's take power his life is degraded and diminished.

Upon their arrival at Auschwitz he is separated from his wife and twin daughters, slowly he learns what the camp is. He also encounters an SS officer who he had successfully defended against a murder charge in the past. When that officer is again charged with murder he demands that the prisoner be part of his defense team.

The story is brilliantly constructed to keep you guessing until the end.

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## Sarah-Jayne Briggs says

(I received this book for free as part of Goodreads First Reads giveaways).

(This review may contain spoilers).



The first thing that struck me about the book was the irony of the title. My sister told me she had to look again when she first saw the title - to which my niece immediately asked what said title was. (Inquiring six-year-olds... I was able to divert her, though).

In the author's note at the beginning of this book, there's the comment that this could be read in a circular fashion - you can either read it front to back, or pick any chapter at random and read in a circle. To a certain extent, I agree - there are certainly two different stories that each chapter alternates between.

A book about the Holocaust, even a fictional book, is one that's very hard to read. The same is true of anything particularly horrible in history, with the possible exception of Horrible Histories. I've often wondered how so many people thought it was acceptable to treat fellow human beings as something less than themselves.

The descriptions of the concentration camp were particularly moving, from the hard labour the people had to go through to the fact that colour seemed leached from someone as they stayed in the camp.

I liked the friendships formed throughout the course of the book. Even though there were bad people throughout, there were also good parts that came through - the simple act of sharing tree sap with fellow prisoners; a German citizen stepping in when Jews were about to be arrested; another sending food to a family who couldn't feed themselves.

There were several things that surprised me by the end of the book, particularly with the two letters Manfred had written. Something about what happened was almost... satisfying, in a way. There's part of me that thinks I shouldn't feel like that, while the rest of me realises that some of these people were terrible, awful human beings. I don't condone the death penalty, but something like that makes that belief waver.

I don't think I'd read this book again, but it's definitely one I'd recommend as thought-provoking and well-written, with only a few errors I noticed.

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## **Bob says**

Excellent -- Don't Let The Fact That This Book Is Self-Published Dissuade You From Reading It!

A few months ago the author, J.C. Stephenson, emailed me to request that I accept a free copy of his self-published book, called *A Murder In Auschwitz*, in return for an honest review. I don't usually accept invitations of this type for two reasons: (1) Because what is often being asked for when accepting a free book is not "an honest review" but "a favorable review," and I'm not the type of person who'll say anything other than what I truly feel about a book in my review; and (2) I have a tendency to believe that a book that has to be self-published isn't going as good as a book published by a well-known publishing house.

Despite my above-mentioned reasons, I recently decided to read *A Murder In Auschwitz* rather than reading a book from some "proven" author sitting on the top of the mountain of books I have waiting to be read. My main reason for doing so is due to its intriguing title and plot, which can be read about in the Book Description above. I particularly liked knowing that the author chose to have his legal thriller set in Germany (and subsequently in Auschwitz) while alternating between the years of 1929 and 1944.

Having now finished this book, I have only very high praise for it; and, as such, highly recommend it to

anyone interested in historical fiction during this period in history, legal novels, books with very well-developed characters, and a narrative style that enables the reader to feel that they are "right there" experiencing everything the characters are experiencing. *A Murder In Auschwitz* is a book that I found very difficult to put down due to the emotional impact and nicely woven surprises it provides. And, while the well-written chapters that take place in Auschwitz are very emotional and realistic, they (thankfully) do not dwell on their gruesomeness. Despite the awful period and places in which the book is set, Stephenson's book is more than a good work of historical and legal fiction. It, for me, is an excellent tale of the powerful love a man has for his wife and children and what he is willing to do to hold on to that love -- even if only for one more minute.

Why all of the big publishing houses passed on publishing *A Murder In Auschwitz* is a mystery to me -- perhaps a bigger mystery than the one provided in the book itself -- as it is one of the better books I've read recently. However, for the Kindle owner or those with the Kindle app, they have a real treat in store for them if they act quickly, as Amazon is currently offering *A Murder In Auschwitz* for free.

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