In Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century, Max Liebermann is at the forefront of psychoanalysis, practicing the controversial new science with all the skill of a master detective. Every dream, inflection, or slip of tongue in his hysterical patients has meaning and reveals some hidden truth. When a mysterious and beautiful medium dies under extraordinary circumstances, Max’s good friend, Detective Oskar Rheinhardt, calls for his expert assistance. The medium’s body has been found in a room that can only be locked from the inside. Her body has been shot, but there’s no gun and absolutely no trace of a bullet. On a table lies a suicide note, claiming that there is such a thing as forbidden knowledge. All signs point to a supernatural killer, but Liebermann the scientist is not so easily convinced. Set in the Vienna of Freud, Klimt, and Mahler, a time of unprecedented activity in the worlds of philosophy, science, and art, A Death in Vienna is an elegantly written novel, taut with suspense and rich in historical details.

My Personal Review:
Just as the dark moods and buoyant spirits of London of the late 19th century contrast in the narratives of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, so does the pomp and gloss of imperial majesty scrape up against the black, sordid underbelly of Vienna in Tallis’ fin de siecle mystery.

The star of the piece is a young Jewish doctor interested in the fledging discipline of psychiatry. He navigates carefully through the corridors occupied by the controversial Sigmund Freud, the anti-Semitic Karl Lueger, Mayor of Vienna and other fascinating denizens of that era.

The mystery which the young doctor helps solve is a variant of a closed door puzzle, the suspects are well-drawn and the solution is satisfying.

The surprise was the skill with which Tallis, a psychiatrist himself with a spate of published texts, handles the descriptive passages. His insights
and flourishes are worthy of the best descriptive writers. As a frequent visitor to Vienna and a reader of many texts and novels about the city, I was amazed to read exquisite passages which captured so exactly the feel and mood of the city. I must add that I am generally more inclined to narrative than description but Tallis is so exceptional in the latter that one almost forgets the former.

All in all, I would strongly recommend this worthy first novel in what one hopes will be a long series.

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A Death in Vienna by Dr. Frank Tallis  Dr. - 5 Star Customer Reviews  and Lowest Price!