



# Book Club Discussion Questions

## The Dark Monk By Oliver Potzsch

1. There are a number of allusions to the Templar text *Ordinis Templorum Historia* and Latin quotes throughout the novel. Explain these references: How do they help to solve the mystery?
2. Explain the various roles religion plays in *The Dark Monk*
3. Augustin Bonenmayr is seeking the True Cross of Christ-"It will adorn this church, and crowds of pilgrims will once again come flocking to Steingaden!"-and is willing to do anything to obtain it, even kill. How does history show that religious fervor always leads to violence?
4. The novel opens with a quote from Aristotle, *Poetics*, XXIV: "We delight in marvelous things. One proof of that is that everyone embellishes somewhat when telling a story in the assumption he is pleasing his listener." How is this sentiment explored in *The Dark Monk*? Who in the novel embellishes their story? What, if any, punishment is given to this person?
5. Compare how Oliver Potzsch fleshes out the male and female characters. Do you think he does a better job with one gender? Why do you think he chose Magdalena Kuisl instead of Jakob Kuisl to title the series after?
6. Discuss the significance of Andreas Koppmeyer. What is his role in the story?
7. How does Benedikta serve as a foil to Magdalena? Who, if anyone, fills that role for Simon?
8. Why is Simon "both attracted and repelled" by Benedikta?

9. How does Simon's superficial love of fashion and appearance blind him to potential danger?
10. How much, if any, has Johann Lechner changed since the first novel? Is Lechner still willing to do whatever it takes to ensure the safety of Schongau?
11. Explain Kuisl's worry for Simon while having hardly any for his daughter, Magdalena, while she is in Augsburg. Was it a wise decision to send Magdalena, a young woman, to Augsburg without an escort?
12. Who do you think the hidden "master" of the story is? Who do you think is the fourth robber?
13. Discuss the significance of Jakob Kuisl referring to his time as a soldier as "from before."
14. What do you make of Jakob Kuisl's distinction "I'm a hangman, but not a murderer"?