

Vienna Blood by Frank Tallis.
Century, 2006.

Vienna Blood is the second novel to feature Dr Max Liebermann, disciple and intimate of Sigmund Freud, psychotherapist, gifted amateur musician, and colleague and friend of Police Inspector Oskar Rheinhardt.

The plot of the story is set against the backdrop of 1902 Vienna, held in the icy grip of a Siberian winter, and terrorised by a series of murders whose viciousness, and accompanying characteristics puzzle and confuse the main protagonists, at least initially.

Frank Tallis loves Vienna, and he adores Viennese pastries (they are always described in minute, and sometimes semi-erotic, detail!) and his knowledge of the city and ability to convey it in words is quite magnificent. The plot of Vienna Blood, as with its predecessor *Mortal Mischief*, is satisfyingly convoluted enough to reward aficionados of the genre, but Tallis also introduces many of the undercurrents in Viennese society, notably its racism and anti-semitism, that were to explode so horribly some thirty years later, and to such devastating effect.

Vienna Blood further establishes the unusual partnership of Liebermann and Rheinhardt and leaves the reader looking forward to many more cases for them to solve. The stories also cry out to be made into television dramas.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh