

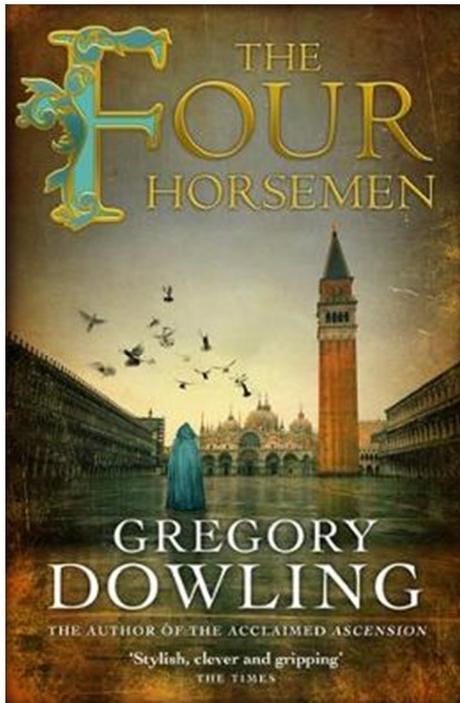


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LoveReading Reader reviews of **The Four Horsemen** by Gregory Dowling (The **Alvise Marangon** Mysteries)

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Lisa Redmond

The second book from Gregory Dowling to feature secret agent Alvise Marangon in Eighteenth century Venice is as fast paced and unpredictable as the first. The book opens with intense action as Alvise is chased by some casino bruisers after apparently insulting their boss and is promptly arrested as the brawl spills into St Mark's Square. Brought before the Missier Grande he is asked to investigate the mysterious death of another agent. A seemingly quiet, bookish man Sior Padoan fell from the roof of his home in what was apparently a tragic accident. Alvise however is certain that the man's missing diary will provide some clues. There is a connection to a secret society

known as The Four Horsemen and Alvise once again must seek help from the bookseller Fabrizio and his beautiful daughter Lucia and his gondolier friend Bepi. Though his investigations are blocked at almost every turn by the city's Inquisitors and he is caught up in the dark and shadowy world of a scandalous noblewoman, Alvise soon begins to unravel the curious threads that led to poor Sior Padoan's death.

This is fast paced historical crime with great writing, smart plotting and a host of interesting characters bringing Venice to vivid life. Really enjoyable and perfect for fans of Diana Bretherick and Andrew Taylor.

Carole Tuckett

*Set in Venice in the 18th Century. Ruled over by the Inquisitors. Missier Grande's undercover agent Alvisè Marangon is told to investigate the death of another agent, who has fallen to his death from the roof of his apartment. Ruled as accidental by the Inquisitors, Missier Grande is not so sure. Helped by a friend Alvisè gains access to a cultural evening at Isabella Venier's palace. The evening titled Friends of Greece and Eastern Roman Empire brings together a group of people from various walks of life. But there is more to this group than appears on the surface. Alvisè begins to dig, pursuing clues, meeting with obstructions and brutality. **An enjoyable read which brings a visual olden Venice to light.***

Sandra Rabiasz

Enjoyable. Engaging. Excellent.

This is the second installment of the adventures of Alvisè Marangon and the first – ‘Ascension’ - is now definitely on my must read list. Set in mid eighteenth century Venice, Alvisè has been recruited as a reluctant spy for the authorities. Although Venetian, he speaks flawless English, and this together with his job of cicerone (tour guide) makes him an ideal recruit. A secret society called The Four Horsemen is implicated in spiralling claims of theft, corruption, and murder - but who are they and what do they want? With the assistance of his gondolier friend Bepi, the disapproving Lucia and her scholarly father Fabrizio, Alvisè must run the gauntlet of the state security service, the Venetian nobility and a variety of thugs and assassins to prove his own innocence and solve the conundrum of The Four Horsemen.

This is a really enjoyable, absorbing read told with lots of energy and verve. The plot is clever and moves along at a brisk pace, whilst Alvisè is an engaging hero who you easily warm to. The other main character is, of course, Venice - full of mist, marshes and magnificence!

Laura Rowland

This a captivating and beautifully descriptive novel, which takes a mysterious murder and turns it into something so much bigger.

‘The Four Horsemen’ is a novel set within the captivating surroundings of

Venice in the 18th century. The author is definitely not short on description, as at times in your own mind you are wandering the streets alongside the main character who is named Alvisè Marangon, being passed by Gondolas and seeing the wondrous sight of Saint Marks Square.

This novel sets root with the main character being informed of the death of a mysterious character; Paolo Padoan, which is originally implied to being in mysterious circumstances. It is then informed as being his responsibility to find the culprit, albeit with a secretive vibe.

Reading the first few chapters I became sceptical that I would in fact enjoy this novel, as to begin there were many characters introduced within a short space of time. However, with an ounce of perseverance, you quickly became accustomed to who was who and the story really began to evolve and intrigue you, as to where the story and therefore the reader would end up. The death of Paolo Padoan, is in fact a tiny acorn in the vast storyline which grows and evolves into something so much more.

Judith Sharp

A thrilling tale set in Venice with historical information thrown in.

Loved the book which is the second featuring Alvisè Marangon. I haven't read the first but will do so.

Gregory Dowling knows his Venice and its history, he has been compared to C J Sansom & I would agree this this.

Not knowing much about Venice, it was great to be informed as well as thrilled as Alvisè is set the task of looking into the death of a fellow agent.

Linde

Such a great atmospheric historical thriller from the pen of Gregory Dowling. *The well-researched details of mid-18th century Venice - canals, buildings, misty atmosphere, dealings of the ruling classes - all enliven this second adventure of Alvisè Marangon, a reluctant member of one branch of the city's secret service. He is tasked with investigating the death of another spy who had become involved with a mysterious secret society, The Four Horsemen. Alvisè's investigation turns up links to rakish noblemen, a Greek Orthodox priest, cultural yearnings for the restoration of artefacts back to the Eastern Roman (Ottoman) Empire and serious indications of corruption. His is*

hampered by the insistence on secrecy surrounding his actions, a false charge of murder and the disapproval of his spying activities by Luisa, his amorata.

This novel was an easy read, with a good cast of well differentiated characters. Their motivations, actions and interactions were lively and sustained throughout a clever plot which resolves the investigation satisfactorily. I look forward to further novels from this stylish series.