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Pagan In Exile: Book Two Of The Pagan Chronicles



Synopsis

"The setting is medieval, but the issues addressed have twenty-first century parallels. . . . Jinks's writing is the tour de force of young adult prose." — VOICE OF YOUTH ADVOCATE
The year is 1188, and Jerusalem is in the hands of the Infidel. Upstanding Crusaders and their squires — like Lord Roland Roucy de Bram and Pagan Kidrouk — are returning to Europe, hoping to rally more knights to their cause. The sardonic young Pagan expects Lord Roland's family to be the picture of fortitude and good manners, but he's in for a rude awakening. Brutish and unfeeling, the de Bram clan cares nothing for the Crusades, or indeed for anything outside their neighborhood in France. Meanwhile, local unrest is brewing. Church authorities are duking it out with the de Brams over a group of "heretics" living nearby. And now Pagan and Roland, sworn to defend Christianity, are left to decide for themselves who to stand by — and whom to trust.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 530L (What's this?)

Series: Pagan Chronicles (Book 2)

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; Reprint edition (February 3, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763626910

ISBN-13: 978-0763626914

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.8 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #2,500,956 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Teens >

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Christian > Action & Adventure #422 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Medieval

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

What's everybody staring at? All right, so you've never seen an Arab before. Is that any reason to stare? My hair's not green. My skin's not blue. It might be darker than yours, but dark skin is quite normal in my country. So I'm short. So what? I'm not that short. I'm tall enough to see over my own knees. Anyone would think I had a giant candle-snuffer growing out of my forehead. Look at that

fellow there, gawking away. Face like a gob of spittle, and he's staring at ME. Why don't you get yourself a mirror, Spitface, if you really want something to stare at. A one-armed child makes a rude gesture. Runs away as I poke out a viciously threatening tongue. No backbone, the little coward. "Pagan." Roland's voice is cold and stern. (Doesn't want his squire eroding the dignity of his arrival.) "Please behave yourself." The year is 1188 and the infidels have conquered Jerusalem. Pagan, forced into exile, is accompanying his master, Lord Roland, to the castle of Bram, Roland's home. But the castle, cold, dark and filthy, is not Pagan's idea of how lords live and neither is Roland's family anything like the type of family Pagan imagines someone as noble and dignified as Roland should have. Pagan is soon caught up in violent clashes between both family members and the family and their neighbours. At the heart of the bloody feud stands Esclaramonde, a highly principled woman whose enigmatic character and heretical religious beliefs both disturb and attract Roland, while Pagan himself finds that he too has unpalatable truths to confront. I am absolutely bowled over by Catherine Jinks's writing style.

Jerusalem has fallen to the soldiers of Saladin. Pagan Kidrouk and his master, Lord Roland Roucy de Bram, are in Lord Roland's homeland seeking knights for a new Crusade to free the holiest of cities from the hands of the infidel. It is hard to know what Lord Roland's squire expected in his master's home in the south of France, but it certainly was not what they find when they arrive. Lord Roland's father, brothers and their families and retainers live in such squalor and have such uncouth manners and ways that Pagan is appalled. How can his almost saintly master come from such a family? It is clearly a waste of time to think that this crowd of unbelieving savages will have any interest in freeing Jerusalem from the clutches of the infidel. Pagan is all for leaving as quickly as possible. He also begins to worry about the effect that Lord Roland's family is having on his master. They are like a disease, corrupting and evil, and Pagan wants to get his master away from their influence as soon as he can. Surely Roland cannot be continuing to hope to "civilize" his family and gain their support for his cause? The situation then becomes very complicated when a local dispute breaks out between Lord Roland's father and the nearby abbey. People are killed and Lord Roland cannot bring himself to leave until he has done his best to find a resolution to the problem. However, the stubbornness of the Abbot and of Lord Roland's father is such that the dispute only escalates. Pagan is the most honest of narrators. His voice is funny and vibrant, and it gives us a vivid picture of his world, which is often dreadfully realistic.

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