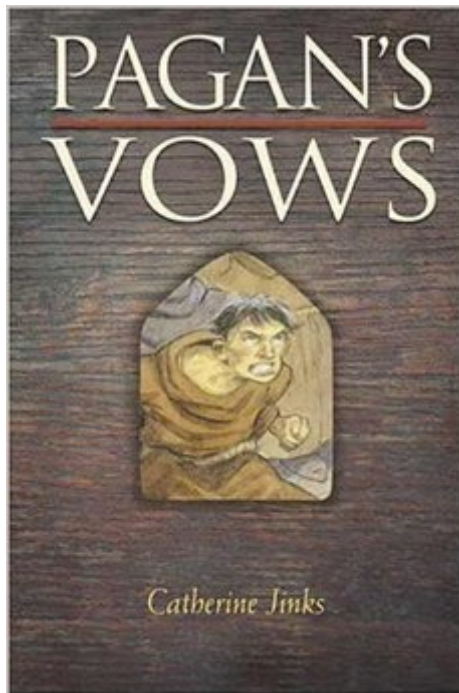


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Pagan's Vows: Book Three Of The Pagan Chronicles



Synopsis

The third of four books featuring Pagan's adventures, *PAGAN'S VOWS* is a medieval thriller that leads the reader through a web of mystery and intrigue in the most unlikely of places. Having renounced the sword, Pagan and Lord Roland arrive at the Abbey of St. Martin to devote their lives to God. But no sooner are they outfitted in their novices' habits than Pagan suspects that something mysterious is going on. While the emotionally wrecked Roland tries to find peace in monastic life, the humility and blind obedience required of all novices do not come easily to the worldly Pagan especially when he learns that the monastery is riddled with deceit and corruption. Someone is stealing alms, and Pagan is determined to find out who. But the truth may come at a price, one that could force him to reconsider his pious role and his dedication to Roland.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 540L (What's this?)

Series: Pagan Chronicles (Book 3)

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Candlewick (August 3, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763620211

ISBN-13: 978-0763620219

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1.1 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,946,431 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #23 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Middle East](#) #277 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious >](#)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Pagan cannot believe that he is actually agreeing to devote his life to God, to accept life in a monastery. This is a lifestyle that he despises, possibly fears, and also one that he fled from when he was a boy. Though Pagan is often rude, disrespectful, impatient and irreverent, he is also loyal, and it is this loyalty that has made him decide to follow his master, Lord Roland, into a new life in the Abbey of St. Martin. After his experiences in a monastery school as a child, Pagan never

dreamed that he would find himself pursuing the life of a monk, but he cannot bear to be separated from his distraught and emotionally lost master. Thus it is that Pagan has to subject himself to blind obedience, rules that he thinks are ludicrous, and a life full of discomfort and unpleasantness. Needless to say, Pagan is not a good fit for the monastic life and it is a struggle for him to keep his temper, to stay out of trouble, and to try to adjust. Pagan does try his best, for Roland's sake, but all his efforts seem to be for naught when he starts looking into a little mystery that is floating about the Abbey. Pagan discovers that beneath the veneer of respectability, piety and humility lies a complex tangle made up of lies, deceit and greed. Pagan may not be the most honest person in the world, but this kind of dirty hypocrisy upsets him enough that he will not stop seeking out the truth even when his very life is threatened. It would seem that someone very high up in the monastic hierarchy guides the conspiracy, and Pagan needs to be wary of what he says and does. One cannot help but have a strong feeling of pity for Pagan.

(This review is for the paperback version)"Monks, monk, monks. Monks everywhere, as far as the eye can see. Rows and rows of them, crammed together on their chapter-house seats like bats in a cave. Like crows around a corpse. The rustle of their black woollen sleeves, as they point and nudge and whisper. The coughing and gurgling of old men with clogged lungs."Lord Roland and his squire Pagan, fresh from battle in the Crusades, have renounced the sword and are seeking to become novice monks at the Abbey of St Martin. Pagan isn't sure he wants to be a monk and soon finds that neither humility nor blind obedience comes easily to him, but he is equally sure he doesn't want to leave his beloved master. He also discovers that even a supposedly holy place can swarm with danger and corruption. Pagan himself tells the story, writing in the present tense, which usually gives me trouble. I normally find it both stilted and unnatural. However, for this story it feels absolutely right. Although I can imagine that many young readers might take a while to become accustomed to Catherine Jinks's spare, distinctive style, I took to it (and her warm, wry humour) straight away. As can be seen from the above quote (the book's first paragraph) her writing abounds in unfinished sentences, which most writers normally use sparingly. But here the oft-used effect serves to underline Pagan's irreverence, which is my only quibble. While I personally found this trait highly entertaining (indeed, almost endearing) I have difficulty believing that someone raised in a monastery in those days would be quite so irreverent, especially at only 17 years of age. One of his favourite expletives is "Christ in a cream cheese sauce", which would certainly be accounted as blasphemous in those days.

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