



Oath of the Brotherhood

Carla Laureano

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In Carla Laureano's tender fantasy novel *Oath of the Brotherhood*, a young prince discovers that his musical talent is an ancient gift.

The Isle of Seare follows the Old Ways, encouraging a warrior spirit. Here, the only value is in fighting. But Conor, who follows a forbidden religion, is different. He can also master musical instruments with ease.

When Seare's king forges a treaty with a neighboring kingdom, Conor is sent away as a hostage. But his new home is forgiving, and members of the royal court are eager to foster his gift. Before long, Conor falls for the king's half sister, Aine. But then a political plot entangles the couple; ultimately, one may be forced to sacrifice the other in order to save everyone else.

Much of this first trilogy title is devoted to introducing central characters, their world, and the subtle magic around them. Celtic mythology informs the world building, with a tenuous layer of Christian faith incorporated.

Conor is a refreshing heroic figure, notable for his intelligence and faith. He takes counsel from those who are more experienced than he is after he joins an ancient brotherhood of warriors. The balance between his faith and his personal moral code makes him compelling. Aine, meanwhile, is his equal in every regard. Theirs is a warm romance, used to balance the book's more dramatic scenes. The book works toward a hopeful ending, if one behind which exists a glimmer of darkness, too.

The devout characters of *Oath of the Brotherhood* face dire circumstances in this introduction to a faith-driven fantasy epic.

JOHN M. MURRAY (January / February 2021)

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