



Of Love and Treason

Jamie Ogle

Tyndale House Publishers (Jan 23, 2024)

Softcover \$16.99 (400pp)

978-1-4964-7967-9

Love blooms between a renegade Christian and a jailer's daughter, but is threatened by controversies, in Jamie Ogle's invigorating romance novel *Of Love and Treason*.

In third-century Rome, Iris was blinded in an accident. She longs to regain her sight, but her father is in debt, no remedy has helped, and their pleas to multiple gods failed. When she meets Valens, he promises to pray for her. Then Emperor Claudius bans marriage to force unmarried men into army conscription, prompting Valens to feel concern about women, widows, and ex-legionnaires who've lost their rights. As both a notary and an underground church leader, he navigates the gulf between legality and moral conviction, performing marriage ceremonies in secret.

Meanwhile, Iris and Valens have encouraging encounters with one another. His prayers draw her toward faith, even while fears about her father's debts and his superior's threatening proposition loom. Iris's courage when she's facing unknown prospects is striking. Iris learns the tenets of Christian beliefs and witnesses sincere conversions, and the couple benefits from the support of their loyal friends and a perfumer, all working within the clandestine house churches of the period.

Indeed, the dangers that Christians faced are made clear: in the Roman empire, people believe in sundry gods, live with hardships, and reckon with what loyalty to an ever-shifting empire should look like. To many herein, the Christian God is unfathomable. When Valens faces charges of treason, and some of Iris's people stand to gain from the event, the book's sense of suspense increases. The plot's turns are unpredictable and tense, though there are rewards to pursuing faith even when hope is distant.

In the historical romance novel *Of Love and Treason*, a new couple faces perilous trials and learns the meaning of sacrificial love.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2024)

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