

The Good Hawk: Shadow Skye, Book One

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The Good Hawk imagines a mythological medieval Scotland whose mainland was devastated by plague and whose outer island clans are struggling to survive.

On the Isle of Skye, Jaime is a reluctant teen from the Clann a Tuath. He's destined for an arranged marriage with a girl from a nearby clan. Meanwhile, developmentally disabled Agatha, a fellow clan member, struggles against prejudice and yearns to protect their land as a hawk sentry. When the bulk of the tribe is betrayed and kidnapped by imperious Norse invaders, both Jaime and Agatha grow up in a hurry. They set off in pursuit, contending with shadow monsters, a mad queen, and other unforeseen dangers.

The first book of a planned trilogy, *The Good Hawk* mixes Celtic dialect and folklore with Scottish characteristics: ruined castles, wild wolves, expressive descriptions of forbidding lands and seas, and a rousing sequence in which Jaime and Agatha are captured by a tribe that rides indigenous Highland bulls. Assured storytelling propels the narrative, which is divided between Jaime and Agatha and their distinctive points-of-view.

The story springs plenty of surprises, from Agatha's telepathic abilities with animals, which come into play at crucial moments, to the mystery surrounding her origins. That mystery portends major revelations in future installments. As the teens' quest widens in scope, juicy tidbits of backstory arise, detailing a Scottish-English war in which dangerous gambits threaten to wipe out thousands of people on both sides.

Given the high stakes, violence and tragedy play in, and plenty of good people lose their lives. Amid this darkness, Jaime and Agatha emerge as sympathetic heroes, their fortitude and humanity in the face of danger giving their adventure a beating heart. As a first chapter of a sprawling fantasy, *The Good Hawk* is a vibrant yarn that promises further riveting adventures to come.

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