

Confessions of a Pagan Nun: A Novel

By Kate Horsley



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Cloistered in a stone cell at the monastery of Saint Brigit, a sixth-century Irish nun secretly records the memories of her Pagan youth, interrupting her assigned task of transcribing Augustine and Patrick. She also writes of her fiercely independent mother, whose skill with healing plants and inner strength she inherited. She writes of her druid teacher, the brusque but magnetic Giannon, who first introduced her to the mysteries of written language. But disturbing events at the cloister keep intervening. As the monastery is rent by vague and fantastic accusations, Gwynneve's words become the one force that can save her from annihilation.



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Confessions of a Pagan Nun: A Novel By Kate Horsley Bibliography

• Sales Rank: #180561 in Books

• Brand: Brand: Shambhala Publications

Published on: 2002-09-10Released on: 2002-09-10Original language: English

• Number of items: 1

• Dimensions: 7.22" h x .49" w x 4.97" l,

• Binding: Paperback

• 208 pages



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

When we think of the Dark Ages, we often think of a dim, primitive society where people struggled just to stay alive, with no room for spirituality or philosophy. The cool, clear, gemlike precision of Horsley's (Crazy Woman) new novel tells another tale. Gwynneve is born into a world suspended between paganism and Christianity: Ireland circa 500 C.E. While the rest of Europe was well on its way toward Christianity, at this time Ireland remained much closer to its pagan traditions. After losing her mother, Gwynneve trains as a druid and practices as one for many years. By the time she sets her story down, though, she has converted to Christianity and become a nun. The book is written as a memoir detailing her journey from her birth into a pagan tribe to her end as a Christian with near-saintly status. Her story is not just that of a strong woman making her way in a hostile world. It is also the story of what happens to a country when a new religion takes the place of the old. A beautifully written and thought-provoking book; recommended for all fiction collections. Wendy Bethel, Southwest P.L., Grove City, OH Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From **Booklist**

This brief but vivid novel presents itself as a recently discovered manuscript composed by 1 of the 19 nuns of Saint Bridget in Kildare, at the dawning of Ireland's Christian era. Gwynneve was a druid before the tonsured clerics began to convert her people, offering them new technologies in exchange for conversions. When her druidic teacher and lover, Giannon, is kidnapped, apparently by followers of the new god, Gwynneve falls into despair that is lifted only when she hears of a community that keeps the old Celtic ways under the guise of Christian ritual. In it, she is set to a task that suits her perfectly: copying manuscripts of the church fathers, especially Augustine, with whom she has a running intellectual battle. As she records her life's story, she also relates the melodramatic doings of her convent, which include the abbot's fall from chastity and later self-mutilation. Poetically written and marvelously researched, the novel offers complex theological arguments wrapped in a compelling story about memorable characters. *Patricia Monaghan Copyright* © *American Library Association. All rights reserved*

Review

"Cool, clear, gem-like precision . . . a beautifully written and thought-provoking book."—Library Journal

"The depth and subtlety of this document casts a spell upon the reader, bringing words to an ancient silence. Kate Horsley's moving tale both embodies and confirms the power of language."—*Branches of Light*

"The story reads so convincingly as a personal journal that one may forget that it is, in fact, a work of fiction."—NAPRA Review

"This powerful little book is not for lightweight, fainthearted, or doctrinaire readers, but it will be deeply satisfying for many. It can be read simply as a compelling piece of historical fiction or as an insightful meditation on the nature and roots of sectarian conflict."—School Library Journal

"As a slant of sunlight illuminates jewels long buried, Kate Horsley's novel brings words to an ancient silence and a living, vivid presence to people who lived in that time of great changes and estrangements we call the Dark Ages."—Ursula K. Le Guin

"An exquisite historial novel. The poetry of the language is stunning."—Margot Adler, author of *Drawing Down the Moon*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Amy Mueller:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book might be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the book untitled Confessions of a Pagan Nun: A Novel can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Jack Scala:

Why? Because this Confessions of a Pagan Nun: A Novel is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap that but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who have write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of gains than the other book get such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I have been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Frances Fortier:

Confessions of a Pagan Nun: A Novel can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to place every word into joy arrangement in writing Confessions of a Pagan Nun: A Novel yet doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information could drawn you into completely new stage of crucial imagining.

Juanita Cooke:

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