

## The Selkie's Daughter

**Linda Crotta Brennan**

Holiday House (Jan 2, 2024)

Hardcover \$17.99 (208pp)

978-0-8234-5439-6

A family is caught between the land and the sea in Linda Crotta Brennan's coming-of-age novel *The Selkie's Daughter*—a story rich in Celtic lore.

Brigit's father is a fisherman; her selkie mother chose to live her life on land. Suspicion surrounds Brigit's family nonetheless. The townsfolk don't like that there's a supernatural creature among them; they think that Brigit, too, bears the mark of the selkie.

When the fishing industry begins to wane and illness strikes the village, people blame the selkies. And Brigit learns that such struggles are akin to a punishment: people have been killing baby selkies, angering the Great Selkie, who uses his power against the innocent and the guilty alike. Donning the borrowed skin of her selkie cousin, Brigit embraces her heritage, taking to the sea to help both branches of her family.

The book's clear descriptions channel the elements, focusing on whipping wind, sea spray, crashing waves, and icy ocean depths: "Hurrying through the chest-high, wind-tortured trees, I duck into an inky cave." Such images complement the story's rhythmic structure as it flows from section to section. And a poetic Celtic refrain starts each chapter, its lore helping to contextualize the chapter at hand, fleshing out the background lore, history, and nuances of the situations that Brigit faces. Characters' conversations are more modern, trading between snarky remarks and quick pleasantries and featuring both squabbling children and passing villagers.

In the mythical novel *The Selkie's Daughter*, a half-human, half-selkie girl learns to honor all parts of her heritage as a means of being true to herself.

ALEX DAILEY (January / February 2024)

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