



## Act of Mercy

*Peter Tremayne*

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In the year 666 C.E., Sister Fidelma embarks on a pilgrimage to reflect upon her commitment to the church and her relationship with the Saxon monk Eadulf. Seabound to the Shrine of St. James, she encounters her first love Cian, who abandoned her ten years earlier. But before she can sort out her feelings-she must discern if a murderer has also set sail with her...

## Act of Mercy Details

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Author : Peter Tremayne

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## From Reader Review Act of Mercy for online ebook

### Susan says

I love Sister Fidelma novels but I really missed Brother Eadulf in this story. While Sister Fidelma is on a pilgrimage and trying to sort out her life; does she want remain a religieux or just a dalaigh, does she have deeper feeling for Brother Eadulf or is it platonic, when she runs in to her long-ago lover who spurned her. With multiple murders and very suspicious fellow pilgrims she sifts through the clues and (as always) solves the murder mystery. The story was good and takes place mostly aboard a ship taking her and her fellow travelers to a famous shrine in Iberia. As usual, I can never figure out “who dun it” and love how it makes such logical sense when the reveal happens. I am hoping that Brother Eadulf is back with the next installment.

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### Christine says

Review: Act of Mercy has been the best of the Sister Fidelma Mystery Series. The twists & turns of the mystery kept me guessing until the very end. I fell in love with double masted tall ships much like The Barnacle Goose. Just a simple command & the ship moves with ease. The pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. James in Iberia. (Spain) is so familiar. I've had friends who have taken this very pilgrimage called The Way from France to the Shrine of St James. And lastly, the references to the early King of Tara (Ui Neill) and related to Fidelma sister to the High King of Cashel/Tara. My husband & sons carry the marker of Ui Neill on their male Y chromasone. I don't know when I've enjoyed a book so much as Act of Mercy. Murder, Mayhem, and Lunacy all wrapped up in one book. Bravo. My undivided attention went to solving the case with Sister Fidelma.

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### Caroline Hayes says

On land or at sea, Fidelma is the most resourceful investigator. Great read!

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### Malcolm says

Sister Fidelma's 8th outing takes us into a world of jealousy, murder, revenge as well as ecclesiastical doubt in the staple of the murder mystery – the confined cast in a confined space. Unlike Christie, this is not a country house in the home counties but a 7th century pilgrimage from Ardmore to Santiago de Compostella, via navigational adventures in the Scilly Islands and Ushant. As well as the murder, there are pirates and treacherous seas; this has all the marks of a good adventure.

As with all of Tremayne's novels there is a solid historical basis and a sound underpinning of the tensions and rivalries between the Roman and Celtic churches, and in this case the deep seated tensions over asceticism and celibacy that become the most high profile of the differences. More prosaically, Fidelma is without her foil, Brother Eadulf – part of her reason for joining the pilgrimage is to review her feelings for Eadulf and her contradictory feelings over obligations to the law and the faith. These are resolved through

the investigation of the ship board murders, and the tensions in the band of pilgrims centred on lust and jealousy.

Unlike many procedurals, this series does not rely on the enigmatic powers of the investigator as it does dogged pursuit – Tremayne's Brehon nun is more empiricist than enigmatic, with a powerful liberal modern outlook that is, paradoxically, entirely consistent with ancient Irish law. It is refreshing to see the accumulation of evidence, with just a little sharp insight, as the key player in detective fiction.

True to his genre, Tremayne has given us an engaging, enjoyable murder mystery. Thoroughly good fun.

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### **Jaline says**

In this novel, we learn more about Sister Fidelma's background – particularly incidents that happened when she was eighteen that nearly de-railed her education and thus her future as a *dálaigh* of the courts.

We learn about the ancient game of *immán* which appears to be sort of like polo without horses, or perhaps more accurately (due to the shape and size of the ash sticks used), like hockey without ice. And we learn about the social environment of Sister Fidelma's youth and how it affected her personally.

As mentioned in another review of a book in this series, Ireland in the 7th century and for centuries before and afterward was, as the author states, "a feminist paradise". The laws, both religious and secular were completely equal for women and men alike. It was not until the Church in Rome began its reforms in the 4th century that this began to change, although the changes were several centuries in the making – or rather, the overtaking.

As the author also notes, during the centuries under Brehon law, women and men enjoyed a degree of equality that was unmatched by anything existing in the western world prior or since. These laws not only found suitable ways to punish the guilty (usually financial compensation paid by the guilty to the injured party), but the repercussions for false allegations were as severe if not more so.

That is one aspect of our legal system today that is definitely in need of reform, in my humble opinion. With no consequences for those who make false accusations, we end up with a lop-sided and inaccurate legal system where no-one really benefits except for the legal system itself, and those involved in being supported by it.

This 8th novel in the series takes place on board a ship as Sister Fidelma and several others make pilgrimage to Iberia (Santiago de Compostela) and the Holy Shrine of St. James. There is an interesting part in the Author's Notes about St. James, the first apostle to become a martyr in the new faith (he was killed in Palestine in A.D. 42), and how his body made its way from there to the Iberian Peninsula.

During the voyage from Ireland to Iberia, they run into storms, pirates, and someone who is intent on murder. A ship's Captain is the ruler of his floating domain and he 'seconds' Sister Fidelma to investigate a murder, and also many other suspicious incidents on board the ship. There is even an incident where they land at a small Island for provisions and a break from the rolling seas, and Sister Fidelma confronts the fact that Brehon law does not apply in other countries. International law is not something that even exists yet.

The plot, sub-plots, and characters in this novel are, as always in this series, fascinating. The writing is vivid

and kept me tapping the pages to find out what was going to happen. With 90% of the book aboard a ship, I also learned much about ancient navigation and life at sea. I also felt immense respect for the author who kept the pace at a full-sail clip within the confines of the sea vessel and a limited amount of characters.

This book does end with a cliff-hanger because at the end, there is an urgent message for Sister Fidelma from her brother, the King of Cashel. Fortunately, I will be able to read about how it unfolds next month in the 9th book of this series.

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### **Feodora says**

An interesting story, again. It was nice to hear something of the life of Fidelma before she became a dalaigh to the Brehon Court of Ireland. We learn something about a love affair!!!

A bit like "Murder on the Orient Express" as all happens on a boat and all passengers could be the murderer....

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### **Sunsy says**

Ein historischer Kriminalroman um Schwester Fidelma, die Nonne und Anwältin bei Gericht. Dies ist das 8. Buch der Reihe und auch wieder genauestens recherchiert.

Meine Rezension dazu könnt ihr in meinem Blog lesen.

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### **Ana Elena Romero says**

Esta nueva entrega de las aventuras de Sor Fidelma se desarrolla en el interior de un navío en alta mar. Sorprende Tremayne por el dominio de los conceptos y elementos de la navegación antigua, además de por el desarrollo de una trama, nada predecible, en un entorno tan reducido y poco dado a grandes sorpresas. Los personajes de esta novela expresan unos perfiles muy definidos y bien incardinados en la trama que se desarrolla.

Lo cierto es que ha sido una grata sorpresa encontrarme con esta novela de thriller policíaco y aventuras. Magnífica saga.

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### **Tracy says**

One of the better ones of this series I've read for a while. I was close to quitting, tired of the on-again-off-again of Fidelma's feelings for Eadulf, especially given the crappy things she regularly says about him and the somewhat lame character the author had made him into in the last book or two. And I didn't really enjoy the character of Fidelma herself anymore. She was just so self satisfied and above everyone else. This book was a refreshing change. It was a nice view inside the character, showing her as much more well-rounded and finally tackling the mystery of her past and the damage her prior love affair had caused. It was a nice character study as well as a good mystery. Too bad the ending has her rushing back to save Eadulf. They could use more time apart, as could I. I despair they shall only go back to the way they were before, since Eadulf is of the Roman church and therefore believes in celibacy. It seems to me any romance is

permanently doomed between the two, especially if she just goes back to disparaging him and seeking herself superior.

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### **Denise says**

I'm reading my way through all of the books in the Sister Fidelma series. I love historical fiction because this is how history should be both learned and experienced by readers. Instead of dry facts and dates books like these help to show what life was like for those peoples of the past and how specific forces impacted their lives. We can never know exactly what they experienced but we are pulled into their world, their time.

Suggestion to potential readers...read these books in order beginning at book #1. Otherwise you will miss the subtle personality and emotional changes experienced by Sister Fidelma. No more hints...find out for yourself :)

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### **Laura Edwards says**

I really liked this book. We get a chance to delve into Sister Fidelma's past and really see what makes her tick. I also liked the setting aboard ship. Different. I think this book gives the reader the most in depth look at Sister Fidelma's character thus far. I love her even more! My only complaint. I guessed the culprit and her reasons from the get go. But, as I said, the broadening window onto Fidelma's character overrode any other deficiencies.

Oh, I do have one other complaint, not just with this book, though it's most obvious here. Why do some mystery writers with recurring characters fudge the ages so blatantly? (Anne Perry is also guilty of this infraction). It's especially annoying in this series because we are given Sister Fidelma's birth year in the foreword (636). So, if it is now the autumn of 666, she would be 30 or approaching 30. A matter of simple mathematics. But the author continues to make statements that insinuate she is barely 28. Impossible! I finally changed the lines "ten years ago" (which were repeated multiple times in regards to her relationship with Cian) to "twelve years ago" in my head. Very annoying!

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### **Doris Mahala says**

Sister Fidelma has gone on another pilgrimage and she has suffered storms of every kind and has had many attempts on her life and when she finally reached the end of her travels now with the cryptic letter from her brother, the King of Muman, will she be able to return home faster than she was able to travel to the last leg of her travel?

Will her companion be given Mercy?

Not going to answer.

You must read!

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### **Nicole Brown says**

A departure from the other mysteries as Sister Fidelma is without the monk to help her solve the crime and she is undergoing a crisis of faith and trying to figure out her feelings for the monk.

<http://nicolewbrown.blogspot.com/2015...>

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### **Kristen says**

So all the books do have an ongoing background story but it is not necessary to read them in order and Tremayne always summarizes plot points established in earlier books but for the first time this one ended with a cliffhanger!!!!

Really?!?!? In book 8?

Now I am going to have to read them in order so I don't ruin the anticipation.

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### **Argum says**

Sister Fidelma has undertaken a pilgrimage alone to contemplate her life with Eadulf and with the religious life. Aboard ship she meets her former lover Cian, an oft mentioned previous young love, it is not a pleasant reunion. When a sister goes overboard and a bloody robe is found in her cabin, Fidelma starts investigating. Lots of dirty secrets and harbored ill will are uncovered. Fidelma has to root out the evil that haunts the ship.

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