



## The Settlers of Catan

By *Rebecca Gable*

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### **The Settlers of Catan** By *Rebecca Gable*

The year is 850. In the seas of northern Europe, the small coastal village of Elasund falls prey to marauding neighbors. Their food stores pillaged, women and children stolen, livestock destroyed, the villagers are left to barely survive the harsh winter — and contemplate a drastic solution to their recurring hardships: leaving the only village they have ever known. Foster brothers Candamir and Osmund lead their people on an epic quest to a mythic island home, but without knowledge of exactly where the island is, they must trust the gods to deliver them safely. Lost at sea and set adrift, an extraordinarily violent storm washes them ashore the island famed in pagan lore: Catan. They quickly set about building a new society but old grudges, animosities, and social orders lead to fraternal strife. As the ideals of Candamir's Christian slave spread throughout the village and conflict with pagan law, the two belief systems clash. When both Osmund and Candamir fall in love with Siglind, the mysterious queen of the Cold Islands, things come to a head.

Based on the wildly popular board game of the same name designed by Klaus Teuber, *Rebecca Gable's The Settlers of Catan* is a must-read adventure rich in detail and rippling with intensity.

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## **The Settlers of Catan** By *Rebecca Gable* Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

#### Interview: Author Rebecca Gable & Settlers of Catan Creator Klaus Teuber

**Klaus Teuber:** When we saw each other at the Frankfurt Book Fair recently, I recalled how we met there 10 years ago. Do you remember?



**Rebecca Gable:** Of course! You asked if I could imagine writing a novel based on your famous board game.

**KT:** I had read one of your books and was so excited about it, I wanted you to bring the story of the settlement of Catan to life. What was your first thought when I asked you?

**RG:** I thought, "This must be the most unusual and fascinating project ever proposed to me." What gave you the idea for a novelization in the first place?

**KT:** In the game, seafarers land on Catan. They harvest, trade, build, and settle the island. But where did those seafarers come from? Who are they? Why did they undertake this dangerous journey? The game doesn't answer any of those questions. I had some ideas but no story yet. Then you entered the picture.

**RG:** We met in Cologne to discuss some basic plot ideas, and it turned out we both had the word "Vikings" in our heads. What is so "Viking" about the game?

**KT:** Catan is set in the Early Middle Ages, and at that time the Vikings were the only seafaring people to venture into the open ocean, and therefore the only ones capable of reaching a fictitious island in the middle of the Atlantic. That was probably at the back of our minds.

How do you move from a draft outline like ours to developing your characters? Do you use people you know as models?

**RG:** Never. I'm fond of my friends and want to keep them, so I make sure the characters in my books don't resemble them. Speaking of characters: If you had to choose, would you rather sit down in a beer garden with Candamir or Osmund?

**KT:** Well, I'd prefer a little flirt with Siglind. But if I may only choose one of the men, I'd like Candamir to explain to me how to build a nice wooden chest. I still need a Christmas present for my wife.

How did you come up with the idea to season the novel with Austin, a likeable character who so insistently (and unsuccessfully) tries to evangelize his master, Candamir?

**RG:** The game inspired the creation of Austin. You've got to be clever and sometimes mean to win at Settlers of Catan, but whenever I play, it strikes me that what you need most is the ability to cooperate and compromise. Austin stands for that ability, I think--though he can be clever and mean, too.

**KT:** In your telling of the legend of Catan, the god Odin falls in love with Tanuri, the king of the Albs' daughter. Normally Odin can have any woman, but Tanuri makes a fool of him when he creates an idyllic island for her. Grief stricken, he moves the island to a place where nobody can find it. Of course, the island is Catan. Where did you get this wonderful idea? Did it come from an archetype in Norse mythology?

**RG:** It's not based on any particular Norse saga, but I tried to capture the atmosphere and narrative patterns of the form. I also wanted to emphasize how very special Catan is--not just in the book, but for millions of fans all over the world who love the game. Catan is a mythical and wonderful place.

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Fans of the popular board game that inspired this novel will be thrilled to learn the backstory. For those with an interest in fiction set during the Viking era, there is something here for you, too. A village is attacked by raiders, and the surviving residents must decide whether it is worth staying on in the hardscrabble of northern Europe. One villager tells a tale of a wondrous land on the island of Catan but notes that the journey there is fraught with peril. No one can verify the tale, but it provides a glimmer of hope for a band of villagers who decide to venture to the mysterious island. Slavery, greed, religion, and social mores are all touched upon in the story, and all of these factors play roles in determining the future of the people living on Catan.

Characters are fleshed out with plenty of interactions and dialogue, and the varieties of landscape on the island—so integral to playing the game—also are significant elements in the storyline. — *Rebecca Gerber*

#### Review

"I promise: I tried to hate this book, I really did! Up front, I beg all of my fellow members of the cult of Catan to forgive me if you can. I mean, I pretty much despise the idea of a product tie-in with any board game...[but] Rebecca Gable didn't disappoint. Her characters are both heroic and realistically flawed...Her writing style is quick and action filled. Rarely did I find myself waiting for something to happen. Over all, it is a good barbarian adventure story...I hate to say it, but I enjoyed the book." --*Wired Magazine GeekDad Blog*

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##### Mike Jones:

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##### Leigh Weimer:

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