



Shadow of a Century: An Irish Love Story

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A journalist in modern New York stumbles across a story from a century earlier when the streets of Dublin were ablaze as men and women fought valiantly for liberation from the British Empire. This is the story of three women.

Mary Doyle was reared by nuns and knows nothing of her parents, except that they were a source of shame. Arriving to Dublin in 1913 at just eighteen years old, she is resigned to facing a lifetime of domestic service. Instead, however, her eyes are opened to the political and social turmoil of a fledgling nation struggling for independence. Suddenly, all that was once inevitable is no longer a certainty as she is embroiled in the very heart of the Easter Rising.

Scarlett O'Hara has overcome many hurdles to get where she is today, not least her name. A successful political analyst, on a reputable New York broadsheet, her seemingly perfect existence goes up in a blaze of media headlines when she makes one catastrophic error of judgement. As she tries to rebuild her life from the wreckage, she has no option but to start at the very beginning again.

Eileen Chiarello is ninety-three years old and she has a story that will draw her back to Ireland, the land her parents fought for and loved so passionately. A chance meeting with Scarlett gives her the opportunity to fulfil a promise she feared she never could.

Shadow of a Century is the story of three women, whose stories are inextricably linked over the span of a century.

Shadow of a Century: An Irish Love Story Details

Date : Published June 3rd 2015

ISBN :

Author : Jean Grainger

Format : Kindle Edition 408 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Cultural, Ireland

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From Reader Review Shadow of a Century: An Irish Love Story for online ebook

Ann McManus says

Two stories told in parallel. The modern day story, so-so, but the historical story, wow! Vivid narration of the Easter Rising in Dublin, 1916. Well told! I felt like I was there.

Nancy Pennick says

Two time periods - Ireland in the 1910s and present day U.S. The author jumps back and forth telling each story. The first time the story switched back in time, I thought it was jarring. Suddenly I was reading about totally different characters, which at the time, had nothing to do with the ones I had read about in the present. Eventually it all comes together, but I felt it took too long and was too repetitious.

Scarlett, in the present, finds an elderly woman living alone who'd just been robbed, when she's sent to do a newspaper story about the break-ins. The woman takes Scarlett under her wing and they bond. Maybe I read two or three similar stories like this so I felt like I've read the story line before. I also felt more should have been revealed about Eileen, the older woman, at the beginning so the reader would be invested in the other story- the Irish Uprising. Historically, the author did her research and I learned a lot about that era. Again, getting to the end was slow-going just to find out how all the pieces fit together.

Jeanne says

Scarlett O'Hara is an up and coming journalist until she makes the mistake of having an affair with a very public figure. Her previous editor tries to help her get back on her feet. The seemingly small story he ask her to cover regarding an attempted burglary on a 93 year old woman, Eileen, proves to be her lifeline and redemption. Eileen has a history worth telling and the friendship that develops between Scarlett and Eileen helps them both to achieve what they need at this time in their lives

The characters in this novel have such depth and are easy to like and cheer for. The history of the rift between Ireland and England as told from the Irish perspective brings to life what families were willing to fight for and believe in. There is romance but this book is mostly about family ties, friendships, history, forgiveness and coming full circle. A good read.

Liesel Moultrie says

I enjoyed this book! A cute love story mixed in with the history of Ireland's struggle for independence. As an American who is very proud of the founding of our nation, and someone who comes from the Clan Grant of Scotland (They fought in the Jacobite uprising against the British), I am drawn to the history of all those who have fought for their independence from the British Empire. I have been recently learning more about Ireland's struggle and while this isn't a history book I very much enjoyed it and it gave me more information to do more research on.

Tracy says

This was an interesting historical fiction story. I didn't know about the Irish uprising in 1916 so it was fun to learn about that while witnessing the growing friendship in the current day story between Scarlett and Eileen.

Pam says

Shadow of a Century: An Irish Love Story is by Jean Grainger. This novel tells two stories in alternating chapters and then stories then merge into one story. It is really a wonderful story and one that brings lots of emotions to the forefront. (Have tissues ready.) Once more Jean Grainger has managed to create a story that pulls the reader into it and keeps you prisoner until you are finished. It is extremely hard to put down once you get started. The Irish rebellion for freedom is a story that needs to be told from a personal level. In this story, Jean manages to tell a small part of the rebellion in such a fashion. She takes the story of three unlikely women of varying ages and combines them into one story with the Irish rebellion as the background. She makes it work.

Mary Doyle was an orphan who went to Dublin in 1913 to start a life of domestic service. Little does she know that she will become embroiled in the first steps of fighting for a new nation. Her story begins in an orphanage and ends in America. It is a story filled with love and loss.

Scarlet O'Hara is a journalist who becomes involved with a married politician and whose career and life goes down in flames when he denounces her as a stalker and home breaker. Scarlet binds her wounds and applies to an old mentor for a job. He sends her to report on a burglary. This leads to a complete change in her life as she follows the story of a bloodied flag back to the Irish rebellion.

Eileen Chiarello had her home broken into and burgled. When she arrives back home after being in the hospital, she meets with Scarlet. As Scarlet helps her put her house back together, Eileen is concerned only for one missing object- a bloodied flag wrapped in an old sheet. This is the one heirloom from her Mother that means the most to her.

The stories and lives of these three women converge and meld into a wonderful love story and a story of adventure. It is definitely a story that should not be missed.

Judy Mulholland says

Awesome Read

I kept reading even when I had things to do. The intensity of the story, along with historical authenticity, even though it is a work of history and fiction intertwined.

Teresa LaBella says

The premise of this novel intrigued me. The story of Ireland's struggle for independence from British rule told by Volunteers who lived through the Rising and their descendants re-living the history 100 years later

became the lesson I wish my Irish grandmother and I would have shared during her lifetime.

Scarlett O'Hara resents the name her mother gave her and the dismal childhood with an alcoholic father that Lorena O'Hara, by enduring the beatings and abuse, refused to save herself and her daughter from. She responds as an adult in classic overachieving behavior. The small town journalist climbs to big city reporter prominence only to lose it all in a blaze of bad PR over an affair with a married politician who covers his indiscretion by blaming her for seducing him away from the devoted family he values. She accepts the only job offered, a freelance assignment from her former boss, and meets Eileen, an elderly woman living alone, devastated by the break-in that violated her home and desperate to find a flag wrapped in linen brought to America by her mother who was forced by revolutionary violence to leave her husband and Irish homeland. The flag leads Scarlett, Lorena and Eileen on a journey back to Dublin to discover the past, resolve the present, and cherish their divergent paths to future peace and potential happiness.

Chapters woven between the contemporary story trace the events leading up to and after the Easter Uprising in April 1916. Mary Doyle leaves the only home she's ever known, an orphanage run by nuns, and goes to live and work in service for a wealthy family in Dublin. Her involvement with the freedom-seekers begins with the mistress of the house, Angeline Grant, whose fierce political stance opposes the opinions and threatens the pride and livelihood of her pro-British husband. Mary's friendship with Eileen O'Dwyer, maid to another nearby household and sister to Rory O'Dwyer who is destined to become IRA leader Michael Collins' right hand man, puts Mary in the epicenter of danger and a lifelong passionate love for Rory and a free Ireland.

The rather abrupt ending rubbed a bit of the shine from an otherwise polished novel. But the characters and their story remain with me. That, in my humble opinion, is a good read I highly recommend.

Susan Frager says

I should have re-read Morgan Llewelyn's "1916." I've read it twice and loved it both times. So I thought that in honor of the anniversary of the Rising, I would read something else. Unfortunately, "Shadow of a Century" was a huge disappointment. Given all the 4- and 5-star reviews, I expected better. I felt that the characters were shallow and stereotyped. And frankly, Scarlett, I didn't give a damn about her. She was whiny and self-absorbed. The plot was thinly pieced together. For instance...the whole thing about Boland's Mills was never followed up. Nor does the timeline fit. The characters refer to Rory insulting Mr Grant in the street as a recent event in 1916, but if you read closely, the incident occurred over a year before. And what a slim motive for Mr Grant's actions! In one place early on, it's said that Eileen is born in 1922, but when we actually get to Eileen's birth, it's not 1922 yet. I suspect the author fudged the timeline so that Eileen could be believably alive and functioning well in 2015. And so on. The whole book badly needs an editor. I wanted to throw my Kindle across the room every time one of the characters said "alright." Which they did every couple of screens. Nails on a chalkboard for me. That is NOT a word. The author spends multiple chapters referring to the crazy priest Father Ennio as "Fr" - no period - and then suddenly halfway through the book she spells it out as Father, and then by the end she is referring to him as "Fr" again. (For the record, it should be spelled out.) The grammatical errors abound. I was frequently rolling my eyes and asking myself why I bothered continuing to read...and I'm not sure I know why I stuck with it. I think I saw the potential and was hoping it would get better. It never really did, though, and none of the plot developments were at all surprising or unique. If you are considering "Shadow of a Century," trust me: read "1916" instead.

Gina says

I enjoyed this book more than I expected. It was two stories in one; one current day and the other about the Easter Uprising in Ireland. I enjoyed the historical aspect of the book but the book does need a lot of editing.

Tami Brewster says

I really enjoyed this story. I took one star off of the review because it suffers from some grammatical issues, timeline issues, and an abrupt ending. I think this book is self-published; I have noticed with many self-published books that there are grammar and spelling problems. I don't often mention grammar and spelling issues but it's enough of an issue here that it's worth mentioning.

The timeline is difficult to grasp. One reason why is that the specific age of one of the main characters is not stated until much later in the book. In fact, only one character's age is mentioned up front and I'm not even sure about that one. So, perhaps none of the ages are stated until the elderly character later in the book. This throws the timeline into confusion and is distracting.

The ending is abrupt and I felt that it could have been improved if the author had included in the story having the characters go to the orphanage where one of the characters had grown up. Perhaps her parentage could have been tied in with some of the other characters in the story.

That all said, this is a really good story. As I mentioned, I think this book is self-published. If so, it definitely has the potential to be picked up and republished by one of the larger publishing houses. The story pulled me in immediately and kept me reading even with the issues that I mentioned above. And the story is complex. There is the main story of the book and then the story of one of the main characters, so multiple stories in one. Yet, it doesn't feel too busy and, with the exception of the abrupt ending, it doesn't feel fragmented.

I recommend this story if you like historical fiction. I even recommend it for readers like me, who don't usually like much in the "romance" category.

Lisa Wayman says

Shadow of a Century by Jean Grainger

This is a story of two Irish women, Mary in Ireland in 1916 and Scarlett in present day New York. The women are connected through a very old woman, Eileen, and a relic of the 1916 Irish Easter Rising. The stories smoothly weave back and forth between the past and present and I was drawn to both the Mary and Scarlett. Mary leaves an orphanage as an 18-year-old and is quickly drawn into the Irish cause and the rebellion against the English occupiers and becomes a participant in the Easter Rising. Mary's story is one of strength, determination and love in a time of war. Scarlett struggles with her Irish American heritage and her father's alcoholism and domestic abuse. Eileen provides closure to Mary's story and a way forward for Scarlett. The characters are complex and read as believable, relatable people. I would have liked for Mary's story to have a happier ending, but while that would have satisfied my longing for happy endings it wouldn't have been true to the time. This book gave me plenty to think about when considering my Irish heritage.

Hunter Mallone says

This book took forever to really get off the ground. I was almost ready to give up on this book, but it did redeem itself some though. It just felt really disconnected at time.

Texas says

What Once Was True - A well written, well thought out novel with interesting people, events and places. The historical parts are well done and personal as told by the participants of those events. The storyline blends history with the growth of all the characters. Ranging in ages and social status, the effects of the Troubles and World War II are clearly seen. If you love Binchy and Pilcher, and authors like Pearl S. Buck, this heartwarming and heart breaking world that Ms.Grainger crafted will sweep you away with her vivid descriptions and characters. 5*

Shadow of a Century #1 - A well written, sad but uplifting story set in both Ireland and New York. The characters are well developed and interesting. The storylines are well thought out and hold your attention, especially the last three-quarters of the book. If you enjoyed Maeve Binchy's Coming Home, you'll enjoy both books by Jean: Shadow of a Century and Letters of Freedom. I disagreed with the main character's comments on a gun-crazed USA and the Democrats fixing all problems if in power. US politics aside, the story is worth reading.

The Conor O'Shea Boxed Set gives a heartwarming, funny and entertaining experience by reading these three well written books. The characters are realistic, fun, sad, easy and troublesome. The emotions run the gamut and there are surprises along the routes. The well told stories are full of vivid descriptions that make the reader think they're part of the tours themselves. These books are a perfect escape from the woes of modern life, allowing fun and intrigue to take its place. There's a free download for Letters of Freedom; the start of the Carmen Sheehan Series - a must read. 5*

Letters of Freedom #1 - Heartwarming. A well written, sad but uplifting story about two women and their losses. The short story is mesmerizing and can't be put down and ends too soon. Although the two don't meet, they end up sharing the same family. The abandoned child finds she had someone all along and now she's part of a real family and treasured. I contacted the author to review her books after reading Shadow. 5*

Heidi says

When Scarlet's world crashes and she meets a sweet older Irish woman, she has the opportunity to dig deep into her Irish heritage and replace her association of Ireland and her abusive father with something much richer and packed with an incredible story culminating in front of her eyes.

In an Ireland on the brink of the Easter Uprising, Mary Doyle's story is told parallel to Scarlet's...in my opinion, it is in the deep historical account Jean Grainger's strength lies. I learned so much about Irish history and was captivated by Mary and her sweetheart, Rory, as they dedicated themselves to an independent Ireland.

A valuable account of the revolution and a sweet love story, I would recommend this to anyone wanting to learn and little and read a romance at the same time.
