



A Subtle Grace

Ellen Gable

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1896, Philadelphia. In this stand alone sequel to "In Name Only" (2009 FQP), "A Subtle Grace" continues the story of the wealthy and unconventional O'Donovan Family as they approach the dawn of a new century. (Religious Fiction) At 19, Kathleen (oldest daughter) is unmarried with no prospects. Fearing the lonely fate of an old maid, her impatience leads to an infatuation with the first man who shows interest. The suave, handsome son of the local police chief seems a perfect match. But will her impulsive manner prevent her from recognizing her true beloved? A disturbing turn of events brings a dark shadow that threatens the life-long happiness she desires. Dr. Luke Peterson (the family's new physician) also makes quite an impression on Kathleen. His affection for her leads him to startling revelations: about Kathleen, about his practice and, most importantly, about himself. Will (oldest son) believes God may be calling him to a religious vocation. Eventually, he discovers the hidden circumstances of his humble beginnings compelling him to embark on a pilgrimage to Rome. Although 'A Subtle Grace' is the sequel to 'In Name Only,' each book can be read independently of the other.

A Subtle Grace Details

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Author : Ellen Gable

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From Reader Review A Subtle Grace for online ebook

Barb says

This standalone sequel to "In Name Only" was, I thought, even better than the first book in the series. (And I'm hoping for more books!) I enjoyed this historical novel that takes place in late 19th-century Philadelphia. The author shows great attention to detail and creates characters that are interesting and enjoyable to read about.

A.K. Frailey says

Generally I do not read romances as I tend to find them rather shallow and predictable but *A Subtle Grace* has more substance than fluff. There were some very interesting questions raised and some serious issues addressed even as the reader is led through the events centering on a young woman (Kathleen's) transition from childhood to womanhood. I found myself reading later than I intended, turning the pages over and over, wanting to know how the author would finally address some of the touchier points including: What qualifies real fatherhood/motherhood? How do the sins of the parents effect the next generation? and What defines true love? Excellent issues with honest characters.

Therese Heckenkamp says

There is plenty to love about this beautiful novel, including the graceful flow of the story, the genuine characters, the description, the rich historical detail, the joyous moments, and the frightening ones.

A Subtle Grace by Ellen Gable is an inspirational historical romance, and more. It takes you on a genuine journey into the past, into the lives of the endearing O'Donovan Family. While the main story focuses on the oldest daughter, Kathleen, I enjoyed the intertwining, equally interesting, stories of the close-knit Catholic family and how they coped with life's challenges: losses, tragedy, vocations, and temptations.

At 19 years old and living a privileged life in 1896 Philadelphia, Kathleen longs to be married and to begin a family before she reaches "old maid" status. She becomes fascinated by the attentions of a certain young man, but when her sparkling expectations for the future are savagely crushed, she has to learn to hope and love again. With time and trials, she matures into a selfless, instead of a somewhat self-absorbed, young woman. Even though she cannot fathom God's plan for her life, she must trust in Him. Meanwhile, a lurking threat follows her like a dark shadow, marring her happiness.

A Subtle Grace is the sequel to the lovely book *In Name Only*, yet *A Subtle Grace* can be enjoyed independently. Of course, readers of the first book won't want to miss this one! We get to see where life has taken Caroline and David and their family, and how the journey of life continues. The story kept me so interested that I hardly realized this was, in fact, a lengthy book.

A Subtle Grace is a novel to stir your heart, your emotions, and your soul. I highly recommend it!

Reviewed by:

Therese Heckenkamp
Catholic author of *Past Suspicion* and *Frozen Footprints*

Diana Barton says

Compelling drama

I strongly recommend this compelling family drama about a loving but imperfect family struggling to live out their faith in the late 1800s.

Although the story is faith based, and not sexually explicit, it is not overly treacly nor preachy. The family deals with real problems and struggles, including violence, cultural problems, and forgiveness..

Corinna Turner says

Late nineteenth-century teenager Kathleen O'Donovan cannot wait to marry. She's already 19, and dreads being an old maid! Although her parents urge patience, she rushes headlong into courtship with the first man to take a fancy to her, whilst newcomer to the town, young doctor Luke, shyly admires her from afar. Meanwhile, her brother Will feels a different calling stirring in his heart. But unknown to him, secrets lie hidden in his past. Will they steal his dream away from him?

I thoroughly enjoyed this period romance drama, often having trouble putting it down. I love the way we get to know all the main characters so thoroughly, and the gentle, slow-building romance between Kathleen and her true love. The book also makes it clear that any form of sexual assault can have devastating consequences for a woman's confidence.

One character's plotline has a very unexpected twist/revelation near the end, which makes the—in other ways predictable (though nonetheless satisfying)—showdown all the more poignant and gripping.

Leslie says

Meticulously researched, this novel brings the turn of the last century to vibrant life. An Irish Catholic family, appearing idyllic from the outside, struggles with various human and sometimes sordid difficulties. The consequences of individual choices—some decades old and only now revealed—send shock waves through the tight-knit group. A tragic event, all too common in the days before the advances of modern medicine, also leaves them reeling. Yet each character (except for the villain) strives toward a more perfect living of their Catholic ideals in an imperfect world. Suffering and grief, anger and remorse, immaturity and painful lessons that lead to growth, love and lust... Nothing is sugar-coated, and faith is tested, but the O'Donovan family perseveres, perhaps an example for us, if we slow down and examine our own lives at the pace of a time gone by.

Elizabeth says

I enjoyed this book about an Irish American Catholic young woman who comes of age at the turn of the 20th century. It helped me visualize what life might have been like in my paternal grandmother's life, as she was the same age as Kathleen and married in the same time frame. She was a 1st generation American and was Irish Catholic. Ellen Gable writes from a decidedly Catholic viewpoint, which I appreciate.

Toni Ladd says

Outstanding!! Even better than "In Name Only" which is one of my all time favorite fiction books. Ellen, please continue to write more about about this family! Wonderful Catholic Fiction! !

Virginia Tican says

I do admire the O'Donovans in their devotion to their Faith and their family as well as in their efforts (collectively as a family and individually) in trying to maintain a Godly life despite life's trials. My indoctrination to the Roman Catholic faith was not as deep and as devoted as the O'Donovans so I appreciate the author's efforts in this book in showing to readers of other Faiths that God can also be found where you least expect Him to be. I am deeply humbled by the message of this story vis-a-vis my own experiences on my "road to Damascus."

Sarah says

Do you like historical fiction? Do you like books that are Catholic without, you know, shoving it down your throat? Do you have a few days to spend with Ellen Gable's latest book?

Because, yes, it is the kind of book that will suck you in, hold you captive, and leave you better for having read it. It's a good story, well told, and I can heartily recommend it.

(I may or may not have skipped right past my bedtime while I was reading it, and I may or may not have had "Good Novel Hangover" afterward. Additionally, I may or may not have sent Ellen demands for another book PRONTO.)

Nancy Belanger says

I took this book to the beach and could not put it down. It was a long read, but I didn't notice or seem to mind since the story moved so swiftly and captured my attention from the first page. When my vacation ended, I cheered myself up with the fact that at least I could look forward to reading Gable's A Subtle Grace on the plane ride home; it was THAT good! Gable specializes in wholesome, romantic, thrilling, historical, family dramas—all with a Catholic angle. I really enjoyed reading about Catholicism right before the turn of the century, the advent of electric lighting, and the different types of carriages. I won't give away any plot lines

or spoilers here, so I'll just say that Gable's characters are compelling, and the reader soon grows to care about the O'Donovan family, anticipating their thoughts and feelings, feeling their sorrows and joys. The characters you can't stand (and there are a couple in this novel), make you cringe. Gable seems to have a knack for creating some evil, creepy types (read *Stealing Jenny* for another example) and she makes them so real and lifelike that you feel goosebumps and dread when they make their appearances. Some scenes were a bit disturbing to read, but Gable keeps them short and they are not written in a sensational way for shock value like so many other novels. By the end of the novel, my mind was racing: What will Gable do with the members of the O'Donovan family now? I have some ideas, but it's best to simply leave it up to her; she won't disappoint!

Diane Klettke says

The realism and the unrealism.

The author didn't hide the gritty ugliness of humanity or evil. There was a realistic portrayal of subjects like brothels, fornication, obsession, and violence. These things were not hidden, nor were they glorified in a way that overwhelmed the story. They were there in aid of the story. And, in my opinion they were needed to tone down the overwhelming sugariness of the dialogue.

I had a hard time believing that even in that Victorian era people would talk in such an extremely polite manner - asking permission for every little thing. "Would it be alright if..." "May I enter the church now?" and so on. While it is refreshing to see such politeness in light of our current culture, I quickly tired of so much of it.

I rated this a 3 and might consider it a 3.5 as I did get caught up in the story and I liked the characters - especially Luke's dedication and kindness. It is a good book, just not a great book.

Ron Frampton says

A very compelling historical romance that captures the period of 1896 .With all the problems of a love story that goes wrong .

Jean says

Award winning Ellen Gable's new novel *A Subtle Grace* is an intriguing historical romance with a plot that hooks you from the very beginning. It's a fast-paced suspense novel about the O'Donovan family – an established, well-respected, but unconventional Catholic family—who live in Philadelphia in 1896.

The main character is the beautiful 19-year-old Kathleen, a nursing student, who fears becoming an old maid and prays to St. Agnes for a sweetheart. She eventually falls in love with the charming son (Karl) of the local police chief. Is Karl the man she is meant to marry? She seems convinced but her family has their misgivings. Dr. Luke, the family's new physician enters the picture. He is a kind, gentle man who is enamored with her. However, through an unexpected turn of events, a dark shadow is cast down upon her dreams.

Not only is Kathleen's romance story appealing, but all the subplots and themes keep the reader captivated with the story. Kathleen's younger brother, William, believes he is being called to the religious life, while

another brother wrestles with chastity, and the father needs forgiveness for a buried secret from his past.

In A Subtle Grace, Gable shows us through her characters, what happens when an individual lives his/her life based on principles rather than on passions. She clearly conveys the differences between love as a feeling vs. love as a choice, illustrating the consequences of each. Themes of redemption, forgiveness, discerning one's vocation, healing, hope, and joy, all contribute to make this a story that tugs at the heart.

A sequel to In Name Only, A Subtle Grace works well as an independent, stand-alone novel. You will definitely want to read both. Here is my review of In Name Only.

A Subtle Grace is excellent read for historical romance fans. Those who enjoy Christian romance and suspense novels will find this story particularly enjoyable. This is a winner!

Darlene says

I won this book on good reads first reads giveaway,I loved the book and could not set it aside.It takes you through the dangerous and disastrous first courtship of Kathleen O'Donovan who at 19 thought she was going to be an "old maid" to the death of her baby sister and her court ship with the local doctor.This book has elements of love,religious devotion,scandal and so much more. I truly recommend this book.my only regret is that I dont have the novel in this set. this book is well written and flows easily as a stand alone even though it is a sequel.
