



The Irishman's Daughter

V.S. Alexander

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From the acclaimed author of The Magdalen Girls and The Taster comes a powerful, unforgettable novel of strength and resilience, set against the backdrop of the Irish famine.

Ireland, 1845. To Briana Walsh, no place on earth is more beautiful than Carrowteige, County Mayo, with its sloping fields and rocky cliffs perched above the wild Atlantic. The small farms that surround the centuries-old Lear House are managed by her father, agent to the wealthy, reckless Sir Thomas Blakely. Tenant farmers sell the oats and rye they grow to pay rent to Sir Thomas, surviving on the potatoes that flourish in the remaining scraps of land. But when the potato crop falls prey to a devastating blight, families Briana has known all her life are left with no food, no resources, and no mercy from the English landowner, who seems indifferent to everything except profit.

Rory Caulfield, the hard-working young farmer Briana hopes to marry, shares the locals' despair--and their anger. There's talk of violent reprisals against the callous gentry and their agents. Briana's studious older sister, Lucinda, dreams of a future far beyond Mayo. But even as hunger and disease settle over the country, killing and displacing millions, Briana knows she must find a way to guide her family through one of Ireland's darkest hours--toward hope, love, and a new beginning.

The Irishman's Daughter Details

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From Reader Review The Irishman's Daughter for online ebook

Holly B says

I enjoyed the setting of Ireland in 1845 on a family farm during a devastating famine. The tenant farmers were dealing with a plague on their potato crops. The potatoes were moldy, black and rotten. The farmers had a struggle coming and they weren't prepared for it.

Brian manages the land and the tenant farmers for the wealthy Sir Thomas Blakely who is concerned only for his bottom line. Brian's daughter Briana, struggles to help all the families that are suffering due to the failing crops. She is both strong and courageous.

I wanted to love this book, but it never fully captured my attention. You know, when you keep reading, thinking something will strike you. I read The Taster by this author last year and it made my 2018 favorites list. So I had high expectations for this one. It felt like the story was just staying in one place for far too long before things began to move along. I think I was suffering along with the farmers.

Thanks to NG / publisher for my review copy.

Lisa says

Briana Walsh, the daughter of the land agent, grew up along the beauty of Carrowteige, County Mayo. Her only wish is to marry the handsome Rory Caulfield and start their life together but when the famine hits their small village she is faced with watching as the Irish people fight to stay alive as they are turned out of their homes by the callous English landowners. Very well written and researched, this haunting and at times harsh story illuminates one of the darkest periods of Irish history. In this age of entitled attitudes and vast dependence on technology, the hostile conditions the Irish endured should serve as a lesson to all that indifference to the poor and weak of our society undermines our very humanity.

Mrsk Stephen says

The Irishman's Daughter, by V.S. Alexander, teaches one more about the great Irish potato famine and its affect on the Irish population than any history lesson ever! As usual, Alexander has written an excellent story set against a real historical event. Her protagonist, Briana, is indeed the Irishman's Daughter of the title. She has a genuine love for her country, Ireland, and Alexander spares no words in her many descriptions of the raw beauty of the rugged surroundings. Since Briana's father is an overseer for a British land owner in county Mayo whereas her husband is a tenant facing both bankruptcy and starvation due to the continuous failure of the potato crop, there is no shortage of plot devices in this book.

Alexander's depiction of the generational way of life gives one a true sense of the love the Irish have not just

for their family, but also for their extended community and the land they depend on to meet all their daily needs – food, housing, fuel, etc. Her characterization of the arrogant British who have no idea of the hardship facing the Irish when their crop fail helps one understand the long standing animosity between the two countries. In addition to the pompous British, Alexander cleverly integrates the secret society of the Molly Maguires, the failure of the Roman Catholic church to help those in most dire need, societies expectation of women and the mass migration of the Irish to America into the novel.

Although the ending is somewhat contrived it brilliantly tied up all the lose ends and left one with the feeling of hope for the future of the myriad of characters who had been so passionately brought to life.

I recommend this book to lover's of historical fiction.

I received a free copy of this ARC in return for a honest review.

Sue says

The Irishman's Daughter is one of those rare books that make me wish I could give it more than 5 stars. It is a beautiful, well written, fantastically researched historical fiction novel about a rarely discussed time in Irish history - the Famine of the mid 1800s. I have read a lot about this time period because most of my maternal ancestors immigrated to America from Ireland during this time period. Even though I have read a lot about it, this book gave me more information about the Irish farmers and what they went through during this terrible time.

The novel begins in 1845 in County Mayo where Briana lives with her father Brian, the agent to a wealthy English landowner. As the land agent, Brian is responsible for collecting rent from the tenant farmers who grow crops on the land. Tenant farmers sell the oats and rye they grow to pay rent to Sir Thomas, surviving on the potatoes that flourish in the remaining scraps of land. When the potato crop fails, the farmers are left with no food and no way to survive. Briana feels great compassion for the farmers and has been in love with Rory, one of the local tenant farmers, since they were children. As the hunger and disease spread over Ireland, Briana and Rory work to make sure that their families survive despite the odds against them.

Briana was a wonderfully written character. The reader could feel her pain and compassion as the drought worsened and I must admit that I cried along with her several times. Her love of her home and the beauty of the Irish countryside is so strong that I consider Ireland to be one of the main characters in the book. I know that it made me want to take another trip to Ireland to see the beauty of it. This is a book that I won't soon forget.

Thanks to the publisher for a copy of this book to read and review. All opinions are my own.
