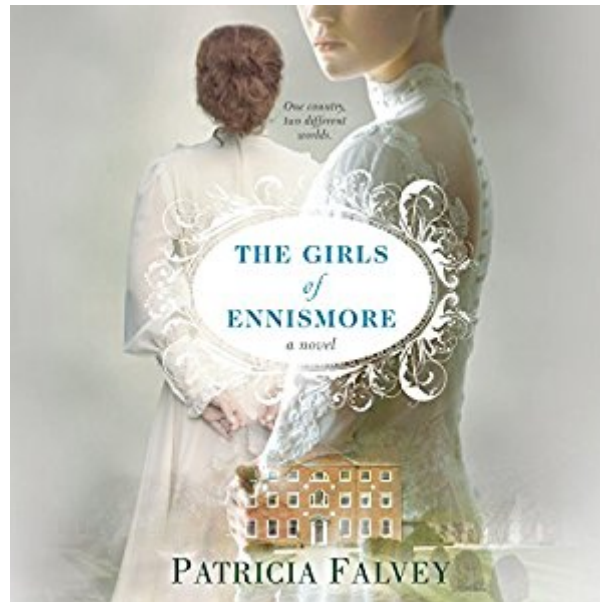




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The Girls Of Ennismore



Synopsis

Set in Ireland during the turbulent early 20th century, Patricia Falvey's sweeping novel explores an unlikely friendship between two girls of vastly different backgrounds, as each tries to overcome the barriers set by class and birthright... On a June morning in 1900, Rosie Killeen crosses the road that divides her family's County Mayo farm from the estate of Lord and Lady Ennis, and makes her way to the "big house" for the first time. Barely eight years old, Rosie joins the throng of servants preparing for the arrival of Queen Victoria. But while the royal visit is a coup for Ennismore, a chance meeting on the grounds proves even more momentous for Rosie. Victoria Bell, Lord and Lady Ennis's young daughter, is desperately lonely. Though the children of the gentry seldom fraternize with locals, Lord Ennis arranges for Rosie to join in Victoria's school lessons. For Rosie, the opportunity is exhilarating yet isolating. Victoria's governess and aunt, Lady Louisa, objects to teaching a peasant girl. The other servants resent Rosie's escape from the drudgery of life below stairs. Bright, strong-willed Rosie finds herself caught between her own people and the rarefied air of Ennismore - especially as she grows closer to Victoria's older brother, Valentine. As they near womanhood, the girls' friendship is interrupted. Victoria is bound for a coming out season in Dublin, and Rosie must find a way to support her family. But Ireland is changing too. The country's struggle for Home Rule, the outbreak of the Great War, and a looming Easter rebellion in Dublin all herald a new era. Not even Ennismore can escape unscathed. And for Rosie, family loyalty, love, friendship and patriotism will collide in life-changing ways, leading her through heartbreak and loss in search of her own triumphant independence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Loved the book.

Ireland - 1900 Rosie Killeen, age 8, lives on the Killeen farm near the Ennis Estates. She has come to the Big House on the Ennis Estates to work temporarily in the kitchen. They are scurrying around in preparation for a visit from Queen Victoria. But Rosie is disappointed at the sight of the old, fat Queen dressed in black. Rosie's sister, Bridie, works at the Big House and soon Rosie will be working there full time as well. When out walking one day, Rosie meets Victoria Bell, age 7, who lives at the Ennis House. Victoria wants Rosie to be her friend so her mother reluctantly agrees that Rosie can take lessons with Victoria and her governess. While Victoria can't wait for Rosie to arrive, Rosie doesn't want to go. But go she does. Even with the snide comments Rosie gets from the teacher, she excels in reading, learning French, and how to play the piano. More and more she begins to imitate Victoria to become a lady. Valentine, Victoria's second oldest brother has not done well at school or any other positions he has tried. But he and Rosie have become good friends. When it comes time for Victoria's season in Dublin, her mother refuses to allow Rosie to accompany her. With Victoria gone, Rosie is at loose ends with nothing to do. Her sister is a maid at the Big House but Rosie feels that with her education, that type of work would be beneath her. However, when her sister becomes ill, Rosie has to take her place to make money for her family. Soon Rosie realizes that the love that she and Valentine now share is not to be and that she will always be just a maid. She then decides it is time to move to Dublin and start a new life there. The story follows Rosie and Victoria as their lives touch one another over the years and the pain both women face during the difficult time of the Easter Rebellion in Dublin which tore apart so many lives. This is a long saga about life in Ireland in the early 20th century. It depicts the decline of the aristocracy and the many class changes that took place around the time of World War I. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and highly recommend it. The characters are so real and the way the author threaded actual historical events into the story is so very well done. Don't miss this book. I voluntarily reviewed an Advanced Reader Copy of this book.

The Girls of Ennismore is a beautifully written, heart-wrenching novel that touches the soul. I was drawn into the story and the character's lives, right from the start. I didn't want to put the book down, not even for a moment. John Killeen was poor and rented farmland from Lord Ennis. All of John's daughters worked at Ennismore, aka, the Big House, to maintain the family household. When Rosie Killeen turned eight, she made her way up to the Big House kitchen to

work, like her sisters had. But, Rosie didn't stay working there for long. Victoria Bell, Lord Ennis's daughter, talked her father into permitting her to have Rosie as a friend. Lord Ennis shocked his wife when he declared that Rosie Killeen, whom Lady Althea Ennis considered to be a peasant, would be coming into their home and befriending their daughter. Rosie was never asked whether she wanted to become Victoria's friend or take classes with her at Ennismore, but her thoughts on the matter didn't count. The two girls, however, did end up becoming the best of friends until Victoria started her season. Rosie was crushed when Victoria didn't invite her along as her companion. She burned with embarrassment when she had to return to the Big House and work as a servant. Although Rosie knew, that her close association with Victoria's brother, Valentine, could never become a true relationship, she was still shattered when he left her. But, Rosie's self-esteem lifted once again, when she aspired to make the best out of her lot in life, rather than set her heart on an unattainable dream. It was a difficult time, though, when Rosie struck out on her own. It was the time of the Uprising when the Native Irish started to band together and come up against the English, and the Aristocrats who had stolen their land. The Girls of Ennismore brought a dark segment of Ireland's history alive for me. This poignant novel is superbly written with razor-sharp details and raw emotion. The Girls of Ennismore pulled at my heart and captivated my interest until the end. Highly recommended. Thank you, Kensington Books and NetGalley, for my advanced review copy.

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