



The Godforsaken Daughter

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When Ruby Clare's father was alive, they happily toiled together on their small dairy farm in Northern Ireland. Since his death seven months ago, Ruby—thirty-three years old, plain, and plump—has become a veritable drudge for Martha, her endlessly critical mother. Then comes the day when Ruby finds her late grandmother's old suitcase in the attic. Among its strange contents: a slim, handmade volume called *The Book of Light*.

The deeper Ruby delves into its mysterious pages, the more confident she feels. But Martha, convinced that her newly empowered daughter must be possessed, enlists the help of psychiatrist Henry Shevlin. Henry is unflappable on the surface, yet inwardly he's reeling from his wife's unexplained disappearance the year before. As Ruby undergoes therapy alongside other local patients, including lonely bachelor farmer Jamie McCloone, all their lives intersect in unexpected ways. And Ruby, alone for so long, finds the courage to connect—with Jamie, with Henry, and with her own loving, indomitable spirit.

The Godforsaken Daughter Details

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From Reader Review The Godforsaken Daughter for online ebook

Susan Barton says

Ruby Clare is thirty-three, unmarried and still lives at home on the family farm with her bitter, abusive mother. Since Ruby's beloved father died suddenly, Ruby's day consists of knitting tea cozies, and waiting hand and foot on Martha Clare. Ruby's spoiled twin sisters, May and June, don't make life any easier for Ruby. Although they work in the city, they come home on weekends to visit Martha and to torment shy, overweight Ruby.

Meanwhile, psychiatrist Henry Shevlin's life is in turmoil. His wife, Constance, went for a walk and never returned. After a year of searching for her, he's decided to attempt to move on by relocating from the city of Belfast to the more rural location of Killoran. Henry settles into his new surroundings nicely while treating some pretty quirky characters, but he never stops hoping Constance will return.

There's a lot going on in *The Godforsaken Daughter* – several stories are intertwined and told. While at first it seems to start out as yet another spin on the classic Cinderella story, readers will be quite happy to see that it is so much more than that. Christina McKenna has woven a beautiful tapestry of characters, set against the glorious backdrop of Northern Ireland. Her characters are so charming, compelling and well developed, I was immediately invested in their well-being. I wanted to hug Ruby and tell her everything would be okay.

There are some definite religious undertones at play in *The Godforsaken Daughter*, but this is Northern Ireland in the 80s after all, so it's to be expected. The Troubles between Protestants and Catholics are injected at various points in the story. The IRA and British authorities play an important role as well. Ruby's experimentation with the occult is short-lived and met with negative consequences.

The ending is magnificent and I felt very satisfied with the way the author put all the pieces together. The story was never contrived or overdone.

While reading *The Godforsaken Daughter*, which I did in one day since it was so wonderful, I found myself searching for more of Christina McKenna's books. I love her writing and have every intention of reading all of her books. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading engaging stories of life, love and perseverance.

<http://ebookreviewgal.com> received a complimentary ARC of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

Rachel says

Like a comical Irish version of the Cinderella story, Ruby's life becomes that of a sorry house-slave to her waspish critical mother Martha after her beloved father dies. Her life suddenly changes when she discovers her late grandmother's old suitcase full of secrets, tarot cards and mysterious occult things. Ruby embarks on a voyage of exploration and discovery, ending with her mother enlisting the help of both the parish priest and the psychiatrist Henry Devlin, to deal with a daughter she believes is clearly possessed or insane. Henry himself is dealing with the tragedy of his wife's mysterious disappearance and has a host of interesting patients including a would-be John Lennon and the mildly comical farmer James McCloone, depressed over

the death of his dog. All these characters weave together to create a sweet and quaint story. Light-hearted and humorous, this would make a funny movie.

Danielle says

This kinda didn't work for me? I liked elements in it but I found a lot of the book bewildering and tired making. I think that it was largely well written and parts were compelling even with my uncertainty but I don't think I liked it as a whole. I'd give this one 2.5 stars, with the understanding that mileage may seriously vary.

Lisa says

I loved the Misremembered Man and so enjoyed that the main character, Jamie, also has a starring role in this one. So many horrible things happen to the characters, but yet the book is still hopeful and even funny in places. The conversation has such a great Irish lilt to it that I want to start talking that way myself by the end of the book.

Cyndi says

Sweet

Another book that I would love to rate as 4.5stars. No beautiful writing, just a sweet story with a great ending. Just what I needed!

Cherie says

Another good story, with old friends Paddy, Rose, and Jamie. I really liked the story of Henry and his missing wife just as much as the story or poor Ruby.

This author seems to like to have two separate story lines going at the same time, with cross over characters, with something to tie them all together. This one was done especially well.

Trudy says

Fluctuated between 3 and 4 stars. I alternately laughed out loud and sniffled back tears. Christina McKenna does such a great job of combining serious subjects with sweet folksy humor. I'm looking forward to her next book in this series. Love these books!

Becky says

It's been seven months since his death but Ruby Clare still mourns the loss of her beloved father. The two were close, sharing a love of the land and a bond that no one else in the family could understand. Since his death, Ruby's mother has leased off the land and forcing her to give up farming for good. And while her two sisters work in Belfast during the week, Ruby stays home to keep house and care for their mother. With daily criticism from her mother and weekends spent terrorized by her sisters, Ruby has never been more morose.

Then Ruby discovers an old case belonging to her paternal grandmother. It appears in her own grief, Ruby's grandmother turned to the ancient Goddess Dana for solace. In her, Ruby too finds comfort and the promise of change. But when Ruby's mother catches wind of it, she begins to threaten her daughter with exorcisms and a trip to the local asylum!

Enter Doctor Henry Shevlin. Henry is new to the area, working as temporary psychiatrist while the town's actual doctor is away on research. And even with his own woes hanging heavy, Henry can offer a voice of reason and support for people like Ruby.

I really enjoyed this read from McKenna. It's set in the early 80s, amidst the IRA bombings and threats of the era and while this isn't a HUGE part of the plot, it does play into it to a good extent. And really there are two main stories here: that of Ruby Clare and her family and that of Henry Shevlin.

Ruby's tale is the main focus of the book. She's a bit downtrodden, understandable given her situation. Her mother has never really shown any affection for her and even her mother's friends are incredibly critical of the girl. Living in a small town where gossip is gold makes things even worse. McKenna does a fabulous job with the characters that dwell in and around Tailorstown. From the local priest to the post mistress and even the town sheriff, each character - no matter how small or how infrequently seen - is rich in detail. And like any town, some of them are nice and some of them are a little nasty.

Henry Shevlin's story is quite interesting as well. It's through him that we get more of the political climate of the time. It's a bit of a shame really that his story is kind of pushed to the side in lieu of Ruby's tale. It would seem that Henry and his wife might be deserving of their own book, to be quite honest. And this is really The Godforsaken Daughter's only big downfall. I felt like Shevlin's story was too big to be a secondary story.

If you enjoy small town settings and family drama (and this family is full of drama) you'll like The Godforsaken Daughter. This is the third book set in the Tailorstown but it's not at all necessary to have read either of the previous books.

JEAN H MCKILLOP says

The Godforsaken Daughter

A story of life in Northern Ireland early in the revolution. The cast of characters starring a young doctor of psychiatry and his wife and people he had reason to interact with. The troubles of the locals who were affected and glimpses of their problems and solutions. Love, laughter and tears are all here asking for your input!

Melinda says

McKenna delves into the subject matter of deep dark secrets, faith, grief, redemption and love with plenty of enthusiasm.

We meet three varying characters dealing with loss as their paths intersect. Each backstory differing yet parallel in the end.

Set in Ireland circa 1980's, you are privy to snapshots of landscape along with the culture, and political strife. A small farming hamlet is depicted as well as city life. Religious differences are referenced. You have a strong sense of community in this quaint little town nestled a distance from the city.

The narrative is bursting, however, McKenna manages it well. Essentially three threads are introduced as well as their players seamlessly. Their converging becomes clearer as the story progresses. With diversity throughout the triple threads I felt it was rather clever and added texture.

All the characters are well drawn, you know of their vibrant personalities and idiosyncrasies. Ruby tugs at your heart, you hope she stands up for herself and when she shows promise you'll be cheering her on. The magnitude of her grief is felt and you are affected by her tremendous loss. Jamie is sweet and you hope he sets himself on track again. Paddy and Rose are nothing less than charming.

As you turn the pages familiarizing yourself with characters and their trials you find yourself absorbed. Quite a moving story, it's subtle packing a powerful punch. Rather unique, lacking predictability, as it pulls together you will find yourself captivated. A wonderful story touching on family, love, faith and learning to move forward, dealing with loss.

Cindy Roesel says

In the very early 80s, my father married an Irish woman with six kids. She was seriously Irish, first generation from Athenry, County Galway. When they moved in, almost everything was replaced in the color green, Mondays were corned beef and cabbage and all they, and soon we, talked about were The Troubles. Picking up Christina McKenna's, THE GODFORSAKEN DAUGHTER got my Irish up a bit. I remember learning to make traditional Irish soda bread, attempting to cross stitch and throwing up after sneaking Irish whiskey, which I was much too young to drink. Back to 2015, I don't know about you, but Monday, I had a lovely St. Patrick's Day!

THE GODFORSAKEN DAUGHTER is set in the 1980s Ireland. Ruby Clare loves her father and looks forward to working with him out in the farm fields every day. But he dies, leaving behind the 63-acre farm, Ruby, her mother and nasty twin sisters. First thing her mother does is forbid Ruby to work outside on the farm and turns her into her private servant. Her sisters live in Belfast but come home to Tailorstown on weekends to add a special sisterly brand of torture to Ruby's already dismal existence. The only bit of joy she has is in the form of Jamie McCloone, a lonely bachelor farmer she knows.

Dr. Henry Shelvin is a psychiatrist in Belfast. His wife, Constance goes missing one night and he proceeds to spend all his time looking for her. It's destroying him, but this is also a time of unrest in Belfast. There's a civil war waging between the Protestant IRA and the Catholics and he is told to "lay low" to stop looking for her, but nothing more. He leaves Belfast for Tailorstown and finds peace working with small town patients while never losing hope he'll find his wife.

The two stories come together in a somewhat awkward way. In some ways, they seemed as if they were two different novels. As I was reading, I found myself invested in Ruby's story that I couldn't stop until the end and was satisfied with the resolution of how everything turned out. THE GODFORSAKEN DAUGHTER somehow feels like a step back in time, with McKenna's lyrical portraits of the countryside. It's a story of family, love and faith. This is the third novel in Christina McKenna's, Tailorstown Series.

Margaret J. Fitzgerald says

Enjoyable Reading

I gave this book four stars because it was interesting, well written and the characters came alive for me. I found myself cheering Ruby on in her journey to find her true self. The storey held my attention and I had difficulty in putting the book down, I just wanted to keep on reading. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading about Ireland and who loves interesting, quirky characters.

John C Wells says

Thought provoking inside look to country life in a troubled country.

Very lovable characters and one you first despise but feel sorrow for too. Ideas one doesn't normally have about faeries and spiritual rituals are thought provoking and eye opening as one realizes most of us face times when we seek new ways to cope with circumstances beyond our control. The conflict that emerges for people caught up in the 'troubles' is an interesting sub-story and one I was not aware of. This story is very sweet and a great read for a weekend's pleasure.

Elaine says

I really loved The Misremembered Man by Christina McKenna, was not quite as enamoured of The Disenchanted Widow but am pleased to say I really enjoyed this one.

The main character here is Ruby who is living something of a Cinderella like existence caring for her mother single handed after the death of her father, whilst her two sisters live the life of Riley in Belfast. Her mother is constantly moaning at her and when her sisters come home at weekends, it seems their main hobby is to be spiteful to Ruby herself.

Many years ago, a case belonging to her grandmother had been stashed away in the attic, and when Ruby now finds and opens it she is in for quite a shock. She will find there was more to her grandmother than met

the eye.

We also see the return of Jamie, our misremembered man, complete with his comb-over, as well as Paddy and Rose. I was pleased to see Rose back to her normal self. I didn't like the direction her character took in *Disenchanted Widow* but she seems back to her old self now – liking a good chat, caring for the men in her life, surrounding herself with knick knacks. Not above interfering in someone else's business, she has a heart of gold nonetheless.

Once again we have a newcomer to meet, this time Dr Henry Shelvin – a psychiatrist who has come on a short term contract over the summer. In a farming community where loneliness and depression can go hand in hand, he is going to be busy. But what about about Henry himself, a man whose wife has disappeared without trace?

It is a well told story with just a hint of the supernatural in there, one that you can get lost in with a bunch of characters who are certainly colourful and at times eccentric and maybe just a touch stereotypical but who you will still care for. It made me smile more than a few times, especially at some of the things Rose says, but is also quite moving in places. A thoroughly entertaining read. Thanks to the publishers for the review copy.

Jool says

This book was five stars' worth of entertaining reading for me. Somewhat like a Cinderella story, but not exactly. Let's just say that poor Ruby is the target of her mother's wrath while her younger twin sisters, who visit only on weekends, are treated as royalty. Ruby spent most of her life helping her dad on their family farm, and she was the apple of her dad's eye. Ruby loved the farm, the animals, and her dad was her best friend. But when he suddenly collapsed in a field and died, her mother took over, sold the animals (but kept the farm to lease out land) and made Ruby the "housemaid". Her hypochondriac mother also made Ruby serve not only her mother but her sisters on the weekends because they were the 'pretty' sisters and able to work in department store jobs during the week. Ruby never lasted long on a part time job, she was a heavyset (So the book says!!!) clumsy rather roughshod girl more used to working hard outdoors on a farm.

This book is two stories in one, it seems, as we also follow the life of a young psychiatrist whose wife has up and vanished - and he spends all the time he can following up leads to find her since the police seem to not be trying too hard. Both story lines are fascinating, and the setting is Belfast, Ireland in the 1980's - when all the wars in Ireland were going on. The IRA was active, some areas were extremely dangerous, and I learned a bit about it.

I highly recommend this book. The focus is on Ruby and her problem-ridden family out in the country, but the bits about inner Belfast are interesting as well.
