



Pay The Devil

Jack Higgins

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Pay The Devil was first published in the UK only by Barrie & Rockcliffe in 1962 under the authorship of Harry Patterson. The book went out of print shortly after its first publication, was never reprinted and never appeared in paperback. The author was in fact Jack Higgins and in 1999 Higgins created an entirely new framework to the original book, added some scenes and made some changes throughout.

The novel is about a Confederate colonel who escapes to Ireland after the Civil War, only to get caught up in a conflict over there. Taking the guise of a legendary outlaw, he wages his own rebellion to assist the common people.

Pay The Devil Details

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Author : Jack Higgins

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From Reader Review Pay The Devil for online ebook

Henri Moreaux says

Originally penned in 1962 this book was printed once in the UK then fell out of sight until 1999 when it was restructured and reprinted in a revised format. Depending on your interests (there's no spy action here) this is one of the better Higgins books.

The story follows a US Civil War veteran who migrates to Ireland only to find himself morally drawn into a conflict between some English landowners and their Irish tenants. The characters aren't terribly deep and filled out but it is a quick and enjoyable read nonetheless about two topics which often aren't linked together.

Tom Ashton says

I thundered through this 19th century thriller, much like the protagonist, Colonel Clay Fitzgerald, would through a line of cavalry; sabre in one hand, Colt Dragoon in the other, and a cheroot aflame to boot!

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Following the defeat of the Confederate army, the war-weary Colonel Clay Fitzgerald retires to Ireland, with the sole intention of investigating the estate bequeathed to him by his Uncle. However, when he arrives to find the townsfolk impoverished and engaged in a dispute with the local land baron, his personal morality and passionate temperament force him to act, albeit under the guise of a legendary rebel outlaw.

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Favourite quote: *"With the natural resilience of youth, the past was already becoming of less importance to them than the future."*

Kerrfunk says

The story was fine. Col. Clay Fitzgerald goes from post-Civil-War America to Ireland to collect an inheritance, and becomes Batman not long after arriving. There's romantic tension introduced early that just drips and drips with veritable foreplay and SPOILER culminates in a kiss, and the whole time I'm thinking "How old is Clay Fitzgerald?" Over thirty, I'm guessing, to have med school and four years of war under his belt, and he's head-over-heels for an 18yo.

The audio edition was an actor's showcase, with several American accents, Irish, English, Scottish, and French, plus at least one woman.

And the story was fine, but I couldn't get past the Batman aspect.

Oh: Higgins liked to drip imagery, and he returned to the same subjects and phrases far too frequently. Tell us again about the burning whiskey, and the dragoon Colt, and please use the phrase "gave the horse her head" one more time.

Rachael Hewison says

My boyfriend has read a lot of Jack Higgins in his time and so he picked this book up knowing his style. He passed it onto me saying that it wasn't the best example of Higgins work but still good for a quick read. He was right in that it took me only two days to finish amidst a busy travelling schedule but I'm not sure that I would call it good. It was okay and I would never say that I wouldn't touch another Higgins book again but it would not be my first choice from a bookshelf.

The characters were well thought out and exciting to read about, especially the villains of the piece with some good interactions between all involved. However we never really got to know any of them particularly well. This is most apparent in the small introduction to the main character, Clay, at the beginning of the book and there is a lot of his history that remains undiscovered.

In addition Higgins described everything solidly, if a little simply with no real depth to the plot. The story line had the potential to be fantastic but the lack of development in both characters and plot made the actual book feel a little like it was a long chapter from much a longer saga. The book also feels a little pointless as there is no real journey undertaken by the characters, they finish in almost exactly the same positions they start in and nothing really happens.

It was extremely easy to read, it was an excellent topic to write about but I don't feel like Higgins met his potential.

Benjamin Thomas says

Harry Patterson (Jack Higgins) is normally known for his thriller novels but it appears that he has, at least once, turned his hand to the historical fiction format. This novel takes place at the very end of the US Civil War at which point Confederate Colonel Clay Fitzgerald travels to Ireland where his grandfather has left him an estate. He gets caught up in the Fenian Rebellion between wealthy landowners and poor tenant farmers. Much as he would like to remain neutral he is forced to choose sides and enter a different kind of war.

This is a quick read and while it has its charms, to me it reads much like a traditional western novel, with a strong hero that often rides in to save the day, right wrongs, and get the girl at the end. If you are looking for some insights into what transpired during the Fenian Rebellion you will need to turn elsewhere as this story confines itself to a very small locale with a dozen or so impacted people. The characters are fairly standard stock and tended to blend together in my mind with only Clay Fitzgerald having any depth. Still...there is an overall interesting plot and as long as you don't expect much detail, it can be a good read.

Scott Drake says

I've seen Higgins name many times over the years but hadn't tried one until I ran across this book in our corner book exchange "library." It's basically a historical romance and the characters are so simplistic I didn't care who got killed or saved or married or whatever but the end — just wanted to finish it. And I did, fast; in about 24 hours.

I have read other reviewers take on this book and it looks like I chose the worst example of Higgins' work to start with. Good thing Good Reads is here or I would write off this guy forever after this yawner.

Kerry says

Kinda of a snoozer. Former Confederate soldier who runs off to Ireland when he realizes the South is getting their backsides handed to them. Speaking of which, has the South realized the war is over...better yet, do they know the results?! And why the eff am I capitalizing south? It's an f ing direction.

I always get harassed in the the south for being a 'Yank'...thems fighting words to a Sox fan kids, FIGHTING WORDS. Don't be angry we evolved quicker.

I digress, anyways, he rolls to Ireland, bc that's where dreams come true. A land of eating, drinking, fighting and f ing. (Think about it, how many people do YOU know claim to be "Irish"? Have you SEEN how small Ireland is compared to most countries?! They breed like no other. One potato = three kids produced. It's like a cockroach eating a matchstick & making 1,000 kids.)

I digress again, so the protagonist arrives in Ireland to find it in social disarray (I know, shocker) and immediately immerses himself in the fight for the people, bc really, what else does he know what to do with his life?

Long story short: fights the good fight, gets blacklisted by the man and run out of town after finding a lady friend. Bet you're already running to the store to pick this one up already, right?

Miriam says

The pedestrian paperback cover might have put me off until I opened it up, but chancing across this unassuming little epic has turned out to be one of the best choices I've made in a while, where books are concerned. In fact, this is one of the best books I've read all year.

The characters are so invariably likable, realistic in their thinking but not without their necessary literary melodramatics, and principled but not plagued by manufactured struggles of conscience as so many of this type of figure in military novels often are.

Higgins writes dialects believably but comprehensibly, and this is certainly a book for the masses. Without resorting to offensive stereotypes, this book shows us strong women, motivated people of colour, and human historical figures.

The writing style is atmospheric and sets the scene very strongly, while trotting along at a brisk pace. My only gripe there is with some of the awkward phrases that could have been ironed out, such as a carriage "being got ready" instead of "being readied," or the strange repetition of an "inexplicable tenderness flooded through him" nearly two hundred pages apart.

I can't complain, though. This was a great, gripping read. If you like thrillers, Westerns, or 19th century history, this may be the book for you.

Richard says

Jack Higgins - "Pay the Devil"

A Confederate Colonel, at the end of the US Civil War, moves to Ireland, having inherited a country estate and considerable wealth. Instead of the peace and tranquility that he was looking for, after 4 years of brutal warfare, he finds civil strife and conflict.

As is natural in any story, our swashbuckling hero, despite his best intents, becomes involved on the side of the oppressed and downtrodden.

A lively little story, with hints of Zorro (no bad thing in my view).

On a rainy day, this book achieves what it sets out to do - entertain the reader. Don't look too deeply into the plot (one wonders what happened to Eithne Fallon and her kin once the story ends) and accept the story as light entertainment.

A book I'm happy to recommend to others.

Debra Kulchar says

Good (audio)

Steve says

August 2018 I don't often read historical fiction and especially the South's point of view of the Civil War plus life in Ireland in the 1860+ when I get a Jack Higgins Very engrossing story!

Samhita Argula says

Vivid, thrilling, keeps us on the edge.

Bob says

A little different time and place for this one from Higgins. Set in the US at the end of the Civil war, but mostly in Ireland if follows a Confederate. Surgeon and Calvary Officer who has returned to Ireland where he travels to an ancestral home looking for some peace and quiet.

Unfortunately Ireland is anything but, the peasants and crofters are becoming fed up with English land owners and tensions are high. When the officer sees the conditions the lower class have to endure and the attitude of the landowners, he slowly begins to side against the owners and becomes involved in the local confrontations. An interesting period piece playing on the inequalities of the social classes of the time.

Angie Fehl says

Though I've heard that Higgins is a well-known novelist, I was not familiar with his work prior to picking up this book, which I picked up and quickly finished in about 2 days flat. I figured once I read about a bad guy getting shot in the face within the first 5 pages, I was in for an action-packed adventure! This was just a good, fun story all around! A real treat for a history nerd like me (sure, it's not fact heavy, really the Civil War is just used as a starting setting, but I liked the escapism within a historical fiction setting).

Col. Clay Fitzgerald is a surgeon, originally from Georgia, who works his way up into a Confederate officer position, doing double duty as an Army medic and a leader of men. Once the war ends, Fitzgerald finds all his family is dead, all his property destroyed except for one ancestral estate in Ireland. Having no other immediate plans, he goes to Ireland with the intention of getting some peace & quiet in the Irish countryside after living through such a gruesome war. Unfortunately, he finds that he's really only traded one battlefield for another when he sees the class war (nobility vs. peasants) working up to a fever pitch in Ireland. He repeatedly says "I'm not getting involved, not taking sides" but that only works for so long before he does take a stand and things go down.

The characters are pretty clear cut -- the bad are definitely bad, the good are witty, lovable, and strong in character. All are entertaining with good banter throughout the story. I don't want to give too much of the story away but there were parts here and there that somewhat reminded me of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. I flew through this story so I will definitely be checking out more of Higgins' work!

Alan Rylans says

This is an early work by Jack Higgins originally published back in 1962 under the name Harry Patterson. It's the story of Confederate Colonel Clay Fitzgerald who heads to Ireland after the south loses the Civil War. His uncle has left him an estate and he seeks tranquility, instead he arrives in the middle of civil unrest between poor tenant farmers and their rich landlords. It's a good enough read but does become repetitive as you read through the chapters and the ending is rather weak.
