



Celtic Storms

Delaney Rhodes

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Celtic Steel Series, Book 1

Darina O'Malley watched the sun set in the bay from the great tower in O'Malley castle. She said a silent prayer for her cousin, Kyra, hoping the message that was delivered to the MacCahan's did not spell sudden doom for her and her people. If what her Uncle Ruarc had told her was true, she was to be married to a stranger in nearly a fortnight, and her world would turn upside down.

The realization that her clan held secrets which could destroy them forever - chilled her blood. Who was this son of a Laird that she was betrothed to and how would he react when he learned the truth?

Celtic Storms Details

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From Reader Review Celtic Storms for online ebook

Mirvan Ereon says

I always love anything Celtic or Irish. I am so attracted to their culture because it seems so bloody and violent, and yet so relentlessly beautiful all at the same time. My first exposure to Celtic culture in novels is from Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles. Aside from that, I have read a lot about Celts, especially the ancient pagan human sacrificing Celts. I had a book all about them in French. The Irish Gaelic language is also very wonderful for me that I even bought a dictionary and a grammar book to study this very mysterious and difficult language sung by my beloved Enya.

So in short, I am an absolute Celtophile. So I expected a lot from a book called Celtic Storms which I saw as an ebook. Without caring much about reading the summary, I downloaded it since I had a feeling that this would be good because of the word Celtic in the title.

I was not disappointed. It is really really really good! It is actually like a family saga, about two clans joining together as one through the marriage of some important members. Although this is not about the pagan Celts I would have preferred, I still found this very interesting because I learned a lot from reading this book. This is set sometime in the earlier centuries, when Christianity was still somehow new to the Celtic setting and there was still magic and mysterious rituals mixing with the popular religion. This was the time when there were still family feuds and feudalism was still practiced. This was the time when the rich lived in castles, but not as far as when Arthur lived.

In short, it was like a fairy tale, but with a modern way of telling it. No non-sense at all. The novel is well-crafted. I cannot put it down. Well, because I am a human being, I still have to sleep but I look forward the next day to read it again. The descriptions are vivid and the story flows well. There are a lot of characters but their names are really beautiful so it is easy to follow their plot lines and their roles in the whole novel.

I do not want to spoil anything so I just advise you to get a copy of this book and read it for yourself. if you like romance, read it. If you like historical fiction, read it. If you like a wonderful novel to spend some time with, this is it. You would definitely discover a lot of precious gems in this treasure chest of a novel. And you know me, if I review a book, I am passionate about it especially if it is worth writing a long review such as this. I really believed that this novel is great and I cannot wait for more of this! Congratulations to the author!

Wanda Hartzenberg says

Now for those who may not know, I am not a fan of romance, at all. I try to avoid it if I can. But this book, with the basic premise romance got my attention. Not the romance, the human frailty of the main male character, the strong personality of the main female character, the rich and fragrant backdrop against which the story plays off had me turn page after page. Fragrant? Yes, fragrant, one can almost smell the rivers, the sea, the horses, the dampness of the castle etc. All served to add substance to a story which already had me enthralled.

The characters are richly portrayed, the story is told with enough sub plots to keep me entertained and wondering what will happen next, the basic love story soon becomes the sub plot. So who would love this book, romance lovers and abhorers of romance will all enjoy this book. I loved the fact that the main male was not a perfect specimen in every way, for that matter, the main female is not perfect in every way either. I loved the fact that their humanity adds so much to their characters that you mentally go and name and associate

them with people you know or knew.

Considering that it is a love story that had me so enthralled, I cannot help but give it an 8 * pant review rating.

Martha Bryce says

*****SPOILER ALERT*****

Celtic Storms is very well written and it's obvious that Ms. Rhodes has spent a great deal of time and energy researching this particularly tumultuous time in the history of Ireland. Her characters are well developed and I particularly appreciated that although they meet the standards of romantic historical fiction, they are far from stereotypes. The best example of this is Patrick MacCahan, the male romantic lead. Patrick is a fine physical specimen of a man, tall, muscular, gorgeous down to his long flowing hair but handicapped by a partially functioning right hand which was seriously injured when the boy Patrick defended his mother in the fight that took her life. Patrick is additionally hampered by a stutter that is at its worst when he is speaking under stress.

A neighboring clan, the O'Malley clan has been quick to recognize the ability of its females and has trained them in every trade, including that of soldiering. The O'Malleys have prospered and are known to be the wealthiest among the clans. However, their success will be challenged because no male children have been born into their clan since Dallin O'Malley spurned marriage with Odetta Burke to marry for love. In retaliation, Odetta is believed to have cursed the O'Malleys with an inability to bear male children. Darina, Dallin's eldest daughter would be competent to lead the clan but the other clans with whom they trade would never accept a female laird. When Dallin O'Malley dies, Darina is told that she will be wed to Patrick, the eldest son of the laird of the MacCahan clan. Patrick has worked hard to overcome his handicaps but believes them to have made him unsuitable to wed, so you can imagine his surprise that a secret agreement between his father and the O'Malley laird requires his presence at Darina O'Malley's wedding - to him. The union will provide the O'Malleys with the male leader they require and will provide the MacCahans with badly needed riches and trade.

To benefit his clan and please his father, Patrick agrees to marry and settle permanently as the O'Malley laird. With him he takes a small party that includes his beloved foster brother Braeden MacTierney. Only three people know that the eleven year old boy is actually the rightful heir of the O'Malley clan, smuggled to safety from the Burkes at birth. However, before Patrick and Darina's wedding is consummated, the boy, Braeden is abducted by the Burkes who need a young male sacrifice for a black magic rite. Since Darina believes Braeden to be Patrick's bastard, she is furious at being left and petitions for an annulment, citing abandonment before consummation. At the annulment hearing, she discovers not only that she has a brother but that that Patrick has left her to find him. Darina is not a woman to wait at home for her man to solve her problems.

This book is a very fast read, full of mysticism, superstition, Druids, and a passionate mind connection between Darina and Patrick. The erotic connection played out in their minds is a better read than many graphic physical love scenes. It was a little bit of a stretch accepting that one clan would actually train their women in every type of trade and skill while another clan would allow the eldest son to leave his own to rule another, particularly when they had younger and marriageable sons available. Although Celtic Storms is a good read, most of the book is spent introducing characters and setting the stage for future books in the series. Increasing the length to resolve at least one of the many subplots would have made the book much stronger and left me far more satisfied.

Bry says

UG!!!! What is with books these days ending at the beginning of the climax?? I should not have to read book 2 to find out the ending of book 1. Authors have an entire book to win over the reader and make them want to read book 2. Readers shouldn't be forced to keep reading a series just to find out what should have been in the first book. It is such a cowardly way to end a book.

The sad part is that even though the first 3/4's of this book was boring and needed some serious culling the last quarter was actually entertaining. Of course the main characters didn't even meet till last character, and for a while there I thought Kyra was going to end up being one of the main characters since it switched to her POV so often. I even stopped skimming and actually read entire chapters! But then all of a sudden it gets super rushed, entire scenes are skipped and told through memory instead of allowing the reader to witness it for themselves. But then what happened - it bloody well ended just at the good part! WTF???

Hell, the villain wasn't even in the last few chapters of the book!!! She gets whole chapters throughout the book to set up her nefarious schemes only to be completely dropped from the plot with no scheme forthcoming or resolution to her evilness. All you get are all sorts of set ups with no closure. Hell the main characters don't even consummate their marriage - oh wait...I'm sure that will finally come in book 3 or 4.

I am so tired of this. I get that people want to write series, that they have more characters in their heads than can fit in a single book, but you should write an ENTIRE BOOK, not HALF OF ONE! And what's sad is considering how much I was enjoying the last quarter of the book I probably would have kept reading the series, but now I absolutely refuse to based on principal.

Of course there is also the annoyance of the characters duality. Obviously the author was attempting to make them seem complex but instead they came off as bipolar. Patrick has a deformed hand and a stutter that supposedly makes him wary of women because why would they want him when they could have a unhurt, well speaking man. But then he also claims he doesn't waste his time on women because he can't be bothered by them because he is too enthralled with his blacksmithing work. Well which is it?? It can't be both! He is either terrified of women or considers them inferior to his own work. Again I say it can't be both!!

Then there is Darina who is supposed to be so strong, brave, stubborn, and wary of men due to past experiences yet she meets Patrick and within 24 hours is making out with him on a balcony and totally cool with this whole arranged marriage.

Finally there is the "paranormal" aspect to this book that totally came out of left field with no build up or foreshadowing at all. But suddenly Patrick and Darina can read each others minds, and are totally not even shocked by this but accept it as meant to be. WHAT?!?!

All I can say is save your time and read a book with an ending instead.

Ronda Tutt says

Addictive Beginning!

Oh my, what an addictive story to start with. This is one Highland adventure that not only has some fierce and sexy highlanders in it but a world full of mysteries, magic, Celtic paganism, mixture of christian beliefs, and bitter sweet revenge. The writing is beautiful and the beginning romance is a sweet tease (Heat Level 2).

This first book is just the beginning of the whole story as we are introduced to the Irish countryside and their countrymen. The readers get to meet the MacCahan Clan: Laird ,Patrick (oldest son - patient and laid back), Parkin (ladies man), Payton (youngest brother), Braeden (heir to the O'Malley Clan who is being fostered), the their blacksmith and Druid Airard and the O'Malley Clan that consist of Ruarac O'Connel (brother in law to Laird O'Malley), Deasum MacNaultey, Carbry O'Quinn, Aengus O'Connell, Laird Dallin O'Malley's daughters Darina, Dervila, Darina, Daenal, Darcy, and Dareca.

The beginning of a plot takes form as an arranged marriage is formed by Laird O'Malley and Laird MacCahan in order to protect the O'Malley's Clan and their secret from reaching the evil priestess Odetta Burke knowledge. This marriage was to take place in the event that Laird O'Malley died. The plot has an interesting twist to it as the evil priestess Odetta puts a curse on the O'Malley Clan where no male's would be born in the O'Malley Clan and for 22 years there was no known male born or recorded. But secrets to protect the O'Malley Clan eventually come forward and the plots action unfolds in order to keep the unknown male child Braeden safe until he is old enough to take his place as Laird of the O'Malley's.

The drama is totally awesome and the ending leaves the reader hanging. The marriage takes place between Patrick and Darina however their wedding nite ends unexpected as Patrick is called away before he can comsamate the marriage. Now the whole clan is in uproar because their new Laird Patrick is off on a quest to rescue Braeden who was kidnapped. With this Darina learns the long kept secret and she along with Patrick's brother Parkin they start a quest to find Patrick.

I love these clans especially the O'Malley clan because they were one of the first clans who allowed women to wear truis (pants) and train women to be soldiers.

I really liked this and I will be jumping right into the next book to finish this story.

Excellent Read!

Sha Mslvov says

Author give-away when I emailed her. I'm so excited, I jumped and my husband thought I won lottery LOL

This book was good from beginning to end. I fall in love with Patrick, although he stammered a bit.

The dialogue was cute and I laughed all the time. I really want more. I can't get enough of it. I only wished that it was a little bit longer. I'm curious and wanting to find out more about Patrick, Darina and her little brother Braeden.

Meagan says

Celtic Storms by Delaney Rhodes is the first book in the series and it does what any good start to a series does...it leaves you wanting more. It is the story of Darina and Patrick, who are being forced to marry each other to bring two clans together. I loved the characters and how easy the book was to follow despite the time period it is set in. I normally have great difficulty getting into books that are set any farther back in time than

the past 10 years or so but Delaney caught and kept my attention from start to finish. I really found myself getting lost in the story because of how descriptive everything was but not in an “over-the-top” sort of way. The details were vivid and I could picture everything as it was occurring which I love in a book. I think the only thing I didn’t like about the story is that I have to wait to find out what happens next!!!

Tammy says

I got to read this last week before official publication and I was very impressed. It was believable and exciting all at the same time and I found myself laughing many times in the book. The author put great detail and work into developing a gripping story line that held my attention, combined with quality writing. She built the story from the very beginning and I loved the people in the book, especially Patrick. Delaney is a great writer and I look forward to reading more books from her in the future. Thank you Delaney for such a great read, now I just have to wait for the next book.

Wei Cho says

There is a reason why I read within the confines of my reading comfort zone. And this book just assured me of the reasons why I only stick to reading what I like to read. I don't intend offense to the author, who clearly dedicated time and effort to research Celtic mythology and Irish customs, language, and idioms in order to write this book. And I appreciate that. I think the major problem was that I was expecting too much from this book. I read the synopsis and it sounded mysterious and interesting. However, I was disappointed in more ways that I would like to admit.

To salvage some credit to the author, I shall start with some positive features. The research was meticulous. I can see the author spent a lot of time investigating and learning Celtic mythology and terminology, and applying it with true Irish-like idioms. Some dialogues were funny and entertaining and the pace of the story was good.

Also the fact that the O'Malley's clan are women who can fight, hunt, and wield swords is pretty awesome!

There were several things that I thought could have been better. For example:

Character development. I did not feel that the characters grew by the end of the book, nor did I feel that Patrick and Darina showed exponentially increasing signs of affection. Their romance and relationship did not build as I was expecting it would. They simply consummated in their love since their first meeting. Which was really awkward because the author spent 3/4 of the book explaining their backgrounds and personality separately and only till the last quarter of the book did Rhodes bring them together. Their relationship was choppy and not alluring at all, as the front cover of the book suggests.

The other characters felt like expendable accessories that didn't really contribute much to the book. Their names were hard to remember and I could not see the importance of those characters. Darina was a perfect woman, almost too perfect, she had everything: skills and beauty. The only fault the book described about her was that she was stubborn. Not much of a fault because you might as well call it determination for the sake of positiveness! Oh, and also, I thought Kyra was a much more important character than Darina. 3/4 into the book and I discovered I was wrong. Darina is a main character!

Patrick was another problem for me. He was portrayed as such a weakling. He had the body of a model, but the attitude of a mouse. His stammering was eye-rolling, to say the least. One moment he is oh-so scared and

insecure, and the next he is a seductive monster. Can Rhodes please make up her mind?

Enough of character development. All I can say is that the characters were not interesting and did not call my attention.

Half of the time I wasn't aware there was a plot to the story! All I read was descriptions of the clans, of the land, of the confrontations, how this came to be like this and that and such and blah. I could not decipher a strong plot and I got a bit frustrated because the characters weren't doing a great job at being likable.

The ending was fatal. It only augmented my suspicions that this book does not have a plot at all but was merely an introduction to the series to come. I can tell right away that this book cannot stand on its own.

The writing style was choppy and was begging to be re-edited (if it was edited at all in the first place!). For starters, the book was overridden with "Said Bookism" which are words like interjected, interrupted, roared, retorted, etc. which are inserted instead of the word said, asked, etc. For example, can you really retort a sentence? Why say retort when "said" can do and stage the sentence hinting at some sort of retort from the character? Can you roar a sentence? The use of them in some places are okay, but not okay when all you see is that.

Don't use adverbs after said bookism unless it is absolutely necessary. Honestly, we don't need to know someone shouted something angrily. The readers should be able to tell from context if the character is shouting because s/he is angry or excited. Give the reader some credit.

The Irish language/idiom/way of expressing themselves is not my cup of tea. Reading "ya" instead of you and other tidbits was not very enjoyable. And I know the author wanted to stay as true to the original idioms and whatnot, but could have toned it down. It made reading a bit choppier.

In conclusion, this book could have been better. It needs either some major subtractions to the current "plot" or a newly designed and kinda less vague one. I think it is also partly my fault because I expected too much.

Carolyn says

I could not understand why so much of the book was spent setting everything up. As a matter of fact, Darina (our heroine) and Patrick (I LOVED our hero) were only together in the book a short time. But, then I came to the end of the book. DAMN! This is a cliffhanger book! There is no ending. You have to get the next book to learn what happens in the story next.

After I got over that shock and my unhappiness about it, I decided that I will, indeed, be getting the next book in the series. And, that is because I really liked Patrick and there are just so many mysteries that intrigued me and I want to see resolved.

I sincerely hope Ms. Rhodes doesn't wait too long to publish the next book. Time is of the essence here, Mr. Rhodes. I need to know what is going to happen next before the details slip into the mist. :)

However, I hope other authors don't intend to use this format in the future. I'm still not happy about it and almost feel duped. This is the one time I will purchase the next books to continue with this series. I won't be doing this again if I find another author using this "cliffhanger," "have to buy the next book to see what happens" format.

Romina says

What do you get when you have highlanders, lairds, clans, plaids, and shamans IN IRELAND? Well, you get Celtic Storms, of course!

I've never read this author, and never will again, but it is obvious that she mixed up Scotland with Ireland, BIG TIME. Advice to the writer: whenever you write a story about some point in history, make sure the historical aspects pertain to a particular culture/country. You wouldn't for example, write about how the Nazis during WWII were based in China right? Come to think of it, perhaps you would! Hmmm... hope I haven't given the author any new book ideas! (shudder)

Anyway, besides the fact that she made the Irish act Scottish, the story itself is a total mess. Dozens and dozens of characters that constantly walk in and out of 'stage'; chapter after chapter of dull description of the 'duties' of those characters and where they perform those duties; absolutely no character development of, well, anyone; I have read 52% of the book and the main characters haven't met yet. I'll repeat that: The main characters, that is THE PURPORTED HERO AND HEROINE HAVEN'T MET YET AND I'M HALFWAY THROUGH THE BOOK.

Will I finish the book? Probably since I'm actually curious as to how the heck the author's gonna make the characters 'fall in love' instantly (take into consideration she only has about a quarter of the book left for falling in love, then another quarter for beating the bad guy) when the heroine - an immature teenager (she's 17) who supposedly acts and has the maturity of a 40 year old, even though she keeps demanding answers a la valley girl from all her relatives the minute they arrive - with a man in his late twenties who has insecurity issues, not to mention nightmares every night... but of course, a total hunk!

Did I mention the 'bad guy' is a self professed witch who sacrifices children and uses sex in order to gain world power? Yup. And nope, I'm not making this up, REALLY.

Oh goodreads, why can't we rate a book with '0' or negatives? Why? WHY?!

Hanife says

Bu yorum ayn? zamanda Romancekolikte yay?nlanm??t?r.

Kitab? netgalleyden yorumlamak niyetiyle alm??t?m. Asl?nda kitaptan haber olmam çok daha ötesine gidiyor. San?r?m yazar twitterdan beni takip etmi?ti. Neyse efenim benim o zamandan gözüm tak?lm??t?. Hem konuya, hem kapa?a.Görüncede hemen talep edip okudum.

Ama bu kadar m? yan?l?r bir insan? Saç?m? ba??m? yolacakt?m herhalde. Öncelikle benim beklentim bir Tarihi A?k Roman?yd?. Kitapta a?k görebilsem di?i mi k?raca??m yahu. Tamam arzu var ama nerde a?k? Hani? Onu geçelim özette belirtilen zoraki evlilik kitab?n %75'inde gerçekle?iyor mu? Bana afakanlar bast? tabii. Gerçekle?iyorda n'oluyor sanki. Evlilikleri olaca?? ak?am o sahneyi anlatmadan pat diye 8 gün sonras?na atl?yor hikaye. Tabii bu aralar ben ya sab?r çekmekteyim. Neyse okudukta ne

ç?kt? kar??m?za!

Adam dü?ün gecesi önemli bir ?ey için çekmi? gitmi? sekiz gündür gelmez olmu? mu? K?zda ben evlilik iptali istiyorum diyor. Tabii ben o aralarda tansiyon aleti nerede diye s?zlanmaktay?m. Velhas?l efendim kitap k?z?m?z?n kocas?n?n pe?inden gitmesiyle öylece dank diye bitti mi? Kendimi daha önce bu kadar afallam?? hissetti?imi hat?rlam?yorum. Birde kitab?n yar?s? kötü karakterin gözünden anlat?lm??.

Yazar acaba hiç okudu?u Tarihi A?k Romanlar?ndan nasibini alamam?? m? dedirtti bana. Ayr?ca malesef ki ikinci kitap bu çift gözünden de?il. Nas?l devam edece?ini bilmiyorum aç?kças? umurumda da de?il.

Konumuza gelirsek o?lumuz Patrick bir kabile reisinin o?ludur ama küçükken geçirdi?i bir kaza sonucu sa? elinin kemikleri un ufak oldu?undan pekte bir k?l?ç tutamaz. Bunun d???nda o kaza yüzünden korkudan da kekeme kalm??t?r. Babas? bir gün bunu ça??r?r ve O'Malley klan?n?n varisiyle evlenece?ini bildirir ve macera ba?lar. K?z?m?zda bu evlili?i istememektedir. O?lan yola ç?ka dursun kötü karakterimizde O' Malley klan?na büyüler yapı dursun hikaye böylece geli?mektedir.

Celtic Storms was provided by netgalley.com in behalf of DR Publishing.

Book Babe says

Source: Provided by NetGalley for an honest review.

Reviewed by: Book Babe at www.RomancingTheTomeReviews.com

Quickie Review:

This novel is riddled with grammatical errors, contained copious pages of narrative and description most of it unrelated to the immediate story, and only a hinted at a plot through chapter five; which is point where I deleted the story from my Kindle.

First Line:

“Patrick! Patrick!” repeated the annoying sound from the castle grounds.

Summary:

Darina O'Malley watched the sun set in the bay from the great tower in O'Malley castle. She said a silent prayer for her cousin, Kyra, hoping the message that was delivered to the MacCahan's did not spell sudden doom for her and her people. If what her Uncle Ruarc had told her was true, she was to be married to a stranger in nearly a fortnight, and her world would turn upside down.

The realization that her clan held secrets which could destroy them forever - chilled her blood. Who was this son of a Laird that she was betrothed to and how would he react when he learned the truth?

What worked for me:

- I found the cover enticing enough to request the novel from NetGalley to review.

What didn't work for me:

The following are true for the first five chapters of the novel. I did not, could not, read beyond that point and cannot speak to the remainder of the book.

- The first two chapters introduce no less than TWENTY FIVE characters, most of which were in no way central to the story.

- Copious backstory. I define backstory as the narrative retelling of events that take place prior to the start of the story.
- The first five chapters, sans the backstory, narrative, and description could have been condensed into two scenes.
- There is no hint of a plot line.
- Poorly edited.

Other thoughts:

- The premise of the story could have worked in the hands of a writer skilled in the craft of writing.
- This novel was not ready for publication.
- Take advantage of the preview feature offered by Amazon prior to purchase.

Rating:

DNF (Did not finish)

Ains says

Horribly written. I can't believe this book was published with spelling errors, weird syntax, bizarre use of language and oh so many other annoying things. I felt like I could have written this five years ago but maybe slightly better. At least I would check my spellings! Waist not waste! The conversations are mostly weird. They all sound modern and out of place. It doesn't matter how many times they say "Nay" and "Aye". It's not going to make it believable. 1/4 through I was already pitying myself reading this book.

An excerpt so you can decide if it's hilarious or just plain ludicrous:

"Good - all clear. Not even a sentry at my door? I see how much value they place on my chamber. She chuckled at the thought. O'Malley castle was near impenetrable. There hadn't been soldiers placed at chamber doors in decades. It was nigh impossible to gain entry through the castle doors without being seen, so there was seldom any need for extra security."

Why on earth this idiotic woman chuckled when she should have known that fact? Why would she even think of it in the first place?? It's like having a pet dog and when you come home from work one day, you're surprised and perhaps amused that there's a dog in the house! This is just one of the many facepalm moments in the book. The story line is full of potential but argh I cannot stand so many errors and stupidity in a published book!

Please avoid this and do yourself a huge favour and pick up the Hidden Grotto series by Louisa Burton.

Ruth says

I, sadly, had a lot of problems with this one, provided by netgalley, which completely outweighed its redeeming features. I really didn't enjoy reading it at all (which always pains me, because I appreciate the work that goes into a book, even if it's not a genre I'm particularly into, and especially if it's by a relatively new author), and honestly couldn't wait to finish it so I could move on to something better.

So, what did I like?

- I liked the Irish setting. You did get something of a feeling of the isolation of Ireland and it's place as a unique culture. It felt undeniably Irish.

- I quite liked the hero. He was the most rounded, interesting character, but none of his issues were dealt with at all, and, as a result, he felt disappointingly one-dimensional.

So, what didn't I like so much?

- Too. Much. Detail. Way, way too much pointless detail. It starts off with an extensive data dump of daily life in a small Irish town/village, which bored me stiff. Now, don't get me wrong, I absolutely LOVE history, really love it, and, particularly, those intriguing snapshots of the daily routines of life, which make the past so different from the present, but this wasn't even a data dump of accurate historic details. It was a data dump of the lay out of the castle, the life story of every minor character, no matter how irrelevant their existence to the core of the story, and it ended up making the entire book feel completely transactional. Just a long list of what they wore, what their bath smelt like, and what jobs everyone did. Detail and description is required for a good historical, but it has to be woven into the fabric of the story, not offloaded into long paragraphs.

- I had the most bizarre feeling I was lost in an episode of The Prisoner. You know, that bizarre late 1960s spy/science fiction series in which Patrick McGoochan gets to run around Portmeirion, the incredibly picturesque and rather creepily perfect life-size model village in Wales, and get his life threatened by large white balloons (I dormed at college with a posse who used to watch it under the influence, which I assume is the only way to appreciate it). Everything in this book was so absolutely perfect, from the ideal feminist society (in late medieval Ireland, are you kidding me?), to how the stablewoman is a dab hand at designing carriages, to how the setting is representative of a highly successful, advanced trading society. Even the heroine is supposed to be absolutely frikkin' perfect, and her sisters include one, who at the age of 15 seems to be a famous dressmaker, and another who is a medieval version of a celebrity chef. It was so perfect I disliked it.

- There were some highly visible errors and spelling and grammatical mistakes. Not all over the place, but just enough to irritate me. I do give ARCs the benefit of the doubt, since, well, they're not the final version, and mistakes are hopefully corrected prior to publication, but some of the errors didn't seem like the usual little mistakes. Two examples which really stuck with me were the use of the phrase "stay out of my head", which not only didn't sound anything like an Irishman or woman would say in the 15th century, but was so jarring that I still remember it, and the existence of fuschias (when I know after a 5 second search of wikipedia were only discovered after 1700). It left me with the unnerving feeling that this book hasn't been edited either for the story nor for basic spelling and grammar. I do hope this gets fixed.

- The most heinous issues I had with this book was the lack of flow, the uneven use of genres and the way it ended. There was a lot of jumping around (each chapter laid out where it was set, which was incredibly useful), but scenes almost drifted in and out, ending rather abruptly. The sexy bits came out of nowhere, and the heroine got pissed at the hero for absolutely no reason I could find, for example, and it made the whole story rather difficult to follow. Likewise, there was a lot of genre-jumping. It starts out as a historical set in Ireland (yeah!), but then switches to a paranormal with (I kid you not) telepathy, but the telepathy is not examined or explained, so we are left to deal with it. But, most seriously of all, this story, just, well, ends in the middle of nowhere, and without even the climax. We never get to hear if the hero and heroine will get it on, or anything else either. One minute we're with the heroine, and the next the story is finished. I do appreciate that for a series to work there has to be something left for the sequel to "chew on", but a romance does need to be a self-contained work also, or readers just feel let down.

So, very disappointing, even though it has some features which could be interesting. 1 star. I didn't like it.

