



The Irish Princess

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Born into a first family of Ireland, with royal ties on both sides, Elizabeth Fitzgerald-known as Gera-finds her world overturned when Henry VIII imprisons her father, the Earl of Kildare, and brutally destroys her family. Torn from the home she loves, her remaining family scattered, Gera dares not deny the refuge offered her in England's glittering royal court. There she must navigate ever-shifting alliances even as she nurtures her secret desire for revenge. From County Kildare's lush green fields to London's rough-and-tumble streets and the royal court's luxurious pageantry, *The Irish Princess* follows the journey of a daring woman whose will cannot be tamed, and who won't be satisfied until she restores her family to its rightful place in Ireland.

The Irish Princess Details

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Rio (Lynne) says

I thought I was Tudored out, but this book tells the story of people that I was not familiar with. Elizabeth Fitzgerald's family was beheaded for treason because of an uprising in Ireland and we all know Henry 8th didn't allow anyone the opportunity to overthrow him. Elizabeth came to England after her family was overthrown and was forced to live among those that killed her family all the while hoping for revenge one day and to hopefully see her family brought back to power in Ireland. Karen Harper brings us a story where we not only learn about the Fitzgeralds, but also Elizabeth's husbands...Sir Anthony Browne and Edward Clinton who served under John Dudley and all the Tudors (Henry, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth.) This story covers Elizabeth's life. She was a Lady in Waiting for two of Henry's wives, then Mary and Elizabeth 1. This book started out a little fluffy for me (reminding me of a Kate Emerson book) but knowing I was reading about real characters kept me interested. There were some really great and interesting parts and some real fluffy and over of the top parts. All in all I enjoyed this story.

Jackie says

We meet Gera, our heroine, first as she is sneaking into King Henry VIII's bedchamber. With murder in her eyes and a dagger in her hand she is intent on revenge for the damage the king has caused to her family. Just as she is about to plunge the dagger into the King he turns and whispers to her. We are then spirited back to Ireland where Gera grew up. She is part of what would have been royalty if Ireland had royalty. At this time in history, Ireland was not an independent nation, but a part of the English crown. Ireland was not considered part of the empire yet, but was still overseen by English governors. Gera was part of one of the remaining Irish families that were still allowed to rule with the approval of the King. This peaceful coexistence was short-lived for Gera. When Gera was only 11 her father is imprisoned in the Tower of London with claims that he was trying to start a rebellion in Ireland. Not long after being imprisoned her father dies. This spurs her half-brother, now the Earl of Kildare, into declaring rebellion against King Henry VIII. When this happens Gera and her brother, the heir, are the only Fitzgeralds left at their home in Mayhoon. When the rebellion begins Gera stays and Gerald is sent away to the continent so that he will be safe.

The rebellion is shortly quelled and Gera's uncles and half-brother go into hiding. After a few months of hiding the five uncles are tricked into a meeting to discuss terms of peace. They are shackled and taken to the Tower of London. This trap was planned by Gera's English uncle, now the governor of Ireland. Gera is now sent to England to live with her mother and her siblings. On her trip over she meets Edward Clinton. This clandestine first meeting will continue to appear throughout the book. Her random encounters spur on the love story between them. All the while, the court politics of King Henry VIII play a central role to both the story and Gera's plans for revenge. Though Gera has a lot of tragedy in her life primarily caused by the Tudor family she also has some unexpected happiness while in England. This is one story that you just want to learn more about.

Karen Harper does a phenomenal job on this book. Her detailed illustration of the court intrigues and the political gauntlets that are thrown down during this time is extraordinary. Taking a fairly well-known subject of Tudor London and highlighting a little known character with an incredible backstory that is heartbreaking.

Gera's life leads her from her beloved Ireland to Whitehall Palace where the English court is held. I personally wish I had met the real Gera. I think she would have been a loyal and exciting friend to have. I would recommend this book for anyone interested in a good historical fiction that highlights many smaller characters in a part of history that was so large.

Caitlin Pate says

spoiler free!

First off, let me say that I loved this book! As a reader who adores history (especially Irish history) this was a home run for me. The main character Gera is extremely interesting and personable; I found myself whispering her family battle cry along with her. The story focuses on Gera whose family has been uprooted and torn at the seams. We see her transplanted from her beloved Ireland into the treacherous Tudor court. I thought the writing was artfully done. I've seen a complaint that the author sometimes "tells" us information instead of "showing;" however, this is a novel that spans more than a decade of time. It would not be useful for the author to show every little thing that happens. She shows us the important things then allows the narrator, Gera, to summarize. I think this works because the novel is supposed to be Gera looking back on her life, so she wouldn't go into detail about everything, especially with so many people in and out of Tudor court. And it would have been too long and would drag had she done that. So, I stand by Harper's narration and detail style. I think it works very well, and I never felt like anything was too rushed over.

I adored this novel and devoured it (even though I obviously had other things to do as well). It enveloped me into its world. Truth be told, I'll probably read it again someday. A Geraldine! A Geraldine! A Geraldine!

Heidi says

I really liked this book and I'm glad that I read it. It is a historical Tudor era novel, but is about more peripheral characters than you usually get. (For example Queen Elizabeth is a minor character instead of one of the main ones). Actually a lot of the things that happen in the book really did happen. I ended up really liking the main character, Gera. I thought that the book started out slowly which is why I gave it 4 stars. The rest of the book is a 5. I liked that Gera evolved and didn't let vengeance or bitterness consume her life even though she clearly went through many trying things. I also really related to her difficulties with childbirth, etc. After I finished it, I looked up some things about Gera and her family and was surprised at the fact that she really did do many of the things in the book. I think that a lot of books that are written today about women from the past impose our current ideas about women and what we would have thought, felt or done in their circumstance on these historical women. But, Gera really did many of the things in the book (like hijacking a pirate ship). I ended up respecting the amount of research that Karen Harper put into this book and I would read another book by her.

Leah says

I enjoy a good historical fiction novel. The author calls it a "historical faction" meaning most is fact while some stuff was added to keep the story running smoothly. Of course I was googling the people in this book as soon as I finished!

This story was about Elizabeth "Gera" Fitzgerald .. from a noble family in Ireland in the 1500s, and who would more than likely have been the royal family if not for the stinken English (seriously, they caused problems for everyone back in the day!) Henry VIII ultimately is responsible for the deaths of Gera's father, brother, and Uncles ... so this story is dedicated to her resolve to get revenge. I enjoyed her journey to get there. She was one awesome lady, and I wish there were more women out there like that. Someone to truly look up to. Her love story with Edward Clinton was bittersweet and left me heartbroken for her at times, and with happy butterflies in my stomach at the end.

This book, as with others I've read about this time period, makes me thankful I wasn't alive during this era. It was a "man eat man" kind of world. People did whatever they could to raise themselves in status, no matter who they trampled over to get there. No one seemed sincere or seemed to have any kind of personal integrity. That's why Gera was a refreshing heroine to me. She wasn't afraid to stand up for herself and her beliefs.

This was a good meaty, substantial read and took me a while to read. I love a book that takes a while! There was no language or "adult situations" which I really appreciated. A good book doesn't need that!

Read this! :)

Sarah Hearn says

A very enjoyable read, confirming for me once again - as if I needed the confirmation - but a total nutbar Henry VIII was. Karen Harper writes really well-researched historical "faction".

L P says

Karen Harper does an excellent job weaving a story with historical accuracy about Elizabeth Fitzgerald - known as Gera.

This is the 4th book I've read by Harper. Each one has been an adventure.

Makita says

Absolutely LOVED this book!!! What a heroine! I wish they made a really long movie about this story.

Elis Madison says

This gem by Karen Harper details the life of Elizabeth Fitzgerald (a/k/a The Fair Geraldine)

Yeah, I don't get it either.

Let's just say Gera (as she was called) had plenty of reason to despise the Tudors. In fact her story kinda

makes you want to dig the lot of them up and raise them to life just so you can kick their butts.

Maybe it's just that I have a fascination with the Fitzgeralds, going back to the early antecedents, Nest ferch Rhys and her husband Gerald of Windsor, but this gave life to one of their many fascinating descendants (in a line that includes the Kennedys here in the US). But this was a ripping good read.

Four and a half stars, and I look forward to reading more by Harper.

Sheli Ellsworth says

The Fitzgeralds were considered Irish royalty when the English Tudors deposed them in 1533. Harper follows the young Elizabeth Fitzgerald from the imprisonment of her father in the Tower of London and the siege of her family's castle to the execution of her half brother and five uncles in London.

Gera, as she was called, was determined to exact revenge on the Tudors—especially Henry VIII, and eventually positioned herself in the epicenter of English Royal court and becomes a lady-in-waiting for Catherine Howard. After Howard was charged with treason and beheaded, Gera maintained her ties with Henry VIII's two daughters Mary and Elizabeth and became a lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth. The story is a fascinating glimpse of the machinations of royal social climbing as Gera seeks to restore her family's position in Ireland.

Gera becomes acquainted with the handsome Englishman Edward Clinton, and is instantly attracted to the married captain. Gera and Edward maintain a long-standing mutual admiration that almost erupts into romance, even though at the age of 16, Gera marries the older Sir Anthony Browne. After the death of her husband, she is fortunate enough to become the Countess of Lincoln and eventually commandeers a pirate ship and claims her victory, in the name of the queen, hoping to gain Elizabeth's trust.

The author deftly works this fascinating and tragic time in history into Gera's personal memoir, accurately capturing the period's social practices.

Amanda says

I was actually disappointed in this one. After reading Karen Harper's *The Queen's Governess*, I found myself a fan of her approach to history and how she brought the past to life. Though I wouldn't say Harper is my favorite historical author out there, I enjoyed reading here and wanted to read more. So, of course, I put *The Irish Princess* on hold as soon as it popped up at the library. But when I got it, however, I soon found that it just wasn't that good. Perhaps I had over hyped it in my mind or I was expecting something different, but I could just never get fully engaged in this book.

The Irish Princess tells the story of Elizabeth Fitzgerald (aka Gera), the daughter of a high-ranking Irish Earl who is king of Ireland in all but name. Gera and her people have long been oppressed by Henry Tudor and the British. When Gera's father dies, she and her family are captured and she is sent to live with the Grey family -sort of distant cousins. Gera finds herself thrown into the political webs of the Tudor court, complete with drive to kill Henry Tudor himself.

The Irish Princess felt like a run-of-the-mill Tudor novel. Though it seemed like Harper's goal was to give a

different view of Henry VIII's reign through the eyes of an unknown historical figure and tell her story. Instead, I felt like I was reading a brief history of Henry VIII's reign from the vantage point of a very minimal side character and, even though some interesting things do happen to her, mostly in the romance department, I never felt like the story was fully about her. Perhaps I'm just Tudor-mania-ed out, but I really didn't care about re-counting all of Henry's wives, yet again, and hearing about the family Tudor drama.

Sadly, I felt like Gera's story just wasn't compelling enough to keep me going. While she had some interesting motivations and a unique past, she didn't really seem like she was moving toward much of a future. I'm not sure if it was Gera or Harper, but I felt like there was little direction for much of the novel. Plus, I feel as though Harper's writing quality had dropped here.

Not great, but not horrid. I'd give Irish Princess a pass.

Donna says

Henry VIII & all his wives and children, the political turmoil & intrigues of courtly life, England-Ireland-Scotland, never knowing who you can trust, vengeance & betrayal & loyalty, marriages of protection & convenience, marriages of love, corruption for power, corruption with power, the Tower of London ... it all describes the Tudor era of England and this book perfectly.

I am always intrigued by stories of England during the Tudor reign especially Henry VIII and his wives. This story begins in Ireland and takes you through 20+ years of Henry's England right into Mary Tudor's England and finally Elizabeth Tudor's England.

The majority of events are indeed based on facts, with, I'm sure, a few liberties thrown in, but they create a very engaging story that is not easy to put down. I thought KH did an excellent job weaving facts & fiction to give us this story of Elizabeth 'Gera' Fitzgerald and the Fitzgerald's of Ireland with Edward Clinton of Lincolnshire.

Meg Ulmes says

This book is an easy read. I love historical fiction--especially about Great Britain. This novel is written almost at a young adult level--nothing wrong with that--but it has been merchandised as an adult novel. Too much of the novel is telling instead of showing--not much depth--a lot of shallow narration. The story is an excellent one that could have and would have made a more serious adult read. The characters are appealing--but some are well drawn and others are quite flat. Some of the plot events that allow a happy ending are not only unbelievable--they are unsatisfying as well. I was very frustrated by its lack of depth, detail, and seriousness.

Chana says

Interesting and entertaining history of Elizabeth Fitzgerald of the Fitzgerald family of Ireland, most of the

story taking place in the mid 1550's. Political and Court intrigue, romance, famous historical figures; a good balance between history and romance for those of us who love history but a little romance does not go amiss.

Cornerofmadness says

While I read a lot of historical mysteries, it's rare I read plain historical fiction. I read it even less when it's about real people. However, I received this as part of a gift I won from my local library so I felt like I should read it. It was pretty entertaining and if you like fictionalized British history, you'll probably really enjoy this.

It follows (first person point of view) the life of Elizabeth "Gera" Fitzgerald (and yes she is real and at least some of this really happened) from her teen years on. Gera and her siblings should have been the rulers of Ireland but of course Henry Tudor (Henry VIII) has something to say about that. And when her father ends up in the Tower of London and her elder brother, Thomas rebels, the whole family almost ends up dead. Gera and her younger sisters survive and her young brother, Gerald escapes to the continent).

Gera ends up being bartered to the English court and is taken to London by a young naval officer who is an up and comer in Henry's court, Edward Clinton. Gera learns that the only thing worse than being a penniless peasant in this time period is to be rich and in court where the king watches your every move and one wrong word gets you beheaded.

Gera plots murdering the king even as she observes his queen and her other royal cousins. Eventually she befriends the girl who will grow up to be Lady Jane Grey along with his bastardized daughters, Elizabeth and Mary (the former more so than the latter). As she grows up during this turbulent time, she takes the only protection she can as she works to getting the attainment removed from the family name: marriage to an older man even though she is sure she loves Clinton.

There is some weird pacing in this. It could have ended with Henry's death and the resolution with Clinton but she hammered in the bloody conflict between Elizabeth/Mary/Dudleys and it felt very rushed. In the author notes Harper did say to include all the details would have made this 1000 pages long and I believe that. Gera is an interesting person, someone I haven't heard much about (this is not really my favored piece of history). If you like Tudor history, you'll probably enjoy this.
