



# Kathleen

*Candice Ransom*

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## **Kathleen** Candice Ransom

Behind her was the home she could never return to. Ahead was the shining promise of America...and love. There were times she wished she'd never come to America.

Pretty, spirited Kathleen O'Connor arrives in Boston on a "coffin" ship from Ireland. She has escaped the devastating famine, but her boyfriend died at home and her parents didn't survive the voyage to America. Still, the promise of a new life gives her hope. Patrick, a friend from the ship, finds a job for her as a maid with the wealthy Thornley family. They remind Kathleen of the landowners in Ireland who forced her from her home. She wants to despise them, but she can't hate David Thornley, who is tender and handsome, and obviously attracted to her. Her secret love for David could force Kathleen to go back to Ireland or make her dreams for a new life in America come true.

## **Kathleen Details**

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# From Reader Review Kathleen for online ebook

## Megan says

Date below: not first reading

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## Reading with Cats says

So, you're stuck in the cargo hold of a ship that may or may not fall apart in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean at the first sign of a brisk storm. Your mother just succumbed to the fever that killed your lover and your younger siblings. Your father is lying near death of this same fever. You're headed to a foreign country where you don't have a job or know a soul. Your only possession is an English grammar book. So, what do you wish for? Why, to fall in love, of course.

Things that remind Kathleen of Rory: flowers, skies, lakes, flames(!). Things that remind her of her parents: um, people throwing dirt on the pier?

"I have just seen the shoulders and the back of the head of the son of my employers. I am in love."

Curls falling like ribbons, ginger curls, burnished curls, russet curls. Kathleen doesn't have hair, she has \*curls\*. Soooo, why does the cover model have stick-straight hair?

"I have VOWED to hate all rich people forever and ever!"

Kathleen, you're the best-est ever jewelry maker!

So, I'm pretty sure maids had to wear uniforms (not wisteria-green organdy gowns) when working. And \*no\* woman would leave the house with her hair unbound in the 1840s. (Even if it was waist-length, red-gold curls.)

This book would have been much, much better if the idiotic love story was GREATLY reduced and the author focused more on Kathleen's dream to be a goldsmith.

2.5 stars

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## jen says

On page 94, he dazzles her with his eyes. On page 212, we have flouncing! As always, Ms Ransom's Sunfire fare is heads above the others. I particularly liked how she was determined to make her own way in a trade that was not very ladylike, and her capacity for telling people they couldn't tell her what to do. A real spitfire!

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## Cynthia Rivera says

My all time favorite book I read it to pieces and had to buy another one. Just a feel good easy read. So amazing. About an Irish girl who comes over wearing the great famine to America. She becomes a servant in Boston and falls in love.

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## Jessica says

I finally have completed my collection of Sunfires! Or at least the thick ones that are, in general, the best of the bunch. This one was, by far, the hardest to come by. Every search led to a price tag of upwards of \$100, and I wasn't paying that. Finally found a good copy on Amazon for 67 cents, plus tax.

With a price like \$100, I expected this to be a really fantastic book. Like a super rare book because it was so good. The plot has everything you would think you would want. The immigration of the Irish to America is a fascinating topic of discussion. It just goes to show that Americans will find something to nitpick about no matter what race comes into the country. But I digress.

So we have an interesting part of history. We have a tragic, lonely main character who has to survive a new country by herself. Everyone she has ever loved is dead and she has been starving for the past two years. The trip on the ship is horrible. The story is so engaging at this point, what could possibly go wrong?

The freaking romance.

Everything about the romance story in this plot snatched everything that was amazing and engaging about this book and made it a to a snooze fest. Instead of our heroine struggling to find herself and her place in a new land, we have her in a good job that she happens to be perfect at with two "perfect" boys to pick from. I'm terribly sorry if that is harsh. If I had read this book in high school, maybe I would have enjoyed it more. But the romance seemed forced and unrealistic. After Kathleen going through such hardships, I don't want her to have some rich, aristocratic boyfriend. I want her with someone who will understand her pain and support her in her endeavors.

With the romantic suitor plot, it brought down my opinion of Kathleen. I really wanted to like her feisty, shy, and dreamer nature, and I did. She's a likable girl. There is a chapter after she arrives in America of the harsh conditions she finds herself in. That's perfect. Despite being the "BEST MAID 'EVA," her coworkers sabotage her and the family she works for are snobs(mostly). That's fine. She has a whole subplot where she goes to be an apprentice for a jeweler, and she wants to change the negative stereotype of the Irish in the Americans' eyes. That's great! But then we have to slug through her feelings toward two boys. I don't like either one of her suitors really, don't even remember their names. Both of them seemed to want to tell her what to do and feel at every turn, and neither seemed to be a good fit for her.

In the end, I feel like this book could have been AMAZING. The romance, which is the whole point of the book, just isn't there for me. It doesn't mesh. It's definitely better than some Sunfires I've read, but I'd rank it at about 10th place out of 15 if we are just looking at the longer Sunfire novels.

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## Cindy says

I originally read this series back in the 80s, checking them out from my elementary school library. Having re-read them as an adult I think they stand the test of time and are still relevant as far as historical fiction is concerned.

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## Meghan says

Kathleen didn't even bother to establish herself as a person before she committed to romance. I didn't think her romance was very genuine at all.

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## Abby says

Waxing Nostalgic #14- This book is full of adventure, starting with Kathleen's tragic journey from Ireland, her stint as a pick pocket in Boston, and then her employment at the wealthy Thornley home. She is a strong and tender girl but the love that she finds makes me question whether it would really blossom at that time of prejudice against the Irish and the societal class differences.

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## Karla says

Kathleen O'Connor is your stereotypical Irish lass, raised on tales of fairies and little people, and clings to romantic notions about the moon and fair Irish breezes. She also is smack in the middle of the Potato Famine and it's one tragedy after another. All her siblings die, as does the love of her life, Rory. Then, to top it all off, the landlord boots them off their land and gives the O'Connor family one-way tickets to America, during which both parents die. (These aren't spoilers. It's all on the back of the book, which annoyed me because there was no suspense at all during the long voyage.) So what's an orphan to do in a strange and scary country? Well, luckily, Kathleen knows English, which puts her in reluctant good stead with those who think of the Irish as a bunch of illiterate bogtrotters. After a scrappy few weeks on the docks (a plot that is the first in the Sunfires I can recall of deliberate criminal lawbreaking), Kathleen ends up as maid in the home of a very rich Boston family - both in money and dysfunction. Kathleen harbors hatred of wealthy people, the root of her family's miseries, but the son of the family is just so gosh-darned HANDSOME! And he's a poetical loner, misunderstood by his narrow-minded family. *Quelle romantique!* She's compelled and repulsed by turns, but you just know one has to win out eventually.

I liked this one, for the most part. It was another one of those Sunfires that are welcome changes from the more formulaic ones. Kathleen, though she finds herself attracted to David Thornley and the rich objects around him, is driven to succeed on her own terms, leading her to contemplate the life of a tradesman, a craft she has a slight knack for but which isn't exactly ladylike. Phooey to that, she says, and though she allows that she might not be able to continue it, she'll work it to her advantage in the short term. It's a nice plot device, much more affective than the usual Vivien Schurfranz device of having her heroines be the ridin'-est, rootin', tootin', shootin'-est gals in Old West/Old South/Colonies from page 1. (Yes, I do like to dump on Ms.

Schurfranz. Guilty, but it is ever so much fun.)

Kathleen learns and grows over the course of the book and, since this is Candace Ransom, the "rivalry" of suitors really isn't one at all. One gets sidelined early on (even if he doesn't know it, in this case), and so more attention can be placed on one romance. Sure, it goes against the Sunfire formula, but it makes for a better read. I wanted to hit David Thornley repeatedly for being such a wuss about his writing career, but, seriously, his FAMILY. He was working against quite a bit there. If he'd taken to hobbling around on crutches in his jammies and guzzling booze by the gallon, I wouldn't have been surprised. All that was missing were Gooper and the no-neck monsters.

Ransom has a great eye for detail of the era, though the descriptions of furniture and clothes may get tedious after awhile. IMO, it fits in with the vast difference between Kathleen's old life and her new one. She's had so little, that her eyes absorb everything. However, for a promising start, this one eventually descended into typical romance territory with deliberate misunderstandings and obtuseness for the last quarter between our good hero and heroine, and the pleasure I got from reading it decreased in proportion. The finale wrapped up too nicely, with Change of Hearts And All That, but this is teen romance, not wrenching tapestries of the soul. Even so, the story could have used one less bright package with a tidy bow at the end. Still worth tracking down, as it's one of the rarer ones and the majority of the story is a cut above the norm.

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### **Raquel says**

This character is a bit depressed most of the time. She endures great hardship and that's certainly part of it. However, the book's progression is slow and sad for a long time. Also, she has about 6 conversations with her love interest before they end up engaged. It's a bit ridiculous.

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### **Rachel Berens-VanHeest says**

I have to say, this held up pretty well! The writing isn't bad at all. The heroine is a COMPLETE Mary Sue, but if you can get past that, it's a good way to get a little light romance and learn about Irish immigration in the 1800s. What more could you want?

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