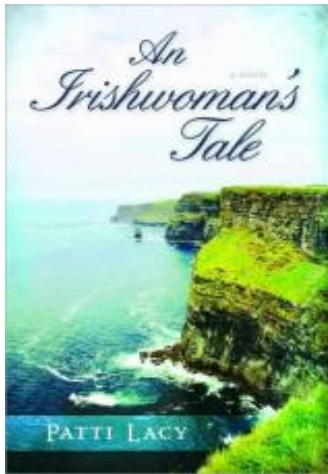


An Irishwoman's Tale

by Patti Lacy



About the Book

Mary Freeman's earliest memory has haunted her since childhood: An old oak table, bitter faces drinking bitter tea, a heated discussion of what's to be done with the "little eejit" --- her. Now she is far removed from this family that didn't want her, and separated from her native Ireland. Living in the United States heartland, Mary searches out fulfilling roles --- entrepreneur, wife, Christian, mother, community servant --- but her loneliness and torment remain as acute as ever.

A crisis in her youngest daughter's life --- and the encouragement of Sally, a plucky Southern transplant --- propels Mary back to the rocky cliffs of her home in County Clare, Ireland. Her harrowing journey unveils her tragic past, and forces her face-to-face with God.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss Mary as a caretaker. What are her motives in caring for Anne? Is she handling the inherent stress of that role in a healthy way? In serving Anne, is she serving Christ?
2. The point of view shifts in chapter 3. Is your response to Kathleen sympathetic or critical? Does she make the only choices possible considering her circumstances, or does she have other options?
3. Who is to blame for young Mary's predicament, which reaches a climax in chapter 5?
4. Anne is a complex character. What are some of her positive qualities? What are some of her negative characteristics?
5. How does the setting of the book discussion group meeting serve as a back-drop for the rest of the story?

6. What are Sally's motives for listening to Mary's entire life story? Do you have a friend who is willing to listen to your life story without passing judgment or giving you advice? With how many people could you share your entire story?
7. Michael and Paul both provide romantic interests in the novel. Cite differences and similarities between the two men.
8. At what point in the novel do you recognize signs of Mary's illness?
9. Folk, geological, biological, and geographical elements of Mary's native Ireland are interwoven in the story. In what way do these elements have an impact on Mary's life? Have you ever both loved and hated a place?
10. How does Mary's return to Ireland serve as a quest device?
11. Does the kaleidoscope metaphor fit any aspect of your life? How has God used your brokenness to create something beautiful? How can you see a pattern developing out of seemingly unrelated events? Apply the scriptural foundation of Romans 8:28 to this text and to your own story.
12. How is **An Irishwoman's Tale** different from what you might expect of Christian fiction? In what ways is it similar to what you would expect?

Author Bio

Patti Lacy graduated from Baylor University with a B.S. in education. She taught at Heartland Community College in Normal, Illinois, until 2006, when she began to pursue writing full-time. She has two grown children and lives in Illinois with her husband, Alan, and a dog named Laura. Visit Patti's website at www.pattilacy.com.

Critical Praise

"Patti Lacy's ability to span multiple generations, and link two continents, helps readers explore the external setting of a wild land while simultaneously studying the interiors of her characters' hearts and minds. Solid storytelling."

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