



• Literary Speaking •

THE GIRL WHO CAME HOME

A NOVEL OF THE TITANIC

A VOYAGE ACROSS THE OCEAN BECOMES
THE ODYSSEY OF A LIFETIME FOR A YOUNG IRISH WOMAN...

❖ By Hazel Gaynor

Ireland, 1912...Fourteen members of a small village set sail on the RMS Titanic, hoping to find a better life in America. For seventeen-year-old Maggie Murphy, the journey is bittersweet. Though her future lies in an unknown new place, her heart remains in Ireland with the sweetheart she left behind. Maggie is traveling with her aunt Kathleen who lives in America but returned to Ireland when her sister, Maggie's mother, died, leaving Maggie without parents and alone. When disaster strikes, Maggie is one of the few passengers in steerage to survive. Waking up alone in a New York hospital, she vows never to speak of the terror and panic of that fateful night again.

Chicago, 1982...Adrift after the death of her father, Grace Butler struggles to decide what comes next. When her great-grandmother Maggie shares the painful secret about the Titanic that she's harbored for almost a lifetime, the revelation gives Grace new direction and leads both her and Maggie to unexpected reunions with those they thought lost long ago.

So often when we hear of tragedies that happen to people we don't know, we feel compassion for them, but the incident soon slips from our minds. We seldom acknowledge that those affected must find a way to continue to live, perhaps without

loved ones, a home, or even a community.

This book, inspired by true events, blends fact and fiction as it explores the Titanic tragedy's impact and its lasting repercussions on survivors and their descendants.

Gaynor does a wonderful job of paralleling the story of this historic tragedy with the contemporary struggle of a young woman who is facing her own tragedy, the loss of her father. When her father dies, Grace gives up her college education to stay home with her grieving mother. She also gives up the career-building opportunity of being published in a national newspaper and the young man she loves.

If this book has flaws, it might be that it is fairly predictable and sometimes there was repetition in descriptions. However, the fact that we already know the Titanic's history does not detract from the book. For me, it kept me more engaged. This is Gaynor's first book, and I look forward to her next.

If you are looking for a comforting, historically based, easy read that will take you through a cold, snowy day, you will enjoy this book. It could easily be read in one long afternoon.

❖ Reviewed By Kathy Wibbels,
Director Yanklton Community Library



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