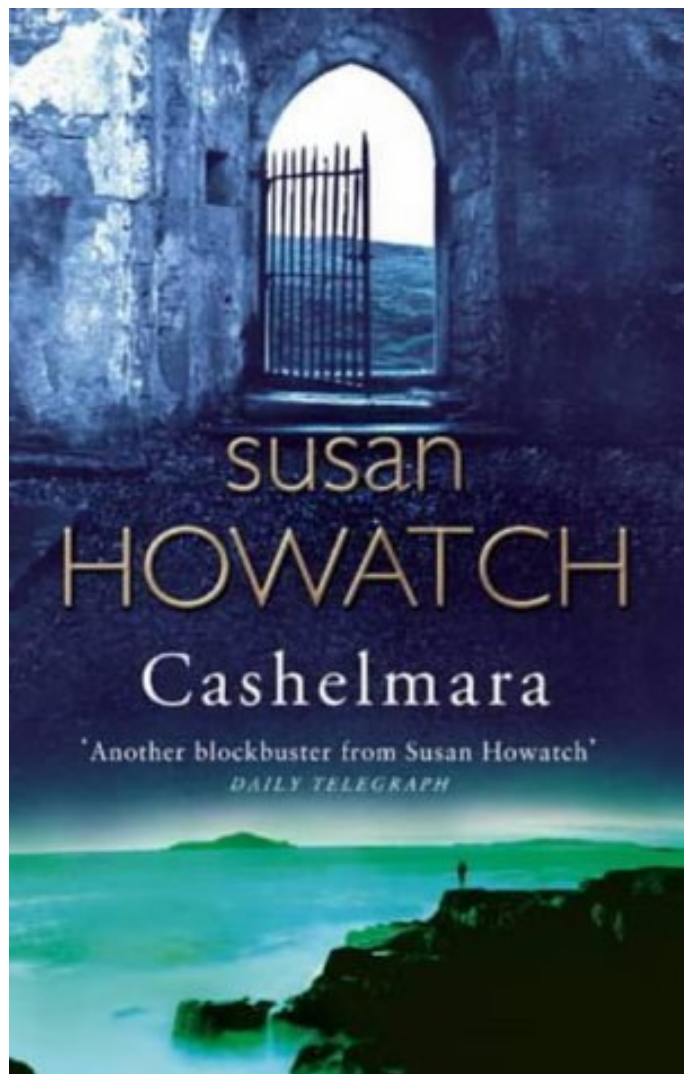

Susan Howatch

Cashelmara



Title: Cashelmara

Author: Susan Howatch

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Description

There were two subjects which lonely widower Edward de Salis never discussed: his dead wife and his family home in Ireland, 'matchless Cashelmara'. So when he meets Marguerite, a bright young American with whom he can talk freely about both, he is able to love again and takes her back to Ireland as his wife. But Marguerite soon discovers that married life is not what she expected, and that she has married into a troubled family bitterly divided by love and hatred. Cashelmara becomes the curse of three generations as they play out their fates in a spellbinding drama, which moves inexorably towards murder and retribution.

Insightful reviews

Judi/Judith Riddle: Cashelmara is a foreboding castle in Ireland owned by the English deSalis family. No one seems to like the castle and estate but there is a mysterious pull causing the family to spend an excessive amount of time there. We see the deception, romance and the self imposed spiral into doom and then the resilience of three generations of the family. Loosely based on The Three Edwards of Medieval England the novel grabs hold of you and won't let go. The story explores the heart breaking plight of the Irish during the potato famine while weaving a tale of the family's quandary. This character driven novel is a compelling, richly gothic family saga that will cause you to read into the night and never let go until the very end. I actually had to make myself stop chewing my fingernails as I read! Spanning three generations, from early to late 1800s, this gripping story is told in six parts with a viewpoint from each character, broken up like this:

Edward-Duty

Marguerite-Fidelity

Patrick-Loyalty

Sarah-Passion

Maxwell Drummond-Ambition

Ned-Revenge

Masterful in it's concept, Howatch cleverly takes you from character to character as if you are enjoying a theatre in the round play. I can't believe that I have never read Susan Howatch before but I see a few of her books in my future.

Gina: This was on a list of 100 books that one should read. So I did. It's a story told from the perspective of 7 individuals; some I like and some not so much. Characters were well developed and interesting. The saga took place just after the potato famine in Ireland and dealt with the English "landlord" aristocracy versus the Irish who farmed for them. There was also a smattering of Americans thrown in. Life, death, love, intrigue, murder, ignorance and grime...

Up to the very end, I was enjoying it, but I felt the ending was a bit too manipulated. Overall, a

fun read.

Danielle: Susan Howatch's *Cashelmara* is one rollercoaster of a ride! One of the blurbs on the book calls it "another blockbuster", and gauging the heftiness of Howatch's books (this one weighs in at just over 700 pages) I think I know what that means. It's the sort of story that you literally lose yourself in. Howatch, and other authors who write (wrote?) 'blockbusters' (most notably in the 1970s and 80s it seems) know just how much fishing line to dangle in front of the reader before reeling it all back in. You know how it goes--pages filled with family dramas, passion, hatred, and in the case of *Cashelmara*--revenge! There are loads of little cliffhangers throughout the story to keep the reader turning pages and sucking them into the story.

Not too long ago a coworker asked me what I was reading and I pulled out my copy of *Cashelmara*. A quick glance at the description and she recalled seeing the book, different edition of course, on her mother's bookshelves when she was young. I hadn't realized it had been published so long ago, 1974 to be precise, but then historical fiction doesn't really become too dated easily. It is a retelling of the life and reign of Edward II, but if you (like me) are unfamiliar with that particular era in history, you needn't worry about feeling you are missing out. It stands quite soundly on its own.

Cashelmara is the family seat of a titled English family in Ireland. The estate and surrounding lands was bequeathed by Queen Elizabeth to the de Salis family and is entailed in such a way that it cannot be sold off easily and passes from male heir to male heir along down the line. This isn't just a garden variety family drama however, it's a family saga, chronicling the dreams, aspirations, weaknesses and shortcomings of three generations of the de Salis family.

Howatch recasts the story from 14th century England and Wales to the mid-Victorian period and a family home in England known as Woodhammer Hall and *Cashelmara* in Ireland. And like Edward's reign which was marked by petty squabbling, mismanagement and political and military defeats, an all around disastrous reign, Howatch tells the story of the rise and fall of fortunes of the de Salis family. At the beginning Lord de Salis is wealthy, well regarded and an excellent land manager to the estate in Ireland. The country, the house and the people are loved by de Salis, and he is held in high esteem by his tenants.

In not too many years, however, and with neglect the once powerful de Salis family takes a tumble. It's not just calamitous events such as the Great Famine and the rise of Irish Nationalism that plague the de Salis family but general incompetence in the managing of estate affairs. Everything that the elder Lord de Salis worked for and built during his lifetime is destroyed by his son in a very few years.

The novel is broken into six sections, each with its own narrator. They are told in first person and with titles such as "Duty", "Fidelity", "Loyalty", "Passion", "Ambition" and "Revenge" it's not hard imagining the narrative arc of the story. Each successive Lord de Salis tells his story, two of the wives tell their version of events and most interesting is an outsider of sorts--one of the tenants who rises to power. This is not a fun-filled romp of a story. Quite the opposite, it is often dark in tone with its concentration on the foibles of the family members. Told in first person, Howatch gives insight into their motivations, actions and behaviors. These are flawed

characters whose actions will have consequences. It's easy to dislike many of them, and surely that is part of the attraction. There are simply some characters you love to hate, though you might question your reactions and need to reassess those reactions as the story unfolds.

Despite the sometimes heavy tone, Cashelmara is an entertaining read in its way. Having such varied narrators makes for interesting going, though it's perhaps a little uneven in the starts and stops. A small quibble however. I've already picked up a few of Howatch's other 'blockbusters' and may pull one out closer to summer when a nice idle sunny afternoon sitting on the porch reading is in the offing.

Kari Slater: My neighbor advised this to me. I felt it was once mediocre. probably simply because i have been studying such nice books lately or simply because I learn an exceptional one correct after it. yet I slogged my approach via all 700+ pages dutifully. However, i used to be extra engrossed by way of web page 2 of Time Traveller's spouse if that places it in perspective.

Willow: family members novel set within the later a part of the nineteenth century. advised from 5 assorted personality POV. a few have been larger than others. What I did like approximately this booklet used to be the atmosphere of English in eire pre-republic, put up famine. It supposedly follows a Plantagenet heritage set in a special time and location.

Mary: This used to be one heck of a kin saga...on steroids. i like mammoth relations sagas with a princely property which acts as a "character" all via itself. This e-book gains a number of mansions, so those people who are enamored of fancy genuine property will love this book.Cashelmara is the identify of an property in Ireland, and follows 3 generations of the Anglo-Irish relations who owns it. the tale starts within the mid-1800s and starts off out as an engaging yet really conventional form of ancient novel. approximately pages in, the tone switches to a type of gothic suspense.Those who're well-versed in English background will realize the tale of the King Edwards: First, moment and 3rd (I realized approximately that via Goodreads reviews). anyone as soon as acknowledged that actual lifestyles is just too unimaginable for reliable fiction. whereas elements of the Edward tale made for a good novel, different elements have been simply too bizarre and felt contrived. The finishing felt rushed, and the belief did not look complete.However, i used to be inspired with the standard of so much of Susan Howatch's writing, and may search for different books she has written. I remember the fact that the final Edward ("Ned") appears to be like within the Wheel of Fortune, and i am curious as to what occurs to him.

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