



The Magdalen Girls

V.S. Alexander

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Dublin, 1962. Within the gated grounds of the convent of The Sisters of the Holy Redemption lies one of the city's Magdalen Laundries. Once places of refuge, the laundries have evolved into grim workhouses. Some inmates are "fallen" women—unwed mothers, prostitutes, or petty criminals. Most are ordinary girls whose only sin lies in being too pretty, too independent, or tempting the wrong man. Among them is sixteen-year-old Teagan Tiernan, sent by her family when her beauty provokes a lustful revelation from a young priest.

Teagan soon befriends Nora Craven, a new arrival who thought nothing could be worse than living in a squalid tenement flat. Stripped of their freedom and dignity, the girls are given new names and denied contact with the outside world. The Mother Superior, Sister Anne, who has secrets of her own, inflicts cruel, dehumanizing punishments—but always in the name of love. Finally, Nora and Teagan find an ally in the reclusive Lea, who helps them endure—and plot an escape. But as they will discover, the outside world has dangers too, especially for young women with soiled reputations.

Told with candor, compassion, and vivid historical detail, *The Magdalen Girls* is a masterfully written novel of life within the era's notorious institutions—and an inspiring story of friendship, hope, and unyielding courage.

The Magdalen Girls Details

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From Reader Review The Magdalen Girls for online ebook

Alisha Marie says

I always hesitate when giving books one star. The truth is that it's rare for me to give a book one star. I use two and three stars all the time, but I tend to reserve one stars for books I truly hate. And I didn't hate The Magdalen Girls. But upon reflecting on it, I realize that there's nothing I remotely liked about it either. I mean, the premise was interesting, but that's about it. And seeing as how this is based on a true story, this book shouldn't get points on the premise because it's not really original. So, we go back to me not liking anything in this book.

First things first: The writing in The Magdalen Girls leaves a lot to be desired. It is extremely simplistic. Now, that's something I can overlook depending on what else the book has going for it, but it was really noticeable in this book. There's just a lot of telling and very little showing. Furthermore, the writing was clunky and awkward. For example, the reference to Sister Anne and Mother Superior was not done well at all. I didn't figure out that this was supposed to be one person until I was a ways into the book. Why refer to this character as Mother Superior AND Sister Anne? It does nothing but confuse the readers.

The character development in The Magdalen Girls wasn't any better than the writing. And by that I mean that there was very little development. You don't really get to know Teagan nor Nora nor Lea that well at all. And I saw very little growth in them. Also, my God were Teagan and Nora prone to doing stupid, stupid things all the time. Before that, I merely didn't care about them. After that, I started getting supremely annoyed by them. They kept getting caught doing this things because they were (and it really does bear repeating) really stupid. If you're going to be sneaky, again, please be smart about it.

Mother Superior/Sister Anne might be the only character that one might think had some growth, but really she's just badly developed. She comes across as one of the biggest cartoon villains known to man. She doesn't come off as a flawed character battling between good and evil, but rather comes across as someone who's an actual sociopath. It was a bit too much. I kept expecting her to start twirling a mustache. And then, after all this build up of her being the biggest villain since Dolores Umbridge, I'm supposed to believe that she's repentant? Nope. I call BS on that. It started getting a little too twee for me at that point.

In the end, I extremely disliked The Magdalen Girls. It had an interesting premise that was, unfortunately, squandered by bad writing, poorly developed characters, and just an all around bad book.

Aoife says

3.5 stars

I received a free digital copy from the author/publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Set in Dublin, Ireland in 1962, The Magdalen Girls tells the story of two different girls sent to one of the Magdalen laundries. The girls are thought of as wanton women and their lives are signed away by their families and become prisoners of the Catholic Church. Teagan and Nora are both determined to survive the back-breaking work and the emotional torment reigned down upon them, and look for a chance to escape.

This book is based around a point in Irish history that makes me burn with anger and I definitely felt a lot of emotions while reading this book from anger to despair and now and again, hope. I think the laundry depicted in this book seemed tamer than a lot of the ones that did exist and the girls living there seemed to have a slightly easier time of it than the ones that were practically tortured daily by the nuns. However, it still managed to depict the horrors of becoming a prisoner for simply being a woman (for example, Teagan is sent because a priest had sexual feelings for her, even though she did nothing wrong) and how so many women refused to let the nuns break them down.

I wasn't completely mad about the plot around the Mother Superior Sister Anne. She is given a back story, and a link to one of the girls, and at times it's used as an excuse for her bad behaviour and the reader is almost suppose to feel sorry for her. While this might work for Sister Anne, it doesn't accurately represent every other Mother Superior and priest involved in the laundries, who seemed happy to have a literal God complex and just be terrible, terrible people. I think I just hated Sister Anne's history because I feel so emotional about the story, I wasn't going to let her have any excuses for her behaviour. I also could have done without some of the 'ghost stories' that were mentioned now and again with Lea's spirit stories and the visions of the Virgin Mary.

I was more gripped into this book than I thought it would be too and it was a good, if not challenging, read. If people don't know too much about the Magdalene laundries and want to learn more, this fictionalised version of one of them would be a good place to start!

Gerard Villegas says

I was so disappointed in this especially when the concept is deeply fascinating about the corruption of the Magdalene Asylums or Laundries depending on the Catholic Church's interpretation of these facilities. For those unfamiliar of the true nature of these establishments, the Magdalene Laundries were meant to rehabilitate fallen women from a life of promiscuity, reckless behavior, prostitution, and unwed motherhood. They were pretty much prisons for family members to send their rebellious daughters to who refused to conform to their religious beliefs. Many of these settlements took place in Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States and didn't close down until the late 90's due to the investigation of the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse committed by the clergy and nuns on the inmates inside these buildings. It is an ironic twist especially after the molestations by Catholic priests came to life in the public eye in recent years, exposing the corruption and cover-up by the Vatican. The Magdalene Asylum was no exception.

In *The Magdalen Girls*, two Irish Catholic teenagers are sent inside one of these places during the 1960s. You have the naïve Teagan whose innocent crush on a young priest sends her into exile and the rebellious Nora whose parents commit her within the walls of the convent. Stripped of their dignity, their rights, and their names, the women are enslaved and abused by everyone until they wait for the day for each of them to escape.

If this plot sounds familiar, it was pretty much inspired by another film called *The Magdalene Sisters* that came out in 2002 with a very similar theme. Young rebellious girls losing their innocence and dignity in of these Magdalene facilities just like the two protagonists in V. S. Alexander's book. Now this would have been fine but my issue is the author's writing style that borders on the simplistic. It's almost a cross between a young adult novel to a Harlequin romance book. The over romanticizing of Teagan's infatuation with a young priest almost gets into a bodice ripper territory which really took any seriousness I had of the book and the subject matter into some LOL laughable moments.

Even Nora's harrowing moments are not well executed and sadly she suffers the most in the story. I really think the build-up is there but I'm still wondering why I should feel any empathy for these characters when there is not much development with these protagonists as well as the conflict.

Overall, great concept but poorly pulled together. I didn't believe any of the story even though I know real thing is true. Sadly, the book didn't do anything for me.

Erin says

2.5 stars

Ireland, 1962. Based on the true facts about the Magdalene Laundries that welcomed girls and women that must repent for their sins. Story focuses on three teenage girls- Teagan, Nora, and Lea. Harsh punishments or tough love is enacted by the Mother Superior, Sister Anne. Having viewed the film "The Magdalene Sisters" years ago, I found this book was following a similiar rabbit hole. Honestly, it was a bit formulaic.

Dash fan says

This story is based on true events.

The story is Raw, hard hitting, poient, Powerful and heartbreaking.

After watching the film and reading the story I felt that the book didn't quiet capture the horrific nature these young women faced.

Some young girls were forced into the Laundries because they was pregnant out of wedlock. They was abused, tortured and worked very hard. Once they had their babies they was taken away. Never to be seen again.

This did not mean these young girls got out. Nope they still had to endure the pain, torture, humiliation and abuse even though some families promised they would come back.

There was No escape!!

The Magdalene girls is a book set in Ireland 1962.

The story is about two very different young women who end up being sent to the Magdalene Laundries by their families. Teagan is sent there because the new young priest shows an interest in her which is deemed as her fault and a Sin!

Nora was taken there because her family caught her having an encounter with her boyfriend in their house also a Sin.

The Laundries are run by extremely strict and very cruel Nuns of the Catholic Church.

The young women are stripped of their identity, their personalities, their lives they are forced to work and then eat then sleep and pray.

The Nuns had very strange views on what the believed Love was.

They believed that by "teaching" them a lesson it was showing the girls love!

Nora and Teagan soon realise they have become prisoners of the Nuns and soon accept that the only way to survive the torture is to work. However the girls do seem to get themselves in a fair amount of trouble.

One scene in the book sticks in my mind where the 3 girls are made to lay on a cross to be punished. They must not move, eat or drink. Until they are told.

This is just a glimpse into the horrific torture these women face.

I enjoyed reading the book, however I wish we had learnt a little more about the history behind the Magdalene Laundries.

It did make me angry as the girls didn't deserve to be in there.

The way the Sisters treated them was awful it was almost like they got pleasure from it. Cruel and nasty!

But it also made me very sad and emotional to think this is based on a true story and this did really happen to many, many women.

Overall I would recommend reading this book as it was very powerful and opened my eyes to some of the horrific stories that the girls face in these Laundries.

I received this book from Publisher for a honest and fair review via NetGalley

Alyssa Maxwell says

This story gripped me from the opening page. The research about life in Ireland in the early sixties was meticulous and made me feel like I was living the story along with the characters. The injustice of the girls being unfairly judged and shamed galled me. I shared in their outrage and sense of powerlessness. And the details of their imprisonment - without benefit of any kind of trial - were chilling. What made convent life particularly oppressive was how the mother superior claimed to love the "inmates" and want only the best for them, while at the same time we learn that most of them would never leave. Their lives are portrayed as grim, relentless, and hopeless. Yet, since the main characters are teenagers, there is always that kernel of hope to move the story onward, and each girl learns something vital about herself through her experiences. A powerful story based on real life events. I'm looking forward to more historical fiction from this author!

Crumb says

An informative and enlightening novel about the existence and misuse of the Magdalene laundries. Magdalene laundries were used as a rehabilitation tactic for girls that 'have fallen' or that have been lead down the wrong path in life. The crimes that could land a woman in these laundries are numerous, including, prostitution and unwed mothers. In this book, Nora's crime, if you can even call it that, had been that she was making out with her boyfriend and that she was too forward. Teagan's offense? Leaving her jumper in the basement of her church and calling the priest to retrieve it. She was worried her mother would be angry if she misplaced it, considering the expense. When the priest confessed to his superior that he had been having unholy thoughts about Teagan, Teagan was immediately sent away to the convent, accused of seducing a holy man. Once Teagan and Nora both realized their situations were hopeless, they developed a friendship and vowed they would escape by any means possible. Day in and day out, they worked in the laundry, ate tasteless meals, and were chastised for the smallest of offenses. When they needed to seek 'penance' they were sent to the 'penitent's room' where they would sit for hours upon hours, sometimes days, in a closet,

with no light. These were the conditions at the convent.

Before I even read this book, I was aware of the existence of Magdalene Laundries. I had even seen the movie 'The Magdalene Girls'. However, this book was so rich in historic detail, that I ended up learning so much more. This was most certainly a heartbreaking and bleak story, but it also preaches the importance of friendship, hope, and resilience. I would definitely recommend this to anyone who enjoys historical fiction lush with detail and authenticity.

Martie Nees Record says

Genre: Historical Reading

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The first time I ever heard the idiom Magdalene Girls was when, in horror, I watched the 2002 film entitled "The Magdalene Sisters" based on the Magdalene Asylums also called the Magdalene Laundries. This is when I learned that teenage girls who were labeled "fallen" by their families (usually meaning they were unwed pregnant girls or girls that were discovered to have had sex before marriage) were sent to these asylums based mostly in Ireland. These asylums were run like prisons and the young girls were forced to hard labor in the laundries with Roman Catholic nuns from the order of The Sisters of the Holy Redemption as the prison guards and the Mother Superior as the warden.

I was then introduced to the song by Joni Mitchell "Magdalene Laundries" with lyrics such as: "Most girls come here pregnant, some by their own fathers', Bridget got that belly from her parish priest." So, when I was given an Advanced Review Copy of "Magdalene Girls" I knew what to expect. I would not be reading the sweet story like "The Trouble with Angels." This would be a very difficult read based on true stories.

In V. S. Alexander's historical novel the reader will find themselves in Dublin during 1962. The story centers around two 16-year old girls. One is from an upper-class family while the other is from the slums. Both girls were virgins, one (for lack of better words) could have been called a "fast girl," while the other could have been called a "good girl." The latter girl was woken up in the middle of the night to be dragged away by strangers to the asylum. Her crime was the parish priest was tempted to break his vows with her. Her sin, according to her alcoholic father, was that she went into the wine cellar with this priest which was proof of her wantonness. Throughout the beginning of her stay at the workhouse, she kept waiting for her supposedly loving parents to come get her, beyond heartbreaking. The "fast girl" was betrayed by her boyfriend. She also was taken at night, but she didn't fight for she had non-caring parents and she was glad to get away from them, not realizing that her new home would be far worse.

In the novel's plot, there were lots of visions of the Virgin Mary, usually after the girls' had begun to lose their minds in the asylum. There were also scenes about failed escape attempts. Once caught, the girls were put in isolation (which was the common means of punishment), or the sadness of reading about the unmarked graves of the girls and/or their babies who had died there. Even the visual picture of the shaving off the girls' hair upon arrival was hard to read. Personally, reminding me of the lyrics by Leonard Cohen "she tied you down in her kitchen chair...she cut your hair."

This novel does a good job of explaining the agonizing living conditions that went on in these institutions, all in the name of God. It is an excellent history of such an atrocity. In the author's endnotes we learn that the

first Magdalene asylums were opened in 1758 and they were not restricted to only Ireland. Named after Mary Magdalene the prisons were filled with prostitutes and unwed mothers with the theory that a lifetime of hard work on earth would free their souls in heaven. I guess for the 18th century that is understandable. What is impossible to understand is that the last of Ireland's Magdalene Asylums did not close until September 25, 1996 (I googled the exact date), simply shocking. Alexander wrote a good historical fiction. Yet, I was disappointed that I didn't learn more on how this corruption of faith lasted till such recent times. One cannot miss the parallel of the long hidden of abuse of children by priests that did not become public until recent years. Just as the scandals with the priests, there has been a culture of secrecy surrounding the laundries. How did the church keep such dirty secrets for so long? I guess I will need to do some of my own research in non-fiction books that have been written by Magdalene survivors. I know that there are a few out there. But first, I need to do some light reading to recover.

I received this Advance Review Copy (ARC) novel from the publisher at no cost in exchange for an honest review.

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♥ Sandi ♥ says

4 stars

Three young girls, among many others, alienated from their families and sent to the Sisters of the Holy Redemption convent, where they were indentured into the Magdalen Laundries. Lea is content to live her life out in the convent, however Teagan and Nora both believe they have been wrongly labeled as "fallen" and plan their escapes.

These asylums, labeled as Laundries, since that is the main occupation of these convents, were basically prisons to the young women who were housed there. They were beaten, not well fed, worked overtly and pressed into the Catholic religion and all its religious accoutrements. Seldom were these girls ever released from their holding. These work house convents lasted until 1996, when a large outcry was publicly heard in England and Ireland and the Magdalens were awarded compensation for their years of toil.

Research on this book was very good. It is a book of fiction, but solidly based on true fact. Alexander did a great job in retelling the lives of the girls who lived this horror.

SmartBitches says

Lightning review at Smart Bitches, Trashy Books

From the late 18th century to 1996, the Magdalen Laundries were (In theory) a place for fallen women to be

employed with godly, honest work and get off the streets and all that. The reality was that women and girls could be committed to these asylums for years with no appeal or release until such a time as the nuns running the place let them go. Records of women who disappeared into the asylums are scant and incomplete.

It's one of the black spots in the history of the Catholic Church and, while they were not exclusive to Ireland, it's a black spot in the history of Ireland and its treatment of women, as well.

It's not a particularly feel-good story. There's a happy ending for one of them, but it's at SUCH a cost. There's hope held out only to be snatched away (again and again and again) and – given the reasons most women and girls were sent to these places, this isn't a surprise – there's a child death as well, so please be aware of that.

I liked reading about this this facet of history, even as I had to struggle with the rage that this wasn't a bygone era: this was happening in my lifetime. If we can understand the things people do to each other, maybe we can keep history from repeating itself.

-Redheadedgirl

Josephine (Jo) says

This was a heart rending and poignant story about the girls sent to a Magdalen Laundry in Dublin. The first shocking thing for me was that it was set in 1962! The fact that society was so small minded even as late as that was something that I found hard to deal with. There are two main characters in the story, Teagan and Nora. They become firm friends and soon they are befriended by Lea who has been at the laundry for some time and has come to accept her situation. Both Nora and Teagan are spirited girls and do not accept the discipline in the convent without a fight. They try to escape and are regularly punished for their small acts of rebellion.

The truth is that both of the girls are entirely innocent! They have been sent to the Laundry by their own families to hide Nora's pregnancy and Teagan's alleged midemeanors and to prevent any shame being brought on the family name but they were the victims. The story relates their struggles to prove that they are not 'bad girls' and their fight for a better, free life. They encounter many dreadful situations during their time at the Laundry and there are some shocking moments in the book.

There is such sadness, cruelty and disregard for the feelings of the girls, but also a constant hope that things will work out for them.

It is so sad that this was actually a fact of life for some girls even this recently; I was about their age in the late 1960's and there but for the grace of God go any of us!

Sue says

The Magdalen Girls is a fictional account of the girls who were imprisoned in Ireland in the Magdalen laundries in the 1960s to learn the errors of their ways. The laundries were managed by Catholic nuns for girls who were deemed unacceptable - either they had a baby out of wedlock, were prostitutes or were merely too pretty and may entice men. The living conditions were extremely harsh as they girls were being rehabilitated with hard work, punishment and prayer.

The Magdalen laundries existed in Ireland (and other counties) from the late 18th until the late 20th century. This novel looks at two characters who were imprisoned in 1962, Both were still virgins but were treated like fallen women - one because a priest paid extra attention to her and one because she made her parents angry because she wanted to escape her current living conditions. The life is extremely primitive and the punishment is very cruel. I found it difficult to believe that such establishments still existed in the late 20th century.

This was a difficult book to read in parts but from other reading I have done on the subject, it is presented very realistically. It was well written and I learned more about the subject. While it's difficult to say that I 'enjoyed' reading a book about such a horrific subject, I thought it was very well done and I recommend it to people who read historical fiction.

Terri says

I had no idea this was being done. I knew the Irish church took away the babies of unwed mothers but not that they were kept prisoners. And that it was done in the UK, Scotland & USA.

Rae says

This was a very informative read for me. I must admit that I had never heard of the Magdalene Laundries until I ran across a review on Goodreads. While reading this book I found myself asking, "Can these places be for real?" The cruelty of the punishments and the living and working conditions were at times difficult for me to read. The girls and women were essentially imprisoned under the guise of needing rehabilitation for being "fallen women", many unjustly accused. To think that this form of rehab existed for many years is mind boggling.

Not an easy read, but I do recommend.

Sandra "Jeanz" says

I have read other books similar to blurb of this one. It seems totally wrong to say I enjoy reading this type of story, as what has been done to these women truly is horrific. I do however believe that these books need to be written and read so that these awful acts are addressed publicly and officially (and loudly) apologised for. I think that there should be some form of amends made for the suffering these women underwent at the hands of those running the establishments.

The cover of the book fits the book very well. It features a young woman about to become a Magdalen. We don't see the young woman's face which represents the fact when entering the convent all the young girls are stripped of their previous identity, clothes, possessions and even their hair!

My thoughts throughout reading this book were on a continual tidal wave going up and down as the young women journeyed through their lives as best they could and their experiences were revealed. I find it a crazy concept that so many were forced to give up babies they could have supported with a little help. In comparison in this day and age young women in this situation have life a lot easier. In fact nowadays it sometimes seems that young women are being rewarded for having a child out of wedlock and with a father who has no way and no intention of supporting their offspring. As I am writing this section of my review I am only a few percent into reading this book and already I firmly believe an apology is way, way overdue for

those whose lives were broken by such an horrific act of removing a woman's child so quickly after birth and for the treatment these women had to put up with in the laundries within convents and other similar establishments. Yes, its a subject I feel quite strongly about!"

I'm at around half way through the book and find myself really rooting for the three main Magdalen's this book is centred on, to escape. Then again I wonder what would they or could they do if they escape. What help is there available to them if they do manage to get out of the convent. Society looks down on these women. If an escapee Magdalen is spotted, the majority of people won't help, they'll just call the guards. (Police)

I'd say that the genre this book falls into is realistic, women fiction. In a book store this book would be placed in the "romance and saga" section of the fiction department.

I guess I should give you a bit of an overview of the book. Basically we witness two different girls that though from similar backgrounds find themselves being shipped off to the nuns. To be more specific the nuns at The Sisters of the Holy Redemption. Neither of these two girls are actually pregnant, in fact they haven't even had sex at the time they are sent away. The two girls, naturally protest their innocence to their parents, and we the reader the reader know the girls are not guilty of anything but perhaps a little naivety. With each girl it is the father that is the main instigator that ensures they are sent away for good.

Teagan Tiernan is accused of "making eyes" or "attempting to seduce" the new priest visiting the parish. Sure she finds the Father Mark attractive, he is after all the youngest Priest she has ever seen. The Priest seems pretty flattered by the attention he is receiving from the women of the parish himself. Teagan has a crush on a local boy, Cullen Kirby, only her heavy drinking father does not approve of him as Cullen is Protestant and the Tiernan family are a good Catholic family.

Nora Craven is accused of "cavorting" with her boyfriend Pearse, who is somewhat older than her. Her father loses it when he catches Nora kissing Pearse in their family home.

Both girls receive a similar welcome at The Sisters of the Holy Redemption convent from the Mother Superior, Sister Anne. Sister Anne prides herself on showing the girls the error of their ways using love. Her love and the love of God. In fact Sister Anne has individual blocks with the letters LOVE on them in a prominent place in her office. Though as you read the book you quickly realise that Sister Anne's version of love is very different to that of a "normal" person.

Both girls are given new names when they enter the institution, Teagan Tiernan is told she is now called Teresa and Nora Craven is given the new name of Monica. They are also now known as Magdalen's. The girls are taken to Sister Rose in the cuttery, as all Magdalen's are given a short hair cut, apparently to avoid accidents from long hair becoming caught in any machinery. The girls are also given a grey rough fabric shift style dress to wear. A white apron completes their uniform. The young women/girls are set to work in the laundry, which means sorting the laundry, washing it, stain removal, drying and ironing as well as any mending that needs to be done. The majority of the Magdalen's work in the laundry. Other more fortunate ones can be put to work making and repairing lace.

There is other main Magdalen's we learn more about are Betty, an older woman who has long since become resigned to her monotonous life of drudgery at the hands of the nuns. Then there's Patricia, a greedy, similar aged to Teagan and Nora, a petty Magdalen, who regularly snitches on her fellow Magdalen's to the nuns to gain favour. Patricia plans on becoming a nun as soon as she is able. From what we see of her character within this books pages, she would fit right in with the majority of the nuns featured in the book. The last Magdalen who plays a large important part within the book is Lea. Lea is a considered a "good magdalen" by the nuns and does not work in the laundry. She has her own task which is reproducing a copy of the "Book Of Kells".

In one scene in the book Teresa, Monica and Lea are being punished made to lay as if on the cross like Jesus. they are instructed they may not eat, drink nor soil themselves and will stay there until Sister Anne deems them to have learnt their lesson. The girls react different during the punishment. Teresa is silent, Lea mutters a prayer and the still confident at this stage Monica spits on Sister Anne!

Another more favoured punishment is being put in the penitent's room. Which from the description is more

like a cupboard, with a small stool in it and nothing else. Once the door is closed and locked the penitent is left in the dark to think on their sin. Whilst in the room, Sister Mary-Elizabeth sneaks the "guilty party" a drink, a slice of toast or for a visit to the jacks (toilets).

Sister Anne, the Mother Superior comes across as a very nasty piece of work who actually seems to almost enjoy the punishments she doles out! Though later in the book we learn that she has her own inner demons and her own family history to deal with. In fact that very family history that pains her literally once again lands on the doorstep of The Sisters of the Holy Redemption for her to deal with!

Though I really loved all the characters of Teagan/Teresa, Nora/Monica and Lea, I found Lea fascinating. She seems to exist in her own little world in her head. She wants everyone to be happy and be nice to each other, and that's her wish for the Magdalen's and the Nun's. So sadly it is something that is unlikely to happen within the book. I guess you could say one of the three girls is vindicated and eventually escapes The Sisters of the Holy Redemption for a new life. Though I doubt her memories of her time with the Nun's is something she will ever forget, nor be able to fully forgive. Another of the three girls escapes briefly, but seems doomed to stay at The Sisters of the Holy Redemption forever, and seems to have lost all hope of ever having any kind of "normal" existence. The last girl of the three does a selfless act, that sadly fails having a tragic end outcome for more than one of the Magdalen's.

I did enjoy reading the book, and think the circumstances covered in the book that actually really did happen to many girls, needs to be something told and retold and passed down the generations. I was both surprised and shocked to read that institutions such as the one featured in this book were still in existence and operational in 1996!

The subject of babies being taken away from their mother and put up for adoption is touched upon in this book, though is not the main theme. I think there are many people, in fact I'd probably go as far as saying, many more people than we may realise that were affected by all the different aspects that this book touches on. It is imperative that these displaced children and parents be reunited if they wish.

It is truly truly horrific when you think about the families that have been torn apart. That sure this actual book is fiction but I feel I should stress it is based on real events!

I have already recommended this book to my mum, and daughter, insisting they must read it. My heart genuinely goes out to anyone that has either been through what is depicted in the book either themselves or a family member or friend they know has suffered in this way. My mum and I have read other similar titles and watched movies on the subject. How could I describe this book in only two words? "Thought provoking" kind of horrific to learn the book is a depiction of what was really going on behind those convent walls.

A subject I feel strangely fascinated with it all. Would like to read more on the subject and totally agree with the Author and her reasoning why this has been kept quiet even in the present date. I cannot believe that these institutions were still in existence in 1996, just twenty yrs ago!!!

I could go on and on about this book and others I have read similar to it but I will force myself to limit myself to one last sentence to sum up my final thoughts on this book. I found the book a very emotional and moving read.
