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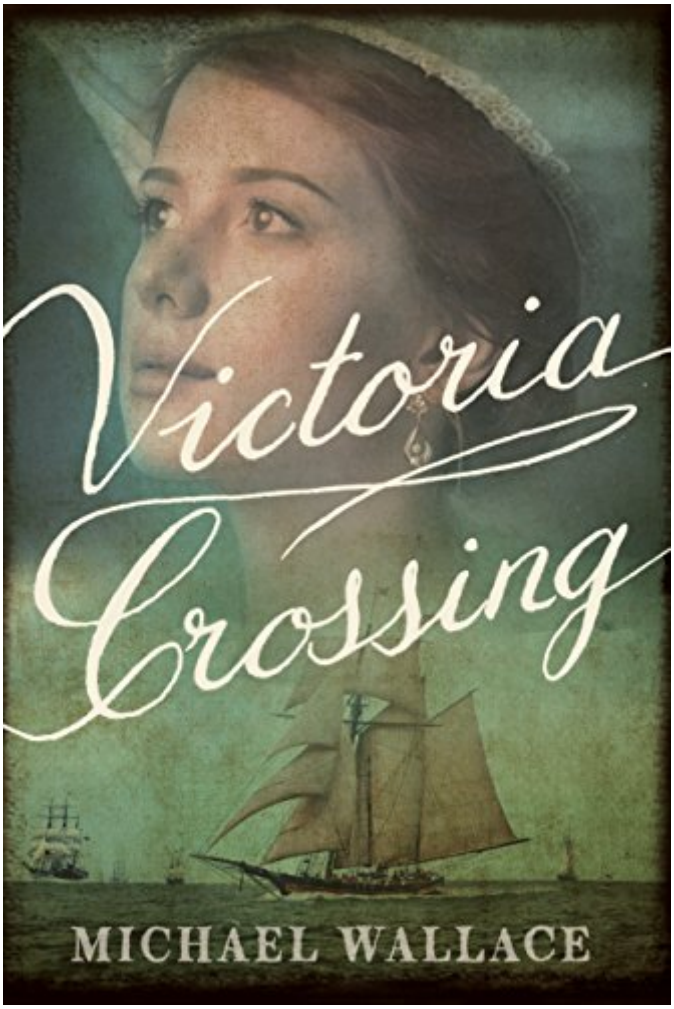
Victoria Crossing



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Synopsis

Driven from Ireland during the potato famine in 1851, Protestant Victoria MacPherson and Catholic Maeve Oâ ™Reilly find themselves thrown together aboard a Manhattan-bound ship. They arrive in New York City with only a small purse of silver and the promise that Maeveâ ™s brother will find them there. But heâ ™s nowhere to be found and a scam artist cons the girls out of their savings, leaving the two destitute in the tenements of Lower Manhattan.As the women claw their way up from seamstresses earning pennies a day to proprietresses starting their own shop, their success is endangered by the cityâ ™s corruption and a disgraceful secret that Victoria has been keeping from Maeve. Jealous rivals, religious prejudice, and the shocking revelation of Victoriaâ ™s shameful past threaten to reduce the women to rags. But will their strength, courage, and spirit be enough to help them survive and thrive once again?

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Customer Reviews

I’m a sucker for books about Irish immigrants making the long, arduous journey, virtually penniless, to America in the 1800’s. This doesn’t disappoint. Mr. Wallace’s books are always hard for me to put

down. If you haven’t read Crow Hollow or the Righteous series, I strongly recommend both. What I find so interesting is his ability to move from genre to genre seamlessly.If this book holds your interest and appeals to you, I strongly recommend reading Kate Kerrigan. Another fine author of Irish immigrants.

Mr. Wallace is a wizard of multiple genres. Don’t let the book cover fool you, this is a story of intrigue, murder, suffering, and victory. (I know the cover makes it look like a romance novel.) The main character is an intelligent, hard-working Irish woman, who comes to New York to escape the blight and famine in Ireland. The story leads you through the first several years of her life in a corrupt city, that eats the weak. I couldn’t put it down, I literally stayed up all night reading.

I originally picked up this book because I love reading historical novels, especially those set in New York City. Itâ ™s fascinating to hear about this city as the waves of immigrants arrived to help make what it is today.While this book does ultimately deliver on that premise, it takes a bit of work to get there. I was very close to putting this book down and not finishing it when I pushed myself to read just one more chapter. Iâ ™m glad I did because I eventually enjoyed the story, though it was very sad at times. I donâ ™t know that the average reader would push through the somewhat slow beginning.As for those sad parts, I commend Wallace on his work in this area. I really felt how hopeless and desperate Victoria and Maeve must have felt when they were penniless and living in a hovel, working their fingers to the bone just to barely scrape by. Their rise to self-sufficiency seems a bit of a fairy tale, because I donâ ™t feel they could have made it without the help of Joel Silver. Even if this part of the story is a bit far-fetched, I did enjoy reading about their business.I felt the ending was a bit of a cop-out. After all of the tension and fear of the previous pages, it seems like the villainâ ™s last actions are completely against his character, of which we had seen in many terrible ways before. On the other hand, I like how Wallace indirectly told us how the main characters wound up through this antagonistâ ™s eyes â “ a different way to show us the ending.Overall, Iâ ™m glad I read Victoria Crossing. It gave me a view into the immigrant experience and helped me remember that I am blessed with so much.I received a free copy of this book as part of my involvement with Netgalley. All thoughts are my own.

I would like to give this book a 2 1/2 instead of a 3 - To me it started slow and was very repetitive after they landed in New York for about the first 50% of the book - I almost gave up on it - then the story picked up; but then went into the same draggy story line. Frankly I was glad to finish the book

and go on to another one.

I liked it; but needed more depth in the main character.... I wanted to know more about her motivation and character. It was difficult to get engaged with her on a level where I could understand her and get to like her.

A good read. Slowed down a bit in some places, but kept my interest. Feel good story of hope, hard work, thinking right and not letting the bad guys do you in. If you like historical fiction (as I do) you will like this book.

Two young women from Ireland had differing tales that eventually caused them to emigrate from Ireland, but they were woven together with poverty and calamity in their native land. Victoria was one of the young women, and her story was repulsive to say the least. Her father, a poor Irish man living on a land baronâ ™s estate was conscripted during the potato famine to identify his peers, friends and neighbors to the persons who eventually evicted them due to non-payment of rent. This was horrifying; nobody could afford to pay, yet the miserly baron had them removed as Victoriaâ ™s father watched. Nasty business. Her father was eventually murdered, and she was an outcast. Off she went to America to escape and be re-invented. This is the story of how these two women met on the Atlantic crossing, became good friends, got robbed, beaten and taken advantage of in their new environs, New York City. They became seamstresses working almost as slaves until they decided to go into business for themselves. They succeed, but not without major trials. A Jewish merchant who manufactured materials gave them encouragement, credit, and any other help he could to help them due to their industriousness and honesty. The tale winds around some scoundrels that continue to try to undermine this new business owner, and the lines are drawn between good and evil people in New York. An engaging story that has many historical truths in it; it describes what courage and integrity is all about both the positive side of the ledger as well as the negative side of the human ledger.

I think this was a fantastic story. I have read a number of books about the potato famine in Ireland and what it caused poor people to suffer - starving to death, losing their homes iin terrible ways without compassion by those who could have helped, but didn’t. The fact that England refused to be of aid to the Irish during those years of famine sickens me. Families were broken apart as their men tried to find work in England and other areas, including leaving Ireland to go to America in hopes of

making enough money to help their loved ones left in Ireland. Of course, there were wonderful stories of life in the United States, but when Victoria lands in the US, she finds that there is prejudice against the Irish as well as toward other emigrants. Hatred abounds toward many who are just trying to make new lives for themselves. Not wanting to give away what happens in the very beginning and thereafter, I want to say this is a book I would recommend to anyone. It is fast-moving and of great interest.

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