



The Butterfly Legacy

Dr. Kathleen Marie Rice

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July 1952 is teenaged Raleigh Buchanan's last vacation on Country Pond, New Hampshire, where for the previous two summers he and an Irish boy had traded notes. Feeling the familiar rush of intrigue, Raleigh removes the kid's latest note from behind the ceramic half-moon tacked above the cottage door. The note contains a riddle half-written in Gaelic. Mystified and irritated, he puts the note away with other childish things – soon to be forgotten. Twenty-six years will pass before Raleigh, now a Boston police detective, realizes that the note holds clues he needs to solve a murder; and that it contains the key to his true heritage, which began with star-crossed lovers a century before he was born. Against the backdrop of Ireland's "Great Hunger," the violent struggle of the 1860s to free Ireland, and "The Troubles" of the 1970s, *The Butterfly Legacy*, a 95,000-word historical novel, is a richly rendered story of Nelly, a young Irish girl and her descendants that began when she and an English captain fall in love. Resulting in twins who are separated at birth, their affair ends with the captain's presumed abandonment of Nelly and her subsequent exile to Prince Edward Island, Canada where she enters into an arranged marriage to a man she does not know. From Nelly's near fatal voyage with the healthier twin across the Atlantic in a "coffin ship" to the 1978 murder of an Englishman whose brutalized body is found on the grounds of Winnekenni Castle located in Haverhill, Massachusetts (the city featured in Andre Dubus's acclaimed memoir, *Townie*), the novel traces the adventures of six generations of characters as they encounter adversity and twists of fate, suicide and other family secrets, misguided patriotism and murder. These themes – tempered with healthy doses of Irish wit – will resonate with readers from most any ethnic group as they are drawn into the pain and joy of difficult lives fully lived.

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