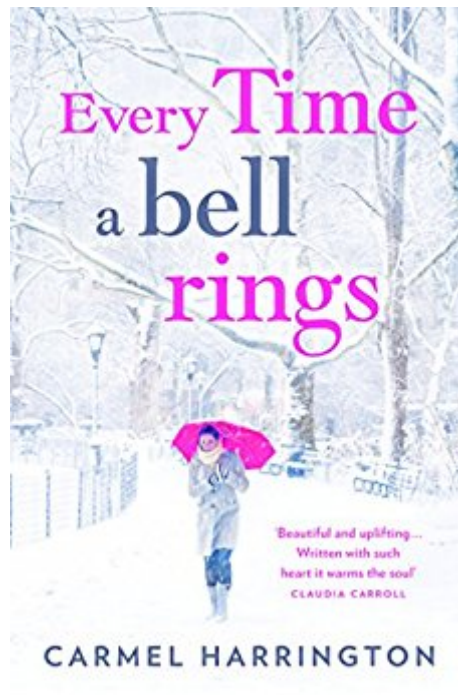




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Every Time A Bell Rings



Synopsis

'Embraces the spirit and the message of the movie...A must read' - Karolyn Grimes, actress, 'Zuzu' in 'It's a Wonderful Life'; 'Beautiful and uplifting...Written with such heart it warms the soul' - Claudia Carroll, bestselling author of 'Meet Me in Manhattan'; 'A compelling, magical, festive cracker of a book' - Alexandra Brown, bestselling author of 'The Great Village Show'; 'An angel gets its wings...Belle has taken all the Christmas decorations down. This year they won't be celebrating. As foster parents, Belle and Jim have given many children the chance of a happier start in life. They've loved them as if they were their own. They shouldn't have favourites but little Lauren has touched their hearts. And now her mother is well enough to take her back and Belle can't bear the loss. Hence, Christmas is cancelled. So when Jim crashes his car one icy December night, after an argument about Lauren, Belle can only blame herself. Everything she loves is lost. And Belle finds herself standing on The Ha'penny Bridge wishing she had never been born. But what happens to a Christmas wish when an angel is listening...Will Belle realise, before it's too late, that her life is the most wonderful life of all? Inspired by the timeless tale of beloved Christmas movie, 'It's a Wonderful Life', Carmel Harrington's next book tells the story of Belle, a young woman and foster carer from Dublin who faces the hardest decision of her life this Christmas on The Ha'penny Bridge. Full of Irish charm, magic, and the warmth of the festive season this is an emotional, heartwarming story that will stay with you long after you've reached 'The End'. Perfect for fans of Cecelia Ahern & Jojo Moyes. Carmel is the bestselling author of 'The Life You Left & Beyond Grace's Rainbow', voted Romantic eBook of the Year 2013.

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Customer Reviews

My first Christmas read of 2015 is Carmel Harrington's EVERY TIME A BELL RINGS. I was eager to read this book after having loved BEYOND GRACE'S RAINBOW and THIS LIFE YOU LEFT. On top of that, this novel is an homage to the film "It's a Wonderful Life," and I, like so many people, found the questions raised by that classic to be life-changers. Harrington skillfully borrows the envelope from the movie, while adding both a modern-day perspective and a woman's point of view. I will admit that I had a bit of trepidation regarding the sometimes dark threads of the story. Since I've had kids, and experienced the loss of my mother, I'm not as tough as I used to be. I no longer read "children in peril" novels such as the ones I read when I was an English major. I assumed based on the film, that the end would be happy, and that ultimately the story would be uplifting. I don't think it's a spoiler to say that I was correct. The story centers on Belle, a tossed-around, often-forgotten, bi-racial child of the foster care system whose longest-term relationships include a mother who never wanted to see her born, and a cold, clinical social worker named Mrs. O'Reilly. She trusts no one but the one constant in her life, her beloved doll Dee Dee. When we meet the young Belle, she has stopped speaking altogether. This is understandable as she is not used to "having a voice." She has never been allowed to make choices or have opinions, and saying what she thinks has never gotten her anywhere good. Enter Tess, a veteran foster mother who understands broken children, but sees past the shards to their humanity. She allows Belle the space she needs, and offers her a safe haven. She intuitively knows what Belle needs, in addition to a real loving mother, is a friend who is made of flesh and blood, not plastic. She takes in Jim, a foster kid who faces the pain of his mother's mental illness. She loves him, but is incapable of caring for him, so Tess steps in to bridge the gap. The three form a bond of family that is as strong as blood, and find comfort in one another. When Jim has to rejoin his birth mother, Belle tries hard to be happy for him, but it's another loss for which she doesn't have the strength. She and Tess

manage to get through the pain, and Belle makes it to adulthood, buoyed up by her foster mother's (real mother's. actually, despite the accident of birth) wisdom, kindness, and practicality. I love the scenes between Belle and Tess when the roles reverse. Belle constantly tries to convince Tess to give up her sneaky cigarettes and eat a green vegetable or two instead of the fried food and chocolates she lives on. I love the fact that Tess is three-dimensional, and not a cookie-cutter saint. Her flaws add rich depth to her character. Belle winds up married and happy with foster children of her own. She loves them all, but it's a girl with a doll who reminds her of herself who steals her heart completely. At the climax of the book, we relax, thinking that Belle finally has every piece of her dream in place: Money, Home, Husband, Children, Family, Pregnancy. When fate intervenes to challenge Belle, she is simply too tired to fight, and contemplates doing herself a harm by jumping off the very bridge in Dublin where she got engaged. (Wait till you read about her "ring.") A little girl with qualities that Belle cannot fathom steps in to help Belle sift through the aspects of her life that she can't accept. She gets a supernatural lesson in the powers of goodness and love to triumph over pain, cruelty, and deprivation. I'm writing this carefully to avoid spoilers, but I want to call out a particular character whom I loved named Bobby. A troubled older child, of the kind that don't always wind up with happy situations in foster care, is taken in by Belle and her husband. The boy turns into a man, and a good solid one at that, after being bolstered by the love of Belle and her husband under the guidance of "Grandma" Tess. I love how he turns out, because he's still a man of the streets, to an extent. While he has chosen light over dark, we can still see sly remnants of the tools he used as a survivor when he was a kid. I adore how multi-dimensional Bobby is. I did cry many times while I read this book. And some scenes still haunt me. It's unimaginable that people can be cruel to children, but sadly, it's a part of many adults' experience. The compelling part of the story is to see how people can overcome their beginnings, and how little it can take to turn someone from the wrong path to the right. The ending was perfect, and it was the HEA that my heart needed. When I shut down my Kindle, I lay in bed weeping on my pillow, but it was a good, clean kind of weeping. I had fully invested in Belle's tale, and I can move on knowing she's fine. Extra stars for wit and humor, a great conversational tone, and a lovely portrait of Dublin. Recommended! (less)

I really loved the first part of the book. However, when Belle was struggling so badly over letting Lauren go back to her own mother, I lost all sympathy for Belle and began to find her despicable. Then, when the ridiculous "angel" arrived, I just skipped over the rest of it so that I could have some idea of how it ended.

I've been a fan of this author's work so far so went into this assuming I'd like it as much as her other books. I was wrong. I liked it more. The main character, Belle, is written so well that you can really connect with her and feel her emotions. Too many times I found myself welling up in sadness/happiness through out the book, and always when I was somewhere in public it seemed! The story is told at Christmas time but that doesn't mean it's a story limited to Christmas. It's a beautiful, wonderful story of one woman having her life flash before her eyes and seeing the real difference she did make. This is a feel good story with some heart wrenching moments and hard truths through out. I also really enjoyed the Irish-isms and descriptions of Dublin, as I am so used to reading books set elsewhere it felt good to be home in a literary sense.

What a sweet book! Ladies, when you read this one make sure you have plenty of tissues handy. Lots of emotion and a lot of love went into writing this story and I adored it. Somewhere, I think Jimmy Stewart is smiling.

If your wanting to curl up by the fire to read on a wet windy day this is the book for you. A brilliant read with a few twists on the way. It feels like a modern day sequel to its a wonderful life and i should add im not normally a chick lit kinda girl but this was more than just happy ever after. If there was ever a book waiting to made into a film this is it. Really enjoyable.

A bit bring I think

Loved this book, my favorite from Carmel. Has some of favourite things, Christmas, love story and best of the happily ever after. Another winner Carmel keep up the good work Ã Â Â“Ã–Ã Â Â’Ã

Loved this book by Carmel Harington, couldn't put it down.

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