



# The Latecomers

*Helen Klein Ross*

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**The Latecomers** Helen Klein Ross

**Set in New England over three generations, THE LATECOMERS mixes the world of Colm Tóibín's Brooklyn with the sweeping family sagas of Christina Baker Kline.**

In 1908, sixteen-year-old Bridey runs away from her small town in Ireland with her same-age sweetheart Thom. But when Thom dies suddenly of ship fever on their ocean crossing, Bridey finds herself alone and pregnant in a strange new world.

Forced by circumstance to give up the baby for adoption, Bridey finds work as a maid for the Hollingworth family at a lavish, sprawling estate. It's the dawn of a new century: innovative technologies are emerging, women's roles are changing, and Bridey is emboldened by the promise of a fresh start. She cares for the Hollingworth children as if they were her own, until a mysterious death changes Bridey and the household forever. For decades, the terrible secrets of Bridey's past continue to haunt the family. And in the present day, after a strange blue bottle is found hidden beneath old wallpaper, the youngest Hollingworth makes a connection that finally brings these dark ghost stories into the light.

Told in interweaving timelines and rich with detailed history, romance and dark secrets, Helen Klein Ross' THE LATECOMERS spans a century of America life and reminds us all that we can never truly leave the past behind.

## The Latecomers Details

Date : Published November 6th 2018 by Little, Brown and Company

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Author : Helen Klein Ross

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## **From Reader Review The Latecomers for online ebook**

### **Helen says**

Well, if a book's author doesn't give it five stars, you have to wonder! Full disclosure: I am the author. This book started out in the walls of an old house my husband and I were renovating in a small town in New England. The house was built by the governor of Connecticut in 1853. In the library, there's a floor-to-ceiling bookcase with sliding glass doors. The glass is engraved 1860 and I'd wonder what conversations took place in that room, as a Civil War was brewing. I made up a story based on conversations I imagined. The story is fiction. But the house is real. You can read about it here <http://www.bringingbackholleywood.com>

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### **Melissa says**

I read an advanced copy of this book from Book of the Month. I love historical fiction, especially when it's told through different viewpoints and jumps around in time. It's like putting together a puzzle- I can't get through it fast enough! Yet I wanted to savor it as well (and I also had to take breaks to read up on the real-life events that were sprinkled in). I laughed and I cried. Loved it!

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### **Michelle says**

Ooooo.....that cover! Exquisite! <3

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### **Cathy Branciforte says**

I have to say that I couldn't wait to read this book based on the description and it did not disappoint! It was everything I thought it would be and more: a wonderful story that grabbed me right from the start, characters that I grew to love ( especially Bridey), and a real sense of time and place with period details. I loved every minute of it and didn't want it to end, yet the end was perfect. I just wish I had someone to discuss it with! This would make a terrific book club book and I highly recommend it for anyone who enjoys historical fiction.

Thanks to Little Brown & Company and Netgalley for the advanced digital review copy!

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### **Karen Kay says**

I received this from netgalley.com in exchange for a review.

In 1908, sixteen-year-old Bridey runs away from her small town in Ireland with her same-age sweetheart Thom. When Thom dies during the sea voyage, Bridey finds herself pregnant and alone in America.

I thought the story lagged a bit in the middle and the ending felt rushed. I never did figure out the meaning of the book title.

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### **Mary Lins says**

Book addicts will relate to this: that wonderful feeling of excitement and expectation as you hold in your hand a 400+ page historical novel; turn to the front and find an old and complicated Family Tree, and turning to the back you discover a Bibliography which included novels that you have read and loved! Bliss! But that angel of practicality and experience over your shoulder whispers in your ear: "Don't get too excited lest you be disappointed." Reader: I was not disappointed!

So I began, Helen Klein Ross' new novel, "The Latecomers" which chronicles the life of two very different main characters: Bridey Molloy— a fin de siècle immigrant from Ireland who now works as a housekeeper at Hollingsworth, a grand family home in Wellington, Connecticut, and Sarah Hollingsworth eldest daughter and heir to the estate.

One of the fun things about reading an historical novel is knowing the future, of which the characters don't. In the 1920s the characters think "that every improvement worth inventing had been now invented" – electricity brought lights and toasters and vacuum cleaners! The telephone revolutionized communication, the car completely changed transportation, roads, and cities. The "talkies" were miraculous! Imagine if these characters could see OUR reality - fewer than a hundred years in the future? I still look at my iPhone and ponder the amazing technology of my own time!

As in all family sagas that span generations, there are secrets that will be revealed, and some that will not, and endings both sad and satisfying. The ending felt a bit rushed; after spending so much time in the early part of the 20th century with Bridey and Sarah, we suddenly find ourselves in the 21st century with entirely new family members!

Don't let the page number daunt you – this novel is fast-paced; I picked it up expecting to savor it for the week, but I couldn't put it down so it didn't last past Tuesday!

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### **Diane S ? says**

Putting aside for now. Not in the mood for a generational novel with two timelines , at the moment.

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### **Leslie Lindsay says**

**Spellbinding historical fiction spanning five generations, plenty of secrets, richly researched, and highly detailed, THE LATECOMERS has a little something for everyone.**

**Helen Klein Ross has outdone herself.** Several years ago, I read her stunning and compelling **WHAT WAS MINE** and immediately fell in love; that story stuck with me and I raced to the climatic ending. **THE**

**LATECOMERS** (Little, Brown November 2018) is a completely different kind of tale--but it's just as good and **showcases Klein-Ross's historical writing--which absolutely shimmers.** The author's research is evident as much of the book features experiences of **America and beyond through the years 1908-2018--** and isn't overdone.

**We start off in 1908 Ireland--Bridey is 16 years old when she runs off with her beau, Thom to America.** Thom dies suddenly of ship fever on their ocean crossing and Bridey finds herself alone and pregnant in NYC.

**Forced to give the baby up for adoption, Bridey then takes a job as a housekeeper at a lavish estate, Hollingwood.** But that child continues to haunt her every moment. So, too does Thom. She befriends her employer, and readers are given a **glimpse into the privileged lives of Sarah and Edmund,** even that of the child she gave up for adoption.

Much of **THE LATECOMERS** is told from **multiple POVs traversing time periods,** but we almost always come back to Bridey, whom I enjoyed very much. **There's love and longing, death and loss, orphans, illness, an old sprawling estate** (which I was in love with), **issues surrounding women and class, religion, and so much more.** Each character is **imbued with such authenticity, such gumption,** that I felt closely connected to them; the author clearly shows empathy for all of them; even the less-favorable ones.

The middle-end felt a teensy-bit rushed to me and I wondered how the author was going to tie up all the loose ends--but she does, beautifully--leaving us to ponder: **just how much can we bury the past?**

**THE LATECOMERS is such a fabulous study in historical fiction** and I would place it in the ranks of J. Courtney Sullivan's **SAINTS FOR ALL OCCASIONS** meets Colm Toibin's **BROOKLYN** meets Christina Baker Klein's **ORPHAN TRAIN.** I am in such awe with the rich details, the obvious research. **A fabulous family saga that is not to be missed.**

**For all my reviews, including author interviews, please see: [www.leslielindsay.com](http://www.leslielindsay.com)**  
Special thanks to Little, Brown for this review copy. All thoughts are my own.

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## **Jill Meyer says**

As I read Helen Klein Ross's new novel, "The Latecomers", I was pretty sure of rating it a solid 4 out of 5 stars. It was a well-written novel about a multi-generational family, centered around a house in Wellington, Connecticut. The family, the Hollingworths, had wed, bred, and died in the house for years when a young Irish immigrant, Bridey Molloy was hired to work for the family before WW1. Bridey, who had born a son from a pregnancy begun on her passage from Ireland to the United States with a fellow who'd died on board the ship, was the lynch pin for a hundred or so years of Hollingworth family history. The book, which had seemed a solid 4, was raised to a 5 by the time I finished.

Helen Klein Ross's book is written in different voices at different time periods. Her family history involves such times as September 11, 2001, as well as 1895 til 1930. Ross proves a master at NOT making the voice and time changes confusing for the reader. She keeps everything straight. She conveniently puts a family tree in the front of the book, to help the reader along with any questions of parenthood they may have.

Why write a family history, with at least 15 major characters and 15 minor ones? It's difficult to write much

about every character and keep the book somewhat less than Bible-length, but Ross brings the various family members alive and manages to throw in a mystery. Ross's book was a great read and I can heartily recommend it.

Note to publisher/editor: I think you need to check to see if all the names remain the same throughout the book. In the readers' copy I have, Vincent's daughter Abby is referred to as Connie late in the book.

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## **Liz says**

It's not often I've picked a book because of its cover, but it's what led me to The

Latecomers. A family saga, of sorts, it deals with the Hollingsworth family along with their live-in maid, Bridey. Bridey came over from Ireland as a 16 year old. Unfortunate circumstances led to her beau dying on the crossing but not before leaving her pregnant. While at a home for unwed mothers, she meets Sarah Hollingsworth and is soon working for the family.

The story is well told and you quickly come to care for the characters. Each chapter deals with a different time period, told from either Bridey or Sarah's POV and later, from Vincent's and succeeding generations. Ross has done an excellent job of painting the early time periods, including the thoughts and prejudices of the day. She obviously did her research, because everything just seems spot on.

The book speeds up at the end. Over ? involves Bridey and Sarah, but then all of a sudden, generation after generation is thrust on us. It was harder to keep tabs of the later generations as some only get a chapter or two. In the end, all is made clear. Not to the reader, who has understood the truth of a certain death all along, but to those later generations.

My thanks to netgalley and Little, Brown and Company for an advance copy of this book.

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## **Nancy says**

The Latecomers by Helen Klein Ross is a multi-generational story of an American family and the Irish immigrant with whom they share a secret. Ross was inspired by a real 1853 Connecticut house, Holleywood.

The novel begins in 1908 when Bridey and Thom plan to secretly marry and immigrant to America because of the feud between their Irish families. The marriage is delayed and Thom dies of ship fever, leaving a pregnant Bridey to fend for herself in America.

Bridey must give her son for adoption and is hired as a maid for the wealthy Hollingsworth family. Their relationship becomes complicated upon the death of the patriarch, causing Bridey to return to Ireland.

The story follows the Hollingsworth family through generations, set against the burgeoning changes in American life, until a long-lost secret is rediscovered through genealogical research.

I had just finished watching Downton Abbey for the first time (yes, I know, years after everyone else saw it.) The early part of the novel reminded me of that series, from the time era to the upstairs/downstairs multigenerational relationships. Except, this story is set in America and continues into contemporary times.

My concern was that the story slowed down in the middle. There is a lot of 'telling' when I would have liked more dialogue and action. I know it is on trend, but I still don't care for a prelude scene with people and a situation not revisited until the end of the book.

Ross's extensive research shows in the period details she includes in the story. Historical fiction fans who enjoy learning about history in a sprawling novel spanning generations will enjoy this book.

I received a free ebook from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and unbiased review.

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### **Eileen says**

This generational saga was instantly engaging, and remained so throughout! I loved the various narrators and the different periods which were not sequential, but rather provided tantalizing hints of what was to come or what might have already happened! Irish immigration, an historical old house, the upstairs-downstairs aspect – all were strains which drew me in and tied the strands firmly. Helen Klein Ross is a master story teller! I actually wasn't that taken with her previous novel, but upon learning of the makeup of this one it went to the top of the list! Fascinating to learn was that the author and her husband had bought an old manor house in Connecticut in 2010, and there the story took root. Her access to diaries and letters made extensive research possible, lending rich credibility to the historical tone of the novel.

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### **Natalie says**

THE LATECOMERS is certainly one of the best novels of recent vintage. I was so engrossed from the moment I met Bridey Molloy that I was unable to leave the book for a moment.

Ross manages to combine the family history of Bridey and her son with that of the wealthy Hollinghursts, while incorporating the history of the 20th century. It is never boring since the skillful weaving of the stories of the characters, caught in the swirl of the times, kept me turning pages.

Oh, how I loved the characters, but as a teacher, I had to admire the incredible research that went into this novel making it a journey through the century. The author describes not only the significant events and movements of the time period, but even the decorative arts and inventions that changed life.

The heart of the novel is the life of Bridey, running away from Ireland with her intended, and within days finding herself alone and pregnant in New York City. It is this pregnancy and the adoption of her child that is the center of this book. The secondary characters are very well-developed and the family is followed through many generations.

Even the terrible secret that could have ruined Bridey's life is revealed and the author does a wonderful job of bringing closure to the reader. That last moment is fueled by a new technology that has come into broad use.

Klein Ross simply doesn't miss a thing in this book.

I highly recommend this novel to book clubs and to classes in Woman's Studies and modern American history. Part of the uniqueness of the book is that it is a wonderful novel wrapped around a well researched story of American history. With all the talk about immigration, it provides an interesting look at the lives of female immigrants around the turn of the century. Despite the happenstance of her son's adoption, it also speaks to the control of a young woman's body and the enslavement to the constant danger of giving birth without respite or choice.

Thank you Netgalley for providing this novel and the fascinating journey that I had the fortune to take.

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### **MaryannC.Book Fiend says**

A lovely, touching read about young Bridey who runs off with her beloved, Thom in 1908 during the time when immigrants were making their way to America to seek a better life for themselves. Before the couple can reach American shores Thom dies of shipboard fever and Bridey finds herself with child trying to survive the mean streets of New York alone. This was well written and depicts the plight of what immigrants had to endure during the turn of the century which so fascinates me because of the history this country was founded on. Well worth picking up.

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### **lp says**

Everything I look for in a historical fiction...an orphan! Irish immigrants! creepy family mysteries! a huge old house! Helen Klein Ross must have been reading my mind.

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