



Isle of Tears

Deborah Challinor

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A vivid and compelling story of enduring love and divided families from one of our bestselling historical novelists.

When armed conflict drives a wedge between Maori and Pakeha, not everyone can choose sides easily. For Isla McKinnon, the choices are bitter. Taken in by local Maori when her parents are brutally murdered, she has grown to womanhood and taken a Maori husband. In a thrilling tale of love and loss from the land wars - when simmering tensions between Maori and the encroaching Pakeha settlements exploded into bloody warfare - love and trust are put cruelly to the test. Separated from her husband and her family and restored to Auckland society, Isla must learn to survive in both worlds. Inevitably, she must decide between them, and lose part of her heart forever.

Isle of Tears Details

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Author : Deborah Challinor

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From Reader Review *Isle of Tears* for online ebook

Kathleen Dixon says

I'm not a great fan of historical fiction - probably the only novels in that genre that I've read recently have been because they've been highly recommended by a friend or have been part of a group-read or challenge - but, having said that, I do admire the enormous amount of research that goes into making one of these novels authentic.

Deborah Challinor is a successful author and a historian, and so I expected this to be well-written and engaging, and it was - I very much enjoyed it. It's set in the 1860s when the New Zealand Land Wars began between the Maori, who had been the people of the land for over a thousand years, and the European settlers (or should I say the European government and soldiers), and details thoroughly the deceit and political manoeuvrings and prejudice and greed. Et cetera.

But we follow the life of Isla, a Scottish girl, eldest in the family of Agnes and Donal, immigrants who are eking out an existence (well, a reasonable existence but they'll never get rich) on the land in Taranaki. When the parents are brutally murdered, Isla and her siblings, Niel, Jamie and Jean, first believe it to be the work of marauding Maori who then capture them and lead them far away. They quickly are told, and eventually believe, that in fact the Maori are adopting them, knowing they would be unable to look after themselves.

And so they live with the Ngati Pono (fictional) and become immersed in their lives. Having no allegiance to the English (and we know about the centuries of conflict between Scots and the English) it's not at all difficult for them to do that. And when their tribe joins in battle, Isla and Niel are actively involved.

Isla's story is a fascinating one. We journey with her through grief and love and so many new experiences. She's plucky and resourceful (and also beautiful, which doesn't hurt at all in an adventurous novel with love and strife throughout) and genuine in her feelings and reactions. What a lovely heroine, and what an excellent book.

Brenda says

It was 1860 and Isla McKinnon, her brothers Niel and Jamie and sister Jean had a happy life. Living with their parents on their small farm in New Zealand, where they'd been since leaving Scotland, and then four years in Australia, they had little money, but the produce from their farm, and Rosie the cow who supplied them with milk, meant they were content. Until the day the children, and Laddie the dog, were herding Rosie home and heard gunfire; their lives were never the same.

The local Maori, the Ngati Pono tribe, were their saviors when they took the children in, raising them as part of their family. The two youngest, twins, were sheltered by the women while Niel was taught to fight, and Isla as the eldest, matured and blossomed under Mere's guidance. Tai was an important part of the tribe and his interest in Isla was obvious from the start. But when war was declared between the Maori and the British Colony, lives would once again change irrevocably.

Isle of Tears by Aussie/New Zealand author Deborah Challinor is another fascinating historical fiction novel which I thoroughly enjoyed. Isla is an excellent character, feisty, tough and determined to keep her family

safe, while Mere is a gentle woman with a strength of character that made her looked up to by her tribe. A wonderful story which I highly recommend.

Robyn Smith says

I read this book while in the US visiting Ngaire Smith, my daughter. It seemed strange reading a NZ book in the States, but I thoroughly recommend it, tho I found the horrific beginning hard to take and couldn't "get into the book" for a while after that. I learnt more about the "Land Wars" between Maori and the British than I ever learnt at school!

Teotakuu says

A well written book about a period of New Zealand history of particular interest to me. The only slightly jarring note, for me, is the odd inaccurate use of Te Reo but I am nit picking as most would miss what annoyed me.

I will keep on the look out for others by this author

Louisa George says

Very interesting historical novel about a scottish girl who's parents are killed (by pakeha) during the Maori land wars...adopted by a group of indigenous people she becomes pakeha-maori and as a consequence embroiled in wars that dominated New Zealand history in 1860s. A lot of factual information embedded into a story about tragedy and love in equal measure.

Karen says

Rolled along at a good pace, and was nice easy entertainment.

I feel I would have absolutely loved this book when I was about 16 years old, but my tastes have have changed a bit since then, and I found the substantial amounts of "tragedy" a little ho-hum Main character was likeable, but I didn't really connect with her.

LaVerne Clark says

What I love most about Deborah Challinor's writing, is her ability to tie in New Zealand's Maori heritage and early history of the English arrivals, with a really great story. I've learnt so much more than I ever did during Social Studies at school! :)

This book started so well and I was drawn into Isla's life from the very beginning, but then, close to the end,

it sort of fizzled out. It was as if the author had too much to get through and had been told to condense it down 100 pages. Sadly, it affected the ending, making what could have been a great book into an okay one. At one stage, we'd left Isla who was in good health to take in another character's point of view, and the next time we saw her, she'd somehow broken her leg, but we hadn't been taken along on the journey to see how or even when exactly. The information came through a secondary character's point of view that she had hurt herself, so it came as a shock to the reader and I was left feeling disconnected to her situation.

Still - this was an enjoyable read and I'm looking forward to this author's next one that's sitting on my bedside table.

Sarah Harrison says

I really enjoyed this one - great storyline, great characters. I liked learning about the aspects of early Maori culture, which i didnt previously know much about. I recommend reading this one.

Stephanie says

really good and moving book i really enjoyed it

Lhizz Browne says

This was better than I expected - a good counterpoint to most European accounts of the New Zealand/Land/Maori Wars, and gave the impression that the author had done her research. I agree with the other reviewers who thought that the ending felt rushed, to be fair there was a lot of story to get resolved in there! Definitely an enjoyable read. I thought the cover art was very bland though - just a generic epic romance cover (big model head, vague scenery) with little sense of the cultural background that was so interesting in the book!

Robyn Coyle says

AAA+++ What a fantastic book. It had everything - very moving

Sonia says

I loved this book and could not put this down, a nice easy weekend read and beautifully written piece of New Zealand history. I plan to read all the books from Deborah Challinor, Can't wait.

Dorothy says

I just started reading this book and I am really enjoying it. I am halfway through it and have a hard time putting it down.

Jenelle says

I absolutely loved this book. It captivated me from the very first page and I loved the fact that it is based in New Zealand during the Maori land wars. Deborah Challinor is most definitely my favourite NZ author.

Alice says

I really enjoyed this book and gave me a little insight to life in early NZ.
