



The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter

Hazel Gaynor

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“They call me a heroine, but I am not deserving of such accolades. I am just an ordinary young woman who did her duty.”

1838: Northumberland, England. Longstone Lighthouse on the Farne Islands has been Grace Darling’s home for all of her twenty-two years. When she and her father rescue shipwreck survivors in a furious storm, Grace becomes celebrated throughout England, the subject of poems, ballads, and plays. But far more precious than her unsought fame is the friendship that develops between Grace and a visiting artist. Just as George Emmerson captures Grace with his brushes, she in turn captures his heart.

1938: Newport, Rhode Island. Nineteen-years-old and pregnant, Matilda Emmerson has been sent away from Ireland in disgrace. She is to stay with Harriet, a reclusive relative and assistant lighthouse keeper, until her baby is born. A discarded, half-finished portrait opens a window into Matilda’s family history. As a deadly hurricane approaches, two women, living a century apart, will be linked forever by their instinctive acts of courage and love.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter Details

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Author : Hazel Gaynor

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From Reader Review The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter for online ebook

Karen says

4.5

I enjoyed this book very much. This is the story of two main characters Grace and Matilda, a century apart, so there is a dual timeline.

Part of the story was based on the real story of Grace Darling, who with her family, lived in and ran the Longstone Lighthouse off the coast of Northumberland in 1838, where she and her father were involved in a rescue after a shipwreck. Grace Darling became a real hero.

Matilda is a young unwed woman in Ireland, in 1938, who finds herself with child and is sent by her family to Rhode Island to stay with a relative to wait out her term.. the relative is a lighthouse keeper there.

The two stories are woven together beautifully.

I love lighthouses, have always thought I'd like to live in one. We have many of them here in Michigan because of the Great Lakes and all the shipping done on them. So, I like to read anything having to do with them!

There was a quote used in a letter in this book that really got to me and it was by Charles Dickens, who I've never read..

"I wish you to know that you have been the last dream of my soul"

This one really got to me.

Elyse Walters says

Settings are either in Ireland.....

or America...

Back & Forward storytelling...

Between two centuries....

1938... and 1838

With 100 years between Grace and Matilda, ... in this historical fiction...they will link together.

I enjoyed this story - but felt the style in which this book was written... Jumping back-and-forth 100 years was a little jarring.... spoiling my enjoyment of 'being-here-now'.

Harriet is the third female in this novel you'll meet.

All three of these women are resilient in their own ways.

I liked this book - enjoyed the characters AND the story - yet it all felt a little thin to me.

What elevated my feelings - wasn't this story per say, but rather learning that's this novel was based on true events.

That 'did' add more emotional depth.

I liked it ... fast easy read. Truthfully... I've found it hard to be ecstatic about much since reading Michelle Obama's book.

I did like "Florida" by Lauren Groff... but that was very different.
Growth for me was involved!

Good story ... my mood for it was so-so!

3.5 rating...

Rating Up - as I honestly did enjoy the characters and appreciate the author's research.

Kate Quinn says

I was given an ARC of this book for the purpose of offering a cover quote if I enjoyed it, and I certainly did. Hazel Gaynor (I loved her *LAST CHRISTMAS IN PARIS*, co-written with Heather Webbe) shines a brilliant light here on female courage and endurance in the face of storms both internal and external. Quiet Grace Darling becomes a heroine of the Victorian age when she performs a daring rescue at sea, and finds her fame harder to endure than the solitude of her lighthouse-bound life. A century later, rebellious Matilda must draw on the legacy of the women who keep the light if she is to navigate her own stormy life, even as a deadly hurricane comes to tear her world apart. A splendid read--"The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter" is not to be missed.

Stephanie says

When I picked up *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter*, I expected to enjoy it since I love Hazel Gaynor's writing but what I didn't expect was to feel so many emotions while reading the book or to finish the book a sobbing mess of tears!

Gaynor's novel is inspired by the true story of Grace Darling, a lighthouse keeper's daughter and is an extraordinary novel that is just gorgeously written and heartwrenching. Gaynor masterfully weaves the story of Grace in 1838 with the story of Matilda Emmerson in 1938, and the story that unfolds is one of strong, brave, inspiring women, yet it's also a story of heartache, unbearable loss, and tragedy.

Grace loves her life on Farne Islands assisting her father, the lighthouse keeper, with the care of Longstone Lighthouse. The island, the coast of Northumberland, and especially the lighthouse are her everything. Helping her father keep the lighthouse lit and watching to keep ship's safely away from the rocky coast is not only her duty but her greatest love...that is until she meets a handsome young artist named George Emmerson who often makes her mind wander from thoughts of the lighthouse to him although she is resolved to forget him and is sure she'll never see him again.

A storm of magnificent proportions changes Grace's life. As it rages and blows around the lighthouse, Grace spots a shipwreck and knows she and her father have to save the survivors before they lose their lives in the raging storm condition. It's a daring rescue that her father is unwilling to make but Grace is adamant. The rescue is extremely difficult and dangerous, but Grace is brave and determined to hold the boat steady by herself as her father brings the survivors aboard, including one woman, Sarah Dawson, who just happens to be George's sister.

While Grace sees the rescue of the survivors of the *Forfarshire* as her duty and not an act of bravery, her act of rescue brings her unexpected and unwanted fame. She begins receiving letters, marriage proposals, money, people begin making trips to the island to look at her, her portrait is painted, and more. It's hard to believe a mere woman is capable of such exceptional bravery and heroism, so everyone must see her and speculate about this young lady! For Grace, it's almost more than she can bear. The only joyful thing that happens is the friendship she develops with Sarah and sees George again, who comes to paint her portrait. Their love story almost undid me!

A century later, Matilda, the great-granddaughter of Sarah Dawson, is a young girl of nineteen from East Cork, Ireland. She's pregnant and in disgrace with her parents, especially with her cold, distant, and unfeeling mother who has never given Matilda any affection or love. She's being sent to Rhode Island to live with Harriet Flaherty, an unknown, reclusive, and apparently also disgraced relative, who is an assistant lighthouse keeper until her baby is born. Only then can she return home, without her child, as if nothing ever happened.

Matilda finds Harriet aloof but always watchful, caring, and anticipating what Matilda might need. Matilda finds herself wanting to know more about her distant relative the more time they spend together, so Matilda spends much of her time with Harriet at the lighthouse not only developing a passion and connection to the lighthouse like Grace and Harriet before her but also learning about Harriet and developing an odd sort of friendship that deepens as time passes.

Matilda also begins researching her family history after uncovering documents that have been in the family for generations. She soon discovers the friendship between her great-grandmother and Grace Darling, and the story of Grace's daring rescue. She also finds a half-finished painting of a woman she believes to be of Grace drawn by George. While Matilda discovers the story of Grace's bravery and how it connects to her own family and uncovers a forgotten love story, she also discovers exactly who she is and decides the kind of woman **she wants to be**--not the one her mother demands of her. Bravery is a parallel theme running in all the women's lives in this book...Grace, Sarah, Harriet, and Matilda.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter is a story that both inspired me because of the determination, courage, and boldness of these women who reminded me that women can achieve anything they put their minds to and it also broke my heart in tiny pieces. I warn you now to have tissues ready when reading this book! Gaynor has written a truly magnificent novel that I highly recommend! It's truly wonderful, heartbreaking, and enthralling.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter publishes on October 9, 2018, so be sure to pick up a copy--and tissues!

****Thank you Edelweiss and William Morrow for an ARC copy to read and review in exchange for my fair and honest review.****

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

5 huggable stars to *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter*! ?? ?? ?? ?? ??

When you have a favorite author, you count the days until her next release. The day came for Hazel Gaynor and *The Lightkeeper's Daughter*, and it lived up to my every expectation!

First of all, in case you didn't know, I am obsessed with lighthouses. I grew up near one, my husband proposed to me there, and we later married near another. There is something both mystical and majestic about them, along with their steadfast beaming light signaling support to all those who need it.

Told in dual narratives, of which I loved both in equal measure (which is not always the case with dual narratives!), the first is set in Northumberland, England in 1838. The Longstone Lighthouse on the Farne Islands is tended by the Darling family, which is where we meet young Grace Darling. She witnesses a shipwreck in a horrific storm and convinces her father that they must help the survivors, which in turn puts their own lives in jeopardy.

Grace is strong and cares for the lighthouse better than any of her siblings, but when it comes down to who is next in line for the job, it will be her brother, and not her because she is female. Even though she is celebrated as a hero throughout England for her efforts in saving the shipwrecked survivors, no matter; she still cannot inherit the job at the light.

The second timeline is in 1938 Newport, Rhode Island at another lighthouse. Just 19-years-old, pregnant, and unwed, Matilda Emmerson is sent from Ireland to live with a distant relative in the United States. There are connections amongst these characters and across timelines that are unexpected and beautifully-executed.

Hazel Gaynor is a natural storyteller. Her books are emotional, charming, and heartwarming. Inspired by the true story of Grace Darling, in *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter*, Gaynor has given us several formidable, memorable, and inspiring female characters who are the epitome of bravery and sacrifice that know no bounds. This book gets my highest recommendation. Don't miss it!

Thank you to William Morrow Paperbacks for the ARC to review. All opinions are my own. The physical copy was purchased by me. This beauty had to go on the shelf next to my other Hazel Gaynor books! P.s. Update: I just now ordered the UK edition, too. ?

Cheri says

4.5 Stars

"I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship."
-- Louisa May Alcott

When I was a child, there was an older man, a former sea Captain who lived in a tiny cabin overlooking one of the lakes in our town. He got by on doing odd jobs in the neighborhood and on whatever else he might

have received. I know my father had somewhat of a soft spot for him, where my mother disliked his rough, unmannered ways. Through him, I heard stories of life on the wild seas, and about lighthouses being a beacon to those at sea, and for him perhaps more like a parent welcoming a child home. Because of him and his love for lighthouses, I have always loved them, for many years more from afar, but later on I began to try and explore as many as I could.

So, for me this was another exploration into a new lighthouse, through the pages of a story that is based on a true story. The story of Grace Darling, a twenty-two year old young woman living in a lighthouse on the Farne Islands in 1838, her father the lighthouse keeper, and she, the lighthouse keeper's daughter. A title that would imply she was only that, a daughter, but she assisted in the running of the lighthouse. In fact, she wants no other life than this.

"As Father is on first watch, I leave the comforting light of the lamps, and enter the dark interior of the staircase. My sister Thomasin used to say she imagined the stairwell was a long vein running from the heart of the lighthouse. In one way or another, we have all attached human qualities to these old stone walls so that it has almost become another member of the family, not just a building to house us...A storm always stirs a desire for everyone to be safe inside the lighthouse walls, but my sisters and brothers are dispersed along the coast now, like flotsam caught on the tide and carried to some other place."

When a horrendous storm causes a the shipwreck of the Forfarshire, she convinces her father that they must come to the aid of those she can see shipwrecked on the rocks, and they rescue the nine survivors, risking their own lives in the process. When this news becomes public, it spreads further and soon people are flocking to see this brave young woman.

Among the survivors is a woman named Sarah Dawson, sister to artist George Emmerson, whom Grace has met. He becomes one of many artists desiring to capture her portrait; he is already captured by her.

There is an alternating story, in an another time, a hundred years hence, that centers around Mathilda, whose story begins with her leaving her home of Cobh, Ireland, and carrying a secret with her to Newport, Rhode Island. Her secret will become more obvious as the months pass, but her parents in Ireland will avoid the public shame she would cause them had she stayed. Not that it was by her choice, her mother has sent her to live with a family friend, Harriet, in yet another lighthouse.

Very poignant, life-affirming, occasionally heart wrenching, but also heartwarming historical-fiction, a novel reminding us of the best that is within us, and inspiring us with the stories of these young women who didn't allow their fears to conquer them, but who rose to the occasion with the courage to face their future.

Many thanks, once again, to the Public Library system, and the many Librarians that manage, organize and keep it running, for the loan of this book!

Lindsay - Traveling Sister says

5+ stars!

Excuse me, while I dust off my Favourites shelf to make room for this beautiful, spellbinding, unforgettable novel that has secured a forever spot in my heart. Not only does this mesmerizing book belong on my Favourites shelf, it easily takes top spot as my favourite read of 2018! I simply cannot imagine anything surpassing the love I have for this story.

I have such a soft spot for books involving lighthouses. There is something about them that I am drawn to – they have such a secretive, magical, historic feel that intrigues me. This breathtaking novel, which strongly focuses on life as a lighthouse keeper, follows two interwoven timelines one hundred years apart – 1838 in Northumberland, England and 1938 in Newport, Rhode Island. Each timeline was equally intriguing for me – I was completely engrossed by every single word of this beautifully written multigenerational story. My mind and heart were fully captivated from the very first sentence.

The start of this tale introduces us to twenty-two year old, Grace Darling, whose entire life has been lived simply on Farne Islands as a lighthouse keeper's daughter. One day, during a horrific storm, Grace and her father bravely battle the sea in a row boat to rescue the survivors of a nearby shipwreck. Grace's courage and bravery during the storm is unexpectedly publicly celebrated and honoured, making Grace a famous hero. The unanticipated praise and attention is hard for Grace to accept and handle.

The lighthouses in this story are characters of their own. The author, Hazel Gaynor, creates an atmosphere so vivid and gripping that I truly felt myself as a part of this compelling and unforgettable scenery and cast of characters. The isolated islands, the damp and windy weather, the sparse beaches where washed up treasures were found and cherished, simple and quaint Cherry cottage. As I was reading, I could hear the echoes of the footsteps on the winding staircase as Grace climbed the lighthouse steps to proudly handle her daily duties.

Upon finishing this amazing novel, I googled the name Grace Darling to find out this book is based on a true story. Wow - I had no idea! This knowledge enhanced my love for this novel as I absolutely love historical fiction for that reason – I love learning about a time in our history that I knew little or nothing about.

This book is written so beautifully that there will be no choice other than to make its way into your heart. I warn you to have plenty of Kleenex ready, as this is an emotional journey that had me sobbing uncontrollably a few times. I just love a good book cry! As my lovely GR Traveling Sister Norma brilliantly stated, as sad as this story is, it is filled with so much warmth and love. Heart-wrenching and heartwarming!

This was a Traveling Sister read that we all adored. To find this review, along with the other Traveling Sister reviews, please visit our blog at:

<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com/2...>

A HUGE thank you to Edelweiss, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. and Hazel Gaynor for providing me with an ARC in exchange for an honest review!

The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter is AVAILABLE NOW! It is an absolute MUST READ!

DJ Sakata says

My Rating:

Favorite Quotes:

“Mam was at her snoring again. Thought it was the cannons firing from Bamburgh to signal a shipwreck.”
He opens one eye. “Don’t tell her I said that.”

I’ve seen how often women marry and become less of themselves, like scraps of pastry cut away and reused in some other, less important way.

She is utterly in thrall of him and I am ashamed to feel a prick of jealousy as I observe her, knowing she will never look at me that way. Daughters never hold their mother’s affection the way their sons do. Daughters are dutiful, dependable and disposable. Sons are brave and admirable, essential to the continuation of the family line.

But it isn’t just her face he can’t forget. It’s the particular sense of purpose and determination that dripped from her like honey from a spoon. So slender in form and yet so immense in personality and character.

She gazes up at me with eyes the color of winter seas and I see in her some greater wisdom; as if she understands that she is not just my daughter, but the sum of generations of strong courageous women who came before her, an echo of them all lingering in her soul.

My Review:

It wasn’t until I had finished reading that I noticed that this epic and poignant book was based on true events, and while I was already impressed by the artistry and quality of the book, that little nugget just blew me away. The writing was beautifully rendered, lushly detailed, and emotively crafted to hit all the feels. The storylines were complex and well woven, yet felt authentic from beginning to end. I cannot imagine the massive amount of research required for such an undertaking. I – am - in - awe.

Heather Webb says

A lighthouse keeper is such a solitary pursuit, it makes one wonder what sort of person would choose it as a profession. A heroine, as it turns out. **THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER’S DAUGHTER** is a beautifully rendered tale of Britain’s most famous lighthouse keeper, Grace Darling, and an American keeper in Newport one hundred years later, whose lives are linked by history and tragedy. Gaynor’s inspired prose portrays the vast landscape of sea and sky, and her characters captured my heart--I even shed a tear. An affecting and gorgeous, book, I relished every page.

Brenda - Traveling Sister says

The Lighthouse Keeper’s Daughter was an unexpected gem I stumbled upon thanks to HarperCollins Canada. I quickly added it as a group read for the Traveling Sisters and along with Norma, Lindsay and I two other sisters joined in on the discussion with us.

It's an emotional gem of a story that is so perfectly paced and took us on the best possible emotional journey I could imagine. The characters crept into our hearts and haven't let go. This story and the characters are unforgettable and compelling with their bravery and strength.

The strength of the story lies in the emotions that drive the story forward. From the moment we opened this book till the final pages we took a heartbreaking and heart-wrenching journey that explores bravery, duty, love, sacrifice, and loss. The characters here are not only brave with their actions but with their hearts.

Inspired by true events Hazel Gaynor develops compelling characters and completely emerges us in their timelines. They inspired us, brought us to tears and found a spot in our hearts.

This story makes for such a great discussion for groups reads to share your emotional journey with. I highly recommend this emotional and unforgettable story.

Thank you to HarperCollins Canada for an ARC to read and review.

Norma * Traveling Sister says

Captivating, affecting & heart-wrenching!

This was my very first HAZEL GAYNOR book, and I must say that I absolutely loved her writing style. I was immediately drawn into this extraordinary story by her beautiful storytelling right from the very first page and had me totally immersed, entertained, and interested throughout this entire book.

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S DAUGHTER by HAZEL GAYNOR is an absolutely stunning, sad, moving, heartwarming, and an excellent historical fiction novel that was inspired by the true story of Grace Darling, a lighthouse keeper's daughter. A fascinating story!

Some parts of this book was extremely sad and heartbreaking for me to read as it takes you on quite the emotional journey and I couldn't help but feel right along with all the characters heartache, loss, and tragedy. Even though there was so much sadness the book also had so much warmth and love emanating throughout that was so inspiring and empowering to read. Just how strong, resilient, and brave these women were was absolutely remarkable and it was an absolute pleasure reading and learning Grace Darling's story.

HAZEL GAYNOR delivers a vividly descriptive, intriguing and beautifully written story here where she interweaves skillfully two different timelines, spanning over decades and centuries. Grace's story in 1838 and Matilda Emmerson's in 1938. Both of these women's stories captured my heart and I found them both as equally compelling and not once did I feel like one was more interesting than the other.

I have a fascination for books with settings of lighthouses and it was one of those books for me where the author's beautiful prose, moving storyline, and endearing characters made this an all-around fabulous read for me. I love it when an author can bring out so many emotions from me while I am reading and for me that is one incredibly satisfying reading experience!

Norma's Stats:

Cover: Formidable, somber, breathtaking, wondrous, intriguing and an extremely fitting representation to storyline.

Title: Appealing, intriguing, interested and a simple but yet such a powerful representation to storyline.

Writing/Prose: Well-written, vivid, exquisite, engaging, captivating, and fluent.

Plot: Thought-provoking, powerful, passionate, emotional, engrossing, steady-paced, enjoyable and extremely entertaining.

Ending: A sorrowful ending that I was extremely satisfied with as it ended historically correct.

Overall: An enthralling and memorable read that had me totally engrossed, emotional, and interested from start to finish! Would highly recommend!

Thank you so much to HarperCollins Canada and Hazel Gaynor for providing me with an Advanced Reader's E-Proof in exchange for a review!

Review can also be found on our Two Sisters Lost in a Coulee Reading book blog:

<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com/>

Diane S ? says

3.5 Two strong, able women, a century apart, and their lives as keepers of a lighthouse.

WHAT I LIKED

The settings, lighthouses are one of the things I seek out on my vacations. I love them and the role they have played throughout history.

Grace Darling was a real person, and as always that sets a different tone to the story, an authenticity if you will. She did live in a lighthouse on Farne Island and did help rescue nine people when the steamer, Fecfashire broke apart during a horrific storm. Her life would be changed due to the notoriety this brought into her life.

The atmosphere and the descriptions of the many natural items Grace collected. These were beautifully described.

That this book showcased strong women who, especially Grace in the late 1880s that women were not expected nor encouraged to do. They each forged their own paths, admirably if not always joyfully.

The writing, Gaynor does a good job with these historical novels.

WHAT I LIKED A BIT LESS

The dual timeline. Although the timelines are connected through the lighthouses and a looser surprise connection, this is far from my favorite way of presenting a story. I usually end up liking one more than the other.

The novel sometimes became lost in the details, some just went on too long, and the story bogged down.

As you can see there were many more likes than dislikes. This was a sisters read, and most absolutely loved it. I liked it very much but with a few reservations.

ARC from Edelweiss.

Christie«SHBBblogger» says

Title: The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter

Series: Standalone

Author: Hazel Gaynor

Release date: October 9, 2018

Cliffhanger: No

Like a curious child pushing open doors to rooms they are forbidden to enter, I tug on the distant threads that connect me to them, determined to unravel the tangled knots of the past so that I can find the place where their story ends, and mine begins.

This was my very first Hazel Gaynor book, and I absolutely loved her writing style. A lot of historical fiction begins a bit dry and takes time to engage me, but Gaynor's storytelling feels effortless from the start. Her immersive seaside landscapes are brought to life in vivid detail, from the briny air to the white capped waves crashing on the shore. As these two women leave their footprints on the sand, you walk right beside them as their courage and strength are challenged. The story is told in two timelines, one hundred years apart. The biggest draw was the female centric duo-plotline, highlighting women living in very different time periods but connected through common life experiences. Love, loss, and finding your path in life.

In 1838, we are introduced to Grace Darling, a real life heroine who lived at Longstone Lighthouse in England with her family. Gaynor blends fact and fiction seamlessly, creating a hint of a mysterious romance underneath the story of her heroic rescue. When the S.S. Forfarshire wrecks during a bad storm, Grace and her father succeed in a daring rescue that lands her in every newspaper immediately afterwards. We experience her range of emotions through this troubling attention, none of which are happy. She is a humble woman who revels in the simplicity of her life, in the solitude and duty that comes with running the lighthouse with her father. The devastation and loss of the survivors haunt her, most especially Sarah, the woman who suffered more loss than any human should ever have to endure. Through Sarah, a surprising kinship is discovered which will test the direction she has chosen for her life.

1938 tells the story of Matilda Emmerson, a young woman sent to a distant relative's home in Rhode Island after finding herself pregnant, unwed, and disgraced. In the first few transitions to her POV, I was a little resentful of having to leave Grace's pages, but eventually I was equally invested in both. Matilda's story was increasingly investing as she not only uncovered her ties to the past, but uncovered truths long buried that would eventually rock her to her core. Matilda was a woman who was simply looking for love and attention in the wrong places after being ignored and stifled by her parents. She'd never felt acceptance or knew what it was like to be *seen*. She never felt as if she had the freedom to express herself, but prickly Harriet gives her a safe place to start choosing a life on her own terms. I really enjoyed seeing their relationship grow, especially as Harriet's own heartbreak is revealed. Their relationship is a rocky one that needs a lot of patience and care. In the end, they found something together that they each so desperately needed. Love, family, and purpose.

This book gently takes you through a lot of heartbreaks. Even though there was quite a bit of loss, it somehow never felt depressing. Gaynor conveys it in a way that felt inspiring and empowering. Highlighting the resilience of the human spirit, and honoring the many women who have been brave enough to fill such a dangerous profession. She skillfully twined both timelines together in a way that made the fictional aspects feel organic with the history. For some reason, it didn't make me as emotional as I would have expected, and

I couldn't really pinpoint why. However, I was fascinated to learn more about Grace Darling, and I fell in love with the author's beautiful way with words. I look forward to reading more from her in the future.

FOLLOW SMOKIN HOT BOOK BLOG ON:

Dem says

3.5 Stars

A lovely story that was inspired by true events. Charming and vivid this was an easy and entertaining read. A story about strong women that is beautifully imagined and written

I love books where a lighthouse or the Island become an extra character in a story and The Lighthouse Keeper's daughter is my first novel by Hazel Gaynor and I really enjoyed the read.

This is an historical fiction story where a mystery and a love story and a true event all marry to give the reader this page turner of a novel.

We are introduced to two stories, the first is based on fact, From 1838 Northumberland England where Lighthouse keeper's daughter Grace Darling along with her father is involved in the rescue of shipwrecked passengers. The fictional 1938 story takes nineteen year old Matilda on a Journey from Cobh in cork Ireland on the TSS California across the Atlantic to New York to spend a few months with her reclusive relative at a lighthouse in Newport. Each story is told in very short alternating chapters and I think this makes easy reading and I didn't have a problem keeping track of what was happening.

Interesting and engaging characters are the heart of this story and I think readers who enjoy books by Kate Morton or Diane Chamberlain might well enjoy this novel.

Angela M says

4.5 stars.

“My sister Thomasin used to say she imagined the stairwell was a long vein running from the heart of the lighthouse. In one way or another, we have all attached human qualities to these old stone walls so that it has become another member of the family, not just a building to house us .”

When a novel is based on the life of a real person, it's many times a dilemma for me on how to rate it because I inevitably try to find out more about the person when I'm reading the book and then I'm disappointed if the fictional character's story is more imagined than true, although I shouldn't be. It is fiction. So I decided I would read and rate this book before trying to find out more about the real Grace Darling. It looks like the author kept to some specific details of Grace Darling's life. She's the daughter of the keeper of Longstone Lighthouse in Northumberland, England. She is a dedicated assistant to her father

and in 1838, during a horrific storm, they rescue survivors of a shipwreck. It is this act that brings her unwanted fame and attention. Among the survivors is Sarah Dawson who happens to be the sister of George Emmerson, an artist who Grace has met and is drawn to. There is a second story line a century later in Rhode Island, where nineteen year old and pregnant Matilda has been sent from Ireland to live with a family friend, Harriet, also a lighthouse keeper until she gives birth.

There are so many novels with dual story lines in different times. I enjoy these if the connection feels real, and this was one of those stories. This is actually one of the few dual time line books where I enjoyed both timelines equally. I think it was because of the wonderful way Gaynor connects them - the relationships, the lighthouses, a locket, a painting and definitely the courage of all of the women. It was notable that in these alternating narratives of the characters that Grace's, Matilda's and Harriet's were in the first person and the others in the third person. This made for much more intimate connections with the three women.

The writing is very good in places, especially the description of the storm. Considering that this wasn't necessarily a short book, I read it fairly quickly because I was always interested in finding out more. A cliché, perhaps to say it was captivating, but I was totally taken by each of these strong women and how they managed to move forward in spite of things that weren't always easy to face. In spite of a revelation towards the end that felt a bit much to me, this book is deserving of five stars because I enjoyed it every step of the way. I can't say that I've ever had an affinity to the lighthouses I've seen, but I'll probably think about them in a different light the next time I see one.

This was a Traveling Sisters read. I was a little late to the party but enjoyed everyone's comments.

I received an advanced copy of this book from William Morrow/HarperCollins through Edelweiss.
