



The Princes of Ireland: The Dublin Saga

By Edward Rutherfurd

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The Princes of Ireland: The Dublin Saga By Edward Rutherfurd

From the internationally bestselling author of **London** and **Sarum** -- a magnificent epic about love and war, family life and political intrigue in Ireland over the course of seventeen centuries. Like the novels of James Michener, **The Princes of Ireland** brilliantly interweaves engrossing fiction and well-researched fact to capture the essence of a place.

Edward Rutherfurd has introduced millions of readers to the human dramas that are the lifeblood of history. From his first bestseller, **Sarum**, to the #1 bestseller **London**, he has captivated audiences with gripping narratives that follow the fortunes of several fictional families down through the ages. **The Princes of Ireland**, a sweeping panorama steeped in the tragedy and glory that is Ireland, epitomizes the power and richness of Rutherfurd's storytelling magic.

The saga begins in pre-Christian Ireland with a clever refashioning of the legend of Cuchulainn, and culminates in the dramatic founding of the Free Irish State in 1922. Through the interlocking stories of a wonderfully imagined cast of characters -- monks and noblemen, soldiers and rebels, craftswomen and writers -- Rutherfurd vividly conveys the personal passions and shared dreams that shaped the character of the country. He takes readers inside all the major events in Irish history: the reign of the fierce and mighty kings of Tara; the mission of Saint Patrick; the Viking invasion and the founding of Dublin; the trickery of Henry II, which gave England its foothold on the island in 1167; the plantations of the Tudors and the savagery of Cromwell; the flight of the "Wild Geese"; the failed rebellion of 1798; the Great Famine and the Easter Rebellion. With Rutherfurd's well-crafted storytelling, readers witness the rise of the Fenians in the late nineteenth century, the splendours of the Irish cultural renaissance, and the bloody battles for Irish independence, as though experiencing their momentous impact firsthand.

Tens of millions of North Americans claim Irish descent. Generations of people have been enchanted by Irish literature, and visitors flock to Dublin and its environs year after year. **The Princes of Ireland** will appeal to all of them -- and to anyone who relishes epic entertainment spun by a master.

From the Hardcover edition.

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- Rank: #60510 in eBooks
- Published on: 2004-03-02
- Released on: 2004-03-02
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Distinctly evocative of James Michener's all-encompassing recapitulations of history, this lackluster saga by the author of bestselling *London* and, most recently, *The Forest* (2000), is the first of a projected two-volume series billed as the Dublin Saga. Rutherfurd begins his tale of the Emerald Isle in pre-Christian Ireland in A.D. 430 with a tragic romance between a maiden, Dierdre, and a Celtic warrior, Conall, hearkening to the legend of the mythic first-century Celtic hero, Cuchulainn. After Conall is offered up as a sacrifice to the Druid gods, the narrative jumps ahead 20 years to Pat Rick's (St. Patrick's) arrival in Ireland in A.D. 450 and his establishment of a small Christian toehold at Dubh Linn. Five centuries later, the Vikings make their mark, and Rutherfurd skips ahead with chronicles of the monastery at Glendalough, the Book of Kells and the death of Brian Boru (founder of the O'Brians) with his Pyrrhic victory over the high king of Tara in 1014. A retelling of King Henry II's arrival in Ireland in 1171 is followed by a cursory account of the reformation of the Irish Church at the Council of Cashel and the story of an obscure 1370 skirmish at Carrickmines Castle (a minor landmark presently doomed to make room for a highway). Rutherfurd sets the last of his ill-connected and artificial sketches in 1537, with Henry VIII hanging Silken Thomas, and Dublin poised at the dawn of the Renaissance. Readers who persevere will glean plenty of historical detail from these pages, but Rutherfurd's uninspiring storytelling makes the journey a slog.

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From [Booklist](#)

Historical fiction fans can settle in for a long, cozy read as Rutherfurd conducts a spellbinding tour of ancient Ireland. Employing the chatty style he perfected in his best-selling novels *Sarum* (1987) and *London* (1997), he covers 17 centuries of Irish history, beginning in pre-Christian Ireland and culminating in the mid-sixteenth century. From the passionate tale of Conall and Deirdre--a reworking of the celebrated Cuchulainn legend--to the desecration of Irish Catholic churches and shrines during the reign of Henry VIII, the history of this island nation is viewed through a kaleidoscope of interwoven historical and fictional characters caught up in all the pageantry and drama of their particular time and place in history. The real focal point of this sprawling saga is, however, the city of Dublin itself. The first installment in a two-part series on the origins and evolution of one of the world's most venerable urban centers, the narrative is distinguished by the panoramic portrait it paints of Dublin through the ages. Like James Michener and Leon Uris, Rutherfurd does a magnificent job of packaging a crackling good yarn within a digestible overview of complex historical circumstances and events. After devouring this initial volume, readers will eagerly anticipate the publication of the conclusion of the page-turning Dublin Saga. *Margaret Flanagan*

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Review

Praise for Edward Rutherfurd:

"Not all good things come in small packages. If you like books that are big, Edward Rutherfurd is your man. He writes wonderful sagas, tales that cover centuries, always keeping these long stories lively by telling us about the events and conflicts of people's lives. Rutherfurd does the painstaking research; the reader has all the fun." -- *The Seattle Times*

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brian Grant:

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David Lussier:

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