

Irish Twins

Michele VanOrt Cozzens

McKenna Publishing Group (2010)

ISBN 9781932172362

Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (09/10)

I am not a twin, Irish or regular, I do not have children and as far as I know, my family's secrets are nowhere near those described in Michele VanOrt Cozzens' "Irish Twins," so why was I so spellbound from the first page on? Sure, the book is well written, but so are many others. Yes, the subject is appealing, but it is certainly not the only one. What then sets this book apart? I kept asking myself those questions while reading, and savoring each page.

The story begins with a death. Anne Catherine Monaghan Shields, a wife and a mother of five living children, suffers a stroke while waterskiing, which at the age of 80 is quite an amazing thing by itself. Entering a new existence, she finds herself in a beautiful place called Ohr, where she is greeted by her own Irish twin, Molly, who passed many years before. Over numerous cups of tea they follow the life of those Anne left behind, particularly her own Irish twins, Jenny and Caylie, who by now are middle-aged women themselves. Many family secrets are revealed, and Anne realizes that as much as she did not know about others, she also did not realize quite a few things about herself.

It was the very last page, the Acknowledgements, which brought some light to my questions. It was the author's mother who actually passed at the age of eighty while waterskiing, and although the rest of the story is not biographical, at least not intentionally, it shines with an undeniable honesty. Stories that come from the heart are always special, and there was no doubt in my mind that this book was one of them. When we add the life lessons learned by Anne and her family, the undeniable truth that love makes one live on in others, the fact that everybody makes mistakes and still manages to live a good life, a well as many others, it becomes clear that this is a book that will be cherished by many.

I have thoroughly enjoyed "Irish Twins." The story pulled me in from the first page and it flowed beautifully. The characters were all too believable and extremely likeable, flaws and all. Although it often spoke of life lessons, it never sounded preachy or soppy. If I could find any fault with it, it would be that it ended all too fast. I wanted more, and I will definitely be on the look-out for more of Ms. VanOrt Cozzens' work for sure.