



## King of Dublin

*Lisa Henry , Heidi Belleau*

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Twenty years after a deadly pandemic ravaged the world, Darragh Fergus Anluan and the people of his village have carved out a hard but simple life in the Irish countryside. But with winter comes sickness, and Darragh must travel to Dublin in search of medicine. What he finds there is a ruined city ruled by a madman, where scavenging is punishable by death . . . or conscription.

Ciaran Daly came to Ireland with aid and optimism, but instead was enslaved by the so-called King of Dublin. After months of abuse from the king and his men, he has no reason to believe this newcomer will be any different. Except Ciaran finds himself increasingly drawn to Darragh, whose brutish looks mask how sweet and gentle he really is.

The tenderness Darragh feels for the king's treasured pet is treason, but it's hardly the only betrayal brewing in this rotten kingdom. Rebellions and rival gangs threaten the king's power, but not nearly as much as Darragh and Ciaran—whose only hope for freedom is the fall of the king.

*\* This title contains the following sensitive themes: dubious consent, explicit violence and non-consent.*

## **King of Dublin Details**

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Author : Lisa Henry , Heidi Belleau

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## From Reader Review King of Dublin for online ebook

### Lisa Henry says

Hey, it's my first collaboration with Heidi Belleau!

It has three of my favourite things: sex, violence, and Irish boys.

I hope you guys like it!

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### Megan says

This book was kind of a quandary for me. It is really well written but the subject matter was what kind of ruined the book for me. I feel like the more books we see out there with non-consent, dubious consent, rape, torture and sexual slavery, the more we are promoting rape culture as a whole. I believe that everyone has the right to the kinks that they like but there was little positive in this book. I came away from reading it wishing for more positive. I wanted to believe that something good could come out of all the pages I had just read. It felt very... off putting. There is so much rape culture in the story that it really ruined the little romance that was to be had. The other works from Heidi Belleau that I have read have been edgy and not always what I would call romance. I loved her book "Wallflower" but there were elements of rape in that as well. (It was brief and no where near as awful as the scenes you will have in King of Dublin.) I know- to each their own, but this book was just not for me. The long wait until the very very end for any positive after pages and pages of rape and torture was a bit much for me. There was too much that made me nauseous for not enough of a Happily Ever After reward, no matter how well written it was. I think that the things we read should leave us in a better place than we were in when we started. If you are into the dark and the angsty, this might be a good fit for you. I just caution that anyone reading pay attention to the Trigger Warnings on this one.

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### Loederkoningin says

Shoo shoo! Off my feed and out of my mind you go.:/

Our review can be found here.

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### SheReadsALot says

## **JustJen "Miss Conduct" says**

A review by The Blogger Girls.

I was pretty excited about this one when it came across my radar. Although I'm not generally a fan of futuristic stories, this one just drew me in. It takes place twenty years in the future where the world has all but been destroyed. People are doing what they can to survive, mainly in different groups or factions, while the main city of Dublin is run by the very brutal King Boru who rules by force and brutality.

King Boru's treasured pet (treasured in his eyes) is Ciaran, aka Boy, his slave and sex toy. He is very cruel to Ciaran, raping and offering him as rewards to his men leaving Ciaran a shell of a man; at least on the surface. Ciaran still has hopes and dreams of freedom and helping his people, but the persistent abuse is taking its toll.

Darragh is a big, sweet, naïve countryman who has left his village in order to find medicine for his dying family. He is found by Boru's men and made a part of his Kingdom when the King promises Darragh the medicine he seeks. Darragh sees something in Ciaran, and although he wants to trust and believe in him, Ciaran's behavior with the King leaves him questioning everything about Ciaran.

This story is told in two parts. Part 1 is the foundation and set up of the relationship between Darragh and Ciaran while under Boru's thumb, while Part 2 focuses on the romance as the two traverse the countryside trying to get back home. A lot happens along the way, including the introduction of one of my favorite characters, a young man named Rabbit. I loved the voice of Rabbit and was really happy to see how things went where he was concerned.

There were times, mostly in the middle, where this felt a little drawn out, and I found things were a bit more exciting when Boru was in the picture, even though I wanted him to suffer and die through the entire story. Yes, there is rape and some violence, but it is true to the tone of the setting, if that makes sense. I loved watching the characters evolve as time went on, especially the transitions from Boy to Ciaran. Darragh also does quite a bit of growing, so I really just enjoyed them together. This is a dark story, but one full of hope. This was a pretty solid, well-developed story that shows these two authors are clearly on the right path working together, and I look forward to seeing something more from them in the future.

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## **Trisha Harrington says**

**A book with Irish characters? Wohoo!**

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## **Emma Sea says**

The review that said, "Ugh, all the rape and torture" made me really want to read this.

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## James Cox says

Seriously dark and dirty but fantastic world building.

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## MLE says

I received this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

I have to say that this book was not quite what I expected it to be, and I enjoyed that. The characters were felt honest to me. I really felt for Ciaran. He had been such a naive idealist before he was captured it broke my heart to see what years of slavery had done to him. There were times I was frustrated by him, but I always understood the anger and the fear that drove his words, and actions. Looking from the outside he does this that might seem stupid, but smart, and rational decisions by such a damaged boy would not have made sense or been honest to the character.

I really enjoyed Darragh as a character. He is strong in such a caring manner while still being a flawed individual. He wasn't the typical alpha male that shows up to fix Ciaran. He isn't that sort of controlling guy who needs to own someone else. He isn't a saint either, and I liked the balance between his protective nature, and his kindness and compassion. I liked how that played out in the character's bond over the story. It felt like their relationship was on a much more even footing, and I appreciated that. Ciaran might have been in a bad place, but it didn't mean that he was totally broken. I liked that Ciaran was such a strong person, to have survived the years of abuse by such an unbalanced character.

The plot was strong, and I liked that the world and the people in it felt honest to the post disaster setting. It actually felt like a world in crisis to me, and only added to my enjoyment of the story. The secondary were a complex bunch, and added to the depth of the plot. I loved the intrigue, and snarl of alliances that comprised this book. Overall a really well developed story with strong characters that I really enjoyed.

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## Ingie says

*Written February 24, 2014*

### **3.5 Stars - a raw, horrible, cruel dystopia, yet captivating - the love will always win, right?**

**I was both thrilled and surprised** then in January when I at last got an M/M romance to ARC read. A one I asked for and really wanted. ~ I've really enjoyed the books by Lisa Henry I read earlier. Heidi Belleau's writing is new for me.

Before I even started to read *King of Dublin*, I heard and saw some critical comments. Easy frightened as I am, it was therefore with both fear (for tough and rough scenes) and a little discouragement as I began to read this novel a couple of days ago.

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**Of course, this was pretty tough, rough**, cold, hard and very cruel in parts. There were horrible rape scenes and a terrible use of every person who was weaker. ~ The beginning of the book was partially heartless,

explicit and horrible to read and I actually hesitated, wondering if I wanted to read on. ~ But as the pages floated away, I also saw two nice men with strong emotions, genuine emotional attraction and a growing hot desire. But not just that, they also had an honorable courage and, from time to time, a willingness to try to change the situation.

**Overall, a captivating, well-written and fast-paced story.** A little thin on the romance but full of heat and in the end sweet tenderness. As well, a vision of horror, with a nasty cruel, but also fascinating world, of a dreaded future in anarchy. A future *Ireland* and *Dublin* without democratic government and without a functioning social structure. May it never happen!

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**King of Dublin takes place** in an future dystopian world, fifteenth, or maybe twenty, years after an global epidemic. Dublin is now controlled by a senseless unstable former criminal. He is now the self-proclaimed so-called "King of Dublin". Or maybe all Ireland. A king who rules with terror and guerrilla-style army of hard men. *King Boru's* enslaved "Boy" is a young handsome blond man adorned with gold.

**Ciaran Daly was a young man with high ideals** and admirable dreams that came from the north to help the Irish and Dublin people in need. Instead he was captured and became King Boru's *golden treasured slut and slave*.

**His name is now only "Boy"**. Ciaran is gone... ~ For months has he been ill treated, abused and raped. Both by the king himself, and sometimes even by the king's men. Hurt, depressed and scared - with a growing self-loathing - is Ciaran lacking more and more of his human dignity. He does what he is told to do, says what he has to say and just try to survive every single day....and night.

...Then arrives a big, tall, nice *culchie* from the Irish countryside. A man who sees the true man in Ciaran and not only the golden pet slave.

‘Solid. Sensible. Safe. So safe.’

**With winter comes sickness and Darragh Fearghal Anluan** from *Cúil Aodha*, is in Dublin to get medicine for his friends at home. But Dublin is a ruined city ruled by a dangerous madman. A threatening king who promises Darragh medicine in exchange if he joins the kings guard for a few months.

Darragh's interest is immediately brought to the golden beautiful man. So beautiful but so unworthy treated and sad to see. Then one day they meet in the ruined old library...

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**Here and there, was this novel a very tough read** (..to heartbreaking raw) for me. This gruesome rape culture made me upset and sad. Sometimes, I also had trouble understanding Ciaran's actions and feelings. I understand why he had become so hard and cold-hearted but I wished that he would have let up a little more warm feelings for Darragh bit earlier. Darragh, however, was a true old-fashioned hero - Wow, what a man.

I hated and really wanted to spit on that horrible, constant power-abusive Boru, the so-called "King of Dublin". Still, I felt confident that the tenderness and love that began to bloom between the two main

characters would triumph in the end. Did it? Read and discover...

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**To sum up;** A rough hard world where (thankfully) some good values ??still got a chance to win. *King of Dublin* is more of a "Dystopian novel", with a lot of cruelty, misery, suspense and thrilling parts, than a grand romantic "Romance", but still captivating. To that I also met two men, Darragh and Ciaran, I really cared for.

~ An quite okay and interesting read. I'm pleased! ~

**I LIKE - ...in the end; Yes**

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\*\*ARC kindly provided by Riptide Publishing via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. - January 2014\*\*

*King of Dublin*, an about 350 pages novel, will be released February 24, 2014.

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## Vanessa North says

This is a difficult book to review for several reasons, but I'm going to give it a try. ;) One reason it is difficult to review is that the m/m fiction world, as diverse as it is, tends to be pigeonholed into being a subgenre of romance, even though some books don't really fit that mold. Other books are sort of shoehorned into that mold. I felt some of that with this book--which makes it difficult to review as a *romance* without taking into account that this story reads like two books.

Book one is straight up dystopian novel, and book two is a romance. The foundation for the romance was laid in book one, but it didn't really stray into "hey, this is a romance!" territory until book two. The tone between the parts of the book set in Dublin and the parts set in the countryside takes a distinct turn--and there may have been an intentional choice on the part of the authors: to show Dublin under mad king's rule as a morally bankrupt wasteland while outside, the world is just struggling to right itself again.

I really enjoyed the two main characters, especially Darragh. I found his transition from innocent to king's man to Ciaran's protector very touching, and I saw that same transition affect Ciaran's character development throughout the book. As should be done in a romance--the relationship changes both.

I've been trying to avoid reading reviews of this book, but several of them showed up in my GR feed, and the subject of rape and rape culture came up in one of those. I disagree with that reviewer that this is a novel that promotes rape culture. Rape culture exists both within and outside of fiction--it is pervasive, and it normalizes rape. Rape culture says rape is about sex, but rape is NEVER about sex. This book does not normalize rape. This book displays rape as a brutal, violent abuse of social and physical power. The rape in this book is not about sex--it is about power.

And that is important to understand when we throw around the words "rape culture." Rape culture is OUR culture, and it is the culture that says women and men can prevent rape by dressing a certain way or not jogging alone. Rape culture is present in fiction, in the thousands upon thousands of romances where one

character says no and the other proceeds over their objection. Rape culture is present in romances where a character is too drunk to consent. Rape culture is present in romances where rape is portrayed as an act of simple sex or even love.

Rape culture says rape is about sex.

Rape is about power.

I know there's going to be disagreement there, but this is an important distinction.

As for the writing, it's no secret I'm a big fan of both authors individually. This is their first collaboration with each other, and I felt it was well-written, though very little was left to subtext. The imagery and emotion were intense and there was some clever foreshadowing. All in all a very solid venture from these ladies, and I hope to read more joint efforts from them in the future.

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## Amber says

Ok, I like both these authors and I thought an Irish story might be interesting but this one just fell flat for me. Even if this is set in a post-apocalyptic Ireland I really didn't feel much of the country in this book. Yes there are Irish names and a little Gaelic thrown in but this could have really been anywhere. Then the reason for Ireland's demise is a little vague, a bad disease sometime in the past not too long ago wiped out a lot of people, but some countries are doing better. I just couldn't get a feel for the world dynamic except this little piece of it was bad and no one wanted to help. I really don't even want to get into how they still have gas, who is buying slaves, and if the population is so diminished shouldn't breeding/woman be a little more important than an all gay society.

As for the characters the King of Dublin, who the love story isn't about, seems pretty one dimensional. Crazy, paranoid, and cruel he acts more like a teenager than an adult. I have trouble believing he could actually control his little group of bandits or he could have gained power. He isn't a warrior, he isn't charismatic, and even if he controlled resources he doesn't personally deal with them making it unlikely he would maintain his power. His cruelty isn't very original mainly rape and having his men rape people, selling people, and Colosseum type killing games.

Ciaran's character is one of those character's I felt didn't make any sense. An idealist he taken and held captive. He doesn't fight Boru but lies flatters and manipulates him so he isn't killed or hurt worse. Yet as soon as he gets free he want to fight Boru and even tries to get back to Dublin. For someone that put up no fight when held captive and truly scared most of the time this seems like an odd choice. On top of that his constant mental gymnastics of how Darragh is to gentle/naive/stupid and Ciaran doesn't deserve him starts to grate.

Darragh felt like a hollow character to me. In the end I really can't say if he slow or naive or both but he just seemed like a doormat for everyone without any spirit or will of his own. He fixates on Ciaran and that's it. Not only that his original quest seems not to be too important to him considering he forgets about it pretty quick.

The two together do nothing for me they are constantly whining they don't deserve each other. Overall I just

couldn't a great deal to like about this book.

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## Elizabetta says

### 2.5 stars

If you are looking for an bleak dystopian read, the *King of Dublin*, set in a futuristic, post-apocalyptic Ireland, delivers. It is relentlessly dark and disturbing. Unfortunately, the title leaves me confused about the intention of it all... is it a horror story or a romance?

This is a Mad Max-ian kind of world where a crazy, rat-bastard slum thug proclaims himself king of the mountain. Boru holds total dominion. He leads a gang of fellow thugs who keep a stranglehold on the starving people of Dublin. Boru and his men control everything: storehouses of food and potable water, and gas-powered vehicles left over from when the lights went out almost two decades ago. He holds the focus of the story, he is the title character, the King of Dublin. The reader enters a long difficult journey with a madman who is evil simply for the sake of it. So... a horror story.

Boru holds the beautiful, golden-haired Ciaran as political hostage and his personal sex slave. He repeatedly rapes and humiliates Ciaran systematically stripping him of his humanity. Ciaran has learned to do whatever it takes to reduce the torture and survive. He has learned to lie, seduce, submit and manipulate, all the while suffering the shame of it. Reading on is to wonder what will become of him.

One day, Darragh, a seemingly simple country boy, stumbles into Boru's enclave in search of meds for his people back home on the farm. Maybe Darragh will be the one to take pity on Ciaran, show him some kindness in the living hell his life has become. But Boru soon gets his hooks into Darragh too, holding his morality hostage, making him another pawn. How much of his soul will Darragh sell to get those much-needed meds and will this supercede Ciaran's lure?

Boru is so awful that I become numb to him. Any power he had over me is reduced because he becomes a caricature, a cardboard boogie man. There are no shades of grey to him, no nuance, he's completely corrupt, sadistic and evil. The story's title further confuses because while much of the focus is on Boru, my guess is that the authors really meant this to be about Ciaran and Darragh.

This has the bones of a good love story, but it is weighted down with the steady degradation of it's lead characters. Just when Ciaran and Darragh can find a moment with each other, they don't know what to do with it, they have been so beaten down and traumatized. The few times hope is dangled in front of them, it is snatched away again. It's exhausting and depressing.

It's really Ciaran that keeps me reading. His character arc is the deepest and easiest to glom on to. It's like watching a car wreck, seeing him struggle with his dilemma. I can't look away, and I want him to rise out of the ashes. But I feel removed from any blossoming romance. I read for Ciaran's sake and to see if Darragh can redeem himself, but the warmth is elusive.

Now, I can appreciate dark and edgy, but maybe the problem is in the expectation... *is* this a romance? Or is it a study of how easy selling your soul can become if you're pushed hard enough. If you are looking for well written torture porn then this is for you, but if rape and physical violence are triggers (the blurb goes nowhere near covering it), you will want to proceed with caution.

For this and other great reviews, author interviews, and general fabulousness:

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## **Lisa Arbitrary - AttentionIsArbitrary M/M Blog says**

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### **4 Powerful Stars**

Per Riptide - Reader discretion advised. This title contains the following sensitive themes:

dubious consent  
explicit violence  
non-consent

My Review:

### **Powerful. Brutal. Hopeful.**

Even if that hope is just out of reach.

I had the very fortunate pleasure of beta reading this during it's writing process. It gave me chills then and is still giving me chills now. It's visual, visceral and vicious. Before you pick this one up know what you're getting into. The brutality holds no bars. There's very little sunshine and flowers here, but that doesn't mean that intense hope and deep "real" love don't develop. It's that intensity that I found riveting.

### **THE CHARACTERS**

**Ciaran Daly (Boy)** - Acutely intelligent and painfully naïve Ciaran finds himself surviving by his wits and his ass.

Boy was a twisted knot of contradictions that Darragh didn't even want to unravel. To understand him, Darragh thought, would be to understand this place. And to understand this place would be to be corrupted by it.

**Darragh Fergus** - Darragh, a gentle giant. Simple by nature, yet anything but stupid. He's fiercely protective, possibly to his detriment and Ciaran's.

**The King of Dublin** Evil. Heinous. Dictator.

### **THE STORY**

Darragh knows survival.

He's fought vicious animal attacks, watched disease take his loved ones and learned to build a community after the end of the world. But when he gets to Dublin he is completely unprepared for the brutal nature of man that he finds himself in the midst of.

Ciaran is living a nightmare as the treasured pet of the self-proclaimed King of Dublin. Only by keeping the evil king "entertained" does he survive. When Darragh becomes one of the king's men it seems impossible that Ciaran would trust him with something so precious that it would be his demise.

### **THE WRITING**

He was free, and this was perfect. If the world ended now—really ended, not this horrible limping half-death they were all trapped in—then Ciaran could die happy. And Darragh had given him that.

The strong, solid writing of Heidi Belleau combined with Lisa Henry's vivid intensity absorbed me instantly. I got deep into this very quickly and then, like I said, I couldn't shake it off. This held my interest even when I kind of wanted to look away. It's easy to say that I'd read anything these two collaborate on.

Just know what you're getting into here, and then if you decide this is for you...hang on. It's big and terrible and messy and definitely hits all of your fears and hopes. And it's going to get to you.

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*I would like to thank the authors and Riptide Publishing for providing me with an advanced copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.*

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**Take a look at my Male/Male Romance Book Blog:**

<http://www.attentionisarbitrary.blogspot.com>

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**♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says**

### **3.5 Stars**

A Very Dark World Desperate for Some Light... Review up on Prism Book Alliance

This was a mixed bag for me. I really struggled to figure out exactly why it missed the mark in some ways for me, and while in others, it was stellar.

The last third of the book is when I became fully invested and wanted more. The ending was fantastic. This is one those that could become a multi-volume universe.

*I was provided an ARC by Riptide in exchange for my honest review.*

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