



1972: A Novel of Ireland's Unfinished Revolution

Morgan Llywelyn

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The Irish Century series is the narrative of the epic struggle of the Irish people for independence through the tumultuous twentieth century. Morgan Llywelyn's magisterial multi-novel chronicle of that story began with *1916*, continued in *1921* and *1949* and now continues with *1972*.

In *1972*, Morgan Llywelyn tells the story of Ireland from 1950-1972 as seen through the eyes of young Barry Halloran, son and grandson of Irish revolutionaries. Northern Ireland has become a running sore, poisoning life on both sides of the Irish border. Following family tradition, at eighteen Barry joins the Irish Republican Army to help complete what he sees as 'the unfinished revolution'.

But things are no longer as clear cut as they once were. His first experience of violence in Northern Ireland shocks and disturbs him. Yet he has found a sense of family in the Army which is hard to give up. He makes a partial break by becoming a photographer, visually documenting events in the north rather than physically taking part in them. An unhappy early love affair is followed by a tempestuous relationship with Barbara Kavanagh, a professional singer from America. Events lead Barry into a totally different life from the one he expected, yet his allegiance to the ideal of a thirty-two county Irish republic remains undimmed as the problems, and the violence, of Northern Ireland escalate. Then Barry finds himself in the middle of the most horrific event of all: Bloody Sunday in Derry, 1972.

1972: A Novel of Ireland's Unfinished Revolution Details

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Author : Morgan Llywelyn

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Shehroze Ameen says

I highly recommend this work. Its presentation, the character development, the parallel storyline being run, the narrative used, and the overall atmosphere creates a very addictive environment where Ireland comes center stage. Really well written in my honest opinion.

The main protagonist in his work is really well cast, and the way description is used to carry the story forward is wonderful: it is a balanced presentation in my honest opinion, even if it may seem biased at some points.

In case anyone would like a further reading on the subject of Ireland and the period defined in this book, do give its selected reading a shot as well. All in all, a good work.

Amanda says

Another great installment about Irish history. I find, as the story becomes more modern, it leaves behind some of its hope and grandiose...it leaves behind the nostalgia (if that is way to describe the first three novels) and becomes reality.

I don't think that I warmed up to Barry the way I had some of the previous main characters but he was still an interesting, complex protagonist. I liked that he became so unsettled by the death that surrounded him. He showed, in his own way, that another path could be chosen...

Sara says

Continuing about a decade after the conclusion of 1949, 1972 continues the Halloran family saga from Barry's point of view. Inspired by the stories his grandfather Ned had told him, the history of Ireland, and his mother's politics, Barry joins the IRA. He loves the comradeship of the army but the violence of the organization eventually leads him to try and find more peaceful solutions to the problem and he eventually becomes known for his photographs of the tragic situation. Meanwhile in Northern Ireland, inspired by the American Civil Rights movement the ordinary Catholics also try to find a peaceful solution. The movement was really gaining headway until that was all destroyed on an April day in 1972 when the British military herded a peace march into a warren of tiny streets and opened fire, with an order to shoot to kill. This day was immediately christened Bloody Sunday.

This is one of the best books in the series. While 1949 suffered from a lack of depth in the characterization of Ursula and those people who surrounded her, Barry was a wonderfully realized three dimensional character. As in the first three books, the knowledge and passion Llywelyn has for the Irish problem is vast. At times she almost seemed to devolve into a lecturing tone but before it could get too bad she would return to the storyline. I highly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in modern history, or even those who just want to understand the meaning behind U2's song "Sunday Bloody Sunday."

Laurie says

This is the fourth book in the historical fiction series written by Morgan Llwyn about Ireland's struggle for independence. The previous three books were about time periods that I did not live through which may explain why I enjoyed them so much and was eager to learn about the history. However, I remember a great deal of this book's history, having lived through the time period, and thus felt less engaged with the story. Or perhaps it was just that this main character, Barry, did not appeal to me as much as some of the others. With so much of the story about the violent times, it needed more breaks with humanity and romance. And without giving away the plot, I frankly felt that the romance was even a little too boring. As always, Morgan leaves the plot hanging at the end so that you have to read the next book. So I will read the last in the series because inquiring minds want to know what happens next!

Kimberly says

Morgan Llwyn does a fantastic job of weaving her fictional characters into the history of Ireland. This is the fourth book of this historical fiction series, which chronicles the struggle for Ireland's independence and then her subsequent struggle to reunite the northern 6 counties with the Republic. The amount of history woven into her novels is amazing and at times a bit staggering. However, you will come away with a more thorough understanding of the culture and history of Ireland as well as where events fit into world events, as well. I highly recommend this series.

A friend recommended this series to me as we traveled to Ireland last summer. It enhanced our trip greatly as I had a better understanding of what took place on the streets we traveled and a greater respect for those who lived through these times.

Alma Ramos-McDermott says

Barry Halloran, Ursula's son and Ned's grandson, now takes up the centuries long fight for Ireland's independence in Llwyn's latest book. Eager to fight for his country Barry joins the IRA as a foot soldier, and is soon enamored with the feeling of camaraderie amongst the men in the army. He has hope for his country's future but, when he actually killed someone, Barry decided there had to be a way to make a difference without killing.

Read the rest of the review on my blog: <https://shouldireaditornot.wordpress.com>

Olivia Riddell says

This is an amazing historical novel about the uprisings in Ireland from 1950s-1972. Some things were a bit confusing, especially the political aspects, however the rest of the book is incredibly intriguing! It makes me want to read all the author's books on Ireland's uprisings since 1916. The mixture of a personal story and historical facts make it this a great read. The end of the book, describing Bloody Sunday, made me wish the book was longer! It was incredibly intense...then I couldn't fall asleep for 3 hours... :)

Sam says

Found this book to lack the substance of the author's prior books. Probably because the lead character, Barry has such little depth. Not that he isn't written that way of course. The author uses phrases and descriptions that try to make Barry a more compelling individual. She refers to his internal anger and "the look" that is suppose to stop a person in their tracks. But in the story, the repeated references fall flat. He may burn with anger and fierceness but he never actually behaves that way! Instead he comes off as someone that happens to be more an observer of events, rather than a person actively engaged in propelling them forward.

Too bad really, the story is good. It just doesn't convey the passion and emotional drama of the books covering the earlier years.

Pam Diggins says

This is the fourth book in the series about 20th century Ireland. (1916, 1921,1949, 1972 and 1999). Historical facts are well documented and interwoven with the fictionalized story of several generations of a family that was deeply involved in the politics of the time. The stories are well told making this a great way to learn about modern Ireland. I am glad that I was able to visit Belfast this past year so that I could better visualize the events of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Tom Garland says

Book 4 of her historical fiction of the Halloran family and the road to Modern Independence. 1916, 1923, 1949, and 1972 were really great. Next up 1999 the final book.

Shawna says

I really enjoyed this book, but will say that I definitely preferred the first three of this series. While the story was great, I feel like the main characters were lacking in depth when compared to the main characters of the first three stories. It was very difficult to become attached to Barry Halloran and I found myself continuing to cling to Ursula throughout 1972. In fact, if she would have been taken out of the story entirely, I probably wouldn't have rated this as highly as I did. Overall, it is a good book and worth the read.

J.S. Dunn says

Fewer notable characters & seems to have less substance than the prior novels in this series. 3.5 -- Llywelyn's Century series is a departure from her usual fantasy novels. Having now read selectively in this series, have been pleasantly surprised. Thankfully this is not the usual sanitized version of the Rising and aftermath nor is it partisan.

Though most of the characters are a bit flat, the author throws in plot twists commensurate with what was happening in the new Republic and tells the wider story in a fairly evenhanded manner. All the novels read to date from 1921 forward throw in lots of factoids, usually without being tedious though some of the dialogue info-dump is tedious.

Overall, this series is a good intro to 20th century Irish politics for readers who have not themselves read primary source nonfiction, history, and the biographies and memoirs of those who were there as written by and about the likes of :

Kathleen Clarke, Countess Markiewitz, Michael Collins, Ernie O'Malley, Dan Breen, and many others. If you like this series, the original material awaits your discovery.

David Anderson says

Morgan Llywelyn's continuation of the Irish Century series, this time covering the years between the IRA's Border Campaign in the 50's, the following period of dormancy in the struggle, the birth of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement in the 60's with the resulting increase in Unionist fueled sectarian violence, the split in IRA between the Provos and the Officials, and, finally, the British policy of Internment and the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry, which marked the beginning of the period known as The Troubles. This time our dramatic focus is the character of Barry Halloran, son of Ursula (focus of 1949) and grandson of the republican revolutionary Ned Halloran (focus of 1916 and 1921). Barry starts out in the IRA himself but the nightmares he has from his experience killing a man face-to-face make him unwilling to play a role on the frontlines. At first he continues serving as a bomb-making expert, provided the purpose is only infrastructure sabotage and that they always issue warnings to avoid killing anyone. After a time even this level of violence is more than he can stomach, so he turns his photography hobby into a career as a photojournalist (inspired by what he has heard about the family friend, journalist Henry Mooney, a major character in the earlier novels), doing his part by documenting the conditions for Catholics and Nationalists in Northern Ireland. Barry has high hopes that the non-violent civil rights movement, inspired by the Blacks civil rights struggle in the US, will prove to be the correct course of action, until the worsening violence that would culminate in Bloody Sunday seems to dash those hopes. I found this as engaging as the others in the series, with a nice supporting cast of characters, including Barry's mother Ursula, his IRA comrade Seamus McCoy, and Barbara Kavanagh, the Irish American woman he comes to love (granddaughter of Henry Mooney). Superior historical fiction, highly recommended.

John says

If the rest of Morgan Llywelyn's Irish Revolution is as well crafted as 1972, then i am in for fascinating ride.

Her willingness to use historical figures with fictional figures colors this narrative with a nation's struggle to free itself from unwanted occupation. Not often does a reader get the chance to learn relevant historical events through the vehicle of fiction. You could argue Dan Brown, but he uses distortion or manipulation of facts to serve his purpose, where as Llywelyn places her fictional characters along side the actual participants. She makes a great departure from the standard preface and dedicates the first fifteen pages to *Dramatis Personae*. It is a biographical cast listing of all the fictional and nonfictional figures that appear in this particular timeline. The end of the novel has source notes and a bibliography.

Barry Halloran is the novel's protagonist and he is a newspaper photographer whose father and grandfather (must read 1916, 1921, and 1949 to learn a grander perspective of those men) were Irish

revolutionists. His narrative takes him from an adolescent living with his proud and nationistic mother to unsettling manhood. It weaves him in and out of the IRA. It shows in stark detail the trauma and tragedy that befalls both sides of the divide.

Katrina says

[if she was going to kill Barry with only pages to spare I was going to super pissed (hide spoiler)]
