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The Fifteen Streets: A Novel

By Catherine Cookson

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The Fifteen Streets: A Novel By Catherine Cookson

Catherine Cookson was one of the world's most beloved writers. Her books have sold millions of copies, and her characters and their stories have captured the imaginations of readers around the globe. Now, available for the first time in this country, comes one of Cookson's earliest and most stirring historical romances: "The Fifteen Streets." John O'Brien lives in a world where surviving is a continual struggle. He works long hours at the docks to help support his parents' large family. Many other families in the Fifteen Streets have already given up and descended into a dismal state of grinding poverty, but the O'Briens continue to strive for a world they are only rarely allowed to glimpse. Then John O'Brien meets Mary Llewellyn, a beautiful young teacher who belongs to that other world. What begins as a casual conversation over tea quickly blossoms into a rare love that should have been perfect. Fate steps in, however, when John is accused of fathering the child of a local girl, and Mary's parents forbid her to see him. The couple begins to realize that the gulf of the Fifteen Streets between them is a chasm they could never bridge-or might they still find a way? In these pages Catherine Cookson displays the irresistible plotting, scene-setting, and characterization that have made her a recognized master of historical and romance fiction. Fans of her novels, with their larger themes of romantic love and class conflict, will be delighted to find that even at the beginning of her illustrious career, Cookson had the power to captivate audiences. Filled with passion and compelling drama, "The Fifteen Streets" is a rare treat for lovers of romantic fiction.

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The Fifteen Streets: A Novel By Catherine Cookson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #911563 in Books
- Color: Black
- Published on: 2002-11-26
- Released on: 2002-11-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.46" h x .99" w x 6.34" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 256 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

British readers have been familiar with this early novel by Cookson for five decades, but this reissue will please American fans who crave the late author's sudsy historical novels. John O'Brien, born in the Tyneside area of Northumberland called the "fifteen streets," is caught up in the vicious circle of poverty, drink and deeper poverty endured by the residents of this slum district. He works as a laborer on the docks, trying to add to the family's precarious finances, keep his mother and sisters safe from his drunken father and brutal brother and protect them from the religious violence that often roils the largely Irish Catholic neighborhood. John thinks only sporadically about a better life until a non-Catholic family moves nearby. The kindly Brackens, who preach spiritual healing, are feared and persecuted in the neighborhood, even by John's own family, but they persevere in their message of tolerance and intellectual empowerment, and open John's eyes to a different way of thinking and believing in God. At the same time, John meets his sister's beloved young teacher, Mary Llewellyn, who opens not only his eyes but his heart. Their love affair is scandalous, since Mary is the daughter of a prosperous shipbuilder. Slander, violence and death take their toll before the lovers tentatively plan a new life together. Cookson's strong and touching characterizations and atmospheric setting carry this narrative, which dramatizes the cruel legacies of religious bigotry and the rigid British class system.

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Review

Helen Dunmore *The Times* (London) Catherine Cookson's novels are about hardship, the intractability of life and of individuals, the struggle first to survive and next to make sense of one's survival. Humour, toughness, resolution, and generosity are Cookson virtues, in a world which she often depicts as cold and violent. Her novels are weighted and driven by her own early experiences of illegitimacy and poverty. This is what gives them power. In the specialised world of women's popular fiction, Cookson has created her own territory. --

Review

From the Publisher

8 1-hour cassettes

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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The book *The Fifteen Streets: A Novel* has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was authored by the very famous author. McDougal makes some research before write this book. This book very easy to read you can get the point easily after looking over this book.

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