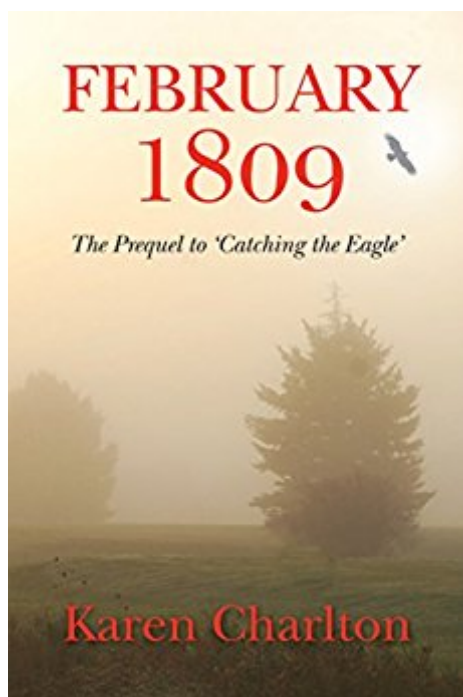


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February 1809: The Prequel To 'Catching The Eagle'



Synopsis

A STAND-ALONE SHORT STORY February 1809: The rural community in Ponteland, Northumberland begins to stir after one of the harshest winters on record. As the land is slowly brought back to life, impoverished farm labourer, Jamie Charlton, desperately seeks work. With a wife and four hungry children to feed, a mountain of debt and creditors baying for payment, Jamie has more problems than most. He lurches from one crisis to another, stubbornly refusing help from his anxious brother, William. When his creditors become increasingly violent, Jamie's desperation reaches breaking point. How will he and his family survive? Based on real events, 'February 1809' is a prequel to Karen Charlton's novel, 'Catching the Eagle' and is a day in the life of the main characters of that book.

Book Information

File Size: 1374 KB

Print Length: 40 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Famelton Publishing (March 18, 2015)

Publication Date: March 18, 2015

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00TCQPMVU

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #20,057 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #2 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Short Stories & Anthologies > Short Stories #24 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Short Stories #32 in Kindle Store > Kindle Short Reads > One hour (33-43 pages) > Literature & Fiction

Customer Reviews

Trouble is stirring in Ponteland. Jamie Charlton is married with children and is struggling to make ends meet and past events makes finding work ploughing or other areas difficult. This slice of rural Northumberland life is vivid and interesting and gives the reader an excellent view of the pressures

and limited options a man of the lower classes faced in the early 1800s. Karen Charlton's short story beautifully lays the groundwork for the full length novel, 'Catching the Eagle.'

Based on a true story, Karen Charlton delivers another unique and timeless novel about the poverty and torments of the early 1800s. The eagle seems to set a tone of menace and kinship as it settles in the boughs of a cedar tree in the damp February air, watching a laborer's cottage below. A prequel to the novel, *Catching the Eagle*, February 1809 introduces us to Jamie Charlton, a reckless rogue with an appetite for the gaming tables. There is something about Jamie's background that makes us want to root for him. Whether it's his hard-nosed determination, or the devotion he has to his family, Jamie is a true Northumbrian. And he's proud of it. As the debt chits pile up, I can't help wondering if our protagonist will ever make it out of the muddy trench he keeps digging, and there are other threats far greater than the Guinea prize winner at Stranghow Fair. When Cilla suffers a set-back, Jamie's life hurtles dangerously towards Kirkley Hall, a place he swore he would never return. As the eagle plucks out a salmon from the icy waters of the river Blythe, Jamie's boots are already pounding the cobbles. I like the book for its authenticity and rugged characterization. Charlton always manages to write with a voice that takes her readers to the heart of the period.

If you liked or loved *Catching the Eagle*, you'll be enthralled by this prequel which gives you a look at Jamie Charlton's increasing desperation as the trials of his life mount. Some of these challenges are societal, some familial, some purely self-destructive, but they all drive the narrative forward keeping the reader's attention on the page from the first word to the very last. As a foreigner I was particularly interested to see the rugged and difficult Northumbrian life of early in the nineteenth century and Ms. Charlton's beautiful descriptions and deft characterization really opened my eyes to another world and time. The eagle, who in some ways seems to reflect Jamie's troubled existence, is almost a character here too (without any anthropomorphism, of course). A winning piece of writing, this is a fabulous read for any fan of historical fiction.

Based on a true story, this prequel novella introduces the reader to the Charlton family and in particular Jamie who features in the subsequent novel, *Catching the Eagle*. In one day in Jamie's life we learn of the depth of poverty and debt that haunted these poor rural folk and get a glimpse of the lengths one might go in avoiding the consequences. As always, the author brings this period to life, with historical accuracy and vibrant vernacular. An engrossing read, that

I'd wholly recommend, regardless of whether you have read the main novel or not.

I am a fan of Ms. Hamilton's Detective Lavender series. The story captures the mood of the early 1800's. I fully intend to read more of this author's works.

Karen Charlton really knows how to write a good book. I recommend all of her books. I hope she continues writing more enjoyable stories for me to read.

This was less of a prequel and more of an extract of the first chapter. I enjoyed 'Catching the Eagle' but found this book a waste of time.

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