



The Looking Glass: A Novel (The Locket Series)

By Richard Paul Evans

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An ex-minister, sometime gambler, and fugitive from justice, Hunter Bell comes to the aid of Quaye MacGandley, a beautiful young Irish woman, abused and abandoned by a brutal husband, and together these two lost and wounded people find a way to bring healing to each other.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Heartfelt but hackneyed, this ponderous new novel by the author of *The Christmas Box* carries heavy doses of spirituality. After "Presbyterian minister turned prospector and gambler" Hunter Bell is run out of Goldstrike camp (aka "Sodom West") in 1857 by a vigilante group that suspects him of cheating at cards, he strikes it rich in the Oquirrh mountain range in western Utah. Despite his material fortune, Hunter remains unhappy, haunted by the death of his wife back in Pennsylvania. (When his prayers for her recovery went unanswered, Hunter headed west "in search of gold instead of God.") "How quickly it is forgotten that Midas's gift was a curse, not a blessing," he reflects in one of the journal entries that precede each chapter. The chance for a new life comes when he discovers Quaye Mac Gandle unconscious in the snow, surrounded by wolves. Quaye has had a terrible time. At 14, she was sold by her impoverished father in Ireland to the American adventurer Jak, whose activities include murder, attempted rape, extortion, abduction, pimping and wife beating. We know Quaye and Hunter are right for each other since they share a love of literature, especially the sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The two tormented souls slowly recognize their mutual need via several incidents laden with homilies. Hunter eventually reaches a new, gospel-inspired level of understanding. "The measure of a person's heart, the barometer of good or evil, was nothing more than the extent of their willingness to choose life over death... the path of God was, simply, the path of life, abundant and eternal." In spite of wooden characters, pervasive platitudes and a predictable plot, this "story of redemption" will undoubtedly find its audience. 11-city author tour. (Oct.)

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From Booklist

Popular author Evans has written yet another sentimental, action-filled, and crowd-pleasing love story. This time around, he takes a trip back to the Wild West, choosing 1850s Utah at the height of the gold rush for his setting. Hunter Bell is a former minister running from the emotional pain of his past. He has forsaken God after his wife died in childbirth, and he is now seeking to make a fortune in Utah's rough-and-tumble mining towns as a card shark, hoping to send money back east for the care of his young daughter. He wins a large pot playing poker but is forced to flee into the wilderness to stay one step ahead of the vigilantes who want his winnings. He ends up in Indian Territory, where he discovers a huge vein of gold. Word of his find spreads far and wide, and an entire town is hastily erected around his claim. Enter Quaye and her extremely abusive husband, Jack Morse, who is tempted by the lure of gold and easy money. Quaye was sold to Jack during the potato famine to get her out of Ireland and has consequently accepted her husband's humiliations and beatings as her lot in life. But the grip of her stoicism and self-effacement are gradually loosened once Hunter rescues her from a raging blizzard and brings her into his cabin to recover. They begin to heal each other, and Evans whips up the sort of dramatic intensity he has perfected, and which his legions of fans seem to love. *Patty Engelmann*

Review

"Booklist" Evans whips up the sort of dramatic intensity he has perfected, and which his legions of fans seem to love.

"Publishers Weekly" This "story of redemption" will undoubtedly find its audience.

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