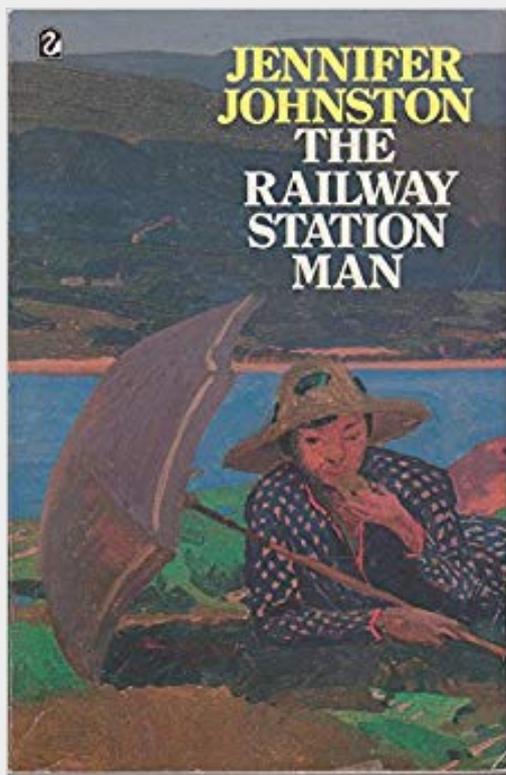


The Railway Station Man (Flamingo S.) by Jennifer Johnston



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Author: Jennifer Johnston

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Helen has retreated to the remote north-west coast of Ireland to paint the sea and the shore, and to be alone with her past. English war hero Roger Hawthorne has settled in the neglected railway station house nearby. Mutilated and sick at heart, with the help of a young lad he has begun painstakingly to restore the derelict branch line station. Soon Roger and Helen form a bond which, over gramophone music, dancing and champagne, deepens into love. But Helen, enjoying her first taste of happiness in years, is to learn just how brutally fleeting it can be.



Reviews of the **The Railway Station Man (Flamingo S.)** by Jennifer Johnston



1. Oveley

"The Railway Station Man" is an unusual novel. It is not terribly long, and we are offered only a very brief snapshot into the lives of the characters around which the story evolves. The main character is a widow who seeks a new life in a small coastal village in Ireland after her husband is tragically killed and finds a sort of guilty hard won happiness with her painting and her cat. Her loneliness is broken occasionally by the visits of her distant son, and eventually she finds a different sort of happiness with the eccentric war hero who has bought the local abandoned railway station with a view to restoring it.

If this is a novel of anything however, it is how fleeting any happiness can be. In the background of this seemingly innocent tale is the great Irish "troubles" - hints of the IRA and matters far from innocent. It has all the ingredients for a rich and fascinating tale.

However, all of these ingredients do not really make for the wonderful tale that it could be - it falls a little far from the mark. We do not get to know these pivotal characters very well - things are hinted at in their past but never elaborated on. There is some issue brewing in the background, and somehow this is only hinted at until the shocking conclusion - shocking in both what happens and how abruptly it finishes the book. It is certainly well written, and has the promise of a far greater novel, but that is all it is - the promise of a great novel, and one that falls way short.

2. JoldGold

This is an odd book about love found, and hinted at, and lost. In the midst of all of this there is the spectre of the violent times in Ireland, and I felt quite uncomfortable with these hints, which are never fully explained. It is really different, but I am not really sure that I liked it. Well written, but still not sure!

3. Kaim

I had a problem with the lack of dialogue tags at first but overcame that

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