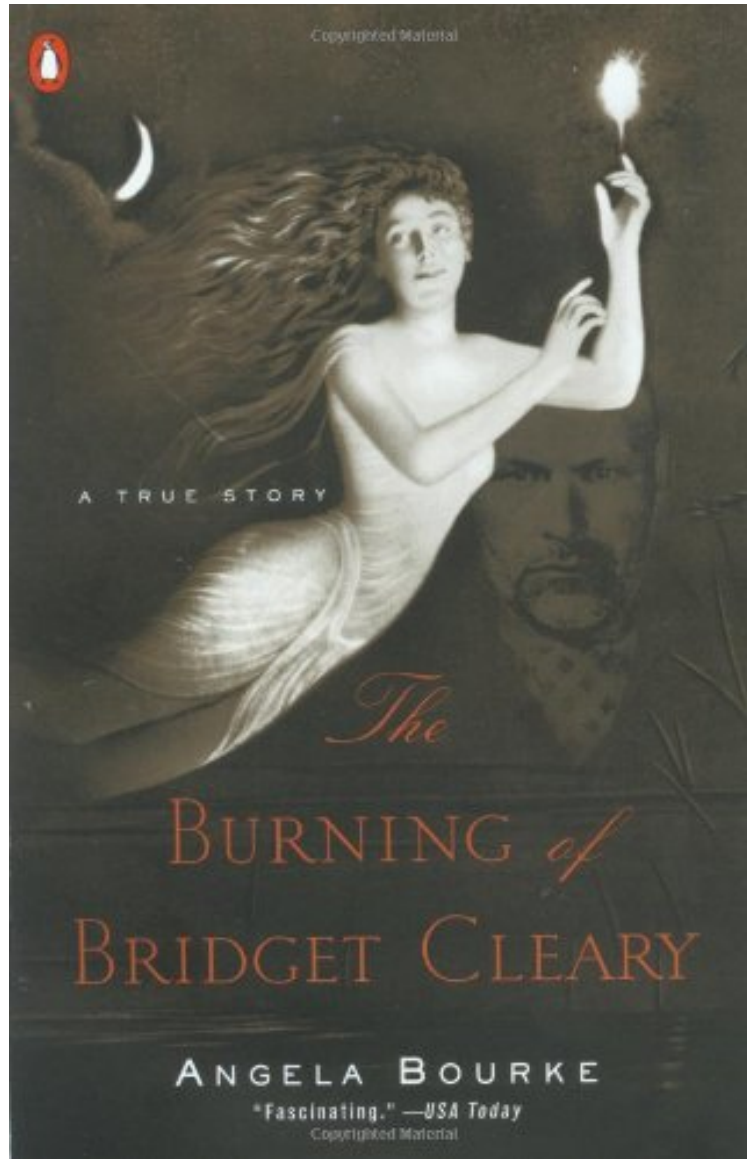


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The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story

Angela Bourke

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#154509 in Books Angela Bourke 2001-07-01 2001-07-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.80 x .70 x 5.101, .55 #File Name: 0141002026320 pages The Burning of Bridget Cleary A True Story | File size: 65.Mb

Angela Bourke : The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Also known as "The Fairy Wife" By Diana S. Long Fascinating read. I applaud the author for her efforts in doing such extensive research and presenting the facts and doing so in an unbiased fashion. It would serve no purpose to degrade a specific group of people for beliefs contrary to more enlightened societies and the author takes great care in expounding this clearly. The work reads as a documentary of

events as they occurred. I did like the fact the author also added some of the other events occurring around the same time but did not overshadow the topic of this work, being the death of a young woman, Bridget Cleary.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. "THE FAIRIES MADE ME DO IT! By Joseph R. Calamia A 113 year old murder mystery equal to the tale of Lizzy Borden and almost every bit as violent as the actions of "Jack the Ripper." The Burning of Bridget Cleary by Angela Bourke becomes a contemporary 19th century postscript of the "Salem Witch Trials." Unlike those cases of notoriety, the main suspects in this case were ... "Irish Fairies!" Irish Fairies that is, with the assistance of poor Bridget Cleary's husband (and several family members). In 1895, Michael Cleary beat, and then set his wife, Bridget on fire in their "salubrious Irish cottage." Michael took it upon himself to "exorcise" the Fairies from her with a good dose of cleansing fire and just for good measure, added an accelerant of paraffin oil from a near by lamp. Surely the Fairies vacated the premises after that but, unfortunately ... so did the life of Bridget. Superstition, premeditated murder or, lustful killing... you be the judge. The reality of a hangman's noose ironically over shadowed the world of demonic fairies and Michael Cleary (and family members) withdrew their plea of "Not Guilty" and opted to plead to the charge of "Manslaughter" (at least, the suffix portion of that word describes the real act). For that plea, Michael Cleary received 5 years and was subsequently released early for "Good Behavior." Angela Bourke did a superb job of introducing the reader to the cultural aspects of Irish lore, and superstition (especially in Chapter 2). She weaves this world of Fairies and Celtic superstitions throughout the book and it's tragic story. However, much of her information seemed out of order and tended to bog down the flow of the case story that she was trying to portray. It was as though, the book became a mixture of college text, and historical biography. Despite the interesting information put forth by the author, the book is not necessarily a smooth read. Had Ms. Bourke utilized a different style of writing, the story would have been much more exciting to follow. If, you are a student of turn of the century murder cases, or a collector of Celtic lore, then this book would be a good one to have at least, for reference material. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. You'll burn thru this one! By holly cummings Couldn't put it down!

In 1895, Bridget Cleary, a strong-minded and independent young woman, disappeared from her house in rural Tipperary. At first her family claimed she had been taken by fairies-but then her badly burned body was found in a shallow grave. Bridget's husband, father, aunt, and four cousins were arrested and tried for murder, creating one of the first mass media sensations in Ireland and England as people tried to make sense of what had happened. Meanwhile, Tory newspapers in Ireland and Britain seized on the scandal to discredit the cause of Home Rule, playing on lingering fears of a savage Irish peasantry. Combining historical detective work, acute social analysis, and meticulous original scholarship, Angela Bourke investigates Bridget's murder.

.com In March 1895, Bridget Cleary became ill. Her husband, Michael, and a number of neighbors and relatives became convinced that she was a fairy changeling and tortured her to death. This grisly true story forms the basis of Angela Bourke's outstanding narrative *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*, in which the whole context of this "crime" and its punishment is sparsely and powerfully laid out. Bourke's style, judgment, and eye for detail are superb. There are scenes in this book of appalling vividness--in particular, the chapters concerned with poor Bridget's end. The closed room, the men yelling questions at her, trying to force her to eat herbs boiled in milk (if she could eat them, then she might be the real Bridget and not the changeling), manhandling her; "lifting her body and winding it backwards and forwards, yelling, 'away with you; come home, Bridget, in the name of God!' while slapping her." On March 14, they held her over the fire to drive the spirits out, and on March 15, Bridget's husband set fire to her nightgown, throwing lamp oil on her to make the fire burn more fiercely. "She's not my wife," he told the assembled people. "You'll soon see her go up the chimney." This is a chilling story, one that stays with you, creepily, long after you have finished reading. Like Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, it seems to open itself to a wide variety of interpretation, and Bourke's balancing of old-world superstitious Ireland against the new rational nation about to be born is expert. These events may be a hundred years old, but they come over as frighteningly contemporary. --Adam Roberts, .co.uk From Publishers Weekly A wonderful example of narrative cultural history, this text examines a pivotal moment in Irish history, through folklore and language. In 1895, Bridget Cleary, of Ireland's County Tipperary, caught a bad cold which her husband interpreted as a sign that she'd been taken by a "fairie." "She's not my wife," Michael Cleary said, "she's an old deceiver sent in place of my wife." After trying to treat her with herbs, "first milk" and urine, Michael burned his wife to death. When her body was discovered in a shallow grave, the Royal Irish Constabulary, who saw her death as evidence of Ireland's backwardness (and hence justification of the British colonial presence in the region) rounded up a band of men including Michael and tried them for murder. As she pieces together the details of these events, Bourke (senior lecturer in Irish at University College, Dublin) tells the history as a deeply rooted collision of cultures: the accused Irish believed that they'd justifiably snuffed out a fairy changeling; the British authorities called it murder. Fairies, Bourke argues, held an important place in 19th-century Irish culture, but fairy scares were often evidence of larger personal and social conflict. In Bridget Cleary's case, she may have been the victim of unresolved marital trouble (she was barren, opinionated and financially self-supporting). Found guilty of manslaughter and sent to prison, Michael Cleary, upon his release in 1910, emigrated to Canada, but the legend of

Bridget Cleary lives on in a Tipperary children's rhyme: "Are you a witch or are you a fairy,/ Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?" This thoughtful and disturbing book gives the legend a new, more complicated cultural life. (Aug.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal In spring 1895 in Ireland, some men reported to their local priest that young Bridget Cleary, who was known to have been ill, had been burned to death by family members, including her husband, in a case of fairy exorcism. The priest in turn went to the police, who found Bridget's charred body and then arrested nine family members, neighbors, and friends in connection with the incident. The subsequent trial became a weapon in the hands of Tories opposed to Home Rule for Ireland. After all, how could one grant political autonomy to a people still so in the grip of superstition? Of the two new books that examine this case, Bourke's is the more readable. Bourke, a lecturer in Irish at University College Dublin who has published journal articles on the Irish fairy tradition, exhibits a more balanced grasp of the story and a greater intimacy with the culture than Hoff, an American academic who has written books on Nixon and Hoover, and coauthor Yeates, a freelance writer of family histories. Frustratingly, Hoff and Yeates take almost 100 pages even to get to Bridget. Because Bridget's murder offers a window into the changing world of Irish peasantry in the late 19th century, her tragic but fascinating story will interest many. Bourke's book would suffice for public and most academic libraries, though Hoff and Yeates's would be a useful additional title for larger Irish collections. DCharlie Cowling, SUNY at Brockport Lib. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.