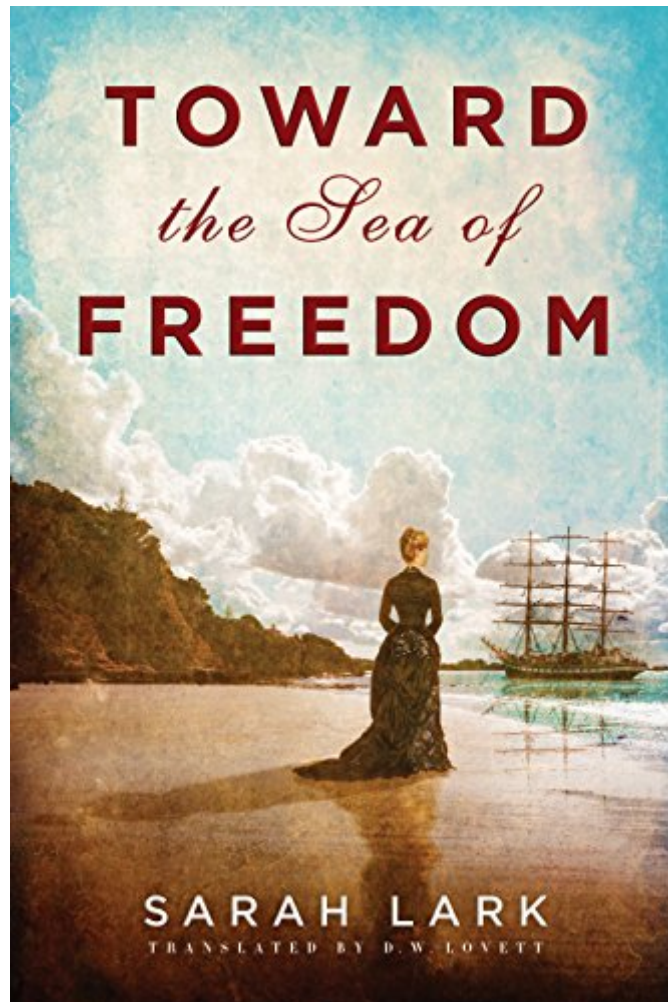


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# Toward The Sea Of Freedom



## Synopsis

In mid-nineteenth-century Ireland, charming Kathleen and dashing Michael harbor secrets and dreams. Imagining a life beyond the kitchen and fields of the wealthy family they both work for, they plot to leave their homeland, marry, and raise the child Kathleen is secretly carrying. The luck of the Irish, however, is not on their side. Soon, they find themselves swept up in circumstances they never could have fathomed. Kathleen is forced to marry against her will and immigrate to New Zealand. Michael is imprisoned for rebellion and exiled to Australia. As time passes and their new lives march on, they long for those stolen moments in the lush green fields of their native land. And they both still dream of escape, with no idea of how close fate will eventually bring them.

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## Customer Reviews

Michael and Kathleen grow up together in nineteenth century Ireland, at a time when the majority of the Irish are starving because of the potato blight. They dream of a better life together away from the emerald isle. Michael has a risky plan to get the money to start their new life. When Kathleen gets pregnant they have to bring it forward. Sadly fate is not on their side. Michael gets caught on

the wrong side of the law and is transported to Australia. Kathleen, because of her condition, is forced to marry and immigrates to New Zealand with her new husband. As the years pass Michael and Kathleen try to make the best of the separate lives they have been dealt. Nevertheless they frequently day dream about their brief past, each longing to escape their current lives so that one day they can be together again. The story was beautifully written and captivating. It transports you back in time and gives you a vivid idea of what life in nineteenth century New Zealand was probably like. It felt authentic, the author has put a lot of care into her research which shows in the detail of the historical facts and the way she describes the landscape. The characters are very human, as portrayed by their determination, hopes and dreams but they also have their flaws which makes them realistic. Overall, another great book by Sarah Lark, of the same quality as the *Land of the Long White Cloud*™ saga. It was thoroughly enjoyable. Fans of historical fiction will not want to miss this book. Review copy provided through NetGalley in exchange for a honest review.

Kathleen and Micheal grow up together in Ireland, fall in love, want to leave Ireland together, because of the potato famine and immigrate to America where they won't be bound by the English Caste system. They pin all of their hopes and dreams of being together and the freedom that they will have in America. When Kathleen becomes pregnant, without being wed, her family urges her to marry another--Micheal has been convicted of stealing grain and is shipped off to the Penal colony in Australia. Reluctantly, Kathleen weds Ian Coltrane, who is a dishonest horse trader. The book follows Kathleen's miserable life with Ian and they have 3 children. Michael meets a fellow penal colony convict named Lizzie on the ship that is bound for Australia. Lizzie fancies herself in love with Michael, but Michael only cares for his Kathleen. Sixteen years go by, and Kathleen becomes a widow. She finds Micheal not far from where she lives in New Zealand. This was a great adventure, romance novel. Reminded me of *The Thorn Birds*, in some ways, as it follows the characters through their lives. It has claimed its spot on my favorites shelf.

This was a very good story but it did drag on in some places. And one of the main characters could've had less sexual encounters (altho not explicit). Not nearly as good as her *Long White Cloud* series...but worth the read none the less.

As a New Zealander I appreciated the dedication and accuracy that Sara Lark has put into the research for this book. I was pleasantly surprised, because the Maori culture has many different facets but I think she incorporated their way of life very well and describing the breaking in of the

land in Canterbury and other parts of the country resonates with the way the women worked and often brought up large families. It wasn't an easy life by any means. They were strong and resilient women and were often not treated with the respect they deserved, it was very much a man's world! The gold digging rush is very pertinent to New Zealand and I think she depicted this very well, so true that the Maori knew where to tap into the gold they knew the land before the Pakeha came. I enjoyed the storyline and I'm glad all the characters sorted themselves out in the end. Highly recommend and I'll read more of her books.

I read this book in one entire day (thanks to a wild snowstorm ~18" deep). Could not put book down. The characters were so realistic, life in Ireland so achingly horrific, the strength and struggles to get to (and live) in Australia & New Zealand...the humanity and inhumanity of people all made this book feel as though a door to history was opened for inspection and recognition. Thank you for writing it.

Toward the Sea of Freedom is an interesting historical novel on the British policy of shipping people off to Australia for minor offenses such as stealing a loaf of bread to avoid starving. I have read other books on this topic but this is the first one to address how the Australian convicts escaped to New Zealand and began new lives in that country. The book also manages to bring in a decent account of Maori culture. The treatment of women as accepted policy of the times was also deeply involved. I liked the book and felt that I gained some new knowledge. The story was captivating and I found it hard to put down.

Enjoyed this book. It's a great tale of adventure and romance but for me it lacked detail, also if you have read her trilogy you will find some of the story repeats itself as it deals with similar themes. Nevertheless a pleasant read.

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