



# The Blind Astronomer's Daughter

*John Pipkin*

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In late-eighteenth-century Ireland, Caroline Ainsworth is an accidental stargazer and an orphan. Her adopted father, the astronomer Arthur Ainsworth, lived a life of obsession, hunting an unknown planet near Mercury, often with his precocious daughter at his side. But his fevered search left him blind from staring into the sun; his love and livelihood lost to him, he chose death over a darkened life.

Grief-stricken, Caroline abandons the search. She buries her love for Finnegan O'Siodha, the blacksmith's gifted, tinkering son. But her father has left her more than she knew: his cryptic atlas holds the secret to finding a new world at the remote edge of the sky. As Caroline reluctantly resumes the search and confronts her longings, Ireland is swept into rebellion, and Caroline and Finnegan plunged into its violence.

Caroline's story unfolds against the background of factual events, and the biography of real-life and legendary astronomer William Herschel. In 1781, Herschel is still an obscure German musician, living with his sister in Bath, England, and building telescopes. Between music lessons, both Herschels study the heavens, William compiling a catalogue of double-stars. And when, quite by accident, he stumbles upon a new planet, far beyond the known boundaries of the solar system, his discovery will forever transform the lives of all these characters.

*The Blind Astronomer's Daughter* is a novel of lives torn between personal desire and historical urgency, set in a time of fiery rebellion and stunning scientific advancement -intricate, lushly rendered, and unforgettable.

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