

The Secret Scripture: A Novel

By Sebastian Barry

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The Secret Scripture: A Novel By Sebastian Barry

An epic story of family, love, and unavoidable tragedy from the two-time Man Booker Prize finalist. Now a major motion picture starring Rooney Mara. Sebastian Barry's latest novel, *Days Without End*, is now available.

Sebastian Barry's novels have been hugely admired by readers and critics, and in 2005 his novel *A Long Long Way* was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. In *The Secret Scripture*, Barry revisits County Sligo, Ireland, the setting for his previous three books, to tell the unforgettable story of Roseanne McNulty. Once one of the most beguiling women in Sligo, she is now a resident of Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital and nearing her hundredth year. Set against an Ireland besieged by conflict, *The Secret Scripture* is an engrossing tale of one woman's life, and a vivid reminder of the stranglehold that the Catholic church had on individuals throughout much of the twentieth century. *The Secret Scripture* is soon to be a film starring Rooney Mara and Vanessa Redgrave.

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The Secret Scripture: A Novel By Sebastian Barry Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
The latest from Barry (whose *A Long Way* was shortlisted for the 2005 Booker) pits two contradictory narratives against each other in an attempt to solve the mystery of a 100-year-old mental patient. That patient, Roseanne McNulty, decides to undertake an autobiography and writes of an ill-fated childhood spent with her father, Joe Clear. A cemetery superintendent, Joe is drawn into Ireland's 1922 civil war when a group of irregulars brings a slain comrade to the cemetery and are discovered by a division of Free-Staters. Meanwhile, Roseanne's psychiatrist, Dr. Grene, investigating Roseanne's original commitment in preparation for her transfer to a new hospital, discovers through the papers of the local parish priest, Fr. Gaunt, that Roseanne's father was actually a police sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary. The mysteries multiply when Roseanne reveals that Fr. Gaunt annulled her marriage after glimpsing her in the company of another man; Gaunt's official charge was nymphomania, and the cumulative fallout led to a string of tragedies. Written in captivating, lyrical prose, Barry's novel is both a sparkling literary puzzle and a stark cautionary tale of corrupted power. *(June)*
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From Booklist
Starred Review From the first page, Barry’s novel sweeps along like the Garravogue River through Sligo town, taking “the rubbish down to the seas, and bits of things that were once owned by people and pulled from the banks, and bodies, too, if rarely, oh, and poor babies, that were embarrassments, the odd time.” We are in the head and the journal of 100-year-old “mad” Roseanne McNulty, locked up for decades in an asylum in rural west Ireland. She has begun writing her life story, hiding it nightly beneath her bedroom’s creaking floorboards. Simultaneously, her putative therapist, Dr. Grene, who barely knows her, much less her history or prognosis, begins an observation journal about her. The asylum is to be downsized, and he must determine whether she is sane enough to live on her own. He attempts to reconstruct the reasons for her imprisonment, as it turns out to be, and that pitches the novel into the dark depths of Ireland’s civil war and the antiwoman proscriptions on sexuality of the national regime Joyce famously called “priestridden.” Barry weaves together Grene’s and Roseanne’s stories, which are ultimately the same story, masterfully and with intense emotionality that nevertheless refuses to become maudlin. Another notable part of Barry’s artistry is the sheer poetry of his prose, now heart-stoppingly lyrical, now heart-poundingly thrilling. An unforgettable portrait of mid-twentieth-century Ireland. --Patricia Monaghan

Review
"[Barry writes] in language of surpassing beauty. . . . It is like a song, with all the pulse of the Irish language, a song sung liltingly and plaintively from the top of Ben Bulben into the airy night." —Dinitia Smith, *The New York Times*

"Barry recounts all this in prose of often startling beauty. Just as he describes people stopping in the street to look at Roseanne, so I often found myself stopping to look at the sentences he gave her, wanting to pause and copy them down." —Margot Livesey, *The Boston Globe*

"Luminous and lyrical."—*O, The Oprah Magazine*

"A great novel about a ninety-nine-year-old woman...trying to understand the truth of her life...Along the way are some of the most beautifully formed prose passages I have ever read." —Thomas Cahill, author of *How the Irish Saved Civilization*

"Written in captivating, lyrical prose, Barry's novel is both a sparkling literary puzzle and a stark cautionary tale of corrupted power." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Part of Barry's artistry is the sheer poetry of his prose, now heart-stoppingly lyrical, now heart-poundingly thrilling. An unforgettable portrait of mid-twentieth-century Ireland." —*Booklist*

"It is a poignant story of the horrors and hypocrisies of rural Ireland, the cruelties of civil war, and the pernicious influence of the priesthood. Roseanne is a vivid and engaging protagonist, and Barry makes rich use of the circumlocutions of his native tongue." —*The Daily Mail* (London)

"Dark, awkward, and exceptionally finely written."—*The Telegraph* (London)

"In this book, the worlds each character builds are significantly, tantalizingly estranged from each other. The novel's delight lies in the way in which the two tales—and, eventually the two lives—begin to coalesce, to the utter surprise of both the characters and the reader."
—*The Economist*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elizabeth Hager:

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children till adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for all of us. The book The Secret Scripture: A Novel had been making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The guide The Secret Scripture: A Novel is not only giving you considerably more new information but also to be your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship with all the book The Secret Scripture: A Novel. You never really feel lose out for everything if you read some books.

Leonard Palmer:

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Carl Speed:

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