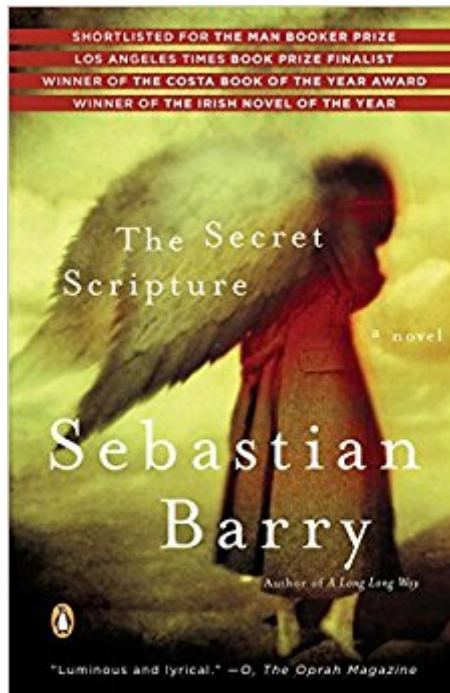




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# The Secret Scripture: A Novel



## Synopsis

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. *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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Playwright Barry's touching novel turned plenty of heads upon its release, as an elderly mental patient documents her life and times in County Sligo, Ireland, while her doctor uncovers a remarkably different story of her existence. Wanda McCaddon's British dialect is no hindrance to her remarkable portrayal of protagonist Roseanne McNulty, as she leaps into character with a stunning, perfect Irish accent that captures every nuance of the West Coast dialect. McCaddon's performance is among the best of the year. Her believable portrayal is perfectly

modulated and nuance-filled, creating a stunning listening experience. A Viking hardcover (Reviews, Mar. 31). (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** From the first page, Barry's novel sweeps along like the Garraogue 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 --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Loved this book. Authentic Irish prose. Surprise ending.

A difficult subject to get your head around - this book brings out the raw impact of civil war and religious intolerance and its impact on ordinary people .

This was a good book, but so sad and depressing! Reason for my three stars is that I was not ready for the depressing story that this book portrayed...

A disturbing account of the troubled Ireland of the 1920's through to more recent times; the story begins at the end of the 'civil war' when factions fought over the Treaty with England brokered by Michael Collins. The Priesthood in Ireland essentially ruled the land and in places priests were both

corrupt and cruel. Such is this tale of a beautiful young woman's abuse and betrayal, and eventual committal to a psychiatric hospital for nearly all her adult life. It is a well written, tragic story; gripping but not for the faint hearted. Ireland in those days was a hard place to live, especially for non-Catholics in rural Co. Sligo. The ending is intriguing.

I loved this book. I am amazed by the talent of the author who could provide such an interesting read through the words of a patient and her doctor. The book held me captive until the end, learning the patient's story and her doctor's involvement in her diagnosis. I never "saw" the end coming! I wondered about several things: did she mean for her journal to be found? Did she know who the doctor really was? The book served as a good discussion for our book club since it left you hanging and questioning..

This book subtly pointed out differences in individuals' outlooks and memories, which, of course, colored their later lives. The writing is very good; a "chance" phrase can paint a whole picture. I was much struck by this piece of fairly recent Irish history and how it affected the characters and the story. Also, having been brainwashed by the press, I have always seen rifts between north and south; in "The Secret Scripture", it's more east and west. Hmm. The way the story unfolds reminds me very much of the way William DeMorgan's tales are so intricately woven; go around the bend, and there's another surprise. That's why I ordered "The Whereabouts of Enneas McNulty", which was promptly borrowed from me before I had a chance to look at it.

Excellent book. Beautifully written! Very unexpected ending.

Barry captures the elegant , poetic, suffering and triumphant voices of generations of Irish past and present. In Barry's exquisite style I hear the echoes of Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, Kavaghan, and Heaney but none so loud and tender as the voice of my grandmother. A philosophy so profound and fitting that it can only be worn snugly by those that conquer life, albeit with suffering, acceptance, and resolve. There is much to be learned in the broad strokes of Barry's storytelling and in the delicate and precise whispers of his prose.. The Secret Scriptures is a book to be treasured.

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