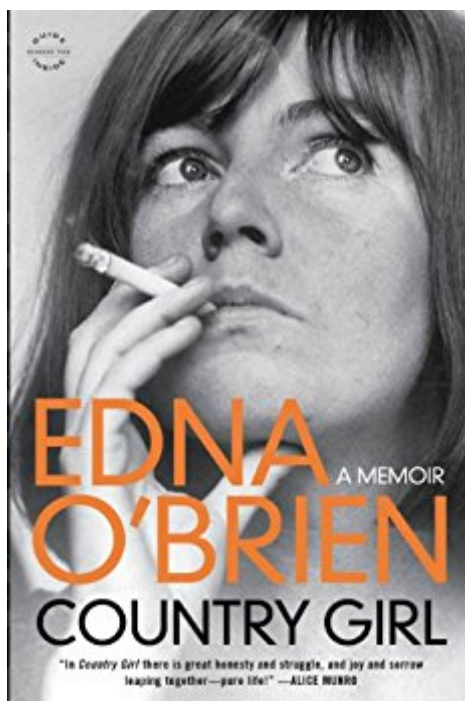


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Country Girl: A Memoir



Synopsis

"Country Girl is Edna O'Brien's exquisite account of her dashing, barrier-busting, up-and-down life."--National Public Radio

When Edna O'Brien's first novel, *The Country Girls*, was published in 1960, it so scandalized the O'Briens' local parish that the book was burned by its priest. O'Brien was undeterred and has since created a body of work that bears comparison with the best writing of the twentieth century. *Country Girl* brings us face-to-face with a life of high drama and contemplation. Starting with O'Brien's birth in a grand but deteriorating house in Ireland, her story moves through convent school to elopement, divorce, single-motherhood, the wild parties of the '60s in London, and encounters with Hollywood giants, pop stars, and literary titans. There is love and unrequited love, and the glamour of trips to America as a celebrated writer and the guest of Jackie Onassis and Hillary Clinton. *Country Girl* is a rich and heady accounting of the events, people, emotions, and landscape that have imprinted upon and enhanced one lifetime.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was so excited to see this memoir emerge, I barely wait for the download. I was eager to hear

O'Brien's sense of her extraordinary life as a younger writer. The author's childhood is rendered in exquisite, loaded imagery, pregnant with the foreboding of how her country will treat her in the future. Her journey to the city and to adulthood is beautifully handled. Indeed, all of the scenes (few through there are) in which O'Brien reflects on her life, choices and experiences, are rendered in a kind of lyrical magic realism. They are painterly and exquisite but as far removed from emotional truth as if she were writing of a monarch or consumptive princess. We hear of the ill treatment she receives at the hands of men, especially her (former) husband. But it is as though she is made of glass - we are not engaged into the emotional experiences or the shifts in self which result. I understand that memoirists sometimes gild the lily or soften the blow - this is her sons' father, after all. But when she speaks of basically anonymous figures, there is no risk to anyone in revealing the impact - formative, educative - of the experience. In fact, the greatest emotional truth actually comes in O'Brien's discussion of her loss of custody - sections which are tightly paced and read like a roman a'policier, so edged and gripping are they. But the writing in that section is the highlight of the book. There are seemingly endless sections which list famous people the author has met and parties she went to and celebrities who behaved badly - like endless landscape imagery, I just ran my eye over these sections. Then comes the self pity - while understandable and no doubt justified, it makes for heavy terrain for the reader.

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