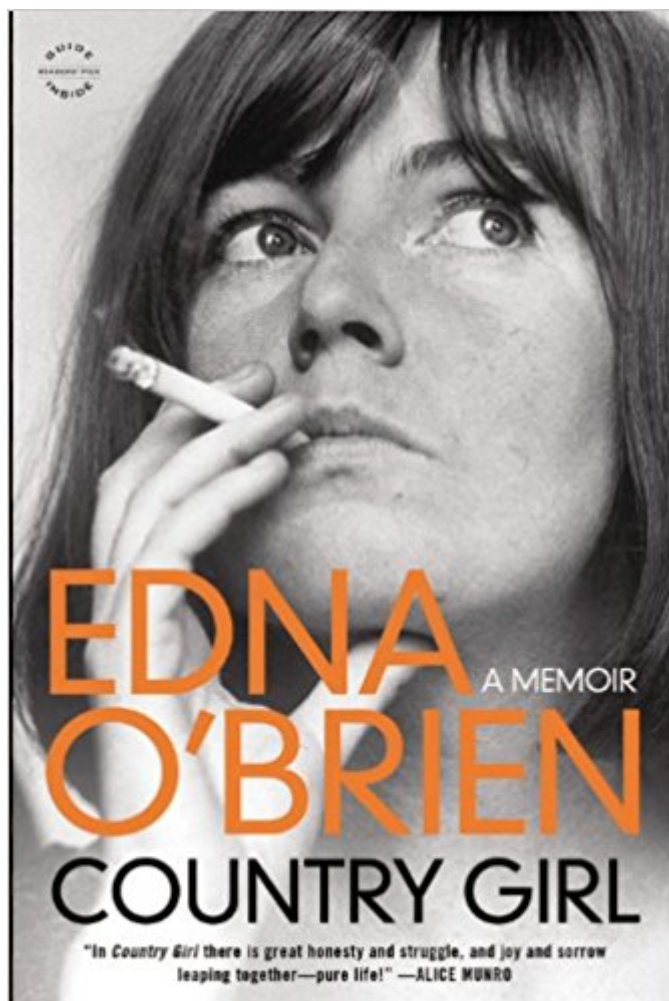


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# Country Girl: A Memoir (Back Bay Readers' Pick)



## 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.

## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** The doyenne of contemporary Irish letters did not enjoy a straight-line rise to international fame and critical regard. In fact, for many years, O'Brien's novels were banned in her native Ireland for indecency. Now, of course, in more relaxed and open-minded times, her fiction (brilliant short stories as well as novels) is seen for what it always was, richly illuminating and, yes, candid depictions of women's needs and desires, rendered with no sentimentality or salaciousness. Born into a rural family that once knew wealth but at the time of her birth had only memories of better times, Edna had a precocious interest in being a writer. Convent schooling is remembered in this absorbing memoir as "dour." Relatively sophisticated Dublin beckoned. She answered the call by apprenticing in a chemist's shop in the capital, all the while "convinced she would meet poets and that one day she would be admitted into the world of letters." She and the husband she had acquired moved to London (her marriage was to prove untenable), and there she began writing in earnest and with success. At this point in her remembrance, her memoir shifts into something different in substance and tone. Her unembellished Irish upbringing gives way to the glamour of the celebrity life she led in London. Still, her book is a beautifully expressed testament to a writer's tenacity. --Brad Hooper

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**Praise for *Country Girl***"Ms. O'Brien has long and correctly been recognized as among the greatest Irish writers of the 20th century. She's had an outsize life to match her outsize talent."--Dwight

Garner, New York Times"O'Brien's account of her life is completely irresistible."--Kate Tuttle, Boston Globe"O'Brien's religion has been literature; to it she has remained devout, with a fervor that is contagious...She is no saint. She is an icon."--Stacy Schiff, New York Times Book Review"In prose as lyrical and exacting as any in O'Brien's fiction, Country Girl evokes both the solitariness and the adventure of a life devoted to writing."--Megan O'Grady, Vogue"Edna O'Brien has made of her memories something of both precision and depth, a book that, letting us see her as she was, jumps with an all-consuming curiosity from one lucidly narrated event to another."--Philip Roth"In Country Girl there is great honesty and struggle, and joy and sorrow leaping together--pure life!"--Alice Munro"You must suffer to become yourself, and it doesn't get easier. I took heart from Country Girl, both as the self-portrait of a great prose stylist, and an exemplary female survivor."--Judith Thurman, "Best Books of 2012," The New Yorker"Flashes of prodigious beauty and power."--Hilary Mantel"The doyenne of contemporary Irish letters did not enjoy a straight-line rise to international fame and critical regard. . . Now, of course, O'Brien's fiction (brilliant short stories as well as novels) is seen for what it always was, richly illuminating and, yes, candid depictions of women's needs and desires, rendered with no sentimentality or salaciousness. . . Her book is a beautifully expressed testament to a writer's tenacity."- "Demure reflections on her celebrated literary life well lived comprise this lovely memoir....O'Brien always returns to the enduring heart of her writing."-> (starred review)

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