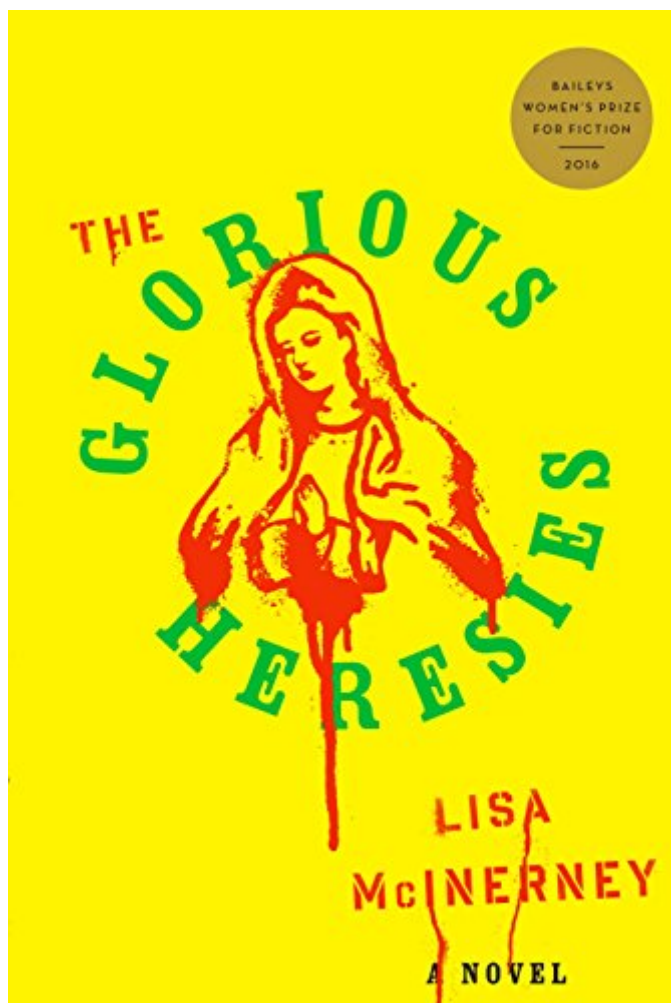


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The Glorious Heresies: A Novel



Synopsis

From Lisa McNerney, hailed by The Irish Times as "arguably the most talented writer at work in Ireland today," comes *The Glorious Heresies*, a searing debut novel about life on the fringes of Ireland's post-crash society. When grandmother Maureen Phelan is surprised in her home by a stranger, she clubs the intruder with a Holy Stone. The consequences of this unplanned murder connect four misfits struggling against their meager circumstances. Ryan is a fifteen-year-old drug dealer desperate not to turn out like his alcoholic father, Tony, whose feud with his next-door neighbor threatens to ruin his family. Georgie is a sex worker who half-heartedly joins a born-again movement to escape her profession and drug habit. And Jimmy Phelan, the most fearsome gangster in the city and Maureen's estranged son, finds that his mother's bizarre attempts at redemption threaten his entire organization. Biting and darkly funny, *The Glorious Heresies* presents an unforgettable vision of a city plagued by poverty and exploitation, where salvation still awaits in the most unexpected places.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author of THE GLORIOUS HERESIES, Lisa McNerney, has a bio around the traps that's worded: "Lisa McNerney is from Galway and is the author of award-winning blog 'Arse End of Ireland'. The Irish Times has called her 'the most talented writer at work in Ireland today'. Her mother remains unimpressed. "Get that tone and there's every chance you're going to love this book. As the blurb says - "one messy murder affects the lives of five misfits who exist on the fringes of Ireland's post-crash society". It doesn't mention that the murder's not the only messy thing here. These are so many messed up, screwed up people, families, relationships, and ways of life in this book that you're going to need to sit up and pay very close attention. Which is no trial at all given that this is madness on the page, written with a wonderfully dry, laconic sense of humour that doesn't pull punches. Although it does seem to have a finely tuned ability to pick just when there is the smallest possibility that the reader attention is wavering. So it can throw a couple of those punches and make damn sure that you're focused. Or else. Needless to say, opponents of swearing, mucky sex, drug dealing, and reality in all it's nastiness should step away. There will be so much here to offend that you'd be hard pressed to tell what would horrify more. For this reader, however, there was so much to love. The style of the writing, the rawness and the brutality of the message, the searing honesty of the revelations and the fast-paced, in your face way of bringing it all together work. In amongst some stellar characterisations. Ryan and his father, each battling their own crusades are equally sympathetic and needing a bloody good talking to.

As you can probably tell from the title, Lisa McNerney's The Glorious Heresies irreverently sets about demolishing a lot of the institutions and ideals that underpin a somewhat romanticised view that persists about Ireland. All the usual targets are there and are laid into with a great big hurley stick - the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church, the treatment of women and the failings of crooked politicians, but the author doesn't spare the Irish themselves or hold any idealised notions about family life. Actually, as irreverent and brutal as it appears - and it does get very dark into alcoholism, abuse, drug dealing and prostitution - The Glorious Heresies is a little more subtle and colourful than it seems. It doesn't set out to rip into everyone as much as force you to evaluate people in a more realistic light and really consider the harm that has been done by those institutions that would rather wash their sins under the carpet and pretend they don't exist. Lisa McNerney allows you no such comfortable illusions. So, no, the characters you meet in the novel aren't particularly pleasant, but they reflect another growing cross section of the community that is representative of a lot of the problems being faced in Ireland, and specifically here, Cork. All of the characters are connected around one incident, the accidental killing of an intruder in a house where Maureen's son Jimmy

Phelan has put her up. The house has a history, so does Jimmy, and so does the dead man who unfortunately came to be there. The disposal of the body by Tony Cusack (who recognises the victim) opens up a whole other can of worms.

I am just getting back into the country after being in Montreal for a few days and where I read only one book, which will be reviewed tomorrow, but I finished *The Glorious Heresies* by Lisa McNerney right before I left and it is a book that stuck with me the entire week. I have passed by this book in the bookstore several times. I would pick it up, read the back, and for some reason would put it back on the shelf. The next week, I would pick it up, go back and forth, and then put it down. When I saw it on Blogging for Books, I figured I would give it a try as it was now fate. When I started the book and even when I finished it, I didn't much care for it. It is a really IRISH book. I don't write that in a derogatory way, but many Irish books and movies are dark in tone with a bit of black comedy running throughout. The characters are often working class with troubled lives. Irish books are often more real in a world where escape is usually in order. This book is a very Irish book in that sense. We are in Cork a working class town, where Jimmy is a big mobster and he has just put his mother Maureen into a house he owns. The house used to be an old brothel where Georgie, a 16 year old run away now prostitute who is hooked on drugs used to work. Georgie winds up in a religious commune after her boyfriend/pimp/drug dealer disappears. There is also Ryan a 14 year old who sells drugs because he doesn't want to wind up like his father who is an alcoholic. The story is Maureen has accidentally killed an intruder with a holy stone. The intruder is now dead in her kitchen and she has to call her son to help clean the body up. The body is the connecting point to all the stories as Maureen accidentally learns the victim's name.

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