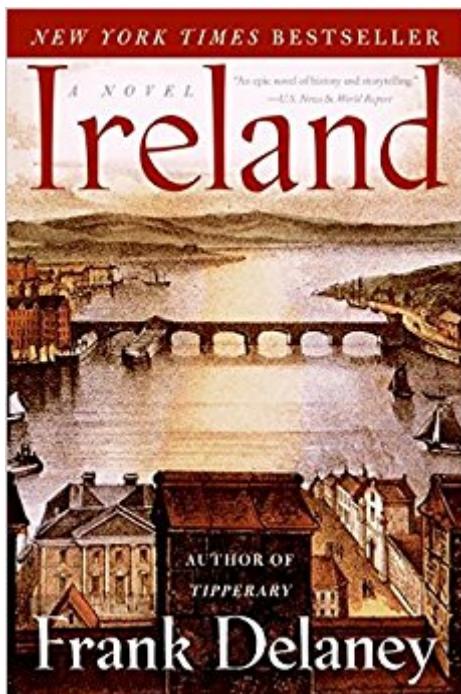


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# Ireland: A Novel



## Synopsis

In the winter of 1951, a storyteller, the last practitioner of an honored, centuries-old tradition, arrives at the home of nine-year-old Ronan O'Mara in the Irish countryside. For three wonderful evenings, the old gentleman entralls his assembled local audience with narratives of foolish kings, fabled saints, and Ireland's enduring accomplishments before moving on. But these nights change young Ronan forever, setting him on a years-long pursuit of the elusive, itinerant storyteller and the glorious tales that are no less than the saga of his tenacious and extraordinary isle.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

BBC reporter Delaney's fictionalized history of his native country, an Irish bestseller, is a sprawling, riveting read, a book of stories melding into a novel wrapped up in an Irish history text. In 1951, when Ronan O'Mara is nine, he meets the aging itinerant Storyteller, who emerges out a "silver veil" of Irish mist, hoping to trade a yarn for a hot meal. Welcomed inside, the Storyteller lights his pipe and begins, telling of the architect of Newgrange, who built "a marvelous, immortal structure... before Stonehenge in England, before the pyramids of Egypt," and the dentally challenged King Conor of Ulster, who tried, and failed, to outsmart his wife. The stories utterly captivate the young Ronan ("This is the best thing that ever, ever happened"), and they'll draw readers in, too, with their warriors and kings, drinkers and devils, all rendered cleanly and without undue sentimentality. When Ronan's mother banishes the Storyteller for telling a blasphemous tale, Ronan vows to find him. He also becomes fascinated by Irish myth and legend, and, as the years pass, he discovers his own gift for storytelling. Eventually, he sets off, traversing Ireland on foot to find his mentor. Past and present

weave together as Delaney entwines the lives of the Storyteller and Ronan in this rich and satisfying book. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

To paraphrase a World War I song, it's a long, long way to the end of Delaney's reland--in more ways than one. In 1951, Alison O'Mara cast out the "last" seanachi, a wandering storyteller who told stories from Irish history and myth to the household and neighbors in exchange for housing and food. The old man left, taking with him the family's peace, stirring up family tensions and secrets. By alternating folklore and historical stories with the story of the O'Mara family, Delaney paints a vivid portrait of the country and fits both storyteller and family into it. There's something for everyone in this book: newcomers to Irish history will relish the rich stories based on real and imagined characters, while readers familiar with tales of the old sod will plow through the stories to find out what happens with the O'Maras. Heavy publicity will ensure demand for this novel, which recalls the work of James Michener and will appeal to readers of family sagas and popular historical fiction.

Ellen Loughran

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Long before books became readily available, traveling story tellers went from town to town, telling stories of great battles, famous and infamous rulers and little tidbits of information that enthralled audiences. Even after printing evolved, victors were most often the "scribes" that recounted important historical events; many of them openly biased. In some environs, the story teller continued setting records straight and bringing dry history to life with colorful language and exciting depictions of events. Such is the story of this novel. A young boy becomes a fanatic history buff after listening to one such story teller and spends much of his youth searching for the gifted narrator. The story teller is elusive, yet feeds the young man's interest by leaving him some of his stories at locations where the younger man was sure to follow, so as he seeks the teller, he is rewarded with more stories. This is a masterful blend of historical events and fictional characters well worth the time spent.

A book that touches the heart and soul of the Irish. No matter where you live, no matter how many years or generations since your family left you are Irish. You pass the stories down as they were passed to you. It is a land of priests and kings. You go back when you can, to physically touch the birthplace of your ancestors. It is a spiritual part of the Gael.

What an engaging story! I grew up in the South, where many Scots-Irish migrated to, where storytelling and music is part of the culture. Delaney's IRELAND is a story within a story. We follow a young lad who becomes obsessed by the travelling storyteller who tells vivid fireside stories of the myths, legends, and history of Ireland. A rift ensues between the mother and the old storyteller, driving him away too soon and hurting the boy. The book follows the storyteller as the boy follows the storyteller as he grows up. I found myself looking up certain stories told and found they were based on real events in Ireland. This book is one that you can immerse yourself in!

Delaney tells a wonderful history of Ireland through his storyteller. He leaves me wondering what part is myth, what is wishing and what is the real history? He helped me understand where and who the Irish people are. They are always happy and looking for craic (spontaneous fun) where they find it. They have a dark side as well as a cautious side and this book explains some of the "whys". It gave me a better understanding of the English problem. I really enjoyed his story of Newgrange and the architect. Ronan was a delight and a pain as a character but knowing how the Irish do have secrets and private lives it was suspense to see how he would turn out. Delaney gave me such a "feel" for the island that I will buy a hard copy for my sister who doesn't have a kindle. I look forward to his next book.

Someone I trust told me this was a good book so I bought it.! I was not disappointed and have already recommended it to several of my ex pat friends. The "story teller" format is quite unique and gives a great link to several factual and fictional stories. If you have the slightest interest in things Irish read this story.....you wont be disappointed!

In the style of James Michener with an Irish twist. This is a definite must-read if you want to discover more about Ireland's vast and intense history as shown through the eyes of a family.

One dark evening a wandering story-teller, the last seanachai, comes to a young boy's home. For several evenings the story-teller spins his tales of the people of Ireland, and then he is gone. The young man is enchanted, enthralled by the stories. Eventually he leaves home in a search to find the story-teller again. The search for the tall man with the black coat forms a net that contains story after story of the people who shaped the history of Ireland and gave it its character. This is a wonderful book, masterfully written, of great value to historians, lovers of Ireland, or anyone who

loves a good story well told.

The title, "Ireland - A Novel" does nothing to let readers understand that this is a beautifully written and engrossing tale. The characters are very believable and you become attached to them more quickly than you might imagine. However the true heroes of the book are the stories, the myths and the legends of Irish history that Delaney brings to life so clearly and with such depth of feeling you feel part of each one. I now know more about Ireland than I ever expected but I never felt I was learning. I hope anyone who can will take a chance and read this amazing novel.

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