



A Long Long Way: A Novel

By Sebastian Barry

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Praised as a "master storyteller" (*The Wall Street Journal*) and hailed for his "flawless use of language" (*Boston Herald*), Irish author and playwright Sebastian Barry has created a powerful new novel about divided loyalties and the realities of war. In 1914, Willie Dunne, barely eighteen years old, leaves behind Dublin, his family, and the girl he plans to marry in order to enlist in the Allied forces and face the Germans on the Western Front. Once there, he encounters a horror of violence and gore he could not have imagined and sustains his spirit with only the words on the pages from home and the camaraderie of the mud-covered Irish boys who fight and die by his side. Dimly aware of the political tensions that have grown in Ireland in his absence, Willie returns on leave to find a world split and ravaged by forces closer to home. Despite the comfort he finds with his family, he knows he must rejoin his regiment and fight until the end. With grace and power, Sebastian Barry vividly renders Willie's personal struggle as well as the overwhelming consequences of war.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori--that's the line from Horace (later famously quoted by war poet Wilfred Owen) that Irish poet, playwright and novelist Barry seeks to debunk in this grimly lyrical WWI novel. After four years of brutal trench fighting, Willie Dunne, once an eager soldier in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, is still a "long long way" from home. Irish Home Rule seems a distant fantasy after the miserable Easter 1916 uprising in Dublin, which Willie, back in Ireland on his first furlough, was forced to help quell, firing on his own people; relations with his pro-British father, who abhors Willie's equivocal stance on Irish nationalism, have soured; his beloved Gretta has married another man; and most of his original Irish band of brothers have been slaughtered. The novel's dauntless realism and acute figurative language recall the finest chroniclers of war (Willie supposes that dead French soldiers "lay all about their afflicted homeland like beetroots rotting in the fields"). Still, Barry lingers too long on the particulars of the battlefield--the lice, the putrid muck--while failing to adequately develop the disasters Willie must face back in Ireland. As such, this somber novel--unlike Barry's moving previous book, *Annie Dunne*, whose eponymous narrator is Willie's younger sister--often lacks the nonsoldier human faces necessary to fully counterpoint the coarseness of military conflict, though its inevitably bleak conclusion is heartrending.

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From [Booklist](#)

Willie Dunne is born in a storm during the "dying days" of Ireland. It is not an auspicious beginning. This novel of Ireland and World War I wears a cloak of gloom and doom as thick as the opening storm. Willie's mother dies young. Willie enlists in the army and fights on the Western Front. Willie's sweetheart marries another, and so on. The wartime scenes are brutally realistic. Throughout this dark novel, though, are glimpses of sweetness and light, such as a scene where Willie's father bathes the returning soldier in an attempt to rid him of lice. Those not familiar with British-Irish history may find some of the personal conflicts and politics in the novel confusing, but nevertheless a compellingly sad, if difficult, read. *Marta Segal*

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Review

"A deeply moving story of courage and fidelity."—J.M. Coetzee, Nobel Prize-winning author of *Disgrace*

"A modern masterpiece."—*The Boston Globe*

"Barry succeeds admirably in creating complex individuals who find themselves trapped in a brutal reality."—*Los Angeles Times*

"Wrenching...[Barry marches] bravely into the darkest, most dangerous terrain of human nature."—*The Christian Science Monitor*

"Nobody writes better about the trenches of the First World War than Sebastian Barry. In brutally effective prose he lays bare and celebrates the heroism of the young men whose livers were lost on the killing fields of France. His great gift is that he makes you feel he is reporting events that he's witnessed first hand."—Peter Sheridan, author of *Everything Inch of Her*

"This is Sebastian Barry's song of innocence and experience, composed with poetic grace and an eye, both

unflinching and tender, for savage detail and moments of pure beauty. It is also an astonishing display of Barry's gift for creative a memorable character, whom he has written, indelibly, back into a history which continues to haunt us."—Colm Tóibín

"Lyrical...Willie Dunne's voice, like his dilemmas, has the resonance of authenticity."—Hew Starchan, author of *The First World War*

"*A Long Long Way* is one of those novels that, as you turn it over in your mind, may just stay with you a long, long time."—*The Denver Post*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Rayes:

The book *A Long Long Way: A Novel* make one feel enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting strain or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make reading a book *A Long Long Way: A Novel* being your habit, you can get far more advantages, like add your personal capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. It is possible to know everything if you like wide open and read a book *A Long Long Way: A Novel*. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science e-book or encyclopedia or others. So , how do you think about this publication?

William Lee:

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