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"Ní Dhuibhne has a great way of mixing and merging the realistic with something otherworldly, like crossing an Alice Munro or an Anne Tyler with an Angela Carter or a Jeanette Winterson."
BOOK REVIEW



Éilís Ní Dhuibhne

The Dancers Dancing

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The Dancers Dancing Éilís Ní Dhuibhne

It is 1972, and teenagers from Dublin are spending a month in Donegal, learning Irish from their teachers and the local people. Urban dwellers released from parental control, they respond to the untamed landscape and find their own wildness.

The Dancers Dancing Details

Date : Published February 1st 2000 by Blackstaff Press (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780856406508

Author : Éilís Ní Dhuibhne

Format : Paperback 242 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Ireland, European Literature, Irish Literature, Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, Coming Of Age

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From Reader Review The Dancers Dancing for online ebook

Rebecca McNutt says

This reminded me of the 1999 film *New Waterford Girl*. Taking place in Ireland during the Seventies, *The Dancers Dancing* is a novel about rebellion and growing up in Europe.

James Duggan says

An accurate portrayal of a trip to the Gaeltacht

Nine says

I bought this while I was taking a short-lived Irish night class (it turns out Polish is actually easier, which ... isn't something I ever thought I would say). Plus in general I'm keen to learn more about Ireland, especially experiences of it that I haven't had. This novel brings things together nicely because it's about girls from Dublin and Derry meeting at the Gaeltacht in Donegal in 1972. They're at an awkward age, they've got issues to do with fickle teenage friendships, class, puberty, and, in some cases, the Troubles™. Ni Dhuibhne's writing style is clever and enjoyable, and the story moves along at a decent pace. I liked the use of foreshadowing with no real subsequent danger - that's how life works, sometimes.

Molly Ewing says

Charming Bildungsroman, this is the story of four diverse young teens beginning to grapple with what it means to be Irish as they enjoy a summer language school in a Donegal Gaeltacht village. Occasionally, a distinct omniscient voice breaks into the narrative to comment on the story, but for the most part the narrative is told through the honestly naive and self-focused 13-year-old subjects. Dhuibhne captures the reality of this particular time in a girl's life with unflinching, though kindly accuracy. They are by turns, cruel, kind, generous, self-conscious and oblivious to all but their own troubles.

VWrulesChick says

Story takes place in Ireland where by you meet Orla and her friends Aisling and Sandra during the 1970s when the Troubles occurred. She and her friends get sent to a summer camp called Irish College to get to know how to speak Irish, dance at a ceili (Irish dance), and is coming of age with her housemates for the summer. Lovely writing by the author.

Anushka says

Didn't really like this book to begin with but after a while started enjoying it. I think Orla is someone any young person can relate to, growing up feeling different and trying to fit in and be like everyone else. It's only when you're older that you try to be 'different'. It takes you back to a time when you were unsure of yourself and who you were and what it meant to be versions of yourself. Like most Irish texts that are post-colonial, reflecting on the past, this novel also plays a lot with memory and forgetting....haha just wrote an essay on this due tomorrow...i could go on and on. But yea - do read! Pretty good read :)

John Darnielle says

Gorgeously written, peopled, drawn, plotted, developed - there's nothing to it; it's some young women at a language-leaning camp; from this simple focus Dhuibhne draws out some of the richest characterizations I've ever read. The scene in which Orla walks past her waving aunt without acknowledging her is one of the sharpest, saddest scenes I've ever read. I'll be seeking out more of Dhuibhne's work; I found out about her through Dalkey Archive's Best European Fiction series a few years back.

Macy says

Very scattered writing style and no particular plot. But it was an interesting look at a slice of Irish society.

Megan says

The strange thing is, I have very little to say about this book. I mean, I liked it and I'd probably pass it on to others to read, but it's just your basic literary fiction. Though I will say the short, episodic scenes work much better here than they do in other things I've read (and attempted to read...)

Zan says

In a Donegal Gealtacht in 1972, four teenage girls from different sides of the border immerse themselves in Irish language and dance while also learning more about their own personal liberation. I finished this novel in a single sitting, I was so drawn in. At times I felt this narrative loomed right on the edge of many sinister childhood stories from Ireland (I've recently read a series of depressing books from Irish women authors) but this novel managed to show how real that danger was, whilst creating a beautiful picture of a single month of adolescence. It really is a charming book.

Kristina says

This book is all over the place. Sometimes it's staying too long on one issue. The narrative style changes at

random. Storylines are started and end up nowhere or are forgotten. Sometimes the book becomes interesting, only to become incredibly dull again a few pages later.

Georgia Claire says

Worthwhile, but somewhat disconnected, and the last chapter is a pointless add-on in the Harry Potter tradition.

Neira says

Pleasant. Captivating. Light reading....

Of course the reader will more than once feel like shaking up Orla, but her innocence and honesty (towards the reader, not the other characters) are more than likely to counteract this impulse. Besides the protagonist's flawed but sympathetic soul, the novel recalls with great power the lost childhood. There is no need to have been to an Irish college in Donegal in the 1970s to connect with the characters and see oneself reflected in them. Additionally, the themes of belonging and nationality linger in the reader's mind long after finishing the novel, prompting more questions than answers, but with an inevitable aura of optimism.

Sara says

2000 short list-orange prize
