

Emer Martin

Novelist

Emer Martin is a radical, vital voice in Irish writing, as she challenges the history of silence, institutional lies, evasion and the mistreatment of women across mid-to-late twentieth-century Ireland through her fiction. She is a Dubliner who has lived in Paris, London, the Middle East, and various places in the U.S. *Thirsty Ghosts* is her most recent novel published by Lilliput Press and *The Cruelty Men* was nominated for Irish Novel of the Year 2019.



Agents

Olivia Davies

odavies@unitedagents.co.uk

Publications

Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
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**THE
CRUELTY
MEN**

2018

The Lilliput
Press

Abandoned by her parents when they resettle in Meath, Mary O Conaill faces the task of raising her younger siblings alone. Padraig is disappeared, Seán joins the Christian Brothers, Bridget escapes and her brother Seamus inherits the farm. Maeve is sent to serve a family of shopkeepers in the local town. Later, pregnant and unwed, she is placed in a Magdalene Laundry where her twins are forcibly removed.

Spanning the 1930s to the 70s, this sweeping multi-generational family saga follows the psychic and physical displacement of a society in freefall after independence.

Emer Martin's mother-and-baby homes and Magdalene Laundries are the Irish cousins of Dostoyevsky and Solzhenitsyn's Gulags; her dispassionate depiction of the ordinary psychotic violence at the heart of families and society in rural Ireland is akin to that of Ferrante's Naples.

In *The Cruelty Men*, two Irelands run in stark parallel: a gentle land of fairy rings, blackberry picking, and poker evenings with the local priest, and a system in which the Church and State incarcerate the vulnerable for profit. The intimacy of the first person accounts draws the reader into the world of each character. Their stoicism makes their suffering all the more moving and dignified.

A delightful abundance of poetic and surreal phrases, quips and curses in this book give it a vitality and authenticity. Poignant and swift, *The Cruelty Men* tells an unsentimental yet emotional tale of survival in a country proclaimed as independent but subjugated by silence.
