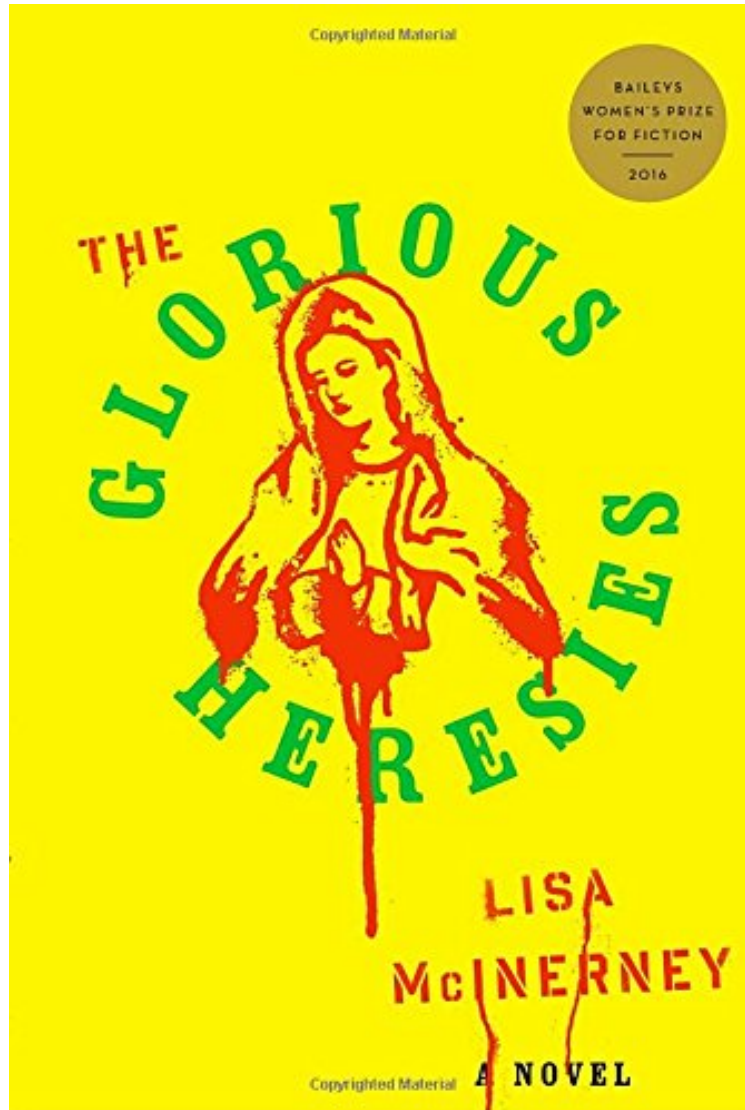


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The Glorious Heresies: A Novel

Lisa McInerney

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Lisa McInerney : The Glorious Heresies: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Glorious Heresies: A Novel:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Molding to fit the shape By KasaC "The parents cast the mould for the little ones, and the little ones curved to fit." This, in a nutshell, is the theme of this amazing novel from a young Irish author. This is really a microcosm of the Irish underbelly in, of all cities, Cork. I was reminded of the Seattle depicted in the series The Killing since both are cities on water, of similar size, and both enjoy a public reputation as

tourist destinations. But that is far from the seedy portrait depicted here, a world of gangsters and prostitutes and people scraping by on the fringes. It really began 40 years ago when unmarried pregnant girls were shipped off to the horrors of the Magdalene Laundries. Maureen was 19 when she gave birth to J P, and was thenceforth shipped off again, this time to London for 40 years, her son rising in notorious prominence to be the kingpin of Cork's crime world. When the book begins, Maureen finds herself back in Cork, being put up in one of her son's former brothels, and she is standing with a religious artifact in her hand which she has used to bash in the head of an intruder. The book rises out of this messy murder with at least 6 people's lives changed forever. Each character holds his or her own. The language is almost poetic in its brutality at times. McInerney is another of the amazing women writers coming out of Ireland these days, authors who don't write about the Ireland of shamrocks and pubs. It's no wonder that this book has won prestigious prizes already. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Unpretty Side of Present Day Cork By Thomas J. Rice Lisa McInerney's "The Glorious Heresies" captures the gritty life and pain of the underclass in present day Cork. Usually, even amongst the downtrodden there are some occasions of happiness, contentment and joy - but there are none to be found in this well-written but dark book. The strength of this novel is its attention to its fairly large cast of characters who are examined in detailed but not in a way that detracts from the narrative. I found it particularly interesting to hear and see the generational differences amongst them from 20ish Katrina and Ryan through 70ish Maureen who has appointed herself something of a "cleansing" angel. You are left to wonder whether Maureen is on to something tangible here in setting her cleansing fires (like burning down a Magdalene Laundry a place of horror for generations of poor Irish women which Maureen had fortunately avoided herself) or is she simply a nutter. I recommend this novel for its interesting characters and its focus on time and place and its uncompromising unsentimentally - but be aware that this is not a happy book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Dark but great read. By E. Shapiro Amazing group of characters that I really came to care about. Struggled a bit with some Irish idioms but that's just a dumb American talking.

Winner of the 2016 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction and the Desmond Elliott Prize Shortlisted for Best Newcomer at the Irish Book Awards Longlisted for the 2016 International Dylan Thomas Prize The Irish Times March Book of the Month From Lisa McInerney, 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.—New York Time's Book Review's "10 Best Crime Novels" of the year

"Drugs, booze, obscenity, violence and black humor fuel Lisa McInerney's audacious first novel. . . . *The Glorious Heresies* is impressive for its moral complexity, and for the energy and virtuosity of its language: a strange, pleasing music that lingers in your mind." —The New York Times "A bleak, powerful novel. . . . Darkly comic. . . . McInerney writes an energetic, profane prose laced with the vibrant idiom of Cork street life." —The Washington Post "A wonderfully offbeat voice. . . . McInerney's characters aren't what anyone would call saints, but they're so richly drawn you have to respect the way they think and sympathize with their moral conflicts." —The New York Times Book "Lisa McInerney's first novel takes off like a house on fire and doesn't stop until it has singed the reader's heart. Love, crime, and cockeyed redemption meet on a hardscrabble housing estate in County Cork, Ireland, in a rare blend of heartbreak and humour. . . . Ms McInerney is a writer to watch." —The Economist "McInerney's debut won the 2016 Baileys Prize for Women's Fiction, and you can see why from the first page. Her lively, unexpected prose brings these characters—and the crucible of their surroundings—to life." —Elle "The novel's searing take on contemporary Cork is elegantly leavened by empathy and humor. . . . McInerney's characters are vibrantly-drawn, richly-rendered, and wonderfully full of surprises." —The Boston Globe "Wonderful. . . . What could be a grim tale is lifted by McInerney's eye for black comedy. . . . I would highly recommend it for the sheer musicality of the language." —The Paris Daily "A smart and sharp tale of Ireland's fringe inhabitants, *The Glorious Heresies* only cements its author's esteemed reputation as one of her nation's most brilliant novelists." —Refinery29 "The *Glorious Heresies* is a blisteringly good debut which manifests the true coming of a brilliant new energy in Irish fiction. It's a love story which captures perfectly the feeling of what it is to be young and bowled over by the beauty of another; it's the story of a city, savage and hilarious and coursing deeper and deeper, with every page into that city's dark veins. It's so much more. It's talent, undeniable and aglow." —Belinda McKeon "The *Glorious Heresies* heralds the arrival of a glorious, foul-mouthed, fizzing new talent." —The Sunday Times "A spectacular debut . . . Tough and tender, gothic and lyrical,

it is a head-spinning, stomach-churning state-of-the-nation novel about a nation falling apart.” —The Telegraph “This book is a riot . . . McInerney’s sentences are like snowballs rolling down a hill, accumulating jokes and fecks and similes spun from pitch-black humor.” —BOMB “Here’s a writer who’s totally and unmistakably the real deal and whose every page pulses with vim and vitality and mad twisty insights and terrific description and with real tenderness, too.” —Kevin Barry “A gripping and often riotously funny tale . . . McInerney gives us a memorable cast that are tough as nails, savagely articulate, and helplessly human.” —Colin Barrett “A real stunner; a wild ride of a read” —Donal Ryan “A punchy, edgy, sexy, fizzing feast of a debut novel from an immensely skilled storyteller with a glorious passion for words. I loved it” —Joseph O’Connor “A spectacular debut . . . Tough and tender, gothic and lyrical, it is a head-spinning, stomach-churning state-of-the-nation novel about a nation falling apart” —The Telegraph “Fiendishly hilarious.” —The Times “McInerney has talent to burn” —The Guardian “A superb debut from a confident and comic writer.” —Mail on Sunday “A rich, touching, hilarious novel.” —Financial Times “A big, brassy sexy beast of a book.” —The Irish Times “This is a daring, exuberant and generous novel. And a work to which you will want—eagerly—to return.” —The Observer “Impressive and imaginative . . . a superb debut from a confident and comic writer with no fear of taking on serious material; McInerney is a new talent to watch out for.” —Irish Mail on Sunday

About the Author Lisa McInerney’s first novel, *The Glorious Heresies*, won the 2016 Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction and the Desmond Elliott Prize, was shortlisted for Best Newcomer at the Irish Book Awards, and longlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize. Her short stories have been featured on BBC Radio 4 and in *Granta*, *the Stinging Fly*, and the anthologies *The Long Gaze Back* and *Faber’s Town and Country*. Lisa lives in Galway with her husband, their daughter, and a dog named Angua.

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The Dead Man' 1 He left the boy outside its own front door. Farewell to it, and good luck to it. From here on in it would be squared shoulders and jaws, and strong arms and best feet forward. He left the boy a pile of mangled, skinny limbs and stepped through the door a newborn man, stinging a little in the sights of the sprite guiding his metamorphosis. Karine D’Arcy was her name. She was fifteen and a bit and had been in his class for the past three years. Outside of school she consistently outclassed him, and yet here she was, standing in his hall on a Monday lunchtime. And so the boy had to go, what was left of him, what hadn’t been flayed away by her hands and her kisses. “You’re sure your dad won’t come home?” she said. “He won’t,” he said, though his father was a law unto himself and couldn’t be trusted to follow reason. This morning he’d warned that he’d be out and about, so the kids would have to make their own dinner, though he’d be back later, trailing divilment and, knowing the kindness of the pit, a foul temper. “What if he does, though?” He took his hand from hers and slipped it round her waist. “I don’t know,” he said. Oh, the truth was raw, as raw as you could get, unrehearsed words from a brand-new throat. He was fifteen, only just. If she’d asked him the same question back before they’d crossed this threshold he would have answered according to fifteen years build-up of boyish bravado, but now that everything had changed he couldn’t remember how to showboat. “It’ll be my fault anyway,” he said. “Not yours.” They were supposed to be in school, and even his dad would know it. If he came home now, if, all lopsided with defeat, the worse for wear because of drink, or poker or whatever the fuck, it’d still take him only a moment to figure out that his son was on the lang, and for one reason only. “Here it’d be yours,” she said. “But what if he told my mam and dad?” “He wouldn’t.” It was as certain as the floor beneath them. His father was many things, but none of them responsible. Or bold. Or righteous. “Are you sure?” “The only people my dad talks to live here,” he said. “No one else would have him.” “So what do we do now?” The name of this brave new man, still stinging from the possibilities whipping his flesh and pushing down on his shoulders, was Ryan. In truth, his adult form wasn’t all that different to the gawky corpse he’d left outside; he was still black-haired and pale-skinned and ink-eyed. “You look like you’re possessed,” shivered one of the girls who’d gotten close enough to judge; she then declared her intent to try sucking the demon out through his tongue. He was stretching these past few months. Too slow, too steady, his nonna had sighed, the last time she’d perused his Facebook photos. She was adamant he’d never hit six feet. His mother was four years dead and his father was a wreck who slept as often on the couch as he did in his own bed. Ryan was the oldest of the wreck’s children. He tiptoed around his father and made up for it around everyone else. Something didn’t fit about that. Of course, men of any age were entitled to flake around the place giving digs to anyone who looked like they might slight them, and that was certainly how the wreck behaved: hollow but for hot, cheap rage, dancing between glory and drying-out sessions in miserable rehab centres a million miles from anywhere. Even when Ryan dredged up the frenzies required by teachers’ scorn or challenges thrown down by bigger kids, he knew there was something very empty in the way the lot of them encouraged him to fight. He’d been on the lookout for something to dare him to get out of bed in the morning, but he’d never thought it could have been her. She was part of that group of girls who wore their skirts the shortest and who commandeered the radiator perches before every class and who could glide between impertinence and saccharine familiarity with teachers. He’d never thought she would look at him as anything but a scrapper, though he’d been asking her to, silently, behind his closed mouth and downturned eyes, for fucking years. Three weeks before, on the night of his birthday, she had let him kiss her. He’d been in one of his friends’ cars—they were older than him, contemporaries of his sixteen-year-old cousin Joseph, who knew enough about Ryan to excuse his age—when he’d spotted her standing outside the doors of the community centre disco, laughing and trembling in a long black top and

white shorts. He'd leaned up from the back seat and called her from the passenger window, and he didn't even have to coax to get her clambering in beside him. Dumb luck that she was in the mood for a spin. And yet, a leap in his chest that tempted him to believe that maybe it was more again: dumb luck and trust. She trusted him. She—Jesus!—liked him. They'd gone gassing. There were a couple of cans and a couple of joints and a cold, fair wind that brought her closer to his side. When he'd realised he couldn't medicate the nerves, he'd owned up to how he felt about her by chancing a hand left on the small of her back, counting to twenty or thirty or eighty before accepting she wasn't going to move away, taking her hand to steady his own and then finally, finally, over the great distance of thirty centimetres, he caught her mouth on his and kissed her. In the days that followed they had covered miles of new ground and decided to chance making a go of it. They had gone to the pictures, they had eaten ice cream, they had meandered at the end of each meeting back to her road, holding hands. And lest they laid foundations too wholesome, they had found quiet spaces and dark corners in which to crumble that friendship, his palms recording the difference between the skin on her waist and on her breasts, his body pushing against hers so he could remember how her every hollow fit him. Now, in his hall on a Monday lunchtime, he answered with a question. "What do you want to do?" She stepped into the sitting room and spun on one foot, taking it all in. He didn't need to stick his head through the frame to know that the view was found wanting. His father's ineptitude had preserved the place as a museum to his mother's homemaking skills, and she had been as effective with clutter as the wind was with blades of grass. "I've never been in your house," she said. "It's weird." She meant her presence in it, and not the house itself. Though she wouldn't have been far wrong; it was weird. It was a three-bedroom terraced so cavernous without his mother he could barely stand it. It was a roof over his head. It was a fire hazard, in that he thought sometimes he could douse it in fuel and take a match to it and watch it take the night sky with it. She knew the score. He'd admitted his circumstances in a brave move only a couple of days before, terrified that she'd lose it and dump him, and yet desperate to tell her that not every rumour about his father was true. On the back steps of the school, curled together on cold concrete, he'd confessed that yeah, he clashed with his dad, but no, not in the way that some of the more spiteful storytellers hinted at. He's an eejit, girl, there's only the weight in him to stay upright when he's saturated, but he's not . . . He's . . . I've heard shit that people have said but he's not warped, girl. He's just . . . fucking . . . I don't know. She hadn't run off and she hadn't told anyone. It was both a load off and the worst play he could have made, for it cemented his place on his belly on the ground in front of her. On one hand he didn't mind because he knew she was better than him—she was whip-smart and as beautiful as morning and each time he saw her he felt with dizzying clarity the blood in his veins and the air in his lungs and his heart beating strong in his chest—but then it pissed him off that he couldn't approach her on his own two feet. That he was no more upright now than his father. That uselessness was hereditary. There was no anger now, though. He had left it outside the front door with his wilting remains. She held out her hand for his. "You gonna play for me?" His mam's piano stood by the wall, behind the door. It could just as easily have been his. He'd put the hours in, while she fought with his dad or threatened great career changes or fought with the neighbours or threatened to gather him and his siblings and stalk back to her parents. She used to pop him onto the piano stool whenever she needed space to indulge her cranky fancies, and in so doing had left him with ambidexterity and the ability to read sheet music. Not many people knew that about him, because they'd never have guessed. He could play for Karine D'Arcy, if he wanted to. Some classical piece he could pretend was more than just a practice exercise, or maybe one of the pop songs his mother had taught him when she was finding sporadic employment with wedding bands and singing in hotel lobbies during shitty little arts festivals. It might even work. Karine might be so overwhelmed that she might take all her clothes off and let him fuck her right there on the sitting-room floor. Something empty about that fantasy, too. The reality is that she was here in his house on a Monday lunchtime, a million zillion years from morphing into a horny stripper. That's what he had to deal with: Karine D'Arcy really-really being here. He didn't want to play for her. Anticipation would make knuckles of his fingertips. "I might do later," he said. "Later?" He might have looked deep into her eyes and crooned Yeah, later, if he'd had more time to get used to his new frame. Instead he smiled and looked away and muddled together Later and After in his head. I might do After. We have this whole house to ourselves to make better. There was going to be an After. He knew it. She walked past him and out into the kitchen, and looked out the back window at the garden and its dock-leafed lawn laid out between stubby walls of concrete block. She flexed her hands against the sink, and pushed back her shoulders as she stretched onto tiptoes. "It's weird," she said again. "To have never been in this house until now. You and me have been friends for so long, like." It had been an anxious kind of friendship. There were school projects and parties and play-fighting and one time a real fight during which he had accused her of only hanging out with him to get access to those parties. It was during that outburst of impotent temper, between off-white walls in a wide school corridor, that he realised their closeness amounted to years of her dragging him along like a piece of broken rock in a comet's tail. It hit him like a midwife's slap that if it wasn't for his house being so cavernous, if it wasn't for his dad traipsing the city looking for cheap drink and indifferent company, if it wasn't for the fact that scrappers cared little for mitching off school, she wouldn't be here with him now, offering him the possibility of removing the burden of friendship and at least some of his clothes. Karine D'Arcy looked back at him with one hand on the draining board. The house looked different with her here, on his side. She didn't know the history in every room and every jagged edge. The bottom step of the stairs. The coffee

table that was always there, just so, to trip him up whenever he was shoved into the front room. The kitchen wall, the spot by the back door, where he'd watched the light switch from an inch away with one cheek pressed against eggshell blue and his dad's weight condensed into a hand flat on his left temple trying to push him right through the plaster. "You're beautiful," he told her, and she laughed and blinked and said, "God, where did that come from?" "You are," he said. "What are you doing here?" She nestled against his neck. Missing Geography, she might have said. But she didn't say anything and the longer her silence went on the closer they got to the stairs, to his bed, to whatever came after that. He hated his bedroom marginally less than he hated the rest of the house. He shared it with his brothers Cian and Cathal, who were messier than he was. The space was laid out in a Venn diagram; no matter how loudly he roared or how gingerly he protected what was his from what was theirs, they always managed to arrange an overlap. She sat on his bed—gratifying that she knew which was his—and he kicked his way around the floor, sending Dinky cars and Lego and inside-out pyjama bottoms under beds and into corners. She was sitting on her hands and so when they kissed it was as if they'd never kissed before and weren't entirely sure whether they'd like it. The second one was better. She reached to cradle his face. The side of her finger brushed against the back of his ear. He pushed her school jumper over her breasts and when she pulled back to take it off he copied her. "Maybe," she said, three buttons down, "like, we should close out the door. Just in case." "I could pull one of the beds in front of it?" "Yeah." He pulled the curtains too. They lay on his bed and held each other, and kissed, and more clothes came off, and all the way along he kept thinking that she was going to withdraw her approval, that his hands would betray him here as he worried they would on the piano keys. She didn't. She kissed him back and pressed against him and helped him. And he wondered if he could do this with her in every room would it sanctify the place, exorcise it of the echoes of words spat and fists thrown? He wondered if he should stop wondering, when a wandering mind was heresy. "Just be careful," she whispered. "Oh please, Ryan, be careful." She clasped her hands around his neck and he found his right hand on her left knee, gently pushing out and oh fuck, that was it, he was totally done for. Cork City isn't going to notice the first brave steps of a resolute little man. The city runs on the macro: traffic jams, All-Ireland finals, drug busts, general elections. Shit to complain about: the economy, the Dáil, whatever shaving of Ireland's integrity they were auctioning off to mainland Europe this week. But Monday lunchtime was the whole world to one new man, and probably a thousand more besides, people who spent those couple of hours getting promotions or pregnancy tests or keys to their brand-new second-hand cars. There were people dying, too. That's the way of the city: one new man to take the place of another, bleeding out on a polished kitchen floor. Maureen had just killed a man. She didn't mean to do it. She'd barely need to prove that, she thought; no one would look at a fifty-nine-year-old slip of a whip like her and see a killer. When you saw killers on the telly, they always looked a bit off. Too much attention from handsy uncles, too few green vegetables. Faces like bags of triangles and eyes like buttons on sticks. Pass one on the street and you'd be straight into the Gardaí, suggesting that they tail the lurching loon if they're looking for a promotion to bring home to the mammy in Ballygobackwards. Well, not Maureen. Her face had a habit of sliding into a scowl between intentional expressions, but looking like a string of piss wasn't enough to have Gardaí probing your perversions. There'd have been no scandals in the Church at all, she thought, if the Gardaí had ever had minds honed so. She looked at the man face-down on the tiles. There was blood under him. It gunged into the grout. It'd need wire wool. Bicarbonate of soda. Bleach. Probably something stronger; she wasn't an expert. She didn't usually go around on cat feet surprising intruders with blunt force trauma. This was a first for her. She was shit at cleaning, too. Homemaking skills were for good girls and it was forty years since anyone had told her she was one of them. He was definitely dead, whoever he was. He wore a once-black jumper and a pair of shiny tracksuit bottoms. The back of his head was cracked and his hair matted, but it had been foxy before that. A tall man, a skinny rake, another string of piss, now departed. She hadn't gotten a look at his face before she flaked him with the Holy Stone and she couldn't bring herself to turn him over. It'd be like turning a chop on a grill, the thought of which turned her stomach. She'd hardly eat now. What if his eyes were still open? There was no question of ringing for the guards. She did think—her face by now halfway to her ankles—that it might be jolly to ring for a priest, just to see how God and his bandits felt about it. But she didn't think she'd be able for inviting one of them fellas over the threshold. Two invasions in a day? She didn't have the bleach. She turned from the dead man to pick up her phone. Jimmy had drawn priests down upon her like seagulls to the bridge in bad weather. He was sin, poor thing, conceived in it and then the mark of it, growing like all bad secrets until he stretched her into a shape no one could shut their eyes to. If she'd been born a decade earlier, she reckoned giving birth out of wedlock would have landed her a life sentence scrubbing linens in a chemical haze, hard labour twice over to placate women of God and feather their nests. But there was enough space in the seventies to allow her room to turn on her heel and head for England, where she was, on and off, until the terrible deed she'd named James tracked her down again with his own burden to show her. Some women had illegitimate babies who grew up to be accountants, or teachers, or heirs to considerable acres of good ground in the midlands. Not Maureen. She frowned at the blood on the floor and dialled. Jimmy would know what to do. This was exactly the kind of thing he was good at.