The Queen of Dirt Island: A Novel Irish Book Club Discussion

(2022) Irish Cultural Center

by Norton Room

Donal Ryan April 27, 2024

10:30 AM -12:30 PM

Donal Ryan is an Irish novelist and short story writer living in Limerick. His previous novels have won numerous awards. Both *The Spinning Heart* and *From a Low and Quiet Sea* were long-listed for the Booker award.

* *The Queen of the Dirt Island* is the story of four generations of the Alyward women (Mary, Eileen, Saorise, and Pearl) who live in a small village in Tipperary. What examples of their strength and resiliency did you see?
* Consider the title.  Does it raise expectations about what will happen in the novel?  Consider the title again after you've finished reading.  Have your expectations been met?  Challenged?
* Two other women are not as resilient as the Alyward women and do not survive. Why?
* Near the end of the novel, a question appears on Pearl’s English exam. Does this make you question any part of Saorise’s memories or her reliability as a narrator?
* Consider the men in these women’s lives. Are some supportive? Why are others not?