



The Marriage Bed: A Novel

Regina McBride

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An exquisitely lush and lyrical story about marriage and motherhood, attachment and letting go, set in early twentieth century Dublin.

Hailed by critics for "connecting what's felt on the skin with what stirs the soul" (*Elle*) and for prose that *The New York Times* calls "shimmering," Regina McBride writes with exceptional passion and courage. Now, she has crafted her most heartbreakingly beautiful novel yet.

"...To my husband's mother, I was an unassuming girl, a kind of empty vessel like the Virgin Mary who would carry holiness in her womb." So begins *The Marriage Bed*, the story of Deirdre O'Brien, who comes from the Great Blasket Island, a windswept place off the Irish coast. It is there that something stunning happens to Deirdre's parents, shamefully driving her to the mainland.

The crossing takes her to the civilized world -- and toward Manus, the son of a wealthy and devout family. An architect, he is stirred not by God but by imagination: Dublin is struggling to find its way into the twentieth century, and Manus wants to fashion its landscape. Like the city itself, the couple's marriage is fraught with hope and complicated by legacy.

At the heart of this striking novel is Deirdre's family secret. Resurfacing when her daughters reach adolescence, she must confront the questions, "How much of our parents do we carry? Do their sins and frailties shape who we become to our own children?" How Deirdre veers from her husband to embrace these answers makes for a sensuous, page-turning read.

The Marriage Bed is a profound work: an inquiry into the extremes of erotic love and a testament to the power of longing and the hold of unresolved grief.

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