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Meath County Council Library Service Book Club Kit

'Absolutely beautiful.'
Douglas Stuart

'Masterful . . . A timely
and powerful book.'
Irish Times

'The best novel
I read this year.'
Colm Tóibín

'Wastes not a word
. . . Exquisite.'
Hilary Mantel

Claire Keegan Small Things Like These



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Notes To Readers




This kit was created for book clubs to use in their discussions of *Small Things Like These* and contains spoilers

Content Warnings

Please be aware that *Small Things Like These* contains content that may be triggering including depictions of confinement, forced institutionalization, religious bigotry, suicidal thought

<https://deedispeaking.com/book-reviews/small-things-like-these>





Reading Group Discussion Questions


Were you familiar with Magdalene laundries before reading this book? How did your level of knowledge impact your experience of reading the story?

Do you wish this novella was longer, or was the length right for you? If you wished it were longer, what would you have liked to have had more of?

Bill and the girl Sarah pass many people as they walk home, but none ask any questions. Do you think this forebodes good or bad things for Bill and his family? What are the likely consequences of Bill's actions?

Is there symbolism in the fact that Bill Furlong delivers wood and gas to some people and coal to others such as the Nuns in the convent? It was Christmas time and tradition has it that bad people received coal for their gift.

Why do you think Ned didn't marry Furlong's mother?





Who Else Writes Like...?

A readers' guide to fiction authors



DID YOU KNOW?

You can use the library's Reading Recommendation Website "Who Else Writes Like?" to find new books to read!

Who Else Writes Like...? will help you to find something to read by uncovering new authors based on ones you already like.

And there are lots of other ways to search Who Else...?, such as genre, character and series. There are also featured links to book award winners, useful websites and editor's choice of top titles.

Some titles included in the site may be suitable for young adult readers, who are in the process of 'crossing-over' to adult novels.

How to Log In

To use this great resource just visit the Who Else Writes Like Website and Log in with your Library Card. Then select Meath County Libraries from the drop down menu of accounts and click on continue. And you're on your way to finding your next read.

And remember, you can also search our [online catalogue](#) and reserve the titles recommended.

www.meath.ie/council/council-services/libraries/what-to-read-next



About Claire Keegan



Claire Keegan is a novelist and short story writer, whose work has won numerous awards and been translated into 30 languages.

Keegan was brought up on a farm in Ireland. At the age of 17, she travelled to New Orleans, where she studied English and Political Science at Loyola University. She returned to Ireland in 1992, and her highly acclaimed first volume of short stories - *Antarctica* - was published in 1999. Her stories are translated into 30 languages and have won numerous accolades.



Dried fruit and Almond cake

2 tablespoons butter
1 1/4 cups dark muscovado sugar
1 1/4 cups sultanas or raisins
1 1/2 cups Shamrock Fruit Mix (sultanas, raisins, mixed peel, currants)
1/2 cup candied cherries
Rind and juice of 1 orange
3 1/2 cups brandy, divided
3 large eggs
1 cup chopped almonds
1 cup ground almonds
1 1/2 cups all- purpose flour (sifted)
1 teaspoon mixed Spice
Icing: top with marzipan, if desired

Place butter, sugar, fruit, rind, juice, and half of the brandy into a large saucepan. Slowly bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, until the butter has melted.

Remove from heat and cool for approximately 30 minutes. Heat oven to 275°F.
Line an 8" round deep cake tin with parchment paper.

Stir the eggs, chopped almonds, and ground almonds into the fruit mixture and mix well. Stir in the sifted flour and mixed spices.

Spoon the mixture into the tin and smooth it out evenly (use the back of a metal spoon dipped in water)

Bake for 2½-3 hours. After 2 hours, cover with foil if cake is browning too quickly. The cake is done when you insert a toothpick into the the center and it comes out clean.

Poke holes in top of warm cake with a toothpick, and pour remaining brandy over cake.

Leave cake in pan to cool completely. Top with marzipan if desired.





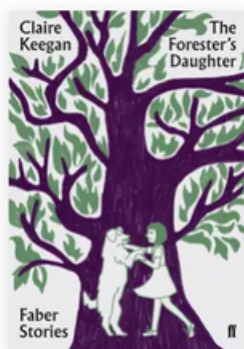
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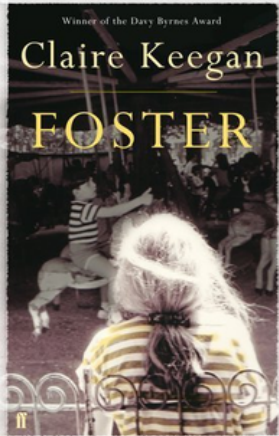
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More from Claire Keegan



A small girl is sent to live with foster parents on a farm in rural Ireland, without knowing when she will return home. In the strangers' house, she finds a warmth and affection she has not known before and slowly begins to blossom in their care. And then a secret is revealed and suddenly, she realizes how fragile her idyll is.



Walk the Blue Fields, an unforgettable array of quietly wrenching stories about despair and desire in the timeless world of modern-day Ireland. In the never-before-published story "The Long and Painful Death," a writer awarded a stay to work in Heinrich Böll's old cottage has her peace interrupted by an unwelcome intruder, whose ulterior motives only emerge as the night progresses. In the title story, a priest waits at the altar to perform a marriage and, during the ceremony and the festivities that follow, battles his memories of a love affair with the bride that led him to question all to which he has dedicated his life; later that night, he finds an unlikely answer in the magical healing powers of a seer.



A married woman travels out of town to see what it's like to sleep with a man other than her husband. "Love in the Tall Grass" takes Cordelia down a coastal road on the last day of the twentieth century to keep a date with her lover that has been nine years in the waiting. "Stay Close to the Water's Edge" tells of a young Harvard student who is pitilessly humiliated by his homophobic stepfather on his birthday. Keegan's writing has a clear vision of unaffected truths and boldly explores a world where dreams, memory, and chance have crippling consequences for those involved. The stories are often dark and enveloped in a palpable atmosphere, and the reader feels that something "big" is going on in each of these carefully sculpted tales.