



Finbar's Hotel

Dermot Bolger (Editor & Contributor) , Colm Tóibín , Roddy Doyle , Joseph O'Connor , Anne Enright , Jennifer Johnston , Hugo Hamilton

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"Devised and edited" by Dermot Bolger, *Finbar's Hotel* pools the efforts of seven acclaimed Irish novelists -- Joseph O'Connor, Anne Enright, Colm Tóibín, Roddy Doyle, Jennifer Johnston, Hugo Hamilton, and Bolger himself -- in a humorous and suspenseful collaborative novel. A Dublin landmark since its glory days the 1920s, Finbar's Hotel has grown increasingly shabby with the years. Now, on a night shortly before the grand old hotel is to be demolished, its rooms and corridors echo one last time with the voices of a curious collection of guests. On his first stay in a hotel, the middle-aged occupant of room 101 ponders the mysteries of the minibar and room service before charging out on the town in search of alcohol and adventure. Across the hall in 102, estranged sisters Ivy and Rose warily negotiate a long-avoided détente. A scorned lover turned catnapping desperado attempts to conceal his furry abductee in the wardrobe of room 103, while in room 107, a somewhat more accomplished thief goes stir-crazy plotting his escape with a small fortune in stolen paintings. Though none of the stories of *iFinbar's Hotel/i* are expressly attributed, close readings of these self-contained yet cleverly interconnected stories will undoubtedly lead to much speculation about just which author is behind each episode.

Finbar's Hotel Details

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Author : Dermot Bolger (Editor & Contributor) , Colm Tóibín , Roddy Doyle , Joseph O'Connor , Anne Enright , Jennifer Johnston , Hugo Hamilton

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From Reader Review Finbar's Hotel for online ebook

Brekke says

I like that the short stories both stand alone and create a tapestry. Creating together a much richer understanding of Finbar's and gives extra glimpses of the Characters.

I re-read like mad, but this one is always an extra sweet re-read surprise.

Not the most interesting or original idea, but it certainly works well for what it does. One thing that does upset me is that the reader is not told who authors each of the sections, so I can't stalk the author of the stories I like the best.

Kelsey says

This was a \$4 purchase at an old, used book barn which intrigued me with the blurb on the page proceeding the title page about the authors being listed alphabetically, but with no attribution to each story. I'm a sucker for a good mystery and being the geek that I am, I did a little more research on the development of this book. I learned that it began with an idea and each author (in an unknown order) read the previous authors' stories and ran with their own idea. By this time I am totally into the idea.

I was not disappointed in any way with this book. I think I expected there to be glaring differences between the writing style in each story due to the seven separate authors. If you analyze closely enough there are subtle variances of language, phrase and structure, but given that each chapter deals with a different set of characters, you can almost overlook it. The work is remarkable seamless for such a compilation of separate voices.

I was most thrilled with the tie in of the characters throughout the whole book. When reading the story of one character you find reference to someone you've already heard from and not only is it interesting to see how each will fit in with one another, it serves to remind the reader that the wide variety of experiences you read all come together for ONE NIGHT at Finbar's. Also, I'm always one for learning about characters and don't necessarily always require a lot of action, so these stories are appealing to me on a level of personal histories and how each person connects to another. For those who prefer a series of great events or more forward movement than reflections to the past, it might be a little slow.

Overall, I found the book charming with equal measure of humor and darkness. It is a good collection of authors and I don't find myself incomplete without knowing who wrote which narrative. I would recommend the book for a comfortable read which is easy to take in parts if you choose. I can foresee myself reading this again.

Sarah says

i got this only bc of the title, and it turned out pretty good. some chapters are better than others, and lots of Irish stereotypes - bad priest, drunks, and lots of cancer and unfulfilled sexual desires. but still entertaining

Tim O'Riordan says

Collection of short stories by different writers all occurring on the same night in the same hotel if my memory serves me correctly. Some of the stories were ok but it didn't hold my attention enough to bother finish reading.

Brendan says

Perhaps it's not being so stuffy to admit that a collaborative novel -- especially when it involves seven collaborators! -- doesn't sound terribly appealing. After all, writing isn't a democratic enterprise and novels are fitful, fragile creations. They can too easily cave in under the weight of a gimmick or come apart without the adhesion of a single author's vision. Which only makes *Finbar's Hotel* more impressive. If collaboration is a risk that invites disaster, then it must also make room for triumph.

OK, "triumph" may be stretching it a bit, but *Finbar's Hotel* really is quite good. The brainchild of Irish writer and editor Dermot Bolger, it features the work of such Irish literati as the Booker Prize-winning Roddy Doyle (author behind such screen hits as *The Commitments* and *The Snapper*), Joseph O'Connor (whose claim to fame is making fun of Irish manhood and being Sinead's brother), as well as Jennifer Johnston, Ann Enright, Hugo Hamilton and Colm Tóibín, this is no crowd of second-raters here, and yet the book may owe its success to the nifty way Bolger has managed to keep their individual voices in tact while reining them in at the same time.

Tom McDade says

"The seven voices represented here are distinct, but the very occasional jolts that come when one chapter ends and the next begins are more than offset by the sustained excellence of the writing. Dermot Bolger not only contributed one of these chapters (perhaps the opening story about the hapless husband, Benny?), but is also credited with having devised and edited the entire volume. He has done a superb job of allowing his colleagues their freedom, while at the same time imposing enough structure to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts."

New York Times—Katharine Weber, whose novel "The Music Lesson" is set in County Cork, teaches fiction writing at Yale.

(Dermot Bolger, Roddy Doyle, Anne Enright, Hugo Hamilton, Jennifer Johnston, Joseph O'Connor, Colm Tóibín have each written a chapter in this book)

Deb says

I'll read anything by Roddy Doyle and my sister reads Colm Tóibín. This book introduced me to a few new authors, if I only knew which was which, and I enjoyed the progression. I'll definitely look at the next volume.

Sandra says

Cleverly conceived. Seven Irish authors take their turn at telling the story of a night in a seedy Dublin hotel that is soon to be demolished. Each chapter is told by one of the guests who are checked in and interweave their stories with a guest previously mentioned. The characters are colorful as well - from a paranoid art thief to a cat-napper who steals his ex's beloved kitty in retribution. Excellent, quick read.

Courtney says

I read this book for a book club my neighbor invited me to attend. When I finished the book, I felt like there had been no point in reading it. Because it consists of 7 short stories, there was not enough time in each to build up a plot. It wasn't uplifting. I didn't learn anything. It was filled with trash such as adultery, rape, stealing, etc. I was not impressed! It was a waste of my time.

Angela says

Fun read--especially for the beach. Pokes a lot of fun at Americans traveling in Ireland (granted, we are an easy target at times). As a series of short stories, it is an easy read to pick up and put down often. Stories link together a bit which makes the entire collection more interesting.

Mandy Sherman says

I liked the idea of this book. A bunch of authors writing a chapter where the last left off. Since it is about the visitors in a hotel each has their own separate story line merging in small instances. The first chapter I really enjoyed. The others were just boring and at points depressing.

Anna says

This is an interesting idea. Seven short stories, all based at Finbar's Hotel, Dublin, which is shortly to be closed down and renovated. Each story is written by a different Irish writer and is based on an occupant in one of the rooms. We are not told which writer wrote which story. However each writer has also picked up from the previous story and so even as they introduce a new character, the various characters featured in the other tales may appear too as "bit players". The stories also reveal something of the lives of the staff and the history of the hotel. As someone who hates lack of continuity, this led to a lot of looking back to see if the mention of someone in one story tied in with what it said previously! I really liked this concept but unfortunately was not very impressed with the actual stories. These are not pleasant, uplifting tales and the characters are not easy to identify with. They have strange lives and strange reactions to things. One review

says “Always funny and often profound” – but I am afraid my own review would be “Often depressing and hard to believe in”. The last story probably got me most interested, but, like the others, it ended in a very unsatisfying way. There are many talented writers contributing to this book but somehow it missed the mark for me

Richard says

A clever multi-author novel that never feels anything other than cohesive. Some strong character studies but each handled with wit as well as insight. Finbar's Hotel blends humour with a permeating sense of emptiness and decay with a deceptively light touch from all its authors.

Jennifer says

A fun collection of short stories set in an Irish hotel. I love how the characters from the different stories, each with different authors and styles, interact and reference each other from one story to the next -- very clever.

Brian says

An enjoyable read, made all the more enjoyable from being familiar with the section of Dublin where it is set. The overlapping of the stories makes for an intriguing link between them and keeps a momentum in the book.

In spite of being called a novel it is more a series of linked short stories. It does touch on a number of facets of Irish life and characters.

Lucynell says

There's this sort of books that are nothing more than pure storytelling, have no Big Ideas behind them, a message to pass on, some egos to feed. They rather let the stories themselves speak as they must. Keillor Garrison's Leaving Home is one example and is highly recommended. This is another and a very cool project as well. Seven well-known Irish contemporary writers contribute a story each that take place in seven different rooms of a about-to-shut-down Dublin hotel. We don't know who wrote what but it matters none. They are all almost flawlessly laid out, funny and impressively evolving. I'll give it a 4 but I won't be surprised if anyone says it's a straight 5.

Christina Gagliano says

Each chapter could stand as a short story, but each one links to the other by mentioning characters from one story to the next. The last story was the weakest but the rest of the stories were, as the Irish would say "brilliant." I don't think I would have enjoyed this book as much if I hadn't just been to Dublin and knew

about/been to most of the places mentioned.

Greta says

Finbar's Hotel was one of the lighter collection of stories I've read by Irish authors, men & women, many born in the 60s and living in Dublin. I look forward to reading more stories by each of the contributors. Fast, funny and noteworthy details about Dublin and it's people are included.

Kelly says

One or 2 of the stories were slightly interesting, the rest were slightly or very disturbing. A few seemed to have really no point at all or maybe I was just too dense to read into what the author was trying to convey. I kept hoping it would get better and that the next author would come up with a more creative story, but each time the stories were disappointing. Too bad because the book had such potential to be a great insight into some different personalities. Most of the stories were a little too depressing for my taste.

Melissa Nestor says

This was definitely a unique read. I haven't read anything like it before. I love Irish culture so I was immediately drawn to this book. I found it very interesting how each chapter followed a different person that was checked into a different room with a different story. Very captivating in that sense. I did find it a bit wordy and some chapters I enjoyed more than others, but overall a book I would recommend to someone interested in unique fiction with an Irish attitude.
