



The Light of Evening

Edna O'Brien

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In this contemporary story with universal resonance, Edna O'Brien delves deep into the intense relationship that exists between a mother and daughter who long for closeness yet remain eternally at odds.

From her hospital bed in Dublin, the ailing Dilly Macready eagerly awaits a visit from her long-estranged daughter, Eleanora. Years before, Eleanora fled Ireland for London when her sensuous first novel caused a local scandal. Eleanora's peripatetic life since then has brought international fame but personal heartbreak in her failed quest for love. Always, her mother beseeches her to return home, sending letters that are priceless in their mix of love, guilt, and recrimination. For all her disapproval, Dilly herself knows something of Eleanora's need for freedom: as a young woman in the 1920s, Dilly left Ireland for a new life in New York City. O'Brien's marvelous cinematic portrait of New York in that era is a tour-de-force, filled with the clang and clatter of the city, the camaraderie of the working girls against their callous employers, and their fierce competition over handsome young men. But a lover's betrayal sent Dilly reeling back to Ireland to raise a family on a lovely old farm named Rusheen. It is Rusheen that still holds mother and daughter together.

Yet Eleanora's visit to her mother's sickbed does not prove to be the glad reunion that Dilly prayed for. And in her hasty departure, Eleanora leaves behind a secret journal of their stormy relationship -- a revelation that brings the novel to a shocking close.

Brimming with the lyricism and earthy insight that are the hallmarks of Edna O'Brien's acclaimed fiction, *The Light of Evening* is a novel of dreams and attachments, lamentations and betrayals. At its core is the realization that the bond between mother and child is unbreakable, stronger even than death.

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