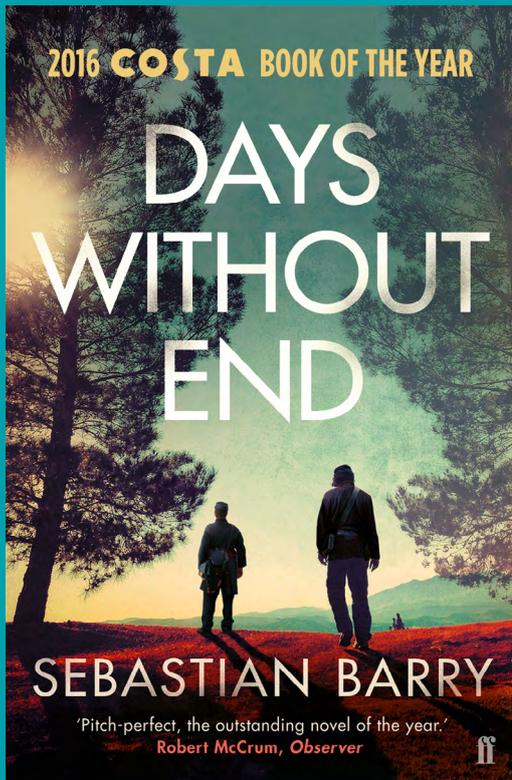




# Reader's Guide



Other novels by Sebastian Barry  
*Annie Dunne* (2002)  
*A Long Long Way* (2005)  
*The Secret Scripture* (2008)  
*On Canaan's Side* (2011)  
*The Temporary Gentleman* (2014)

## Days Without End Sebastian Barry

Faber & Faber

[www.themanbookerprize.com](http://www.themanbookerprize.com)  
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## About the author

Sebastian Barry was born in Dublin in 1955. His novels and plays have won the Costa Book of the Year, the Kerry Group Irish Fiction Prize, the Irish Book Awards Novel of the Year, the Independent Booksellers Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. He also had two consecutive novels, *A Long Long Way Down* (2005) and the top ten bestseller *The Secret Scripture* (2008), shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. *Days Without End* won the 2016 Costa Book of the Year Award. He lives in Wicklow with his wife and three children.

## About the book

After signing up for the US army in the 1850s, aged barely 17, Thomas McNulty and his brother-in-arms, John Cole, go on to fight in the Indian Wars and, ultimately, the Civil War. Having fled terrible hardships themselves, they find these days to be vivid and filled with wonder, despite the horrors they both witness and are complicit in. Their lives are further enriched and endangered when a young Indian girl crosses their path, and the possibility of lasting happiness emerges, if only they can survive.

## What the judges thought

'A tour de force of narrative voice', in the judges' opinion, Barry's book was thought to be 'pitch perfect, sentence by sentence'. It was admired for its 'hallucinatory descriptions of warfare' and 'powerful evocations of landscape'.

## Discussion points

The McNulty family has featured in several of Barry's novels – including *The Secret Scripture* and *The Temporary Gentleman* – how do you feel about the continuous thread between the books?

Thomas escapes famine in Ireland for war and horror in the US. However, at times he finds moments of happiness and safety. How well did Barry balance these contradictions?

Thomas and John were part of both the Indian Wars and the Civil War – how did the descriptions of these differ in the narrative?

The relationship between Thomas and John is central to the novel – how different would their experience be in the US military today?

How does the introduction of Sioux child Winona, into the complicated relationship of Thomas and John, challenge our preconceptions of the family dynamic?

Both Thomas and John work in their youth, as cross-dressing entertainers. How does this experience impact their lives going forward?

## Useful links

[www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/28/days-without-end-by-sebastian-barry-review](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/28/days-without-end-by-sebastian-barry-review)

[www.telegraph.co.uk/books/what-to-read/sebastian-barrys-days-without-end-deserves-costa-award-review/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/what-to-read/sebastian-barrys-days-without-end-deserves-costa-award-review/)

[www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pet-poodle-s-killer-instinct-made-sebastian-barry-novel-a-prizewinner-jp6mkh9vp](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pet-poodle-s-killer-instinct-made-sebastian-barry-novel-a-prizewinner-jp6mkh9vp)