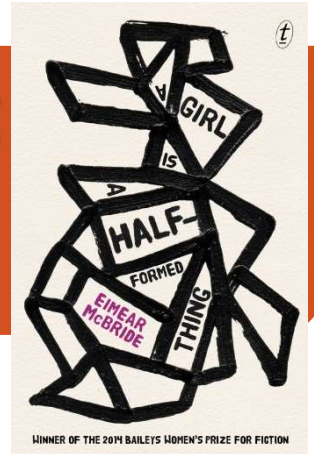




A Girl is a Half-formed Thing

Eimear McBride



Author Background

Eimear McBride was born in Liverpool in April 1976 but moved to Ireland when she was three. She grew up in Tubbercurry and Castlebar and recalls writing from the age of seven or eight. Eimear has a love for Russian literature and spent four months in Saint Petersburg in 2000. Upon her return she worked as an office temp and travelled, whilst completing her first novel, *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*, during this time. Although the book was written in six months, it took nine years to get it published and was picked up by Galley Beggar Press in 2013.

A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing was shortlisted for several awards and was the winner of the inaugural Goldsmiths Prize 2013, Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize 2013, Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction 2014, Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year 2014 and Desmond Elliott Prize 2014.

Her second novel, *The Lesser Bohemians*, was published in 2016 and won the Goldsmiths Prize in 2016 and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 2017. Her third novel, *Strange Hotel*, was published in 2020.

Eimear lives in London with her husband and daughter.

Book Summary

Eimear McBride's debut tells, with astonishing insight and in brutal detail, the story of a young woman's relationship with her brother, and the long shadow cast by his childhood brain tumour. Not so much a stream of consciousness, as an unconscious railing against a life that makes little sense, and a shocking and intimate insight into the thoughts, feelings and chaotic sexuality of a vulnerable and isolated protagonist. To read *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* is to plunge inside its narrator's head, experiencing her world first-hand.

Touching on everything from family violence to sexuality and the personal struggle to remain intact in times of intense trauma, McBride writes with singular intensity, acute sensitivity and mordant wit. *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* is moving, funny – and alarming. It is a book you will never forget.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ The protagonist of the novel is not given a name. Why is that?
- ❖ How would the protagonist describe her mother? How would you describe her mother?
- ❖ What are the main hypocrisies explored in the novel?
- ❖ Did you enjoy the narrative style of *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*? Why or why not?
- ❖ The protagonist in the novel is an unreliable narrator. What other novels have you read and perhaps enjoyed, where the events are relayed entirely by one narrator?
- ❖ The protagonist's brother is desperate to be a 'cool kid'. This is something he very fleetingly manages when he moves school. Do you think we ever lose the desire to be cool?
- ❖ *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* is not, perhaps, suitable for younger readers. Do you believe in censorship of fiction?
- ❖ In what way would the peripheral character's view events differently if the roles of the brother and sister had been reversed?
- ❖ *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* is an uncomfortable read. It challenges preconceived ideas about religion, sexual abuse and stereotypes. Do you like to have your own views challenged? When it occurs, how open are you to reconsidering your viewpoint?

References

- ❖ Sally Flint - <https://www.sallyflint.com/blog/eimear-mcbrides-a-girl-is-a-half-formed-thing>
- ❖ Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eimear_McBride
- ❖ Text Publishing - <https://www.textpublishing.com.au/books/a-girl-is-a-half-formed-thing>
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