



# Ghost Light: A Novel

*Joseph O'Connor*

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*1907 Edwardian Dublin*, a city of whispers and rumors. At the Abbey Theatre W. B. Yeats is working with the talented John Synge, his resident playwright. It is here that Synge, the author of *The Playboy of the Western World* and *The Tinker's Wedding*, will meet an actress still in her teens named Molly Allgood. Rebellious, irreverent, beautiful, flirtatious, Molly is a girl of the inner-city tenements, dreaming of stardom in America. Witty and watchful, she has dozens of admirers, but it is the damaged older playwright who is her secret passion despite the barriers of age, class, education, and religion.

Synge is a troubled, reticent genius, the son of a once prosperous landowning family, a poet of fiery language and tempestuous passions. Yet his life is hampered by conventions and by the austere and God-fearing mother with whom he lives. Scarred by a childhood of immense loneliness and severity, he has long been ill, but he loves to walk the wild places of Ireland. The affair, sternly opposed by friends and family, is turbulent, sometimes cruel, and often tender.

*1950s postwar London*, an old woman walks across the city in the wake of a hurricane. As she wanders past bomb sites and through the forlorn beauty of wrecked terraces and wintry parks, her mind drifts in and out of the present as she remembers her life's great love, her once dazzling career, and her travels in America. Vivid and beautifully written, Molly's swirling, fractured narrative moves from Dublin to London via New York with luminous language and raw feeling. *Ghost Light* is a story of great sadness and joy—a tour de force from the widely acclaimed and bestselling author of *Star of the Sea*.

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