



# Angela's Ashes: A Memoir

By Frank McCourt

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A Pulitzer Prize–winning, #1 New York Times bestseller, *Angela's Ashes* is Frank McCourt's masterful memoir of his childhood in Ireland.

“When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I managed to survive at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while. Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood.”

So begins the luminous memoir of Frank McCourt, born in Depression-era Brooklyn to recent Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Frank's mother, Angela, has no money to feed the children since Frank's father, Malachy, rarely works, and when he does he drinks his wages. Yet Malachy—exasperating, irresponsible, and beguiling—does nurture in Frank an appetite for the one thing he can provide: a story. Frank lives for his father's tales of Cuchulain, who saved Ireland, and of the Angel on the Seventh Step, who brings his mother babies.

Perhaps it is story that accounts for Frank's survival. Wearing rags for diapers, begging a pig's head for Christmas dinner and gathering coal from the roadside to light a fire, Frank endures poverty, near-starvation and the casual cruelty of relatives and neighbors—yet lives to tell his tale with eloquence, exuberance, and remarkable forgiveness.

*Angela's Ashes*, imbued on every page with Frank McCourt's astounding humor and compassion, is a glorious book that bears all the marks of a classic.

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## Angela's Ashes: A Memoir By Frank McCourt Bibliography

- Rank: #16218 in eBooks
- Published on: 1998-12-17
- Released on: 1998-12-17
- Format: Kindle eBook

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Frank McCourt's haunting memoir takes on new life when the author reads from his Pulitzer Prize-winning book. Recounting scenes from his childhood in New York City and Limerick, Ireland, McCourt paints a brutal yet poignant picture of his early days when there was rarely enough food on the table, and boots and coats were a luxury. In a melodic Irish voice that often lends a gentle humor to the unimaginable, the author remembers his wayward yet adoring father who was forever drinking what little money the family had. He recounts the painful loss of his siblings to avoidable sickness and hunger, a proud mother reduced to begging for charity, and the stench of the sewage-strewn streets that ran outside the front door. As McCourt approaches adolescence, he discovers the shame of poverty and the beauty of Shakespeare, the mystery of sex and the unforgiving power of the Irish Catholic Church. This powerful and heart-rending testament to the resiliency and determination of youth is populated with memorable characters and moments, and McCourt's interpretation of the narrative and the voices it contains will leave listeners laughing through their tears.

#### From School Library Journal

YA. Despite impoverishing his family because of his alcoholism, McCourt's father passed on to his son a gift for superb storytelling. He told him about the great Irish heroes, the old days in Ireland, the people in their Limerick neighborhood, and the world beyond their shores. McCourt writes in the voice of the child?with no self-pity or review of events?and just retells the tales. He recounts his desperately poor early years, living on public assistance and losing three siblings, but manages to make the book funny and uplifting. Stories of trying on his parents' false teeth and his adventures as a post-office delivery boy will have readers laughing out loud. Young people will recognize the truth in these compelling tales; the emotions expressed; the descriptions of teachers, relatives, neighbors; and the casual cruelty adults show toward children. Readers will enjoy the humor and the music in the language. A vivid, wonderfully readable memoir. ?Patricia Noonan, Prince William Public Library, VA  
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#### From Library Journal

McCourt is the eldest of eight children born to Angela Sheehan and Malachy McCourt in the 1920s. The McCourts began their family in poverty in Brooklyn, yet when Angela slipped into depression after the death of her only daughter (four of eight children survived), the family reversed the tide of emigration and returned to Ireland, living on public assistance in Limerick. McCourt's story is laced with the pain of extreme poverty, aggravated by an alcoholic father who abandoned the family during World War II. Given the burdens of grief and starvation, it's a tribute to his skill that he can serve the reader a tale of love, some sadness, but at least as much laughter as the McCourts' "Yankee" children knew growing up in the streets of Limerick. His story, almost impossible to put down, may well become a classic. A wonderful book; strongly recommended for readers of any age.

-?Robert Moore, *DuPont Merck Pharmaceuticals, Framingham, Mass.*

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