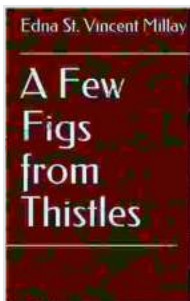


# Few Figs From Thistles: Exploring the Controversial Novel by Edna O'Brien

Few Figs From Thistles, published in 1964, is a groundbreaking novel by Irish writer Edna O'Brien. The book follows the lives of three young women in rural Ireland as they navigate the complexities of love, sexuality, and societal expectations. O'Brien's frank and unflinching portrayal of female experience caused a major scandal at the time of its publication, resulting in its banning in Ireland and other countries.



## A Few Figs from Thistles by Edna St. Vincent Millay

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2383 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 14 pages  
Lending : Enabled



Despite the controversy, Few Figs From Thistles has gone on to become a classic of Irish literature and a beloved work of feminist writing. In this article, we will explore the themes, characters, and literary significance of this important novel.

## Themes

Few Figs From Thistles is a novel that explores a wide range of complex and thought-provoking themes, including:

- **Female sexuality:** O'Brien's novel is groundbreaking in its frank and honest portrayal of female sexuality. The three main characters, Baba, Gretta, and Concepta, all have different experiences with sex and relationships, and O'Brien does not shy away from exploring the complexities of their desires and choices.
- **Love and relationships:** Love is a central theme in *Few Figs From Thistles*. The novel explores the different types of love that exist, from romantic love to familial love to self-love. O'Brien also examines the power dynamics that can exist in relationships, particularly between men and women.
- **Social expectations:** The novel is set in rural Ireland in the 1960s, a time when society was still very conservative. The three main characters all face pressure to conform to societal expectations, and O'Brien explores the ways in which they resist or embrace these expectations.

## Characters

The three main characters in *Few Figs From Thistles* are Baba, Gretta, and Concepta. Each character is complex and well-developed, and O'Brien does an excellent job of bringing them to life.

- **Baba:** Baba is the narrator of the novel. She is a young woman who is struggling to find her place in life. She is intelligent and ambitious, but she is also restless and dissatisfied with the limited opportunities available to her in rural Ireland.
- **Gretta:** Gretta is Baba's best friend. She is a beautiful and popular young woman who seems to have everything she could ever want.

However, Gretta is secretly unhappy and longs for a more meaningful life.

- **Concepta:** Concepta is a young woman who is pregnant out of wedlock. She is shunned by her family and community, and she is forced to face the consequences of her actions alone.

## Literary Significance

*Few Figs From Thistles* is a significant work of Irish literature for a number of reasons. First, it is a groundbreaking novel that explores the complex and often taboo subject of female sexuality. Second, the novel is a powerful and moving portrayal of the lives of young women in rural Ireland. Third, the novel is a well-written and beautifully crafted work of art.

*Few Figs From Thistles* has been praised by critics for its honesty, its insights into the human condition, and its beautiful prose. The novel has been translated into more than 30 languages and has been adapted into a film and a stage play. *Few Figs From Thistles* is a classic of Irish literature and a must-read for anyone interested in women's writing, feminist literature, or Irish history.

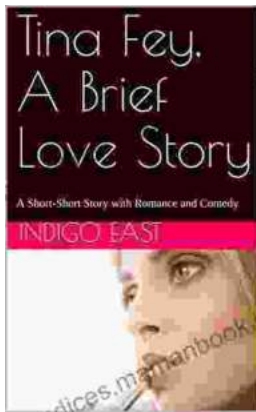
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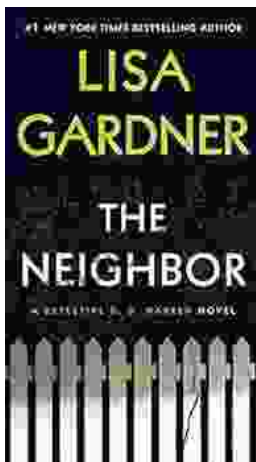


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