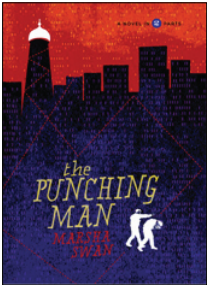


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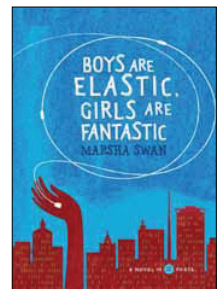
Boys Are Elastic, Girls Are Fantastic & The Punching Man

Marsha Swan



In *The Punching Man*, Remus, a young Roma boy adrift in Dublin, becomes intrigued by a man he sees punch a stranger on the street. When Remus and his friends begin following the man, it quickly becomes unclear who is following whom. But Remus has even less comprehension of the biggest things in his life: the family who will adopt him, the country he will live in, how he will make his way in a new and daunting city.

In *Boys Are Elastic, Girls Are Fantastic*, Ruth abandons her life and career in Chicago to move to Dublin. She marries a man she met on holiday there, even though she doesn't fully understand why—at 46—she's suddenly ready to gamble on romance. After battling breast cancer, she decides she wants to teach again, choosing a challenging job in the James's Street school where Remus is now a student.



These interlocking novellas offer two foreigners' perspectives on a city where they quickly find themselves fighting against shadows: a culture they don't understand and don't have access to; bullies on the schoolyard and in the staffroom; a mysterious stranger or a mysterious disease. In this finely observed portrait of Ireland at the turn of the 21st century, Marsha Swan writes with a stark lyricism, giving voice to two very different characters navigating enormous change with hope and dignity.

MARSHA SWAN is a publisher and the author of *Dirty Sky* (2005), hailed as 'a compulsive read' by the *Irish Independent*. She moved from Iowa to Dublin in 1999 and spent several years teaching English as a second language in James's Street CBS and voluntarily with other organisations, as well as working as an editor for The Lilliput Press.

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