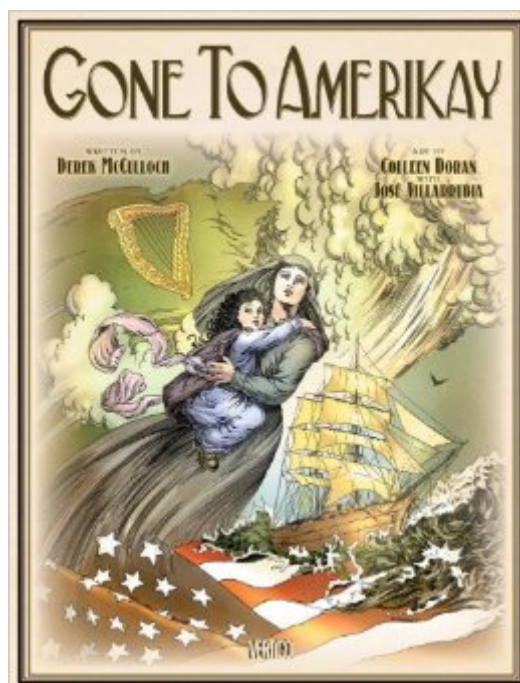


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# Gone To Amerikay



## Synopsis

Ciara O'Dwyer is a young woman raising a daughter alone in the Five Points slums of 1870; Johnny McCormack is a struggling actor drawn to the nascent folk music movement in Greenwich Village 1960; and Lewis Healy is a successful Irishman who's come to present-day Manhattan on his wife's anniversary-present promise to reveal the connection between him and them. The mystery originates with Ciara's runaway husband, who disappeared after promising to join her in America, and carries into midcentury when Johnny, devastated by an unexpected romance and a lost shot at musical fame, gets a supernatural visitor

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (8 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Like 'Stagger Lee', 'Gone to Amerikay' is collection of threads woven together to create a magnificent tapestry, and like a great tapestry, the final image is not revealed until the last stitch is in place. The book follows the lives of three generations of Irish immigrants. It jumps between a young woman in 1870 anxiously awaiting her husbands arrival, a 1960 musician and a present day businessman. We see the struggles and triumphs of the forebears and how they affect the lives of their descendants. The book draws heavily on Irish folk music and makes one wish it came with a recording of these powerful songs. The illustrations are vibrant and detailed. The illustrator (Colleen Doran) meticulously recreates 19th century New York (including the infamous 5 Corners district and the Dead Rabbits gang), the 1960s Greenwich Village scene and today's Big Apple. She manages to easily allow the reader to jump between timelines knowing exactly whose story we are following

on every page. The author (Derek McCulloch) relies heavily on dialog (as opposed to narration) to let the characters tell the story. The characters use the slang and colloquialisms of the time and gain their own voices in your mind as you read their words. The story itself is complex and requires the readers attention. This is not a comic book, it is an illustrated novel. If you don't pay attention the first time through you will have to read it again to understand the ending. Which is not a bad thing. Not a bad thing at all. Highly recommended.

Lovingly crafted by writer Derek McCulloch and artist Colleen Doran, *Gone to Amerikay* details the experience of the Irish immigrant to America across three time periods. From the struggles and shattered dreams of 1870, the prejudice and exploitation of 1960, to the bright horizons of 2010, a tale is woven, part history, part mystery with just a hint of the supernatural. And, be sure, the Irish love of song is not forgotten: music almost becomes a character in its own right. This is a book that deserves a soundtrack. McCulloch writes with a deftness of touch that staggers, providing each character with a distinctive voice and strong motivation. These characters get under your skin, their quiet strength in the face of adversity stays with you long after you've put the book down. And, although the stories in the three periods seem separate at first, the author neatly ties everything together at the end. Doran's art has never been better. Each page is a mini-masterpiece of story-telling brilliance, and the eye-popping detail brings each period to life in a way that's never confusing for the reader. It's often the small incidents she shows in the background that impress most, especially the antics of the children. Doran has always had great felicity in her depiction of the young, and the relationship between Ciara and Maire O'Dwyer, as shown in the pitch perfect body language, will tear your heart out. A word of praise too must go to JosÃ© Villarrubia, whose subtle colors -- he uses a different palette for each time period -- add immeasurably to the art's overall success. A simply beautiful book.

This is a graphic novel about Irish immigrants to America told in three parallel time-streams 1870, 1960 and 2010. *Gone to Amerikay* is a wonderful book to look through. The art by Colleen Doran (creator of the extensive fantasy series *A Distant Soil*) is exquisite -- there is simply no other word for it. The colours added by JosÃ© Villarrubia couldn't be improved on. So, for lovers of graphic arts, this book is worth having for that reason alone. Five stars for that. The author is Derek McCulloch who has not compromised on content to appeal to young readers. This is adult fare in language and content but not overly crude or gruesome. Homosexuality, murder and criminality -- including the involvement of a wealthy Jewess -- are important story elements. But

there is a lot of sensitivity and sentimentality. Lots of song lyrics, some might say too many but the theme of the book revolves around singing, and one song in particular. McCulloch ties the three time-streams together with a ghostly supernatural interlude which I felt ambivalent about. Up to that point I admired the realism the author was portraying and that this was compromised by the incursion of the supernatural. Personally I wish he had found a different way to conclude the book. I would give three and a half stars for the story but with my bias for the outstanding artistic production I have given the book five stars.

I don't have a lot to say except that this book proves, yet again, that graphic novels can do wonderful things that other art forms cannot. In ever so brief a book, the author and artist have woven together 3 tales to tell the story of the Irish coming to America -- a wonderful tale that should be told and re-told again and again!

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