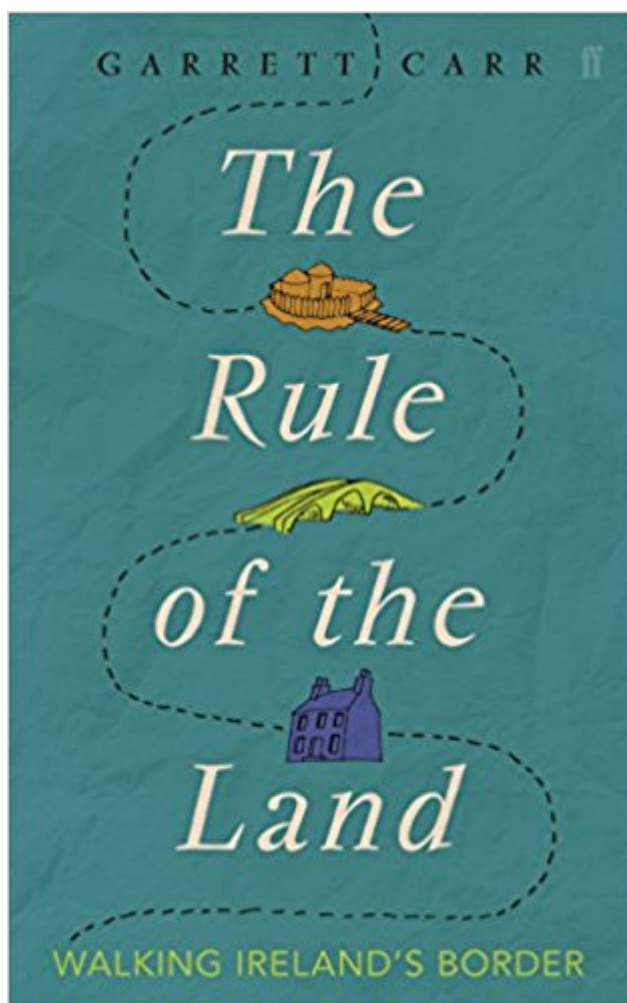


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The Rule Of The Land: Walking Ireland's Border



Synopsis

In the wake of the EU referendum, the United Kingdom's border with Ireland has gained greater significance: it is set to become the frontier with the European Union. Over the past year, Garrett Carr has traveled this border, on foot, and by canoe, to uncover a landscape with a troubled past and an uncertain future. Across this thinly populated line, traveling down hidden pathways and among ancient monuments, Carr encounters a variety of characters who have made this liminal space their home. With words and Carr's own maps and photographs, he reveals the turbulent history of this landscape and changes the way we look at nationhood, land, and power.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Garrett Carr, map-maker and writer, was born in Donegal in 1975. He is a lecturer in Creative Writing at Queen's University, he lives in Belfast with his family.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall Garrett Carr's book, *The Rule of the Land*, is quite simply beautiful. It is written with style, immediacy and depth. The author has a novel idea: to walk along the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic and to map and describe the detail along his journey. He relates memories from his childhood traveling with his father across the border into the north to buy cheaper goods and then shuttle them back to the south through customs. His father and others risked such trips despite the 'Troubles' and the presence of British troops then at border posts. Now, as Carr undertakes his journey, he reflects on the history of the borderland and

its future, now challenged by Brexit. He begins his journey by boat paddling into the Carlingford Lough in the east and ends when he reaches Lough Foyle above Derry/Londonderry. In between these two seas Carr tells us the stories of Ireland. He relates conversations with borderlanders he meets along the way. He tells us stories of achievement and conflict both recent and ancient. He sketches and photographs landmarks from prehistory and modern industry. And he weaves all of these tales into a poetic odyssey. The borderlands have witnessed both tragedy and human ingenuity. And the forensics are there to prove it. All the facts lie buried and preserved in the bogs, which the author crosses during his trek. Seamus Heaney's observation of the bogs' role as a chronicle of history is the Bard's truth. Since the end of the 'Troubles' with the Good Friday Agreement, the borders have opened. Best they should remain that way. As Carr muses at the outset of his journey, (my summary of the author's words) "If only the Lighthouse in Lough Calingford could turn like a spool and gather up the border's twisting black line across the island, it would be a benign act indeed." Buy, read and savor this book. Borders the world over beware.

Bought this for my most recent trip to Ireland - what a joy to read. Part memoir part travelogue part history but also reflective of the challenges that a hard Brexit might impose on both sides of the border. A unique style of delivering a history lesson !

Brace and insightful border stories, truthfully told.

Garret is inspecting a souterrain, to the delight of a farmer who thought it was a fox den. "Old, is it?" the man asks. "Yes, very." "Pre-war, is it?" "Yes," I say. "If by war you mean the Norman invasion." That's a flavour of the lively, logical, lyrical and lamenting adventure. Garret Carr walked, paddled and camped his way around the crinkly border between NI and Ireland. Lanes, fields, lakes and woods were bisected by a line on the map. In tandem with folklore, history and geography, we are told about the Troubles when the border was guarded, smuggled through and flouted with great regularity. This could be funny if it wasn't so tragic so often. Today all is at peace and holidaymakers are welcomed by everyone. We're told of proposals to lead tours around the border but for now, there are farms and a paintball venture. I enjoyed the read and the account is well written, also illustrated with photos. This author has previously written fiction for children set in the same area. I downloaded an ARC from Net Galley. This is an unbiased review.

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