



OFF THE SHELF

TERRY KENNEALLY



The Coast Road

By Alan Murrin

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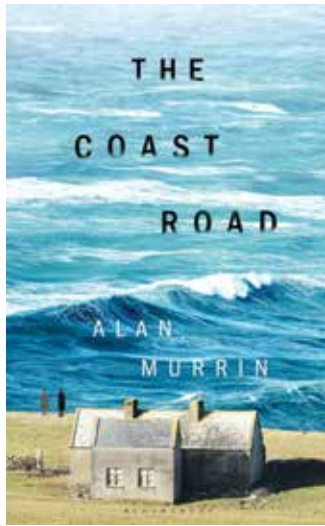
A fictional Irish town in County Donegal provides the backdrop for Alan Murrin's debut novel. Set in 1994, *The Coast Road* tells the story of three women navigating troubled marriages in an era before divorce was legalized in Ireland.

The book looks empathetically on the women's cramped lives and options. Izzy Keaveney has been fighting, off and on, with her husband James for more than 20 years and suffers periods of depression. Frustrated that James gave away the lease to her florist business and now refuses to buy it back, she's recently found a more simpatico male presence in the form of parish priest, Father Brian Dempsey.

Dolores Mullan, mother of three and pregnant again, has long endured the cruelty and promiscuity of her husband, Donal, who constantly demeans and criticizes her. Poet Colette Crowley took the unreal step of leaving her husband, Shaun, and their three sons to have an affair in Dublin. But now she's back, regretful, short of cash, and keen to make amends with the children.

The friendship that forms between Izzy and Colette also becomes a vehicle for Colette to spend time secretly with the youngest child. But when Shaun finds out he strikes back.

Meanwhile, Donal is sleeping with Colette, and James, threatened by the intimacy between Izzy and Brian, uses his clout as a politician to have the priest removed from the



The Coast Road is a story

parish. The wives are the fuller characters in Murrin's gloomy depiction of a stifling, gossipy, traditional community, whereas the men, Brian excepted, emerge badly and more thinly. Colette, falling apart after finding out she is pregnant with Donal's child, and Izzy, taking a stand, personify the extremes of their options, one ultimately tragic, the other more accommodating.

about the limits placed on women's lives in Ireland only a generation ago, and the consequences women have suffered trying to gain independence. This novel is set in the run-up to the Irish referendum on legalizing divorce. It is a TOP SHELF read. •

Terry Kenneally is an attorney in Rocky River, Ohio. He obtained his Masters in Irish Studies from John Carroll

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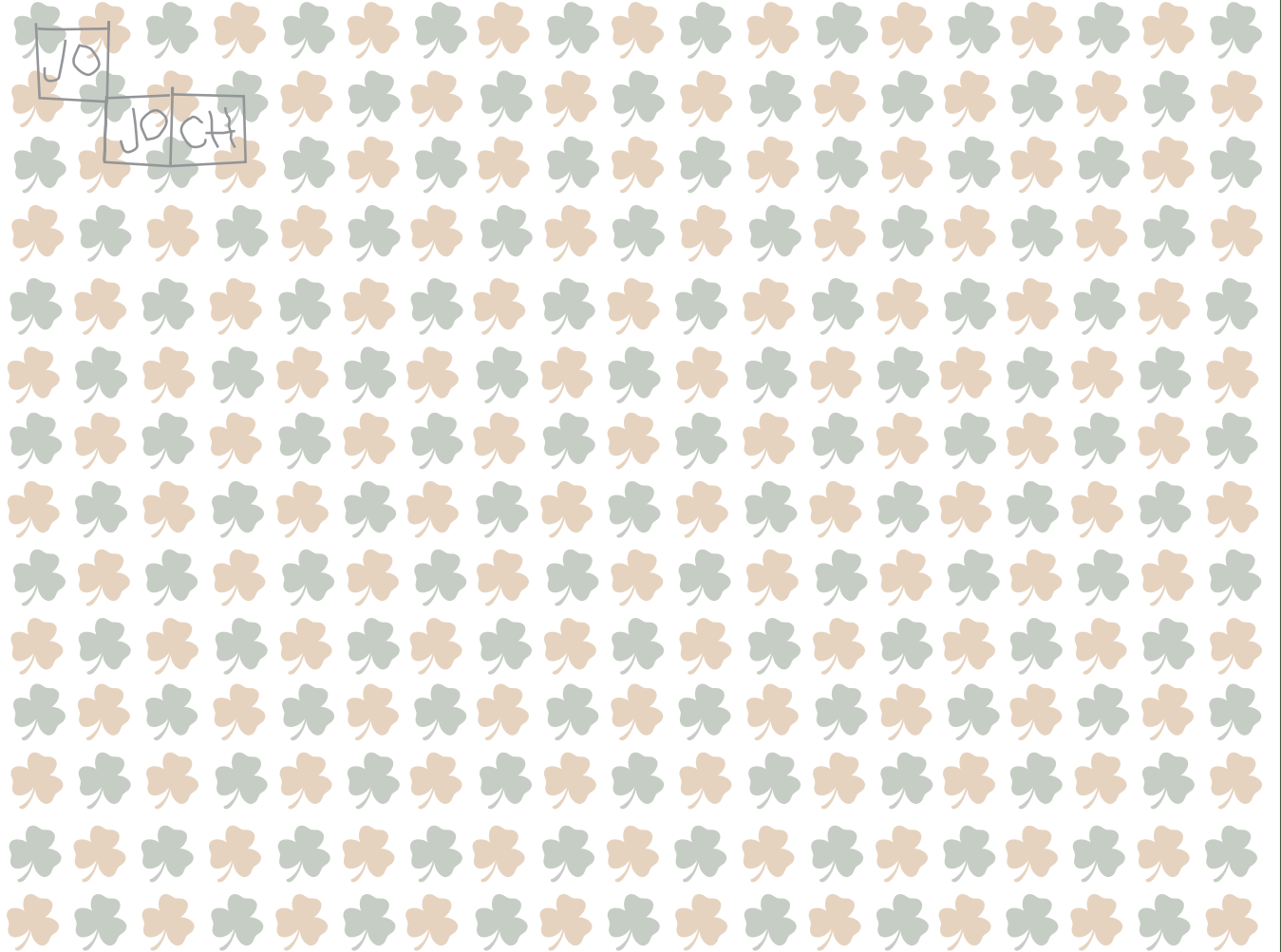
ilrish's shamrock squares



Taking turns, connect a line from one shamrock to another. Whoever makes a line that completes a square, writes their initials in that box. The one with the most squares at the end of the game wins!



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