



# The Dream of the Celt: A Novel

By Mario Vargas Llosa

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**A subtle and enlightening novel about a neglected human rights pioneer by the Nobel Laureate Mario Vargas Llosa**

In 1916, the Irish nationalist Roger Casement was hanged by the British government for treason. Casement had dedicated his extraordinary life to improving the plight of oppressed peoples around the world—especially the native populations in the Belgian Congo and the Amazon—but when he dared to draw a parallel between the injustices he witnessed in African and American colonies and those committed by the British in Northern Ireland, he became involved in a cause that led to his imprisonment and execution. Ultimately, the scandals surrounding Casement's trial and eventual hanging tainted his image to such a degree that his pioneering human rights work wasn't fully reexamined until the 1960s.

In *The Dream of the Celt*, Mario Vargas Llosa, who has long been regarded as one of Latin America's most vibrant, provocative, and necessary literary voices—a fact confirmed when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2010—brings this complex character to life as no other writer can. A masterful work, sharply translated by Edith Grossman, *The Dream of the Celt* tackles a controversial man whose story has long been neglected, and, in so doing, pushes at the boundaries of the historical novel.

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## **The Dream of the Celt: A Novel By Mario Vargas Llosa Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"In the star-studded world of the Latin American novel, Mario Vargas Llosa is a supernova." ?*Raymond Sokolov, The Wall Street Journal on Mario Vargas Llosa*

"Vargas Llosa speaks in his own voice, sees through his own eyes. His vision is unique. His genius is unmistakable." ?*Eugenia Thornton, The Plain Dealer (Cleveland) on Mario Vargas Llosa*

"The bold, dynamic and endlessly productive imagination of the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, one of the writing giants of our time, is something truly to be admired . . . As with any great writer, [he] makes us see clearly what we have been looking at all the while but never noticed." ?*Alan Cheuse, San Francisco Chronicle on Mario Vargas Llosa*

"Generous in friendship, unfailingly curious about the world at large, tireless in his quest to probe the nature of the human animal, [Vargas Llosa] is a model writer for our times." ?*Marie Arana, The Washington Post on Mario Vargas Llosa*

"[Vargas Llosa] is a worldly writer in the best sense of the word: intelligent, urbane, well-traveled, well-informed, cosmopolitan, free-thinking and free-speaking." ?*Merle Rubin, Los Angeles Times on Mario Vargas Llosa*

"Mario Vargas Llosa has long been a literary adventurer of the very first order . . . [He], I am convinced, can tell us stories about anything and make them dance to his inventive rhythms." ?*Lisa Appignanesi, The Independent on Mario Vargas Llosa*

### About the Author

Mario Vargas Llosa was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2010 "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat." Peru's foremost writer, he has been awarded the Cervantes Prize, the Spanish-speaking world's most distinguished literary honor, and the Jerusalem Prize. His many works include *The Feast of the Goat*, *The Bad Girl*, *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, *The War of the End of the World*, and *The Storyteller*. He lives in London.

Edith Grossman has translated the works of the Nobel laureates Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel García Márquez, among others. One of the most important translators of Latin American fiction, her version of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is considered to be the finest translation of the Spanish masterpiece in the English language.

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### **Dream of the Celt, The** **THE CONGO**

#### **I**

When they opened the door to his cell, the street noise that the stone walls had muffled came in along with the stream of light and a blast of wind, and Roger woke in alarm. Blinking, still confused, struggling to calm

down, he saw the shape of the sheriff leaning in the doorway. His flabby face, with its blond mustache and reproachful little eyes, contemplated Roger with a dislike he had never tried to hide. This was someone who would suffer if the British government granted his request for clemency.

"Visitor," muttered the sheriff, not taking his eyes off him.

He stood, rubbing his arms. How long had he slept? Not knowing the time was one of the torments of Pentonville Prison. In Brixton Prison and the Tower of London he had heard the bells that marked the half hour and the hour; here, thick walls kept the clamor of the church bells along the Caledonian Road and the noise of the Islington market from reaching the prison interior, and the guards posted at the door strictly obeyed the order not to speak to him. The sheriff put handcuffs on him and indicated that he should walk behind. Was his lawyer bringing him good news? Had the cabinet met and reached a decision? Perhaps the sheriff's gaze was more filled than ever with the anger he inspired in him because his sentence had been commuted. He walked down the long passageway of red brick blackened by grime, past the metal doors of the cells and the discolored walls where every twenty or twenty-five paces a high barred window allowed him to glimpse a small piece of gray sky. Why was he so cold? It was July, the heart of summer, there was no reason for the icy cold that gave him goose bumps.

When he entered the narrow visitors' room, his heart sank. Waiting for him was not his attorney, Maître George Gavan Duffy, but one of his assistants, a blond, sickly looking young man with prominent cheekbones who dressed like a fop and whom he had seen during the four days of his trial, carrying and fetching papers for the defense lawyers. Why, instead of coming in person, had Maître Gavan Duffy sent one of his clerks?

The young man looked at him coldly. Anger and disgust were in his eyes. What was wrong with this imbecile? *He looks at me as if I were vermin*, thought Roger.

"Any news?"

The young man shook his head. He inhaled before speaking:

"Regarding the petition for pardon, not yet," he murmured drily, making a face that made him look even sicklier. "It is necessary to wait for the Council of Ministers to meet."

The presence of the sheriff and another guard in the small room irritated Roger. Though they remained silent and motionless, he knew they were listening to everything. The idea oppressed his chest and made it difficult for him to breathe.

"But considering recent events," the blond young man added, blinking for the first time and opening and closing his mouth in an exaggerated way, "everything is more difficult now."

"Outside news doesn't reach Pentonville. What happened?"

What if the German admiralty had finally decided to attack Great Britain from the Irish coast? What if the dreamed-of invasion had taken place and the Kaiser's cannon were at this very moment avenging the Irish patriots shot by the British in the Easter Rising? If the war had taken that direction, his plans would be realized in spite of everything.

"Now it has become difficult, perhaps impossible, to succeed," the clerk repeated. He was pale, and Roger detected his skull beneath the whitish skin of his complexion. He sensed that behind him the sheriff was smiling.

"What are you talking about? Mr. Gavan Duffy was optimistic about the petition. What happened to make him change his mind?"

"Your diaries," the young man hissed, making another disgusted face. He had lowered his voice and it was difficult for Roger to hear him. "Scotland Yard found them in your house on Ebury Street."

He paused for a long time, waiting for Roger to say something. But since he had fallen mute, the clerk gave free rein to his indignation and twisted his mouth:

"My good man, how could you be so stupid?" He spoke slowly, making his rage more obvious. "How could you, my good man, put such things on paper? And if you did, how could you not take the basic precaution of destroying those diaries before embarking on a conspiracy against the British Empire?"

*It's an insult for this fellow to call me "my good man,"* Roger thought. Ill-mannered because Roger was at

least twice the age of this affected boy.

"Portions of those diaries are circulating everywhere now," the clerk added, calmer, though his disgust was constant, not looking at him now. "In the admiralty, the minister's spokesman, Captain Reginald Hall himself, has given copies to dozens of reporters. They're all over London. In parliament, the House of Lords, Liberal and Conservative clubs, editorial offices, churches. It's the only topic of conversation in the city."

Roger did not say anything. He did not move. Once again he had the strange sensation that had taken hold of him many times in recent months, ever since that gray, rainy April morning in 1916 when, numb with cold, he was arrested in the ruins of McKenna's Fort, in the south of Ireland: this did not have to do with him, they were talking about someone else, these things were happening to someone else.

"I know your private life is not my business, or Mr. Gavan Duffy's, or anyone's," added the young clerk, making an effort to lower the fury that saturated his voice. "This is a strictly professional matter. Mr. Gavan Duffy wanted to bring you up to date regarding the situation. And prepare you. The request for clemency may be compromised. This morning there are already protests in some newspapers, confidences betrayed, rumors regarding the content of your diaries. The favorable public response to the petition might be affected. Merely a supposition, of course. Mr. Gavan Duffy will keep you informed. Do you wish me to give him a message?"

With an almost imperceptible movement of his head, the prisoner refused. He turned immediately afterward, facing the door of the visitors' room. With his chubby face the sheriff signaled the guard, who unbolted the door and opened it. The return to his cell seemed interminable. During his passage down the long hall with the rocklike walls of blackened red brick, he had the feeling that at any moment he might trip and fall facedown on those damp stones and not get up again. When he reached the metal door of his cell, he remembered: on the day they brought him to Pentonville Prison, the sheriff had told him that, without exception, all the prisoners who occupied this cell had ended up on the gallows.

"Could I take a bath today?" he asked before he went in.

The fat jailer shook his head, looking into his eyes with the same repugnance Roger had detected in the clerk's gaze.

"You cannot bathe until the day of your execution," said the sheriff, relishing each word. "And, on that day, only if it's your final wish. Others, instead of a bath, prefer a good meal. A bad business for Mr. Ellis, because then, when they feel the noose, they shit themselves. And leave the place like a pigsty. Mr. Ellis is the hangman, in case you didn't know."

When he heard the door close behind him, he lay facedown on the narrow cot and closed his eyes. It would have been good to feel the cold water from that spout invigorating his skin and turning it blue with cold. In Pentonville the convicts, except for those condemned to death, could bathe with soap once a week in that stream of cold water. And the conditions in the cells were passable. On the other hand, he recalled with a shudder the filth in Brixton, where he had been covered with lice and fleas that swarmed in the mattress on his cot and covered his back, legs, and arms with bites. He attempted to think about that, but over and over he kept remembering the disgusted face and hateful voice of the blond clerk decked out like a dandy whom Maître Gavan Duffy had sent instead of coming in person to give him the bad news.

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Jeremy Smith:**

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### **John Lyons:**

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that's look different you can read the book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent the entire day to reading a book. The book The Dream of the Celt: A Novel it is quite good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book provides high quality.

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