




Small Things Like These

(2024) Drama / Historical

Directed by Tim Mielants

Written by Enda Walsh & Claire Keegan

 IMDb rating 6.8



Rotten Tomatoes 93%



Synopsis

Set in a small Irish town in the 1980s, *Small Things Like These* follows coal merchant Bill Furlong as he prepares for the Christmas season.

While making deliveries to a local convent, he stumbles upon a shocking secret about the town's Magdalene Laundry—an institution where young women are forced into unpaid labour under harsh conditions. As Bill grapples with his discovery, he is forced to confront his own past and make a moral decision that could change everything.

Based on Claire Keegan's acclaimed novel, this quietly powerful drama explores themes of courage, compassion, and the fight against institutional abuse.



Cast

Cillian Murphy (*Peaky Blinders*, *Oppenheimer*) stars as "Bill Furlong". A versatile and highly regarded Irish actor, Murphy brings depth and quiet intensity to his roles, making him a perfect fit for this introspective and morally conflicted protagonist.



Eileen Walsh (*The Magdalene Sisters*, *Pure Mule*) stars as "Eileen Furlong" plays a key role in the film, further connecting the story to the real-life history of Ireland's Magdalene Laundries.



Emily Watson (*Breaking the Waves*, *The Book Thief*) stars as "Sister Mary". Emily is known for her emotionally charged performances and plays a significant role within the convent, embodying the complex moral landscape of the film.

About the Author

Claire Keegan is an award-winning Irish writer known for her beautifully crafted, economical prose. Her works, including *Foster* (adapted into *The Quiet Girl*) and *Small Things Like These*, explore themes of family, compassion, and the resilience of the human spirit.

Keegan's writing is often praised for its precision and emotional depth, capturing complex issues with subtlety and grace.

Five interesting facts

1. Small Things Like These won the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2022.
2. The film marks another collaboration between Cillian Murphy and director Tim Mielants, who previously worked together on Peaky Blinders.
3. The story is inspired by the real-life history of Magdalene Laundries, institutions that operated in Ireland for over a century, where thousands of women were subjected to forced labour and mistreatment.
4. Much of the film was shot on location in Ireland, enhancing the film's authentic and atmospheric feel.
5. Claire Keegan's work has been compared to that of John McGahern and Alice Munro, celebrated for its quiet power and emotional depth.



Discussion questions...

1. How does Cillian Murphy's portrayal of Bill Furlong shape our understanding of his character's moral struggle?
2. In what ways does the film highlight the power dynamics between the town, the convent, and its inhabitants?
3. How does Small Things Like These compare to other films that explore themes of institutional abuse, such as Philomena or The Magdalene Sisters?
4. What role does the setting—both the town and the time period—play in the story's impact?
5. The novel and film both emphasize small acts of kindness. How does this idea resonate throughout the story, and what does it say about resistance and change?



Enjoy the film, and we hope it sparks thoughtful discussion!

duration 1 hour 38 minutes

IMDB link [click here](#)