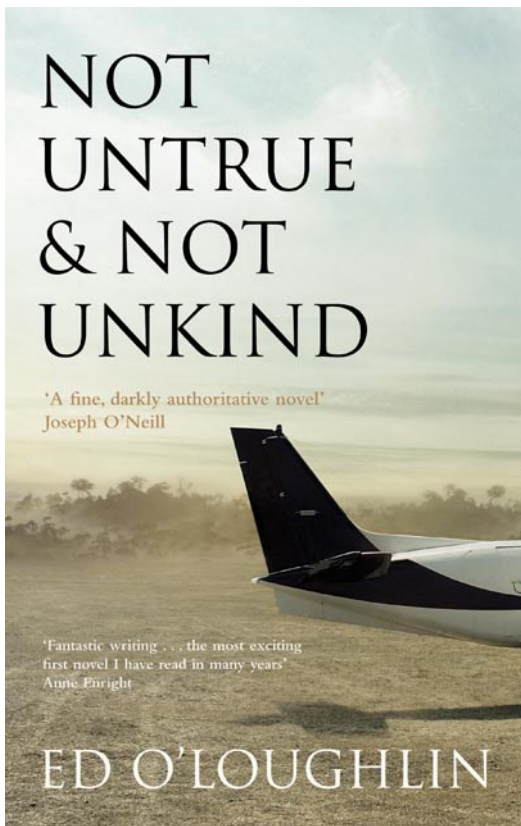


## Reader's Guide



*Not Untrue & Not Unkind*  
is Ed O'Loughlin's first novel

# Not Untrue & Not Unkind Ed O'Loughlin

Published by Penguin Ireland  
Price £16.99

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## About the author

Ed O'Loughlin was born in Toronto and raised in Ireland. He reported from Africa for the *Irish Times* and other papers, and was Middle East correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* of Melbourne. *Not Untrue and Not Unkind* is his first novel, and is published by Penguin Ireland in hardback.

## *Not Untrue & Not Unkind*

In Dublin, a newspaper editor called Cartwright is found dead. One of his colleagues, Owen Simmons, discovers a dossier on Cartwright's desk. And in the dossier Owen finds a photograph, which brings him back to a dusty road in Africa and to the woman he once loved.

*Not Untrue and Not Unkind* is Owen's story – a gripping story of friendship, rivalry and betrayal amongst a group of journalists and photographers covering Africa's wars. It is an astonishingly powerful and accomplished debut that immediately establishes Ed O'Loughlin as a mature master of the novel form.

## Discussion points

Ed O'Loughlin is himself an ex-Africa correspondent, do you think this first-hand experience is evident in his novel?

Do you think there are differences in the way that the female characters are drawn compared to the male characters?

When interviewed about his novel Ed O'Loughlin said '*...journalists always write books about sneaky, corrupt journalists. I didn't want to write a book about sneaky, corrupt journalists; but I didn't want to glorify the trade either. I'd hate to think I did either thing.*'

Do you think his portrayal of journalist created either of these impressions?

The title of the book comes from the last line of a poem by Philip Larkin. The poem begins with the observation that talking in bed ought to be easiest; the place of intimacy and honesty. As life goes on, however, silence creeps in.

*'It becomes still more difficult to find  
Words at once true and kind,  
Or not untrue and not unkind.'*

What feeling does this poem establish and how does this successfully transfer into the novel?

Would you agree with the reviewers who think that the novel gains in confidence and momentum as it progresses?

## Themed reading

*The Quiet American* Graham Greene  
*War Stories* Jeremy Bowen  
*The Last King of Scotland* Giles Foden

## Useful links

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