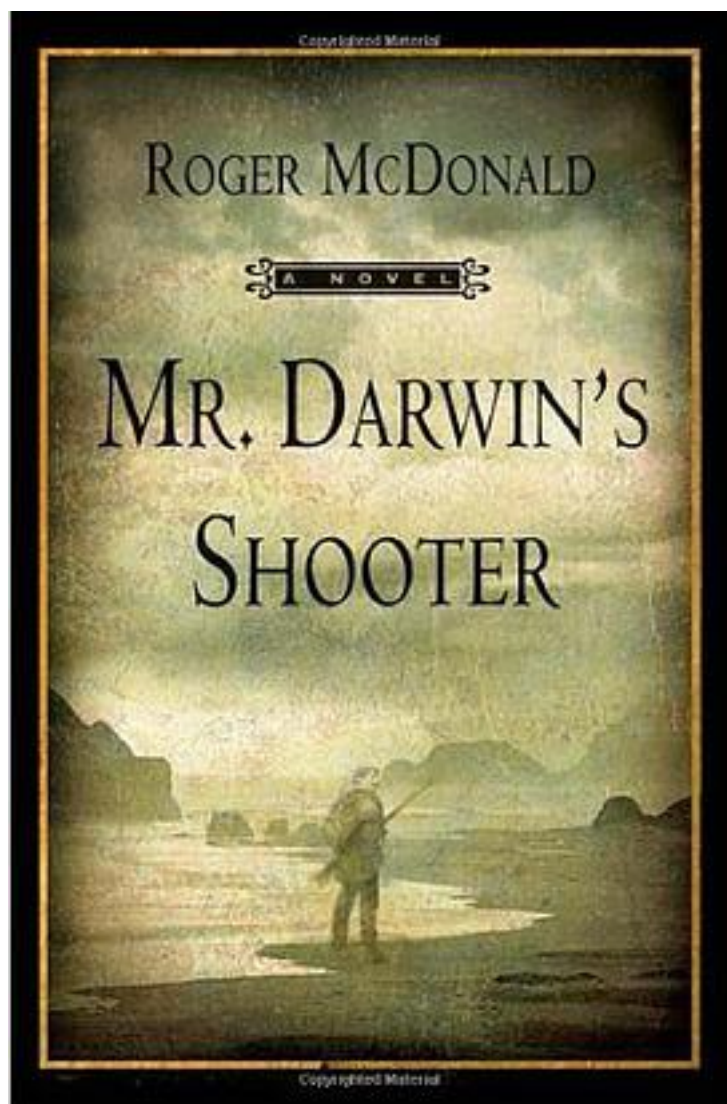


Mr. Darwin's Shooter



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From one of Australia’s most acclaimed authors, a dazzling and deeply imagined exploration of ambition, natural marvels, and scientific discovery, and one of history’s most significant crises of faith. As a boy of thirteen, Syms Covington leaves his home in Bedford and goes to sea, passing into manhood as he sails the world, surveying Patagonia, and losing his virginity in the Pampas. Aboard the HMS Beagle, he enters the service of Charles Darwin as an energetic and precocious fifteen-year-old, and in the course of their voyages together he shoots and collects hundreds of specimens for his gent,” specimens that become fundamental to the formulation of Darwin’s theory of evolution. Now a crusty, eccentric, near-deaf old man, Covington has settled in Australia and is awaiting the arrival of the first copy of On the Origin of Species . Beset by guilt over participating in a work that will shake the human worldview to its foundations, he nonetheless wonders what part of himself might be reflected in Darwin’s oeuvre. Mr. Darwin’s Shooter captures its time with rare and dazzling skill, evoking an unforgettablebut forgottenman at a watershed moment in history.

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