



Maeve Binchy: The Biography

Piers Dudgeon

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Maeve Binchy's novels sold more than 40 million copies worldwide, and when she died on July 30th 2012, she did so as Ireland's best-loved writer. With bestselling books such as *Light a Penny Candle*, *Circle of Friends*, *Tara Road*, *Evening Class*, and *A Week in Winter*, which was published four months after her death, no one else told stories like Maeve Binchy. Humane, down-to-earth, and funny, her novels captured imaginations on both sides of the Atlantic in a way that most authors only dream of.

More than simply a biography, this extraordinary book visits Maeve Binchy in the land of her birth, which is the environment of her novels, and in the company of the author and her fictional characters sets out to discover the emotional contours which define her as a writer and a person.

Maeve Binchy: The Biography Details

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From Reader Review Maeve Binchy: The Biography for online ebook

Beth Mclaughlin says

This book was important to me because Maeve is one of my favorite authors and I really wanted to learn more about her life. While there were some good stories and glimpses into Maeve, I was disappointed. I respect the authors attempt but it often read like a thesis, relying mostly on quotes and stories from other publications and long sections of Ireland history that linked somewhat to Maeve but I found myself paging through and skimming. Since the text was written after Maeve's death, there are no direct quotes from her. But there are also no direct comments taken from her husband or family. I enjoyed the parts that showed Maeve's personality but those were too few. It had a lot of research put into it but again, read like an extended academic research project. I think I will google other things ha about Maeve and be more satisfied.

Carole Blake says

It's evident the author never met Maeve, and had access to few people in her life. In an attempt to correlate her life with her fiction, he makes clumsy comparisons between her life and plots in her novels, breaking into the narrative of her life with large chunks of novel summaries which distance the reader from Maeve herself. Large parts of the biography read instead like an exam essay. A lively subject, such a shame it turned into a laboured, dull, text.

Valerity (Val) says

Examines the life of novelist Maeve Binchy. From her forebears beginnings in Ireland, when she came into the picture, and also a good history of Ireland's problems with England, which I wasn't in the know about. It tells of her schooling, how she was one of the first few young women to go to University in the 1950's, with an eye to a career. How her family was such a wonderful support to her self esteem, which helped her throughout her life. Made enjoyable to read by the author's flair, which I began to get after the first bit. Then it goes into Maeve's climb in the working world, and how she became the successful author the world knew her as when she passed. Includes lots of fascinating things she did inbetween, too.

Flewts says

As a history major, I enjoy reading biographies, but I acknowledge they can be dry and not for everyone. So it was with real pleasure that I read this book. I have immensely enjoyed Maeve Binchy's storytelling, and in particular her thorough characterizations, and have read all of her novels. So when this book began comparing her life to things that happened in the various books, it made perfect sense.

The biography has so much about Maeve and her characters and incidents in her life and how she used her experiences to create a fictional story, it felt almost as if I were reading one last book by Maeve Binchy.

If you loved her books, go ahead and read her biography. It's not heavy going at all, and you'll be glad you

did!

Maureen Mullis says

An interesting woman and terrific writer, but this biography is dry and not very well written. Terribly disappointed.

Liz says

A lovely, timely biography of the sadly-missed Maeve; long-time readers will enjoy the arc of her life and careers in teaching, journalism, and fiction, as well as the exploration of her Irish identity and heritage. Dudgeon pulls from a wellspring of solid, reputable sources for this bio, and rarely does he stray too far into adjacent subjects [ancient Ireland, the Troubles, Catholicism, etc] without thoroughly and skillfully relating them back to the subject at hand. Enjoyable, interesting, and written with a respectful, gentle hand. Highly recommended for Binchy fans, feminist historians, and Irish literature collections.

Nandy8 says

Interesting for me since I've been a Maeve Binchy fan for years. A lot of references to Irish history and prehistory. Some parts rather dry.

Eleanor Cowan says

This biography is proof that great women decide to be wonderful. Happiness is not a circumstance: it's a choice and Dudgeon's engaging bio communicates that Maeve made many pivotal decisions in her life.

A woman who developed strong personal autonomy, Maeve generously shared her progress and her wisdom world-wide.

Eleanor Cowan, author of : A History of a Pedophile's Wife: Memoir of a Canadian Teacher and Writer

Priscilla Herrington says

Maeve Binchy's death was a sad day for all of us who loved her novels. Her fans will definitely enjoy this biography. Piers Dudgeon tells Binchy's life story, showing how her life influenced her work. While she was writing novels that were popular both at home and abroad, she was also a regular correspondent for the Irish Times; Dudgeon makes good use of her columns and articles to provide Binchy's own words to help tell the story.

Linda Marie Marsh says

An insightful biography of an incredible author. Thousands read her books, i was one years ago...and this book gives insight into the background that created the writer who created marvelous stories!
Witty, thoughtful and well-written this bio kinda makes a fan of her books want to go back and delve into them again!

Sharon Huether says

Maeve Binchy: The Biography. by Piers Dudgeon..Thanks Goodreads for picking my name to win this FREE first- reads book. A great story of her life and the books she wrote. Her mother was a wonderful influence on Maeve, Maeve was the oldest of four children. The family lived without frills so each child could go to college. Instead of a Catholic school, she went to a private school with some of her friends. The teacher there had a moto " If the child isn't happy, they do not learn well". Maeve took this moto to heart, when she taught school. The man she married was also a writer. They wrote together with their typewriters side by side. I wish I could have met her.

Colleen says

This is a interesting but at the same time scholarly view of the life and writings of Maeve Binchy. Besides writing what is typically considered a biography, the author digs deep into Ireland's history linking influences on Maeve throughout the years and exploring how those were reflected in her books, plays, short stories and newspaper columns. One of the key influences was her fall from the Catholic Church. She had her own views, but also felt people were entitled to their chosen expression of faith. For readers of her books and other writing, this is a wonderful way to celebrate her work and life. Well written and well documented.

Patricia Fawcett says

Piers Dudgeon applies the same, in-depth research to his account of Maeve's life as he did to that of Catherine Cookson. On that occasion, I came away from reading the book wondering if I liked Catherine any more. However, in Maeve's case, he only serves to endear us to Maeve even more. Maeve had no hidden agenda, save that of being modest almost to a fault. Whilst aspects of her everyday life were freely vaunted in her Irish Times column, and with interviews she gave over the years, Maeve downplayed the wide variety of her life experience, from living on a kibbutz to reporting from Cyprus, in dangerous conditions, during the unrest in 1974. She travelled extensively, often alone, before meeting up with her soulmate and husband, Gordon Snell. Piers' research penetrates the layers of Maeve's persona, setting aside her unassuming modesty, and reveals a woman ahead of her time, one who would never be subsumed into a subservient role in Ireland. One little niggle which rankled me, as a Historian, was Piers referring to Henry VIII as a Protestant. Whilst Henry, having distanced himself from Rome following differences when he sought to divorce Catherine of Aragon, made himself Supreme Head of the Church, and went on to dissolve the monasteries - lining his pockets and war chest on the way - he nevertheless heard Mass every day of his life. he had little truck with the Reformists. The full essence of Protestantism did not fully permeate the ruling class in England until after the deaths of his son Edward and daughter Mary.

Savannah Kundo says

I received a copy of this book through Goodreads First Reads.

What a fascinating life Maeve Binchy had. Piers Dudgeon tells the story of Binchy's life from her early years to her university days in Ireland to her journalism and novelist careers in London. Dudgeon fills us in on the historical events going on during the time period, as well. I also found it interesting how so much of her life's work correlates to her writing, and Dudgeon does an excellent job at pointing out the parallels. I found this biography to be very interesting, often reading more like a story than a biography, though at some points it does sound a bit like an encyclopedia entry.

Carol MacInnis says

I won this book from a contest on Goodreads.

From the date of her birth on May 29, 1939 to her sad passing July 30, 2012, the literary world was blessed with Author, Maeve Binchy's exceptional stories from her homeland of Ireland.

Maeve's father was a barrister and in 1928 he graduated first Class Honors in English Language and Literature and later he got a Masters in the same. He would read throughout Maeve's childhood to her and her bedroom was stacked with shelves of her private library and by age 11 she read "Gone With The Wind" and was mesmerized by the extreme intelligence and the extent the author must have gone to with the background of the story. She was also intrigued by the fact that Author, Margaret Mitchell wrote that one and only book. As the world was introduced to radio (before television) Maeve would sit with her parents and listen to 90 minutes of Saturday Night Theatre with authors that included Dorothy Sayers, George Bernard Shaw, Agatha Christie, just to name a few. Maeve also had an interest in her father's laws book which she would sit and read. Her Mother always told her throughout her life that Maeve could do and be anything she wants. At age 37 Maeve married Gordon and at age 38 she discovered she could not have children. Although they were heart broken at this news, they nevertheless would sit and write their books together in the same room and would nurture and take time and care of their stories right up to each one of their 'births'. From lunch with the First Lady of the U.S., Barbara Bush to the Mayor of Chicago who gave her her own float at the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. It's no wonder her books became so popular, with her talent for promoting them to audiences; she was an exceptional speaker. With much of the money she received with the publications of each book, Maeve gave much of it to many charities and friends and family.

After reading the biography, I have a much better understanding of this remarkable woman and as I think back to the many books of hers that I've read, I can now see her in her works. An amazing, caring, gifted person that the literary world will truly never replace.
