



Maeve's Times

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'As someone who fell off a chair not long ago trying to hear they what they were saying at the next table in a restaurant, I suppose I am obsessively interested in what some might consider the trivia of other people's lives'

Maeve Binchy is well-known for her bestselling novels, the most recent of which was *A Week In Winter*. But for many years Maeve was a journalist, writing for *The Irish Times*.

From 'The Student Train' to 'Plane Bores', 'Bathroom Joggers' to 'When Beckett met Binchy', these articles have all the warmth, wit and humanity of her fiction. Arranged in decades, from the 1960s to the 2000s, and including Maeve's first and last ever piece of writing for *The Irish Times*, the columns also give a fascinating insight into the author herself.

With an introduction written by her husband, the writer Gordon Snell, this collection of timeless writing reminds us of why the leading Irish writer was so universally loved.

Maeve's Times Details

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From Reader Review Maeve's Times for online ebook

Minty McBunny says

I love Maeve Binchy, but this was almost unreadable. I just couldn't get interested in these short little blurbs, there were no characters and no plot, very little charm, all the things I read her for. This just seems like a way to cash in on her after her death.

Donna says

A collection of Binchy's writing from fifty years for The Irish Times

Good thing: Several of these touched me. I remembered watching Charles and Diana's wedding over and over - the article about this brought back these good memories. Binchy's telling of a friend's advice about how to be around someone who is dying resonated with the memory of the passing of one of my friends.

Bad thing: I know little to nothing about English and Irish politics so these articles went over my head.

I've never read any of Maeve Binchy's fiction but have always intended to. Reading this put her higher on my mental to-be-read list.

Adam Dunn says

I loved this book.

Someone once said reading Maeve Binchy is like sitting down to a cup of tea with an old friend and it's the perfect analogy. I met her only once at a book signing but I loved her and I felt like I knew her through her writing.

She wasn't the most thin and attractive woman but I believe this helped develop her fantastic personality which shone to the corners of the earth. She once said of her books that she didn't believe the ugly duckling had to grow up into a swan, that it could mature and become a very nice duck, thank you very much.

These fantastic stories all illustrate a long career with the Irish Times, something I had never known about previously. There's a real cross section here, all written in the trademark Binchy style. Some of them will make you laugh, almost all make you think, and generally I really appreciated having a window into her life. It was like an autobiography of sorts at times and I loved learning more about this amazing woman.

The Jewish story floored me, the story about the abortion was fantastic and should be required reading for those opposed to legalization. Some stories lost me a little, there was a lot of coverage of royal weddings and while I appreciated learning more about Maeve's past, that she had been to the weddings of three of Elizabeth's four children, it was more than I cared to know in detail so I skipped some of these parts.

I would like a sequel, I'm sure there's more articles that could be reprinted.

Jackie Mceachern says

I have to begin by saying that I am huge fan of Maeve Binchy's works of fiction. Her death was a huge blow to the literary world, in my opinion, but I'm grateful to have so many of her books to enjoy. I was excited to find this collection of columns that he had written, over the span of decades, in the Irish Times. I so enjoyed this travel back in time with Maeve and, as always, completely loved her honest, direct writing. It felt like having a conversation with her so I'm grateful that it was put together. But, it made me realize how much I will miss her writing.

Amy says

I think I have read all, or nearly all of Maeve Binchy's fiction. I have often thought she had a great ear for dialogue and good observation skills when it comes to pointing out quirky human behavior. I never knew she was a journalist, but it certainly makes sense that she may have polished those skills writing about real people and events before writing fiction. This is a collection of her columns from The Irish Times, and it spans her career from the 60s up to the 2000s.

In one of my favorite selections, she describes developing a writing style. "Don't worry about style, if you speak like yourself for long enough, the style will be there. It will be *your* style. You will be writing like yourself. You will have found your own voice." I certainly think over the years, she wrote like herself and she did have her own distinct voice in her fiction.

Another favorite concerns how to treat people with a terminal illness. Hint: a "get well soon" card - maybe not.

Also, it made me laugh when she was talking about having a bra custom made. She said she looked "like the prow of a ship". Which I distinctly remember Benny saying in Circle of Friends as she looks at herself dressed up for a dance.

I enjoyed the stories she wrote about everyday people. These stories, like her fiction, sound like her. Less enjoyable, for me, are the observations about political figures and entertainers, as I'm not familiar with Irish and English politics and culture of the 60s-80s.

Jenny says

This is a collection of Maeve Binchy's columns that were published in the Irish Times between the 1970s and her death in 2012. I always think of her as a lovely writer of place and character, but I forgot how funny and insightful she can be. The part where she interviews the super-serious Samuel Beckett had me laughing out loud.

Regina says

Maeve's Times is a selection of articles she wrote for The Irish Times where she worked as women's editor beginning in 1968. Through this accidental autobiography we get to know Maeve herself, unselfconscious, against the background of the events she lived through and commented upon, including the wedding of Charles and Diana and the wedding of William and Kate. Maeve has been my favorite author for decades. I'm so sorry she is gone. And so very sorry she was an atheist.

Linda says

I received this as an ARC and wanted to read it from the blurb mentioning how Maeve almost fell out of her chair trying to eavesdrop on someone dining near her. I recognized her name but have never read any of her books but I think I might try some now. This is a series of her newspaper columns dating back to the 1960s until the early 2000s and I did enjoy it. One of her columns from the 1960s was about taking a field trip with her class and it made me laugh out loud, as did several others. She of course taught in Ireland, at a private school and I teach at a public school in the U.S. 50 years later but some aggravations never change; collecting money from the students, worrying about what parents will complain about and of course making sure you don't lose anyone. All in all it's a fun book to read.

Biblio Files (takingadayoff) says

This is my first Maeve Binchy book. Her novels are not the sort of book I normally read, but I love collections of essays, letters, and articles by good writers. This fits the bill. I picked it up in an airport bookshop before a long flight, and it was perfect for that.

Maeve's Times covers Binchy's writing career from the beginning in the 1960s up to right before she died in 2012. In addition to writing a slew of novels and other fiction, she wrote for The Irish Times newspaper in a variety of roles -- columnist, correspondent, reporter. This book collects much of her writing from The Irish Times.

What I found most remarkable is that from the very beginning, she had a conversational and informative style. She seemed always to be thinking in terms of stories, which is of course great for a novelist, but also is quite effective for a reporter. Her later writing has the same easy yet professional tone as the earlier pieces, but there are more opinionated essays, as you might expect. I enjoyed all of them

As a bonus, there's an interview she did in 2012, as well as a short story. So I actually have read some of her fiction now, and just may have to try some more.

Negin says

I've been a huge fan of Maeve for many years and was looking forward to reading this compilation of short stories and articles that she had written for "The Irish Times" through a few decades. Some of the pieces were enjoyable and others not so much. I ended up skimming through those. I would only recommend this

book for Maeve fans, if that.

One of my favorite quotes:

“Last year I had a friend who was given three months to live, and I asked him to tell me what were the best things people could do and what were the worst. He said the very worst thing to do was to send Get Well card, one with bunny rabbits crying into spotted handkerchiefs and saying, ‘Sorry to hear that you are not so well.’ He used to look at those cards blankly and knew that they were the conditioned response and automatic reflex of people who meant desperately well, but who had to hide behind totally inappropriate greeting cards. He wanted to reply on another card, saying, ‘I’m trying, God damn it.’ But he didn’t. And he didn’t because he knew that the idiotic bits of card with hospital beds and sexy nurses and thermometers and bad puns hid the real message of sympathy and huge distress. He said that he really didn’t like people urging him to get another opinion and saying that it couldn’t do any harm. It would do harm, he thought, because it would waste time, the one thing there wasn’t much of left. He preferred people to call it cancer if they spoke of it at all, rather than use some euphemism, and he also wished that he didn’t have to spend so much time thanking people politely for their suggestions of healing crystals, prayers Never Known to Fail, or the laying on of hands by someone who lived half a continent away.

Those of us who knew him well and asked him how he wanted to do it were told. He wanted to remember the good, laugh at the funny, hear all the gossip, and try to be as normal as possible. Even though he could no longer eat, he wanted to come to restaurants with us and didn’t want to see anyone wince when he told the waiter he was on a diet.

He did love to hear from the many people he had known during his life, saying briefly that they had heard about his diagnosis and that they were sorry. Letters that then went on to say things he could hold on to, things about time well spent, marvelous places seen, and memories that would live forever. All this brought a smile to his face and made the tapestry richer and less laced with regret.”

Maeve dedicated almost all of her books to her husband, Gordon. Here’s a lovely picture of them together.

Obsidian says

I got this book for less than \$7 in a bargain bin so that's a positive.

Now all of the cons.

I really wish that I had just skipped reading this and or borrowed from the library. I really do love most of Binchy's books. I honestly thought this were short stories or other writings she had that would have some type of theme. Instead the publisher just pulled writings and separated them by the year/decade they were written. The first two decades (the 50s and the 60s) at least seemed to have a theme with the writings that were provided to be read. You get to see an ever evolving woman and one that may not be as independent as she would like. You read about women who have their hopes built up and have to crash land back to reality. I was all for that.

The rest of the book the (70s through 2000s) were just nonsensical for the most part. I really wish the publisher had not included stories about Maeve in this one either. A few times I got confused and realized I was reading something that happened to the author and then we would go back to fictionalized writing.

I also really wish all of the writings on the Royal family had been left out. I guess people in the UK, Ireland, etc. would find it fascinating. I was just bored. It read like a fan fiction account of the Royal family and you get to read how everyone stopped to watch Diana marry Charles and then William marry Kate. There was nothing earth shattering about those stories to me. Frankly, they read like filler.

Amy Paget says

Like many readers, I have long enjoyed the atmospheric and character-driven fiction of best-selling author Maeve Binchy. Her death in 2012, was a loss. Being so prolific, the loss was somewhat ameliorated by the posthumous publishing in 2013 of Maeve's Times and in 2014 of Chestnut Street. It's Maeve's Times: In Her Own Words that has captured my attention recently and revealed a whole different aspect of Binchy's writing life. As the fly leaf notes, Binchy was an 'accidental journalist', with her first articles being travel tales written as a teenager and submitted to the Irish Times by her father. What followed was a 40 year career writing a weekly column for The Irish Times and it's the best of these columns that are collected in Maeve's Times. Whether writing about "How to Speak Proper" or her meeting with Samuel Beckett, these columns are masterful examples of the personal essay form, full of wit, humor, and a keen understanding of the human character and society. Highly recommended.

Patricia Fawcett says

I have enjoyed Maeve's books as comfort-reading for many years. Her warmth and engagement with her characters shines through; right always triumphs. Yet behind all this, Maeve, having initially trained as a teacher, became a highly-successful journalist on an international scale. Working in a busy office on Saturday mornings, I scrambled to find time to grab a copy of the 'Irish Times' for Maeve's weekly column. And I wasn't the only one - my colleagues were male and enjoyed Maeve's astute asides and comments on life every bit as much as I did. We would often discuss the content of each article over coffee. There was much more to Maeve than a writer of hugely-enjoyable novels. Her natural modesty belied a towering intellect. How wonderful to have the opportunity to revisit the journalistic aspect of her writing. This is a book I will revisit, again and again.

Colleen says

Maeve's Times is a collection of Maeve Binchy's columns in the Irish Times from the 1960s up to the mid 2000s which pretty much spans her career. She has been one of my favorite authors over the years so this was fun to read a column at a time. Because she is Irish writing for an Irish/British audience over a span of nearly 50 years, I didn't always "get" everything in her columns, but I understood enough to appreciate her very human approach to the everyday details of life. She also departs from stories about the mundane to comment on Margaret Thatcher, other politicians and the Royal Family. In retrospect, it's interesting to read Maeve's views of these famous people and in particular the royal marriages. Maeve Binchy was a very talented writer; it is unfortunate she is no longer with us but her work lives on through this book and other works published after her death.

Susan says

This collection of Maeve Binchy's short journalism pieces set in Ireland and the UK shows her both as a born storyteller and as a journalist able to objectively portray tragedy and/or humor in the stories she writes.
