



Dame Margaret Drabble CBE

Author

Books

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Biography

Dame Margaret Drabble was born in Sheffield in 1939 and was educated at Newnham College, Cambridge. She is the author of eighteen novels including *A Summer Bird-Cage*, *The Millstone*, *The Peppered Moth*, *The Red Queen*, *The Sea Lady* and the highly acclaimed *The Pure Gold Baby*. She has also written biographies, screenplays and was the editor of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*. She was appointed CBE in 1980, and made DBE in the 2008 Honours list. She was also awarded the 2011 Golden PEN Award for a Lifetime's Distinguished Service to Literature. She is married to the biographer Michael Holroyd and lives in London and Somerset.

For film, theatre and TV enquiries, please contact Anthony Jones.

Latest publication **THE DARK FLOOD RISES - Canongate - November 2016**

Francesca Stubbs holds our hand as we take a walk through death and old age. Fran takes us to drinks with her dear friends, dropping off mouth-watering suppers for Claude, her ex-husband, warm and cosy in his infirmity, and visits her daughter, Poppet, holed up as the waters rise in a sodden West Country, as well as texting her son Christopher in Tenerife, dealing with the estate of his shockingly deceased girlfriend.

The questions of what constitutes a good death and how we understand it if we have lived well preoccupy this dark and glittering novel. With characteristic wit and caustic prose via some festive red merlot, *The Dark Flood Rises* dazzles and enthrals, entertains and asks existential questions in equal measure.

Praise for **THE DARK FLOOD RISES**

'Shrewd and timely – the best novel I've read in ages. Ferociously well written, and hugely entertaining.' **Sarah Waters**

'Masterly.' **New York Times, 100 Notable Books of 2017**

'An absolute tour de force.' **Linda Grant Guardian, Best Books of the Year**

'Erudite, beautifully written, funny, tragic.' **Daily Mail**

'Darkly witty and exhilarating.' **The Times**

'With its echoes of Simone de Beauvoir and Samuel Beckett, this quiet meditation on an old age seethes with apocalyptic intent . . . Brilliant.' **Guardian**

'Masterly, poignant and uplifting.' **Mail on Sunday**

'Drabble has pulled off a quietly revolutionary portrait of an age-group whose lives are just as urgent as anyone's but are rarely considered *****.' **Sunday Telegraph**

'Ageing and dying in style . . . Margaret Drabble's sharply drawn characters look back on lives lived and forwards to achieving a good death.' **Observer**

'Uplifting . . . Profound . . . Unforgettable . . . At its heart is the enormous question, how do we know if we've had a good life?' **Sunday Telegraph**

Praise for Margaret Drabble

'One of the most thought-provoking and intellectually challenging writers around.' **Financial Times**

'I have learned so much from Margaret Drabble's work. Her prose is very beautiful, very funny, and at the same time very serious. Novels like *The Millstone* and *Jerusalem the Golden* have helped me to understand what great writing can be.' **Sally Rooney**

'One of our foremost women writers.' **Guardian**

'One of the most versatile and accomplished authors of her generation.' **The New Yorker**

'The novels brim with sharply observed life and the author's seemingly infinite sympathy for "ordinary women.' **Joyce Carol Oates, The New Yorker**

Publications

Non-Fiction

Publication Details**Notes****THE PATTERN IN THE CARPET: A PERSONAL HISTORY WITH JIGSAWS**

2009, ATLANTIC

A deeply personal book on the jigsaw puzzle and the part it plays in the puzzle of its distinguished author's life. It is a mix of memoir, jigsaw history and the strange delights of puzzling. James Boswell described the 'innocent soothing relief from melancholy' of playing draughts, and Margaret Drabble – among countless others – has found a similar solace from assembling jigsaws. In *THE PATTERN IN THE CARPET*, she describes the history of this uniquely British form of meditation, from its earliest incarnation as a dissected map, used as a teaching tool in the late eighteenth century, to the other cut-outs and mosaics that have amused children and adults from Roman times until today. The resulting book is an original and moving personal history about ageing and the authenticity of memory; about the importance of childhood play; and, how we rearrange objects into new patterns to make sense of our past and ornament our present.

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE (REVISED 6TH EDITION)

2006, OUP

Based on the text of Margaret Drabble's 1995 edition, this sixth edition has been completely reworked and expanded. There are nearly 600 entirely new entries to reflect the new figures and issues of English Literature in the new millennium, and the existing entries have been extensively revised and updated to incorporate the latest scholarship. But this new edition remains faithful to Sir Paul Harvey's original vision of an authoritative work placing English literature from the Classical world, Europe, Latin America, and beyond. In addition to the extensive coverage of writers, works, literary theory, allusions, and characters, there are sixteen featured essay-style entries on key topics including black British literature, fantasy fiction, and modernism.

ANGUS WILSON: A BIOGRAPHY

1995, SECKER AND WARBURG

This biography of Sir Angus Wilson traces his early years as a librarian at the British Library, interrupted by a grim spell in the code-breaking huts at Bletchley Park, before his rise as novelist, critic, lecturer and man of letters following the publication of his first volume of stories, "The Wrong Set", in 1949. It also describes the range of contacts he made and maintained around the fixed point of his relationship with his friend and companion of forty years, Tony Garrett, and his role as an influence and mentor for a younger generation of writers.

Fiction**Publication Details****Notes****THE PURE GOLD BABY**

2013, CANONGATE

Anna is a child of special, unknowable qualities. She is a happy child, always willing to smile at the world around her. But she also presents profound challenges. For her mother Jess, still in her early twenties, living alone in North London and hoping to embark on an adventurous career, her arrival will prove life-transforming.

Over the course of decades, in ways large and small, Anna will affect the lives and loves of those around her. While Anna herself will remain largely unaltered by the passing years, she will live through a period of dramatic change, her journey illuminating our shifting attitudes towards motherhood, responsibility and the way we care for one another.

Both personal and political, *The Pure Gold Baby* is a remarkable portrait of a family, a friendship, and a neighbourhood. It is a novel of great beauty, wisdom and stealthy power by one of our country's foremost and acclaimed writers.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SMILING WOMAN: COMPLETE SHORT STORIES

2011, PENGUIN

This collection shows Margaret Drabble to be a leading practitioner of the art of the short story, presenting her complete short fiction for the first time in a single volume, spanning four decades, from 1964 to 2000. Several of the stories, like *The Dower House at Kellynch*, are set in Somerset and Dorset and reflect their author's intimate knowledge of the land and flora there, but their settings also range as far as Elba and Cappadocia. Taken as a whole, the stories reflect the social changes of the past forty years, by showing the English at home and abroad. In 'The Gifts of War', peace-protesting students clash with a mother buying a toy for her son, with tragic consequences. An Englishman on honeymoon has a brief but significant epiphany, finding a shared humanity with a Moroccan crowd in 'Hassan's Tower'. Their protagonists are men and women, husbands and lovers, television presenters and housewives, all subtly and precisely captured as products of their time and place. In his introduction, Spanish scholar José Francisco Fernández celebrates the 'pure and simple pleasure to be found in reading these survivalist, questioning, belligerently intense short stories'.

THE SEA LADY

2006, PENGUIN

Humphrey and Ailsa meet as children by a grey, northern sea. Humphrey is quiet, serious and will in time explore the sea's mysteries; Ailsa is angry, a freckled cobra ready to strike. Yet they fascinate one another and when they meet again years later they fall briefly and disastrously in love. Half a lifetime passes before Humphrey and Ailsa's paths finally re-cross. What will each make of their past? And of the future? *THE SEA LADY* tells the story of first and last love, of evolution and the ebb and flow of time that gives shape to our lives.

THE RED QUEEN

2004, PENGUIN

Two hundred years after being plucked from obscurity to marry the Crown Prince of Korea, the Red Queen's ghost decides to set the record straight about her extraordinary existence and Dr Babs Halliwell, with her own complicated past, is the perfect envoy. Why does the Red Queen pick Babs to keep her story alive, and what else does she want from her? Set in 18th century Korea and the present day, *THE RED QUEEN* is a rich and atmospheric novel about love, and what it means to be remembered.

THE SEVEN SISTERS

2002, PENGUIN

When Candida Wilton arrives alone in London, divorced and rejected and without much money, she is filled with a strange sense of excitement. What can happen, at her age, to change her fortunes? How will she adjust to this shabby, violent, yet curiously attractive city? When Candida starts writing her diary, she expects that she will fill it with the small events with which she pads out her empty life, but she has always had a secret belief that despite all she is a lucky person. And she is, in a sense, right, for when an unexpected windfall brings her sudden riches, her horizons broaden: she will start, she thinks, with a trip abroad...

THE PEPPERED MOTH

2001, PENGUIN

It is 1905, and Bessie is a small child living in a South Yorkshire mining town. Unusually gifted, she sits quietly and studies hard, waiting for the day when she can sit the Cambridge entrance exam and escape the way of life her ancestors have never even thought to question. At the other end of the century her granddaughter, Faro, is listening to a lecture on genetic inheritance. She has returned to the town where her grandmother grew up and sees the families who have lived there for longer than anyone can remember. But for all her exotic ancestry and glamour, has she really travelled any further than them?

Publication Details**Notes**

THE WITCH OF EXMOOR

1996, PENGUIN

Freda Haxby is as famous for her writing as she is for her eccentricities. But for Daniel Palmer, Rosemary, Grace and their families, she is a monster mother. This is the story of an end-of-the-century family whose comfortable lives are disrupted by a succession of sinister events.

THE GATES OF IVORY

1991, PENGUIN

Two years ago novelist Stephen Cox vanished to the east. There had been postcards, then silence: now Liz has received this strange parcel of jottings, bills, pictures and human bones. Enlisting the help of another of his friends, beautiful, unrestrained Hattie Osbourne, Liz begins to decipher the parcel by retracing Stephen's journey from the safety of England to the chaos and corruption of Southeast Asia...

A NATURAL CURIOSITY

1989, PENGUIN

Liz, Alix and Esther are old friends whose lives continue to cross and uncross. As the years pass, they are more than ever disposed to question, to re-evaluate, to examine their motives and directions in the brutally prosperous, atrocity-hungry society of Britain.
