



Maisie Dobbs (Maisie Dobbs Mysteries Series Book 1)

By Jacqueline Winspear

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"A female investigator every bit as brainy and battle-hardened as Lisbeth Salander."

—Maureen Corrigan, NPR's *Fresh Air*, on *Maisie Dobbs*

Maisie Dobbs got her start as a maid in an aristocratic London household when she was thirteen. Her employer, suffragette Lady Rowan Compton, soon became her patron, taking the remarkably bright youngster under her wing. Lady Rowan's friend, Maurice Blanche, often retained as an investigator by the European elite, recognized Maisie's intuitive gifts and helped her earn admission to the prestigious Girton College in Cambridge, where Maisie planned to complete her education.

The outbreak of war changed everything. Maisie trained as a nurse, then left for France to serve at the Front, where she found—and lost—an important part of herself. Ten years after the Armistice, in the spring of 1929, Maisie sets out on her own as a private investigator, one who has learned that coincidences are meaningful, and truth elusive. Her very first case involves suspected infidelity but reveals something very different.

In the aftermath of the Great War, a former officer has founded a working farm known as The Retreat, that acts as a convalescent refuge for ex-soldiers too shattered to resume normal life. When Fate brings Maisie a second case involving The Retreat, she must finally confront the ghost that has haunted her for over a decade.

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Maisie Dobbs (Maisie Dobbs Mysteries Series Book 1) By Jacqueline Winspear Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #7764 in eBooks
- Published on: 2003-07-01
- Released on: 2003-07-01
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Maisie is 14 when her mother dies, and she must go into service to help her father make ends meet. Her prodigious intellect and the fact that she is sneaking into the manor library at night to read Hume, Kierkegaard, and Jung alert Lady Rowan to the fact that she has an unusual maid. She arranges for Maisie to be tutored, and the girl ultimately qualifies for Cambridge. She goes for a year, only to be drawn by the need for nurses during the Great War. After serving a grueling few years in France and falling in love with a young doctor, Maisie puts up a shingle in 1929 as a private investigator. She is a perceptive observer of human nature, works well with all classes, and understands the motivations and demons prevalent in postwar England. Teens will be drawn in by her first big case, seemingly a simple one of infidelity, but leading to a complex examination of an almost cultlike situation. The impact of the war on the country is vividly conveyed. A strong protagonist and a lively sense of time and place carry readers along, and the details lead to further thought and understanding about the futility and horror of war, as well as a desire to hear more of Maisie. This is the beginning of a series, and a propitious one at that.

Susan H. Woodcock, Fairfax County Public Library, Chantilly, VA

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Review

'Readers sensing a story-within-a-story won't be disappointed. But first, they must prepare to be astonished at the sensitivity and wisdom with which Maisie resolves her first professional assignment' -- New York Times
'A fine new sleuth for the twenty-first century. Simultaneously self-reliant and vulnerable, Maisie isn't a character I'll easily forget' -- Elizabeth George
'The book is much more than a cosy mystery - it is also about women's growing emancipation and the profound changes to society after the First World War.' -- Mail on Sunday's You 20050403

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