



**Maisie Dobbs (2003)**  
(Maisie Dobbs novels, #1)

By Jacqueline Winspear

(Winner, Agatha Awards: Best First Novel)



Return laminated  
questions with  
Bagged Book Kit

Total Replacement Price: \$215.00  
Individual Book: \$20.00  
Individual Bag: \$10.00  
Laminated Discussion Questions: \$5.00  
Check out for 8 weeks/ No renewals

Discussion questions taken from *LitLovers*

1. How would you describe Maisie Dobbs? What do you most admire (or not) about her character? Is she psychologically complex...or superficially drawn?
2. Why does the author structure the book as she does: three sections, with the middle section veering back into Mashie's past, while the first and third revolve around the present-day mystery?
3. Follow-up to Question 2: At What point do the mysterious allusions in the first part become clearer?
4. In many ways, Maisie Dobbs is an historical novel, as well as a mystery. What are the ways in which World War I and its horrors impact the story? Which was of greater interest to you—the background of London drawing rooms and vivid depictions of the war...or the current-day mystery?
5. When Christopher Davenham initially comes to Maisie with his case, she is reluctant to accept it. Why? Why does she later accept the case—what makes her change her mind?
6. How much of Maisie's investigative work relies on her almost supernatural powers? Is that...well, an easy way out for the author? Doesn't a good detective story rely on logical thinking and empirical evidence—the detective's intellectual prowess? Or is Maisie's intuition what makes the story so enjoyable?
7. Talk about Lady Compton's and Maurice Blanche's influence on Maisie Dobbs. What does Dr. Blanche mean when he says, "truth walks towards us on the paths of our questions"? What are some of his other pronouncements?
8. What prompts Maisie to question the goings-on at The Retreat?
9. How is Maisie representative of the changing role of women in the 1920's, after the War?
10. How do you feel about the ending? Some reviewers feel it unearned...or hokey...or thin. Others find it totally satisfying. Where do you stand?
11. Overall, does this book deliver? Is the mystery engaging and surprising...or flat and predictable? Does it inspire you to read other books in the Maisie Dobbs series?

## Author Bio:



Jacqueline Winspear was born and raised in the county of Kent, England. Following higher education at the University of London's Institute of Education, Jacqueline worked in academic publishing, in higher education and in marketing communications in the UK. She immigrated to the United States in 1990, and while working in business and as a personal/professional coach, Jacqueline embarked upon a life-long dream to be a writer—she subsequently became a regular contributor to journals covering international education and travel, and has published articles in the Washington Post, Huffington Post, The Daily Beast and other publications.

Jacqueline's grandfather was severely wounded and shell-shocked at The Battle of the Somme in 1916, and it was as she understood the extent of his suffering that, even in childhood, Jacqueline became deeply interested in the "war to end all wars" and its aftereffects. As an adult her interest deepened to the extent that, though she did not set out to write a "war" novel, it came as no surprise that this part of history formed the backdrop of Maisie Dobbs and other books in the series. The unique and engaging character of Maisie Dobbs is very much a woman of her generation. She has come of age at a time when women took on the toil of men and claimed independence that was difficult to relinquish. It was a time when many women remained unmarried, simply because a

Jacqueline's first novel, *Maisie Dobbs*, was a National Bestseller and received an array of accolades, including New York Times Notable Book 2003, a Publishers Weekly Top Ten Mystery 2003, and a BookSense Top Ten selection. In addition, the novel was nominated for 7 awards, including the Edgar® for Best Novel—only the second time a first novel was nominated in this category. She subsequently won the prestigious Agatha Award for Best First Novel, the Macavity Award for Best First Novel, and the Alex Award, which is presented annually by the American Library Association in conjunction with the Margaret Alexander Edwards Trust. Subsequent novels in the series have continued to win awards. Together with *To Die But Once* (2018), Jacqueline has now published 14 novels in the *Maisie Dobbs* series, including the New York Times bestsellers *In This Grave Hour*, *Journey to Munich*, *A Dangerous Place*, *Leaving Everything Most Loved*, *Elegy for Eddie*, *A Lesson in Secrets*, *The Mapping of Love and Death*, *Among The Mad* and *An Incomplete Revenge*, as well as four other National Bestselling novels. Her standalone novel, *The Care and Management of Lies*, was also a New York Times and National Bestseller, and a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

## Read Alikes

*Stella Bain* by Anita Shreve

*Mr. Churchill's secretary* by Susan Elia MacNeal

*Cavendon Hall* by Barbara Taylor Bradford



310 S. Meridian Street  
Greenwood, IN 46143  
(317-881-1953  
[www.greenwoodlibrary.us](http://www.greenwoodlibrary.us)