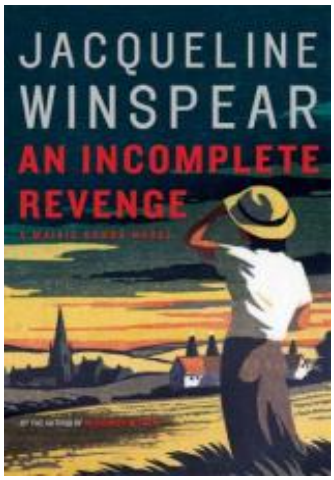
An Incomplete Revenge: A Maisie Dobbs Novel

by Jacqueline Winspear



About the Book

With the country in the grip of economic malaise, Maisie Dobbs is relieved to accept an apparently straightforward assignment to investigate a potential land purchase. Her inquiries take her to a picturesque village in Kent during the hop-picking season, but beneath its pastoral surface she finds evidence that something is amiss. Mysterious fires erupt in the village with alarming regularity, and a series of petty crimes suggest a darker criminal element at work. A peculiar secrecy shrouds the village, and ultimately Maisie must draw on her finely-honed skills of detection to solve one of her most intriguing cases yet.

Discussion Guide

1. Divided between past and present, between her female gender and her male-dominated profession, and between her British identity and part-gypsy ancestry, Maisie Dobbs is a character of intense inward divisions. How do these divisions both complicate and strengthen Maisie as a character?

2. A variety of pivotal scenes in **An Incomplete Revenge** involve dramatic uses of fire. What range of moods, feelings, or symbolic meanings does fire represent in the novel?

3. Although several of the residents of Heronsdene are developed individually as characters, the townspeople are also dominated by an ominous group psychology. What might Winspear be suggesting through her portrayal of this town about the limits of people?s abilities to think or choose for themselves?

4. Maisie is freer from class prejudice than most of the other characters in Winspear?s novel. Nevertheless, does an awareness of class difference influence her relationships with people like Billy Beale and Priscilla Evernden? How?

5. Animals, especially dogs and horses, appear prominently in **An Incomplete Revenge**. How do their presence and the

way they are treated help us to better understand Winspear?s human characters?

6. Followers of the Maisie Dobbs series have shared the heroine?s dread anticipation of the death of her long-incapacitated friend Simon Lynch. Does his death in **An Incomplete Revenge** affect Maisie (or you) in the ways that you anticipated? What choices does Winspear make in describing Maisie?s emotional response, and do you agree with them?

7. A character from a previous Maisie Dobbs mystery observed that war is despicable because it is ?not over when it ends.? How might this seeming paradox be applied to An Incomplete Revenge? Through the death of Simon Lynch and the group confession that marks a climax in the novel, do you think Maisie and the townspeople of Heronsdene are moving toward a long-awaited closure, or do you think they will continue to be trapped and haunted by the memories of the Great War? On what do you base your judgment?

8. What is Maisie?s attitude toward the gypsy elements in her ancestry? In a novel that counsels the acceptance and understanding of different ethnicities, is Maisie sufficiently accepting of her own mixed heritage?

9. At the end of the novel, Maisie dances alone in her apartment. Discuss the significance of this gesture.

Author Bio

Jacqueline Winspear is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers THE CONSEQUENCES OF FEAR, THE AMERICAN AGENT and TO DIE BUT ONCE, as well as 15 other bestselling Maisie Dobbs novels, and THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF LIES, a Dayton Literary Peace Prize finalist. Jacqueline has also published two nonfiction books: WHAT WOULD MAISIE DO? and a memoir, THIS TIME NEXT YEAR WE'LL BE LAUGHING. Originally from the United Kingdom, she divides her time between California and the Pacific Northwest.

Critical Praise

"A smart, pragmatic private investigator and psychologist with extraordinary empathic sensitivity... Every page of this novel is dense with affectionately rendered period detail. Winspear deftly intertwines multiple story lines. The tale becomes increasingly gripping as the novel progresses toward a truly moving ending."

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