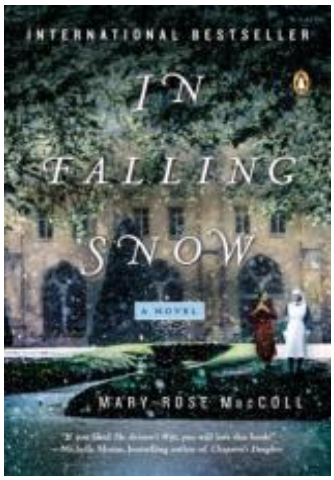
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In Falling Snow

by Mary-Rose MacColl



About the Book

A bestselling Australian writer?s American debut and a heart-wrenching novel of World War I

Iris Crane?s tranquil life is shattered when a letter summons memories from her bittersweet past: her first love, her best friend, and the tragedy that changed everything. Iris, a young Australian nurse, travels to France during World War I to bring home her fifteen-year-old brother, who ran away to enlist. But in Paris she meets the charismatic Dr. Frances Ivens, who convinces Iris to help establish a field hospital in the old abbey at Royaumont, staffed entirely by women --- a decision that will change her life. Seamlessly interwoven is the story of Grace, Iris?s granddaughter in 1970s Australia. Together their narratives paint a portrait of the changing role of women in medicine and the powerful legacy of love.

Discussion Guide

1.) Caught up by Dr. Ivens' personality and vision, Iris postpones her original mission. Although she later comes to question her decision to stay at Royaumont, do you believe Tom would have returned with Iris to Australia had she found him earlier?

2.) Have you ever met someone like Dr. Ivens? Why is charisma as crucial a part of her job as talent?

3.) How does Cicely's story about her mentally ill mother add to the novel?

4.) Did Violet take Tom as a lover for her own sake or for Iris's? How did learning that Violet received the scholarship to study medicine affect your opinion of her?

5.) At the beginning of the book, Grace thinks of Iris as unerringly proper. It's only later that she discovers the many secrets her grandmother kept. Why is it so difficult for us to see older generations as individuals with passions and disappointments of their own?

6.) Why does Iris offer to raise Violet and Tom's child as her own? Would you be willing to do the same if it meant deferring your personal ambitions?

7.) How did IN FALLING SNOW affect your feelings on the difficulties faced by women of previous generations? If you had been alive during World War I, what do you imagine you might have been doing?

8.) Do you agree with Iris's decision to delay calling the ambulance until she felt certain that Al couldn't be revived? Did she come to truly love him?

9.) What does the baby sugar glider represent?

10.) Towards the end of the novel, a letter from Iris to Violet reveals that she believes each of them wound up living the life that suited her best. What do you think?

Author Bio

Mary-Rose MacColl is the author of five novels, a nonfiction book, short stories, feature journalism and essays. Her first novel, NO SAFE PLACE, was a runner-up for the Australian/Vogel Literary Award, and her first nonfiction book, THE BIRTH WARS, was a finalist in the 2009 Walkley awards for journalism. Her novel IN FALLING SNOW was an international bestseller. She lives is Brisbane, Australia, with her husband and son, and is an ordinary swimmer.

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Publication Date: August 27, 2013
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 464 pages
Publisher: Penguin Books
ISBN-10: 0143123920
ISBN-13: 9780143123927