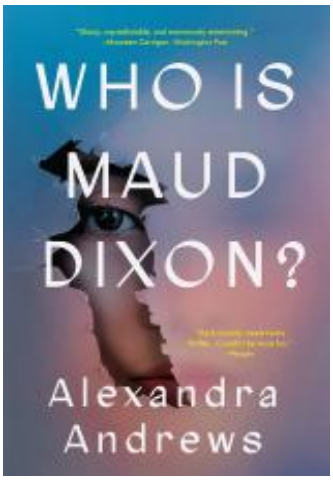
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Who Is Maud Dixon?

by Alexandra Andrews



About the Book

A "stylish and sharp" character-driven suspense novel, "with wicked hairpin turns," about a famous novelist and a small-town striver locked in a struggle for fortune and fame. (Maria Semple, author of WHERE?D YOU GO, BERNADETTE?)

Florence Darrow is a low-level publishing employee who believes that she's destined to be a famous writer. When she stumbles into a job as the assistant to the brilliant, enigmatic novelist known as Maud Dixon --- whose true identity is a secret --- it appears that the universe is finally providing Florence?s big chance.

The arrangement seems perfect. Maud Dixon (whose real name, Florence discovers, is Helen Wilcox) can be prickly, but she is full of pointed wisdom --- not only on how to write, but also on how to live. Florence quickly falls under Helen?s spell and eagerly accompanies her to Morocco, where Helen?s new novel is set. Amidst the colorful streets of Marrakesh and the windswept beaches of the coast, Florence?s life at last feels interesting enough to inspire a novel of her own.

But when Florence wakes up in the hospital after a terrible car accident, with no memory of the previous night --- and no sign of Helen --- she?s tempted to take a shortcut. Instead of hiding in Helen?s shadow, why not upgrade into Helen's life? Not to mention her bestselling pseudonym.

Taut, twisty and viciously entertaining, WHO IS MAUD DIXON? is a stylish psychological thriller about how far into the darkness you?re willing to go to claim the life you always wanted.

Discussion Guide

1. At the beginning of the novel, Florence is struggling with writer?s block. Why does she believe she is being obstructed creatively? How does this change throughout the story?

2. Florence envies the lives of other people and tries to mold herself to fit into the literary world in New York. In Florence?s eyes, what do Amanda Lincoln, Agatha Hale and Greta Frost have that she does not?

3. How does Florence?s definition of ?success? evolve throughout the novel?

4. Does *Mississippi Foxtrot* --- a novel presumed to be based on its pseudonymous author?s own experiences --- remind you of any real-life books? Why might an author choose to use a pseudonym?

5. Florence and Helen believe that identity is a work in progress and that it?s possible to reinvent oneself. How does this belief in ?fake it till you make it? play out in the novel? Do you think people can genuinely change --- or does it always involve some amount of posturing?

6. Book publishing, like many other industries, runs on mentorship and apprenticeship. How do the characters exploit this power dynamic as they mentor or assist each other? How does Florence shift this balance in her favor? Do men and women wield power differently?

7. ?Ultimately, she didn?t care whether Maud Dixon was a man or a woman. She knew that whoever she was, she was an outsider, like Florence herself.? Discuss why you think Florence is preoccupied with belonging to certain spaces.

8. Andrews writes, ?In a moment of rashness, [Florence] had kicked open an escape hatch from the life she?d been leading. Now that she stood outside of it, she could see how small it had gotten.? Have you experienced moments in your own life that felt this way?

9. Secrets and lies play a big part in this novel. Do you agree with Florence?s belief that ?every secret contains the power to destroy something??

10. ?They were jealous, of course --- jealousy being a natural corollary to ambition.? Can ambition exist without jealousy? Discuss.

11. Helen shares all types of life advice with Florence. Do you have a favorite bit of wisdom from Helen? By the end of the novel, does Helen?s worldview and lifestyle hold the same allure?

12. When did Florence?s behavior first cross the line? Does one small transgression inevitably lead to larger ones? When did Florence pass the point of no return, after which she had no choice but to stay on the path towards becoming Maud Dixon?

Author Bio

Alexandra Andrews has worked as a journalist, editor and copywriter in New York and Paris. Her novel WHO IS

MAUD DIXON? was published in 28 languages around the world, and was named a best book/mystery of the year by the *New York Times*, NPR, *Time*, the *New York Post* and *Entertainment Weekly*. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and children.

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