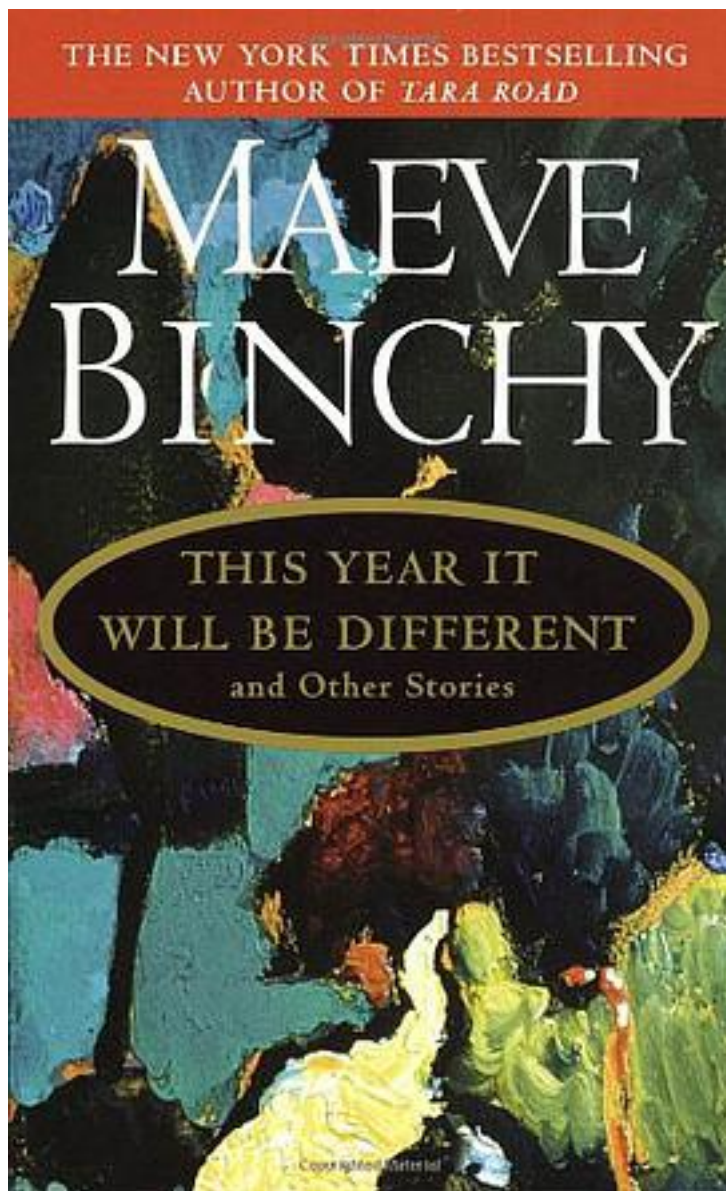


This Year It Will Be Different



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著者:Maeve Binchy

出版者:Dell

出版时间:2007-05-29

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780385341783

From the New York Times bestselling author of *Circle of Friends* and *The Glass Lake* comes *This Year It Will Be Different*, a stunning new work that brings us the magic and spirit of Christmas in fifteen stories filled with Maeve Binchy's trademark wit, charm, and sheer storytelling genius. Instead of nostalgia, Binchy evokes contemporary life; instead of Christmas homilies, she offers truth; and instead of sugarplums, she brings us the nourishment of holidays that precipitate change, growth, and new beginnings.

In "A Typical Irish Christmas," a grieving New York widower heads for a holiday in Ireland and finds an unexpected destination not just for himself, but for a father and daughter at odds. The title story "This Year It Will Be Different" also delves into the emotions of a person at mid-life--a woman with a complacent husband and grown children who are entering a season that can forever alter her life, and theirs. In "Pulling Together," a teacher not yet out of her twenties sees her affair with a married man at a turning point as Christmas Eve approaches--and she may be off on a new direction with some unusual friends. And in the delightful tale "The Hard Core," the four most recalcitrant residents of a nursing home are left alone at Christmas with the owner's daughter in charge: the result is sure to be disaster--or the kind of life-affirming renewal that only the spirit of the season can bring.

The stories in *This Year It Will Be Different* powerfully evoke many lives--step-families grappling with ex's, long-married couples faced with in-law problems, a wandering husband choosing between "the other woman" and his wife, a child caught in grown-up tugs-of-war--during the one holiday when feelings cannot be easily hidden. The time of year may be magical, imbued with meaning. But the situations are universal. And Maeve Binchy makes us care about them all. As the *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted, "Maeve Binchy's people come to life fully. They make you laugh and cry and disturb your sleep." They do precisely that in this extraordinary collection, on the night before Christmas when we are snug in our beds, or anywhere, any time of the year.

From the Hardcover edition.

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