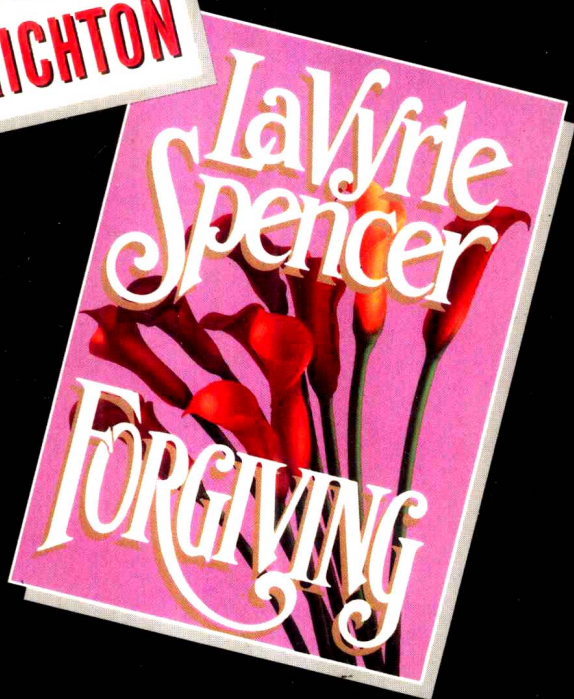
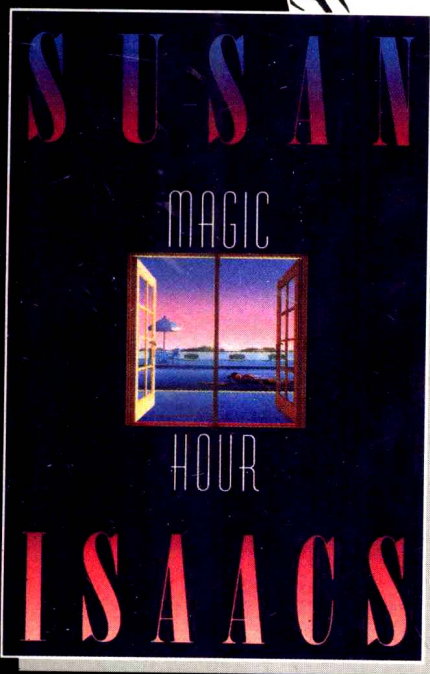
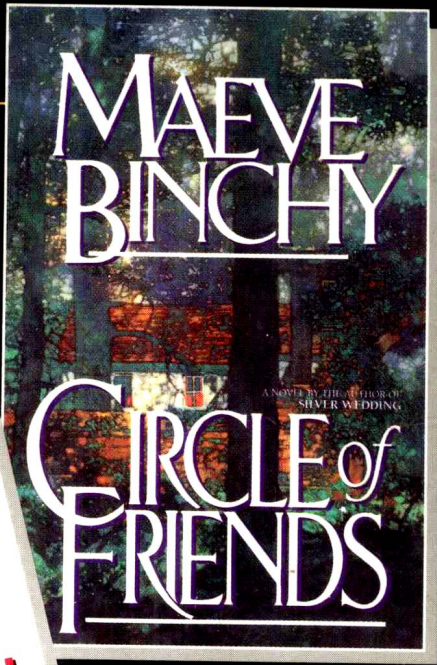
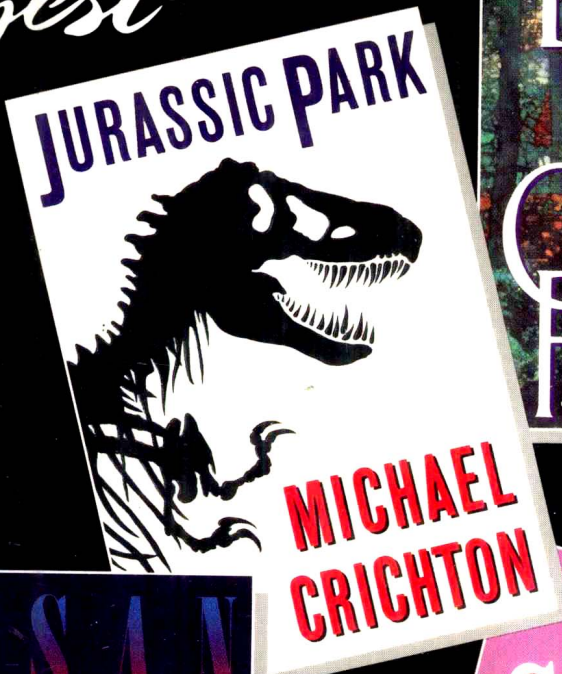


TIME
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4 BESTSELLERS

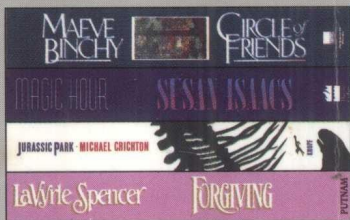
I N O N E V O L U M E

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4

FASCINATING NEW BOOKS
FOR YOUR READING
PLEASURE...



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS Maeve Binchy

Delacorte \$19.95

It is Ireland in the 1950s, and for young, wide-eyed Benny Hogan and Eve Malone, it promises to be an exciting time. Benny is a coddled only child, Eve an orphan raised by nuns. Leaving the protection of village life in Knockglen, they eagerly look forward to new experiences and friends when they go to university in Dublin. Some of these friends will love them, some will betray them in this compassionate coming-of-age novel.

MAGIC HOUR Susan Isaacs

HarperCollins \$21.95

Producer Sy Spencer is dead, shot twice by a .22 at his pool in the Hamptons. He leaves behind two ex-wives, a failing movie, and a rapidly cooling love affair with his star. The detective on the case is a local man, Steve Brady, a recovering alcoholic who suddenly finds every lead curving back to him. Although he didn't commit the crime, Brady himself holds the keys to the mystery behind Spencer's murder.

JURASSIC PARK

Michael Crichton

Knopf \$19.95

It sounded like a great idea. Take the most advanced biotechnology, clone dinosaurs from ancient DNA preserved in amber, and build the world's most sensational theme park featuring creatures on a jungle island off Costa Rica. Breathing apatosaurs, stegosaurus, triceratops, and, most awesome of all, Tyrannosaurus rex—right before your very eyes! A problem or two remain, of course. Nothing serious, the first visitors are assured. A few glitches in the computer, a mistake in the DNA . . . and suddenly the animals are turning on their keepers.

FORGIVING

LaVyrle Spencer

Putnam \$19.95

"It's a woman!" Not only are women a rare sight in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, in 1876, but Sarah Merritt sets out to print a crusading newspaper that demands, among other things, the closing of the town's fanciest bordello . . . where her sister Addie works. When Sarah sets up her printing press in the middle of Main Street, Marshal Noah Campbell throws her in jail. And so begins a duel between two headstrong people who clash with their wits but not with their hearts.

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CONTENTS

5
CIRCLE OF FRIENDS
by
Maeve Binchy

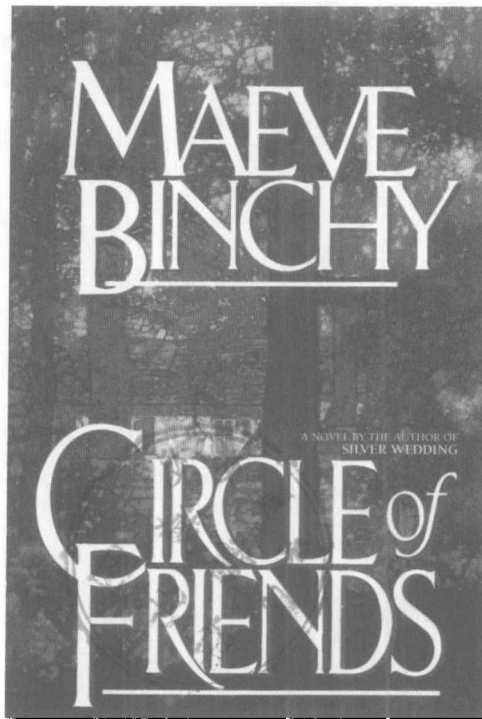
135
MAGIC HOUR
by
Susan Isaacs

239
JURASSIC PARK
by
Michael Crichton

369
FORGIVING
by
LaVyrle Spencer

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Maeve Binchy



Big, softhearted Benny Hogan, an adored only daughter, and Eve Malone, a quick-witted orphan brought up by nuns, are best friends in the small Irish town of Knockglen. As they set off for college in Dublin in the late 1950s, they know little of the bittersweet world they are about to enter. Their new friends, beautiful Nan Mahon and the handsome charmer Jack Foley, introduce Benny and Eve to a life of excitement and sophistication unheard of back home in Knockglen. It is a turbulent time for these young people, and within this circle of friends the undercurrents of ambition, manipulation, and betrayal will test their loyalties to the breaking point.

Maeve Binchy was born and educated in Dublin. Author of the best-selling novels *Light a Penny Candle*, *Echoes*, *Firefly Summer*, and *Silver Wedding*, she has been writing for *The Irish Times* since 1969. She lives with her husband, Gordon Snell, in London and Dalkey, a coastal village outside Dublin.

ONE

The kitchen was full of the smells of baking. Benny put down her schoolbag and went on a tour of inspection.

Patsy was greasing the trays for the queen cakes. "The cake hasn't been iced yet," she said. "The mistress will do that herself."

"Was she in Dublin? Did she go up on the bus?"

"No, not at all."

"But she must have." Benny seemed disappointed.

"No, she's not long gone at all. . . . She was only up the town."

Benny licked the spoon thoughtfully. "It's nicer raw," she said. "I can't believe I'm going to be ten. What did you do when you were ten?"

"Don't you know every day in the orphanage was the same," Patsy said cheerfully. "There was no day different until I came here."

"They must have had birthdays," Benny insisted.

"I don't remember them," Patsy sighed. "Here's your mother, now let me get on with the work."

Annabel Hogan came in carrying three big bags.

"Were you in Dublin at all today, Mother?"

"No, child, I had enough to do getting things ready for the party tomorrow." The words sounded sharp but the tone was kindly. Benny knew her mother was looking forward to it all too.

"Will Father be home for the cake bit?"

"Yes, he will. We won't get to the cake until your father has the business closed and is back here."

Benny's father ran Hogan's Outfitters, the big menswear shop in the middle of Knockglen. The shop was often at its busiest on a

Saturday, when the farmers came in to have themselves fitted out by Mr. Hogan or Mike, the old assistant who had been there since time immemorial.

Benny was glad that her father would be there for the cake, because that was when she might be given her present. Father had said it was going to be a wonderful surprise. Benny *knew* that they must have got her the velvet dress with the lacy collar and the pumps to go with it. She had wanted it since last Christmas when they went to the pantomime in Dublin and she had seen the girls dancing in pink velvet dresses. They had heard that they sold them in Clery's, near where the bus stopped when it went to Dublin.

Benny was large and square, but she wouldn't look like that in the pink velvet dress. She would be just like the fairy dancers on the stage, and her feet wouldn't look big and flat in those shoes because they had lovely pointy toes, and little pom-poms on them.

There would be seven girls from school at the party, farmers' daughters mainly from outside Knockglen. And Maire Carroll, whose mother and father owned the grocery. And Eve Malone.

Eve was the girl who lived in the convent. Small and dark, she looked like a pixie, her eyes darting here and there, forever watchful. Benny neither liked Eve nor disliked her. She envied her being so fleet and lithe. She knew that Eve had her own room in the convent, behind the curtain where no other girl was allowed to step. The girls said it was the room with the round window that faced down the town and that Eve could sit at the window and watch everyone and where they went and who they were with. She never went on holidays anywhere; she stayed with the nuns all the time.

Once, when they had gone on a nature walk, Eve had pointed to a small cottage by the big disused quarry. She said that it was her house. When she was older she would live in it all on her own. She would put all her things on the floor because it was hers to do what she liked with.

Some of them were half afraid of Eve, so nobody denied the story, but nobody really believed it either. Benny didn't really want her to come to the party, but Mother had been insistent.

"That child has no home. She must come to this one when there's a celebration."

Eve had written a very neat correct letter saying that she accepted the invitation with pleasure. "They taught her to write nicely," Benny's father had said approvingly.

"They're determined to make a lady out of her," Mother had sighed.

"Tell me about Eve's mother and father," Benny asked.

"Ah, that's all long ago," her father said. "No point in raking that over."

"Why?"

"Lord, why, why, why," her father sighed.

"Mother Francis says that if you have a questioning mind you get to know all the answers." Benny was triumphant.

"Well, it's a sad story. Her mother died when Eve was being born. And then a bit later, her poor father, may the Lord have mercy on him, went out one evening with his wits scattered and fell into the quarry."

"Wasn't that desperate!" Benny's eyes were round with horror. "But there's more to it, isn't there . . . there's a kind of secret."

"Not really." Her father's eyes were honest. "You see Eve's mother was a Protestant from Westlands—from the big house beyond. She was one of the family and poor Jack, that was her father, was a kind of handyman who did a bit of work up at Westlands."

"But it's not a secret or a scandal." Annabel Hogan's face was set in warning lines. "They were married in the Catholic church."

Benny could see the shutters coming down. She knew when to leave things.

At school next day, even the girls who hadn't been asked to the party wished her a happy birthday.

"What are you getting? Is it a dress?"

"Yes, I think so, but I don't know yet, really."

"Was it got in Dublin?"

"I think so."

Eve spoke suddenly. "It might have been got here, there's lots of things in Mrs. Pine's."

"I don't think so." Benny tossed her head.

When the others had gone away, Benny turned on Eve. "Why did you say it was got in Mrs. Pine's? You don't know anything."

Eve shrugged.

"Have *you* got a frock?"

"Yes, Mother Francis got one at Mrs. Pine's. I don't think it's new." Eve wasn't apologetic. Her eyes flashed, she was ready with the explanation before anyone else could make the accusation. "Mother Francis wouldn't have the money to buy me a new frock."

Benny looked at her with admiration. She softened in her own attack. "Well, I don't know either. I think they got me this lovely velvet one. But they mightn't."

"Don't think about it too much," Eve warned.

"Maybe you're right."

"It's nice of you to ask me. I didn't think you liked me," Eve said.

"Oh, I do." Poor Benny was flustered.

Eve looked at her with a measured glance. "Right," she said. "See you this afternoon."

They went to school on Saturday mornings, and at 12:30 when the bell went they all poured out of the school gates. All except Eve, who went to the convent kitchen.

"We'll have to feed you up before you go," said Sister Margaret. "We wouldn't want them to think that a girl from St. Mary's would eat all before her when she went out to tea." It was a big event, the child the community had brought up being invited out to a party.

MOTHER FRANCIS was delighted too, but far too old a hand in dealing with children to say so. "Going down to Bernadette Hogan's, are you?" she said, sounding slightly put out.

"Do you mind?" Eve asked earnestly. "It's not that I want to be away from here."

Mother Francis felt an urge to take the child in her arms as she used to do when Eve was a baby. "No, no, of course, child. Strange though this place is, it is your home."

"It's always been a lovely home."

The nun's eyes filled with tears. "Every convent should have a child. It's been the best ten years St. Mary's ever had . . . you being here."

AS BENNY WALKED down the town, Mr. Kennedy called her into the chemist's.

"A little bird told me it was your birthday," he said. "Here's a pack of barley sugar for you."

"Oh, Mr. Kennedy . . ." Benny was overwhelmed.

"Not at all. You're a grand girl. I always say to myself, there's that little barrel Benny Hogan coming along."

A bit of the sunlight went out of the barley sugar. Moodily Benny tore the corner off the packet. "Thank you, Mr. Kennedy."

"What's your father doing over there? Hiring new staff?"

He looked across the street toward Hogan's Gentleman's Outfitters with unconcealed interest. Her father was shaking hands with a man—or a boy, it was hard to see. He looked about seventeen, Benny thought, thin and pale. He had a suitcase in his hand.

"I don't know anything about it," she said, and went on down the street, home to Lisbeg. The new dog, Shep, which was half collie, half sheepdog, sat sleepily on the step loving the September sunshine.

Through the window she could see the table set for the party. Benny swallowed the barley sugar rather than be accused of eating sweets in the public view, and let herself in the back.

"Tell me, did you have a nice day at school?" her mother said. "Did they make a fuss of you?"

"They did, Mother."

"That's good. Well, they won't know you when they see you this afternoon."

Benny's heart soared. "Will I be getting dressed, like in anything new, before the party?"

"Come up and see." Benny's mother seemed as excited as herself.

Benny was led into her bedroom.

"Close your eyes," said Mother.

When Benny opened them she saw on the bed a thick navy skirt, a Fair Isle jumper in navy and red. A big sturdy pair of navy shoes lay in their box and chunky white socks folded nice and neatly beside them. Peeping out of tissue paper was a small red shoulder bag.

"It's an entire outfit," cried Mother. "Dressed from head to foot by Peggy Pine . . ."

Benny was wordless. No lovely soft crushed velvet that you could stroke, with its beautiful lacy trim. Nothing in a misty pink. Benny bit her lip and willed the tears back into her eyes.

"It's lovely," she muttered.

"Isn't the jumper perfect? I'd been asking Peggy to get something like that for ages."

"It's gorgeous," Benny said.

"Feel it," her mother urged.

She didn't want to. Not while she still had the velvet feel in her mind. "I'll put it on myself, Mother, then I'll come and show you," she said.

She was holding on by a thread.

Fortunately, Annabel Hogan needed to go and supervise the making of the trifle. She was just heading off downstairs when the telephone rang. "That'll be your father." She sounded pleased and her step was quicker on the stair.

Through her sobs, which she choked into the pillow, Benny remembered Eve Malone. She remembered her small earnest face warning her not to think about the dress from Dublin too much.