



Scarlet Feather

By Maeve Binchy

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Two friends struggle to balance their personal and professional lives in this charming novel from acclaimed author Maeve Binchy.

They met in cooking school and became fast friends with a common dream. Now Cathy Scarlet and Tom Feather hope to take Dublin by storm with their newly formed catering company, aptly dubbed "Scarlet Feather." Not everyone, however, shares their optimism. Cathy's mother-in-law disapproves of both Cathy and her new "hobby," while Cathy's husband, Neil, pays no mind to anything- except his work as a civil rights lawyer. And then there's Tom's family, who expect him to follow in his father's footsteps, and an ambitious girlfriend who's struggling with career dreams of her own. Between friends and families, ups and downs, heartaches and joys, Cathy and Tom are about to embark on the most maddening-and exhilarating-year of their lives...

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Whatever made us think that a catering business had anything to do with producing food?" asks the exasperated heroine of Maeve Binchy's *Scarlet Feather*. Cathy Scarlet and her partner Tom Feather had wanted to open their own catering firm ever since they attended college together. When the perfect location finally becomes available at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, they jump straight into renovations, ignoring the owner's mysterious eagerness to sell. But as they soon learn, chasing a dream demands far more than just cream puffs and canapés. In the months that follow, Tom and Cathy weather the ups and downs of founding a small business, soothe many a client's fragile ego, plan and pull off a fairy-tale wedding, minister to two of the most appealingly waifish children this side of Dickens, and generally work themselves to the bone--all the while producing some of the most exquisite food Dublin has ever seen.

Binchy is a master spinner of tales, the kind of storyteller who captures the rich tapestry of relationships at work in even the most ordinary of lives. Tom and Cathy come surrounded by a cast of characters as skillfully drawn as themselves: Neil, Cathy's activist-lawyer-husband, who's so busy worrying about the world's problems that he sometimes forgets to worry about his own; beautiful Marcella, Tom's girlfriend, who wants to be a top model more than anything else; and most endearingly of all, Maud and Simon, Neil's neglected 8-year-old cousins, who prove equally talented at wreaking havoc and asking awkward questions. Stir in a full complement of clients, family, friends, and enemies, and you have the makings of a bestseller that's very busy and very Binchy. Tom and Cathy's work, after all, is not so different from that of the novelist herself. Like writers, they stage-manage some of the most important events in people's lives, from weddings and funerals to romances and reunions. Before the year is out, Tom, Cathy, Neil, and Marcella will find themselves changed forever--and Binchy fans will have fallen in love with yet another of her fully realized worlds. --*Chloe Byrne*

From Publishers Weekly

Bestselling author Binchy (Tara Road, etc.) again explores the depths of family relationships in an 11th warm, involving drama. Set in contemporary Ireland over a period of one year, the smartly paced tale focuses on Cathy Scarlet and Tom Feather, cooking school chums who achieve their dream of opening a posh catering business, Scarlet Feather, in Dublin. Professionally, they're off to a good start; personally, their lives are falling apart. Cathy, whose out-of-work father plays the races while her mother toils as a housemaid, faces the consequences of having married Neil Mitchell, prized son of an upper-class family who employed Cathy's mother for years. Neil, a lawyer who champions worthy causes, is unconcerned about the tension between his wife and his snooty mother, and Cathy and Neil find themselves leading busy, separate lives. Tom has a live-in girlfriend whom he would love to marry, but Marcella, a manicurist in a classy store, yearns to succeed as a model before making any commitments. A charming cast of secondary characters includes Neil's cousins, Simon and Maud, two abandoned, nine-year-old twins who, in a surprising turn of events, come to live with Cathy's parents. The children's deadpan, exceedingly serious outlook on life is both heartbreakingly and hilariously. One of Binchy's strengths is her subtle depiction of gradual changes in Irish society. By making her principal characters entrepreneurs, she reflects the ways Ireland's growing economic prosperity has altered social mores. Whether her readers are aware of such details, they help this wonderfully engaging book ring true. (Mar. 5). Forecast: Binchy's gift for creating a wide range of characters whose foibles and challenges make them lovable and real, coupled with her theme that genuine love can transform lives, add up to another crowd-pleaser. With major ad/promo, plus an author tour, this one is a lock for the charts.

From Library Journal

This novel (following the very popular Tara Road) has all of Binchy's trademark warmth, making it irresistible to most readers. It tells the story of Cathy Scarlet and Tom Feather, who are building a Dublin catering company, Scarlet Feather. The plot follows the ups and downs of their personal lives as well as the ins and outs of professional food provision. It is obvious throughout that Tom and Cathy are ill suited to their partners (Cathy's husband is an idealistic lawyer full of his own importance, while Tom's fianc e is an air-headed model). Subplots include the shop's vandalism and recovery, its mysterious secrets from the past, and several entertaining catering stories (including two "weddings from hell"). Best of all are Cathy's nine-year-old abandoned cousins, the Mitchell twins, who provide comic relief throughout her personal and business struggles. These darlings can be relied on to make totally inappropriate responses in every situation, winning the hearts of all. Highly recommended.

-DCarol J. Bissett, New Braunfels P.L., TX

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bertha Buentello:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book might be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the guide untitled Scarlet Feather can be great book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Pablo Cowart:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the free time or they will get lot of stress from both day to day life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely indeed. People is human not really a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, the book you have read is usually Scarlet Feather.

Derrick Tompkins:

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