



Mary Higgins Clark: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

Linda De Roche

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Best-selling author Mary Higgins Clark, the Queen of Suspense, uses a popular literary genre, the novel of mystery and suspense, to explore contemporary social issues and the reality of evil in the lives of ordinary people. This first critical study of her work reveals the serious intent of a popular writer of popular fiction. It examines common themes—the consequences of crime on innocent victims, how crime forces its victims to confront their deepest psychological fears and the terror of the past—and explores Clark's treatment of current social issues from capital punishment to child abuse. The study provides close textual analysis of each novel in turn, revealing the surprising depth of Clark's work and her extraordinary gift for working within a number of literary genres under the guise of popular fiction.

This study analyzes all of Clark's fiction including her most recent *Remember Me* and *The Lottery Winner*. Pelzer places Clark's fiction in the context of its genre and provides close textual analysis of each novel. In addition she provides alternative critical perspectives that offer additional insight. For ease of use by the reader, each chapter is devoted to a single novel and is subdivided into sections on narrative strategies (plot, time, and setting), thematic development, character development, and alternative perspectives on the novel. Pelzer also analyzes Clark's use of generic conventions as well as her distinctive style. This study helps the reader to understand the deeper and richer aspects of Clark's fiction and to appreciate why her reputation is so well deserved. A key purchase for secondary school, public, and community college library collections.

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