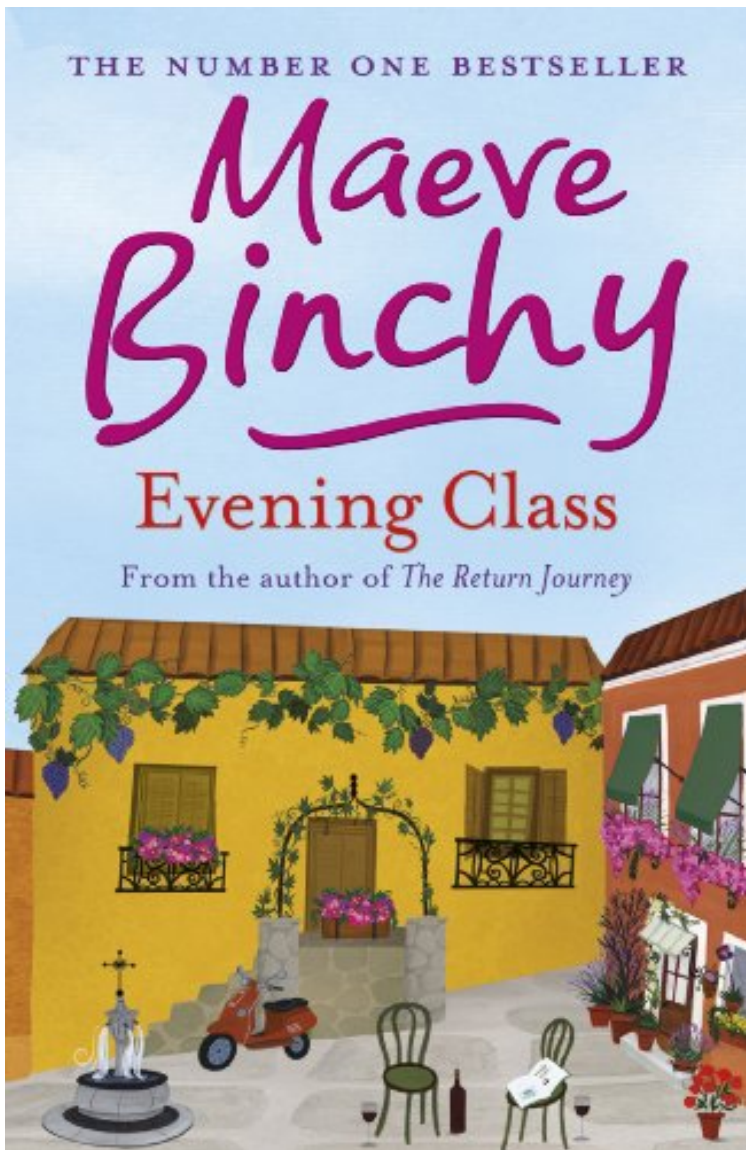


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Evening Class (English Edition)



Par Maeve Binchy
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Description : Description du produitIt was the quiet ones you had to watch. That's where the real passion was lurking.They came together at Mountainview College, a down-at-the-heels secondary school on the seamy side of Dublin, to take a course in Italian. It was Latin teacher Aidan Dunne's last chance to revive a failing marriage and a dead-end career. But Aidan's dream was headed for disaster until the mysterious Signora appeared, transforming a shared passion for Italy into a life-altering adventure for them all...bank clerk Bill and his dizzy fianc Lizzie: a couple headed for trouble...Kathy, a hardworking innocent propelled into adulthood in a shocking moment of truth...Connie, the gorgeous rich lady with a scandal ready to explode...glowering Lou, who joined the class as a cover for crime. And Signora, whose passionate past remained a secret as she changed all their lives forever....From the New York Times bestselling author of This Year It Will Be Different, The Glass Lake, and Circle of Friends, comes a novel filled with Maeve

Binchy's signature warmth, wit, and sheer storytelling genius--a spellbinding tale of men and women whose quiet lives hide the most unexpected things....

Prsentation de l'diteurA group of people, all looking for something more in their lives, and all they have in common is their Italian evening class...The Italian evening class at Mountainview School is like hundreds of others starting up all over the city. But this class has its own special quality - as the focus for the varied hopes and dreams of teacher and pupils alike.Aidan Dunne needs his new evening class project to succeed almost as much as his pupils do. They too are looking for something more: Bill to find a way to keep spendthrift Lizzie at his side, and Fran to make sure that young Kathy finds her way out from behind the kitchen sink. The key to their success lies with the Signora. Her passion has drawn her from Ireland to Italy and back home again with a burning desire to share her love of all things Italian - and a secret hidden in her heart...ExtraitSIGNORA For years, yes years, when Nora O'Donoghue lived in Sicily, she had received no letter at all from home. She used to look hopefully at il postino as he came up the little street under the hot blue sky. But there was never a letter from Ireland, even though she wrote regularly on the first of every month to tell them how she was getting on. She had bought carbon paper; it was another thing hard to describe and translate in the shop where they sold writing paper and pencils and envelopes. But Nora needed to know what she had told them already, so that she would not contradict herself when she wrote. Since the whole life she described was a lie, she might as well make it the same lie. They would never reply, but they would read the letters. They would pass them from one to the other with heavy sighs, raised eyebrows, and deep shakes of the head. Poor stupid, headstrong Nora who couldn't see what a fool she had made of herself, wouldn't cut her losses and come back home. "There was no reasoning with her," her mother would say. "The girl was beyond help and showed no remorse" would be her father's view. He was a very religious man, and in his eyes the sin of having loved Mario outside marriage was greater far than having followed him out to the remote village of Annunziata even when he had said he wouldn't marry her. If she had known that they wouldn't get in touch at all, she would have pretended that she and Mario were married. At least her old father would have slept easier in his bed and not feared so much the thought of meeting God and explaining the mortal sin of his daughter's adultery. But then she would not have been able to do that because Mario had insisted on being upfront with them. "I would love to marry your daughter," he had said, with his big dark eyes looking from her father to her mother backward and forward. "But sadly, sadly it is not possible. My family want me very much to marry Gabriella and her family also want the marriage. We are Sicilians; we can't disobey what our families want. I'm sure it is very much the same in Ireland." He had pleaded for an understanding, a tolerance and almost a pat on the head. He had lived with their daughter for two years in London. They had come over to confront him. He had been in his own mind admirably truthful and fair. What more could they want of him? Well, they wanted him gone from her life, for one thing. They wanted Nora to come back to Ireland and hope and pray that no one would ever know of this unfortunate episode in her life, or her marriage chances, which were already slim would be further lessened. She tried to make allowances for them. It was 1969, but then they did live in a one-horse town; they even thought coming up to Dublin was an ordeal. What had they made of their visit to London to see their daughter living in sin, and then accept the news that she would follow this man to Sicily? The answer was they had gone into complete shock and did not reply to her letters. She could forgive them. Yes, part of her really did forgive them, but she could never forgive her two sisters and two brothers. They were young; they must have understood love, though to look at the people they had married you might wonder. But they had all grown up together, struggled to get out of the lonely, remote little town where they lived. They had shared the anxiety of their mother's hysterectomy, their father's fall on the ice that had left him frail. They had always consulted each other about the future, about what would happen if either Mam or Dad were left alone. Neither could manage. They had all agreed that the little farm would be sold and the money used to keep whoever it was that was left alive in a flat in Dublin somewhere adjacent to them all. Nora realized that her having decamped to Sicily didn't suit that longterm plan at all. It reduced the help force by more than twenty percent. Since Nora wasn't married the others would have assumed that she might take sole charge of a parent. She had reduced the help force by one hundred percent. Possibly that was why she never heard from them. She assumed that they would write and tell her if either Mam or Dad was very ill, or even had died. But then sometimes she didn't know if they would do that. She seemed so remote to them, as if she herself had died already. So she relied on a friend, a good, kind friend called Brenda, who had worked with her in the hotel business. Brenda called from time to time to visit the O'Donoghues. It was not difficult for Brenda

to shake her head with them over the foolishness of their daughter Nora. Brenda had spent days and nights trying to persuade, cajole, warn, and threaten Nora about how unwise was her plan to follow Mario to his village of Annunziata and face the collective rage of two families. Brenda would be welcome in that house because nobody knew she kept in touch and told the emigrant what was happening back home. So it was through Brenda that Nora learned of new nieces and nephews, of the outbuilding on the farmhouse, of the sale of three acres, and the small trailer that was now attached to the back of the family car. Brenda wrote and told her how they watched television a lot, and had been given a microwave oven for Christmas by their children. Well, by the children they acknowledged. Brenda did try to make them write. She had said she was sure Nora would love to hear from them; it must be lonely for her out there. But they had laughed and said: "Oh, no, it wasn't at all lonely for Lady Nora, who was having a fine time in Annunziata, living the life of Reilly with the whole place probably gossiping about her and ruining the reputation of all Irish women in front of these people." Brenda was married to a man that they had both laughed at years back, a man called

Pillow Case, for some reason they had all forgotten. They had no children and they both worked in a restaurant now. Patrick, as she now called Pillow Case, was the chef and Brenda was the manageress. The owner lived mainly abroad and was content to leave it to them. She wrote that it was as good as having your own place without the financial worries. She seemed content, but then perhaps she wasn't telling the truth either. Nora certainly never told Brenda about how it had turned out; the years of living in a place smaller than the village she had come from in Ireland and loving the man who lived across the little piazza, a man who could come to visit her only with huge subterfuge, and as the years went on he made less and less effort to try to find the opportunities. Nora wrote about the beautiful village of Annunziata and its white buildings where everyone had little black wrought-iron balconies and filled them with pots of geraniums or busy lizzies, but not just one or two pots like at home, whole clusters of them. And how there was a gate outside the village where you could stand and look down on the valley. And the church had some lovely ceramics that visitors were coming to visit more and more. Mario and Gabriella ran the local hotel and they did lunches now for visitors and it was very successful. Everyone in Annunziata was pleased because it meant that other people, like wonderful Signora Leone who sold postcards and little pictures of the church, and Nora's great friends Paulo and Gianna, who made little pottery dishes and jugs with Annunziata written on them, made some money, And people sold oranges and flowers from baskets. And even she, Nora, benefited from the tourists since as well as making her lace-trimmed handkerchiefs and table runners for sale, she also gave little guided tours for English-speaking visitors. She took them round the church and told of its history, and pointed out the places in the valley where there had been battles and possibly Roman settlements and certainly centuries of adventure. She never found it necessary to tell Brenda about Mario and Gabriella's children, five of them in all, with big dark eyes looking at her suspiciously with sullen downcast glances from across the piazza. Too young to know who she was and why she was hated and feared, too knowing to think she was just another neighbor and friend. Since Brenda and Pillow Case didn't have any children of their own, they wouldn't be interested in these handsome, unsmiling Sicilian children who looked across from the steps of their family hotel at the room where Signora sat sewing and surveying all that passed by. That's what they called her in Annunziata, just Signora. She had she was a widow when she arrived. It was so like her own name I anyway, she felt she had been meant to be called that always. And even had there been anyone who truly loved her and cared a her life, how hard it would have been to try to explain what her life like in this village. A place she would have scorned if it were back in Ireland, no cinema, no dance hall, no supermarket, the local bus irregular and the journeys when it did arrive positively endless. But here she loved every stone of the place because it was where Mario lived and worked and sang in his hotel, and eventually raised his sons and daughters, and smiled up at her as she sat sewing in her window. She would nod at him graciously, not noticing as the years went by. And the passionate years in London that ended in 1969 were long forgotten by everyone except Mario and Signora. Of course, Mario must have remembered them with love and longing and regret as she did, otherwise why would he have stolen into her bed some nights using the key that she had made for him. Creeping across the dark square when his wife was asleep. She knew never to expect him on a night there was a moon. Too many other eyes might have seen a figure crossing the piazza and known that Mario was wandering from the wife to the foreign woman, the strange foreign woman with the big wild eyes and long red hair. Occasionally Signora asked herself was there any possibility that she could be mad, which was what her family at home thought and was almost certainly the view of the citizens of Annunziata. From the Hardcover edition. Revue de presse The Italian evening class starting at a Dublin school appears like any other. But those involved are desperate for a new life, and by the

time they reach Italy at the end of the course their lives are changed forever. Another winner from Binchy (PRIMA)Reading Maeve Binchy has always acted as therapy of a sort. Her witty, literate small-town tales exude a rosy glow to ease the troubled mind (THE TIMES)EVENING CLASS is a deliciously gossipy read ... it will not disappoint (DAILY MAIL)Binchy, as always, treats her characters with a generous empathy and an intense affection. By the time the book closes with the group enjoying a longed-for holiday in Italy, the story seems to gurgle with joy. EVENING CLASS is a wonderfully enjoyable tale of moral evolution, guaranteed to produce a run on every Italian class in the country (IRISH TIMES)It's a grand read ... EVENING CLASS will keep endless readers happy as the nights draw in and swell many a Christmas stocking (IRISH INDEPENDENT)Warm, witty and with a deep understanding of what makes us tick, it's little wonder that Maeve Binchy's bewitching stories have become world-beaters (OK MAGAZINE)Gripping (WOMAN'S JOURNAL)