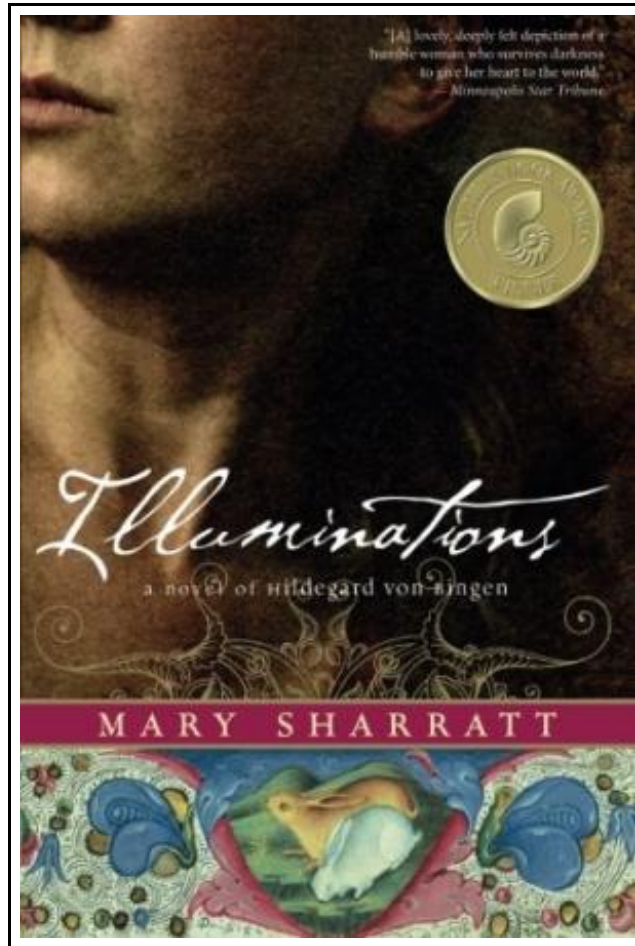


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ILLUMINATIONS: A NOVEL OF HILDEGARD VON BINGEN



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Mariner. 1 Paperback(s), 2012. soft. Book Condition: New. (Winner of a 2013 Nautilus Gold Book Award) The author of the novels *Summit Avenue*, *The Real Minerva*, and *The Vanishing Point*, as well as the co-editor of the subversive fiction anthology *Bitch Lit*, Mary Sharratt weaves this speculative portrait of Benedictine abbess, visionary, and polymath Hildegard von Bingen. Offered up to the Church at the age of eight, Hildegard was expected to live her life in silent submission as the handmaiden of a renowned but disturbed nun, Jutta von Sponheim. Instead, Hildegard rejected Jutta's masochistic piety and found comfort and grace in studying books, growing herbs, and rejoicing in her own secret visions of the divine. "An imaginative retelling of the fascinating life of the 12th-century nun. Though confined primarily to the abbey and peopled by a small cast, Sharratt's gripping story, like Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*, is primarily about relationships forged under pressure." *Publishers Weekly* "In this affecting historical novel, Sharratt imagines the inner life of Hildegard, first as an angry child, then as a young woman nurturing the other girls forced into this restricted life, and finally as a mature woman leading her companions out of the anchorage, establishing the first monastic institution for women in Germany, and advocating an idea of religious devotion based on love rather than suffering. Psychological insight, passages of moving spirituality, and abundant historical detail from straw bedding and hairshirts to turtle soup and wooden dolls make this a memorable addition to the genre of medieval historical fiction." *Booklist* 274.



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