

= After This =

After This is a 2006 novel by award @-@ winning American author Alice McDermott . The novel follows a working @-@ class American family who reside on Long Island , New York and their four children , who are enduring their own experiences during the times of the sexual revolution . It is set during the mid @-@ 20th century , a time after the end of World War II , through to the presidency of Richard Nixon .

The book received many positive reviews from critics , often commenting on the writing styles of McDermott . The Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette commented that the storyline is " sophisticated in design , spare like an elegant entrée at a fine restaurant . " The book was highlighted among the 100 Notable Books of the Year of The New York Times .

= = About the author = =

Alice McDermott was born in Brooklyn , New York on June 27 , 1953 . In 1975 , McDermott received her B.A. from the State University of New York and her M.A from the University of New Hampshire in 1978 . She began writing at an early stage in her life , although her first novel , A Bigamists ' Daughter , was not published until 1982 . In 1987 , McDermott was a recipient of the Whiting Writers Award for her novels , several of which had been finalists for the Pulitzer Prize or winners of the National Book Award .

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The book is set on Long Island , New York , shortly after the ending of World War II . Mary Rose , a lonely , thirty @-@ year @-@ old woman with the responsibility of looking after her father and brother , leaves Church on an April day in the 1940s . She goes to a Schrafft 's outlet and becomes acquainted with a man there ordering food . When she sees him there the next day , the pair begin dating and eventually marry . Together , they have four children . Their first three children , Jacob , Michael , and Annie live with their parents in an Irish @-@ Catholic community on Long Island .

Their fourth child , Claire , is delivered by a neighbor of the family in the lounge of their house as a hurricane is heading towards the Eastern Seaboard . The book follows the family through the 1960s and 1970s , as the children enter adolescence and discover themselves during the changing times of the 1960s and the Sexual Revolution . The Keane children , on entering early adulthood , begin to break away from their family and religious backgrounds . Jacob , the eldest child , serves in Vietnam and is killed in the French trenches . Michael moves away from Long Island and goes to study in a college in northern New York , but later turns to sex and drugs . Meanwhile , Annie , the bookworm of the family , leaves to study in England , but quickly changes her plans after meeting a man on a bus whom she likes . Claire , the youngest , returns from a summer vacation to her former Catholic high school , showing a changed personality and increased self @-@ confidence .

= = Reception = =

The Washington Post commented that " in After This there is no excess , no look @-@ at @-@ me pyrotechnics in her prose ; with the mastery of a poet , she distills the life of the Keanes to its essence . " A review by The Chicago Tribune noted that " It is hard to know how to start piling on the praise for this gripping , poignant book . It would seem there is no technique of fiction McDermott has not mastered . Like the masters , she makes it look effortless . " Writing for the New York City @-@ circulated Wall Street Journal , Kate Flatley LaVoie praised the book , praised the book , writing : " Through sharp , funny , heartbreaking and breathtaking vignettes , Ms. McDermott conveys the family 's evolution (and America 's too) ? from John and Mary 's first meeting at a diner in postwar New York City through the children 's traditional Catholic school youth in the 1950s to the inevitable turbulence of the 1960s . "

USA Today wrote " McDermott 's prose is stunning yet emotionally cool , " adding : " While it fails as

a cohesive novel , After This shines in its small moments , much like a story collection . " Entertainment Weekly described it as a " lovely needlepoint of a novel . " The Economist reviewed the book positively , writing " After This is more than a book about an influential time in history and its effect on those living through it . In its portrayal of the emotions that hold people and families together ? the loyalties and frustrations , the sorrows and joys ? this quietly unusual novel is ultimately about what it is to be human . "