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THE BITCH POSSE

A debut novel by Martha O'Connor

“Astonishing and truly remarkable ... tough, subtle, tense, authentic and very beautiful. If this isn't really Alice Sebold, Donna Tartt or Barbara Vine writing under a pseudonym, then Martha O'Connor is a huge new talent who is already about as good as it gets.”

–Lee Child, author of *The Enemy*

A circle's round it has no end; That's how long I want to be your friend.

Tear off the mask and stop pretending. Your Posse knows the truth.

Novelist Martha O'Connor makes a remarkable debut with **THE BITCH POSSE** (St. Martin's Press; May 12, 2005), the dark and thrilling story of three young women, their passionate friendship, and the terrible secret that inextricably binds them together. Bestselling author Jacquelyn Mitchard called the novel “dark, poignant, and only too believable...a book that will walk alongside you, and haunt your dreams, long after you turn the last page.” Her contemporaries have compared her to Alice Sebold, Donna Tartt, and Joyce Carol Oates.

With bold and unflinching language, O'Connor weaves past and present from the perspectives of three best friends, Rennie, Amy, and Cherry – as rebellious teens and then as grown women in their mid-30's coping with the repercussions of their actions. As high school seniors, the girls form a tight circle of friends – which they name the Bitch Posse – in order to lash out against tumultuous situations in their lives. But as steadfast as their friendship is, it's not

enough to protect the girls from circumstances that cause all three of their lives to spiral out of control. Rennie has a doomed affair with her married drama teacher, which results in her bearing the psychic weight of an abortion and a blighted love. Amy's parents think their daughter has thrown over her bad-news friends, and upon learning their daughter has become a drug and alcohol addict (not unlike themselves) they turn their backs on her. Cherry's mother finds solace in cocaine, then heroin, leaving her daughter to target her rage at someone, anyone, over whom she has control.

Flash-forward to the present, where one girl is now a wife and mother-to-be, trying to uphold a life of normalcy for herself and her family. One is a writer with a sexual addiction that sucks her into destructive relationships. And one is incarcerated in a mental hospital – and has been since one fateful night fifteen years ago, when a betrayal led them to commit a crime that profoundly changed their destinies.

Fascinated by the struggle between good and evil within the human spirit, Martha O'Connor delves into the dark side of human nature, the intensity of female friendship, and the possibilities of redemption in **THE BITCH POSSE**. Emotionally raw, upsetting, and provocative, this is the introduction of a huge new talent and will leave readers reeling this season. As Edmund White says, "*The Bitch Posse* is a debut worthy of Joyce Carol Oates."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Martha O'Connor grew up in Illinois and earned a BFA in Creative Writing from Bowling Green State University in Ohio, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude. Her poetry has been published in the literary journals *Stand*, *Poetry London Newsletter*, *Confrontation*, and *Midwest Poetry Review*, among others.

By turns a department store clerk, waitress, latte-maker, and eighth-grade teacher, Martha O'Connor now lives and writes fiction and poetry full-time in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, award-winning novelist and short story writer Philip F. O'Connor, and their children.

Visit her website at <http://www.marthaoconnor.com>.

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