



# Seeing Mary Plain: A Life of Mary McCarthy

*Frances Kiernan*

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Frances Kiernan

**Seeing Mary Plain: A Life of Mary McCarthy** Frances Kiernan

A revealing portrait of the dramatic life of writer and intellectual Mary McCarthy.

From her *Partisan Review* days to her controversial success as the author of *The Group*, to an epic libel battle with Lillian Hellman, Mary McCarthy brought a nineteenth-century scope and drama to her emblematic twentieth-century life. Dubbed by Time as "quite possibly the cleverest woman America has ever produced," McCarthy moved in a circle of ferociously sharp-tongued intellectuals—all of whom had plenty to say about this diamond in their midst. Frances Kiernan's biography does justice to one of the most controversial American intellectuals of the twentieth century. With interviews from dozens of McCarthy's friends, former lovers, literary and political comrades-in-arms, awestruck admirers, amused observers, and bitter adversaries, *Seeing Mary Plain* is rich in ironic judgment and eloquent testimony. A *Los Angeles Times* Best Book of 2000 and a *Washington Post Book World* "Rave".

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