



# Divining Women (Gibbons, Kaye)

*Kaye Gibbons*

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## **Divining Women (Gibbons, Kaye)** Kaye Gibbons

In her darkest yet most redeeming novel, Gibbons scorches us with a Prestorm of despair-and then resurrects love and hope from its very ashes.

Autumn 1918: Rumors of peace are spreading across America, but spreading even faster are the first cases of Spanish influenza, whispering of the epidemic to come. Maureen Ross, well past a safe childbearing age, is experiencing a difficult pregnancy. Her husband, Troop-cold and careless of her condition-is an emotional cripple who has battered her spirit throughout their marriage. As Maureen's time grows near, she becomes convinced she will die in childbirth. Into this loveless ménage arrives Mary Oliver, Troop's niece. The sheltered child of a well-to-do, freethinking Washington family, Mary comes to help Maureen in the last weeks of her confinement. Horrified by Troop's bullying, she soon discovers that her true duty is to protect her aunt.

As the influenza spreads and the death toll grows, Troop's spiteful behaviors worsen. Tormenting his wife, taunting her for her "low birth," hiding her mother's letters, Troop terrorizes the household. But when Mary fights back, he begins to go over the edge, and Maureen rallies, releasing a stunning thunderstorm of confrontation and, ultimately, finding spiritual renewal.

*The Boston Globe* hailed *On the Occasion of My Last Afternoon* as "another gift from Kaye Gibbons to the literature celebrating strong women of every age and era." Much the same can be said of *Divining Women*.

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