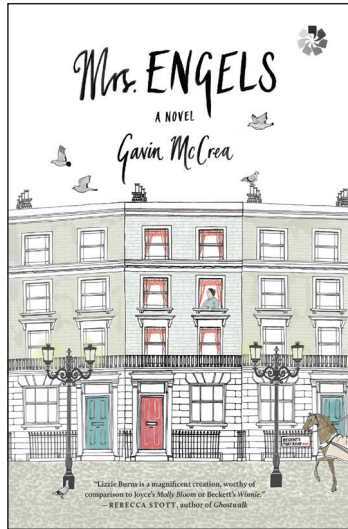


Praise for
MRS. ENGELS



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Selected by Amazon.com as one of the Top Twenty Best Books of 2015
Shortlisted for the 2016 Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction
Longlisted for the 2016 Desmond Elliott Prize
Longlisted for the Guardian First Book Award, 2015 and the Green Carnation Prize
A *Boston Globe* Fall Fiction Selection.
One of *Publishers Weekly's* Best Books of 2015
One of *Kirkus Reviews's* Best Books of 2015

“Lizzie has been brought to life with exuberant force by the first-time author Gavin McCrea.”

—Carmela Ciuraru, *The New York Times*

“Impressive. . . Mr. McCrea draws sharp ironies from the gap between theory and actuality. . . A memorable portrait of a woman looking for a cause of her own, distinct from the one made famous by her husband.”

—*The Wall Street Journal*

“The illiterate lover and eventual wife of a coauthor of *The Communist Manifesto* is the star of this enthralling work of historical fiction.”

—O, *The Oprah Magazine*

“A powerhouse protagonist, Lizzie Burns. . . is as improbable a subject for historical fiction as she is irresistible.”

—Jan Stuart, *The New York Times Book Review*

“This incisive novel. . . outlines a number of radical dislocations—in geography, nationality, class, and even love. If a woman cannot trust her reality, she can hardly trust her husband or herself, and ‘is there a loneliness more lonely than mistrust?’”

—*The New Yorker*

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“McCrea’s debut is a historical novel told through the unforgettable voice of Lizzie Burns, the longtime lover of Frederick Engels. Pulled up from her working-class roots after she meets Engels, Lizzie is nonetheless excluded from upper-class society and haunted by her former flame as she struggles to find her purpose. Sparkling with energy, Lizzie is one of the year’s best characters.”

—Best Books of 2015, *Publishers Weekly*

“[*Mrs. Engels* is] a splendid exploration of the complexities of love and the contradictions between political ideals and intractable personal realities . . . Everything is seen through Lizzie’s sharp eye and described with a mixture of mordant wit, humanity and an unerring capacity for exposing the phoney and self-serving.”

—Joseph O’Neill, *The Irish Times* Book Club

“McCrea turns the larger-than-life character of Lizzie Burns, Engels’ common-law wife, into one of the most compelling protagonists of the year. *Mrs. Engels* is historical fiction of the finest kind, where fact and fiction mix for the better of both.”

—Top Fiction Picks of 2015, Minnesota Public Radio

“Lizzie is as spirited a narrator as a reader could hope to encounter.”

—*The Minneapolis Star Tribune*

“First-novelist McCrea well captures Lizzie’s fiery temperament, vivid voice, and complicated relationship with Engels, whom she both longs to marry and longs to be free of. . . this is a novel to be savored.”

—starred review, *Booklist*

“You can’t keep a good woman down—not even one . . . whose humble background raises eyebrows and hackles in her elite new social circles. . . Lizzie Burns, the former mill worker who was Friedrich Engels’s real-life lover, speaks her sassy mind in Gavin McCrea’s debut novel, *Mrs. Engels*.”

—*MORE Magazine*

“Through Lizzie’s singular perspective, peppered with her wry observations, readers are treated to a backstage look at the domestic lives of the most public 19th-century revolutionaries and their families. While Lizzie’s story exists only marginally in the historical record, first-time novelist McCrea brings her to life in this soulful work.”

—*Library Journal*

“*Mrs. Engels* explores the subtleties of a historic movement through the vantage of Lizzie Burns, Frederick Engels’ longtime companion and eventual wife. . . Her position allows the story’s perspective to refreshingly shift from observing Engels and Marx’s work life and ideals to registering the domestic decorum and politics that have shaped Lizzie’s life. As Frederick imagines what could be, resenting the illusory social norms that dictate what is, Lizzie, to survive, must occupy herself with the very reality he and his peers frequently abhor or ignore.”

—*ZYZZYVA Magazine*

“This debut novel is told in the voice of Lizzie Burns, *Communist Manifesto* co-author Friedrich Engels’ longtime lover. The illiterate Lizzie left no records so McCrea has had to imagine her into existence—which he has done impressively.”

—*The National Book Review*

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Praise for the UK edition of

MRS. ENGELS

“This whirlwind of politics and personalities might become dizzying were it not stabilised by Lizzie’s unmistakable voice. She begins life by grabbing what she needs in order to survive; she ends it having achieved deep self-knowledge. She tells her own story with a fierce wit and trenchancy, shot through with poetry... McCrea’s fictional speculation makes a fine symphony out of the silence that surrounds Lizzie Burns.”

— Helen Dunmore, winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction, in *The Guardian*

“Gavin McCrea is triumphant in his exuberant debut in creating Lizzie’s voice; she is dazzlingly convincing. Voices that feel authentic to their period and yet brim with life and verve are so rare that *Mrs. Engels* is my book of the month.”

— Antonia Senior, *The Times of London*

“This is the best kind of historical fiction—oozing period detail, set in a milieu populated by famous figures and events about which much is known, but seen through the eyes of a central character who, due to her illiteracy, left no ready access to her experience in the form of letters or diary entries: a rich and accomplished first novel.”

— Lucy Scholes, *The Independent*

“This is an assured, beautifully written debut.”

— Mario Reading, *The Spectator*

“[Lizzie’s] wittily realistic voice rings truthfully through this novel of ideas and ideals. One of the most distinctive female characters of modern fiction.”

—Iain Finlayson, *Saga Magazine*

“McCrea’s novel, *Mrs. Engels*, brings its historical characters to vivid and often—at least in Lizzie’s case—rambunctious life. . . . Clear-eyed, sardonic, self-deprecating, she is a strong literary heroine in the mould of the main characters of Emma Donoghue’s *Slammerkin* and Anne Enright’s *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*.”

—*The Irish Times*

“In this ambitious and imaginative recreation of the Victorian London world that gave birth to ‘scientific socialism’, McCrea breathes real life into a historical character of whom we know next to nothing.”

—*The Daily Mail*

“A marginalized figure in the history books, the fictional Lizzie Burns is a marvelous creation: an illiterate Irish daughter of the Manchester slums whose withering deprecations cut a swathe through the self-delusions and hypocrisies of the founding fathers of Communism. . . . Laugh-out-loud funny, touching and tender, and almost Dickensian in its physical descriptions of the Industrial Revolution’s worst excesses, *Mrs. Engels* is a stunningly accomplished debut novel.”

—*The Irish Examiner*

“A terrific, startling read: compelling cast, involving story, historically transporting. Gavin McCrea has found an original and atmospheric way of giving resonant voice to the unsung Lizzie Burns.”

—Rachel Holmes, author of *Eleanor Marx: A Life*