



# Kaye Gibbons: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

*Mary J. Demarr*

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Born to a tobacco farmer in rural North Carolina, Kaye Gibbons found her literary voice by speaking through the strong southern women who inhabit her novels. While concentrating on the places and people she knows well, Gibbons has managed to speak for people who struggle to find their own place, wherever they are, and her books have reached a worldwide audience. Whether for students assigned to read *Ellen Foster* or for lovers of literature, this companion—the first and only book-length study of its kind?provides insights and interpretations that will help readers enjoy and better appreciate the novels of Kaye Gibbons.

Beginning with a biographical chapter, this companion shows how Gibbons's own life came to shape her fiction. Her place in and contributions to the genre of the southern novel are considered, and readers are taken through each of her six novels, starting with the highly acclaimed *Ellen Foster* (1987) and concluding with *On the Occasion of My Last Afternoon* (1998). For each work, lucid analyses of plot, character development, theme, and style are provided, along with an alternate critical perspective. The select bibliography includes reviews and further information on biographical and critical sources.



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