

# *Harpy* A Manifesto for Childfree Women By Caroline Magennis

*'Harpy is a tonic; a tongue-in-cheek manual for dealing with Spanish Inquisition-style questioning about saying pass to procreation and building an enriching life beyond the nuclear family.'*

*Vogue*

A Stylist & Irish Times pick for Best Non-Fiction to Look Out For in 2024

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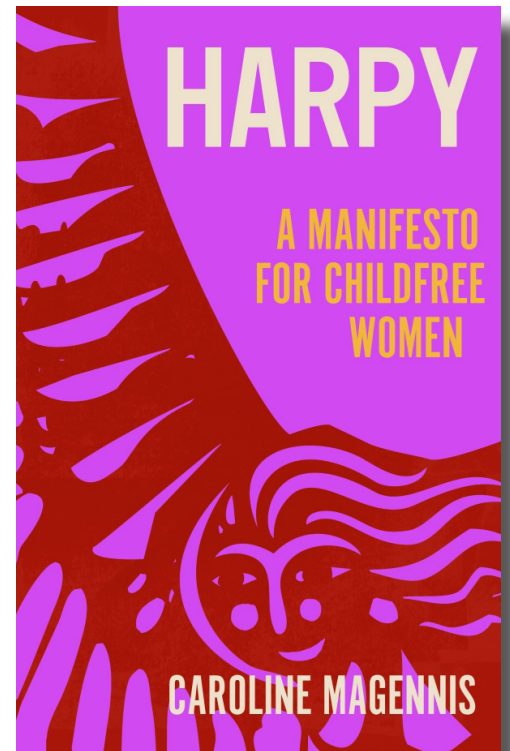
**Each generation has more childfree women than the one before.**

For many, it is an active decision made for a wide range of reasons. Despite this growing trend, we continue to live in a society where women are often judged for deciding to remain childfree - for not conforming to narrow expectations. For being a Harpy.

In this timely and thoughtful book, Caroline Magennis looks beyond the often-divisive conversation around women who choose to be childfree and offers an alternative message of hope and celebration. With humour and intelligence, she explores why motherhood isn't right for everybody and how any woman - whether a parent or childfree - can live a full life, while also reminding the reader that your freedoms and the right to autonomy should never be taken for granted.

**Caroline Magennis** is an Associate Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of Salford. She teaches Irish and British writing and popular culture and supervises PhD projects, primarily on Irish Literature.

Originally from Portadown, Co. Armagh, she received her BA, MA and PhD at Queen's University Belfast. Her book, *Northern Irish Writing After the Troubles*, won the British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies book prize.



# Praise for *Harpy*

‘*Harpy* is a measured, compassionate and truly compelling read. I’ve been waiting to read a book like this for such a long time. It’s not often I see my own experience so honestly and respectfully reflected. I was struck by the way Magennis takes such care to share stories which often go unheard or dismissed. This book will be the catalyst for so many conversations.’

**Jan Carson, author of *The Raptures* and *The Firestarters***

‘Written with all of Caroline Magennis’s characteristic refreshing candour, *Harpy* is a sharp, timely book about the assumptions and expectations that still keep women down, and a heartfelt vision of the freedoms that can and do enrich us. Though subtitled “a manifesto for childfree women”, this book is written for us all.’

**Lucy Caldwell, author of *These Days***

‘Defiant, funny and inspiring, *Harpy* holds open a vital space to think about alternative lives, self-invention and feminist camaraderie.’

**Sean Hewitt, author of *All Down Darkness Wide***

‘*Harpy* is an important book, it will affirm childfree readers and open the eyes of everyone else. It’s a book of clear thinking and deep feeling, I can see so many people learning from the stories in these pages, the voices of women telling us who they are. I do think parents will find themselves moved and inspired by the book, not least to ask more interesting questions of their childfree friends at dinner parties. Most importantly though, *Harpy* belongs to the harpies. This book is their place, for community, inspiration, and wild hopefulness.’

**Claire Lynch, author of *Small: On Motherhoods***

‘Looks beyond the often-divisive conversation around women who choose to be childfree and offers an alternative message of hope and celebration.’

***The Irish Times***

‘Another witty and powerful read is *Harpy* by Caroline Magennis which delves into the world of child-free women – the liberating choice not to conform to motherhood and why becoming a parent just isn’t right for everyone.’

***Stylist***

‘In *Harpy*, Caroline Magennis promises to outline the perils and pitfalls that people without children encounter in our personal and professional lives as we navigate other people’s expectations. What is really unusual in this book is the way Magennis also keeps her promise to showcase some of ways one might make a life outside traditional expectations – ways of being joyful, of being singular, of being in a community that is, as she puts it, ‘completely your own’. *Harpy* made me nod in recognition, and shake my head with sorrow, and then it made me laugh out loud. Because life without kids in a world that expects the opposite can be challenging and sad, and it can also be hilarious. This is that rare thing, a book which captures both sides.’

**Emilie Pine, author of *Notes to Self* and *Ruth & Pen***