

## DACIA MARAINI BIOGRAPHY

Dacia Maraini was born in Florence. Her mother, Topazia Alliata di Salaparuta, was Sicilian, and her father, Fosco Maraini, was an Anglo-Florentine ethnologist. In 1938, the family moved to Japan, where her father was engaged in a study of the Ainu, an ethnic group living on Hokkaido but threatened by extinction. Between 1943 and 1945, Fosco Maraini and his family suffered in Japan the harsh reality of a concentration camp, since he refused to join Mussolini's Republic of Salò, which was allied with the Japanese Empire. Returning to Italy after the end of the War, Dacia lived first in Sicily and later moved to Rome where she still lives and works. A precocious and eclectic talented writer, at the age of twenty-one, she co-founded the literary journal "Tempo di letteratura", and began to write short stories for a number of literary periodicals such as "Paragone", "Nuovi argomenti" and "Il mondo".

In 1962, she published her first novel *La vacanza* (The Holiday) which was followed in 1963 by *L'età del malessere* (*The Age of Malaise*) and in 1967 by *A memoria* (By Heart).

In 1966, Maraini published a collection of poems under the title *Crudeltà all'aria aperta* (Cruelty in the Open Air). In the same year, together with Alberto Moravia and Enzo Siciliano, Maraini promoted "Il Teatro del Porcospino", which staged only new works by authors such as Gadda, Parise, Moravia, Wilcock, Siciliano and Tornabuoni. In 1968, she published a collection of short stories entitled *Mio Marito: racconti* (My Husband: Short Stories), and in 1970 a theatrical collection entitled *Il ricatto a teatro e altre commedie* (Ransom in the Theater and Other Plays). In 1972 she published a new novel, *Memorie di una ladra* (*Memoirs of a Female Thief*), which was later adapted into the film, *Teresa la ladra* (Theresa the Thief), directed by Carlo di Palma and featuring Monica Vitti as female protagonist.

In 1973, together with Lù Leone, Francesca Pansa and Maricla Boggio, Maraini founded "Il Teatro La Maddalena", which was managed and directed entirely by women. In 1978, the company staged *Dialogo di una prostituta con il suo cliente* (*Dialogue between a Prostitute and Her Client*), which attracted wide international attention.

Maraini published *Donna in guerra* (*Woman at War*) in 1975, and soon after another successful play, *Maria Stuarda* (*Mary Stuart*), which was translated and staged in twenty-two different countries.

In 1980 she co-wrote *Storia di Piera* (Piera's Story) with Piera degli Esposti; director Marco Ferreri later made a film version starring Marcello Mastroianni, Hanna Schygulla and Isabelle Huppert.

In 1984, she published her novel *Il treno per Helsinki* (*The Train to Helsinki*), followed in 1985 by *Isolina* (Fregene Prize), in 1986 by *Il bambino Alberto* (Alberto the Child) and in 1987 by *La bionda, la bruna e l'asino* (The Blond, the Brunette and the Donkey).

Her novel *La lunga vita di Marianna Ucria* (*The Silent Duchess*) was published in 1990. Not only this novel enjoyed huge success among literary critics and readers but also earned Maraini a number of important awards, including the prestigious Super Campiello Prize. Director Roberto Faenza adapted the novel for his film *Marianna Ucria*, while Maraini herself adapted the work for the stage, eventually directed by Lamberto Puggelli for the Stabile di Catania Resident Theatre Group).

In 1991 Maraini published a collection of poems, *Viaggiando con passo di volpe* (*Traveling in the Gait of a Fox*) (Prizes: Mediterraneo; Città di Penne) and her stage play *Veronica, meretrice e scrittrice* (Veronica, Prostitute and Writer) which was followed in 1993 by additional novels: *Bagheria* (Prizes: Rapallo-Carige; Scanno; Joppolo) and *Cercando Emma* (*Searching for Emma*) and in 1994 by *Voci* (*Voices*) (Prizes: Vitaliano Brancati – Zafferana Etnea; City of Padua; Flaiano International Prize for fiction). In 1997, Maraini wrote a stage play entitled *Diario di una cameriera* (Diary of a Waitress), freely adapted from Mirbeau's *Le journal d'une femme de chambre*, which was later staged by the Teatro Stabile dell'Umbria and directed by Luca Ronconi. The major social issues, the condition of women and the problems of the young generation, which have always represented the main themes of her literary works, are once more the

focus of her latest production: *Un clandestino a bordo* (*Stowaway on Board*) (1996) and the collection of short stories inspired by acts of violence against women in the new multi-ethnic Italian society, *Buio* (*Darkness*) (1999), which won the Premio Strega. Among her latest novels are: *Il treno dell'ultima notte* (*Train to Budapest*) (2008), *Chiara di Assisi. Elogio della disobbedienza* (*Claire of Assisi. Praise of Disobedience*) (2013) and *Corpo felice* (*Happy Body*) (2018) in which she retraces the history of women and maternity.