



## Wheels Within Wheels

*Dervla Murphy*

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## Wheels Within Wheels Dervla Murphy

In this beautifully written and searingly honest autobiography, the intrepid cyclist and traveler Dervla Murphy remembers her richly unconventional first thirty years. She describes her determined childhood self - strong-willed and beguiled by books from the first - her intermittent formal education and the intense relationship of an only child with her parents, particularly her invalid mother, whom she nursed until her death. Bicycling fifty miles in a day at the age of eleven, alone, it seems only natural that her first major journey should have been to cycle to India.

## Wheels Within Wheels Details

Date : Published January 14th 2002 by Flamingo (first published 1979)

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Author : Dervla Murphy

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## From Reader Review Wheels Within Wheels for online ebook

### **shae says**

In spite of having read her other books, when I read this one I discovered both a kindred spirit and a mentor.

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### **Karen Cramer says**

I really enjoyed her honesty about her life. I have read two other of her travel stories. Both are quite incredible adventures. She travels alone and frequently on a bicycle. The travel was done in the 1960's. Although heading into her eighties she still travels extensively.

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### **Catherine says**

Already a huge Dervla Murphy fan, I came across this book about her unconventional upbringing in a charity shop and read it that afternoon. Her writing style is so engaging and enjoyable to read that I immediately felt that I wished to be her friend! And that I wanted to re-read her other immensely enjoyable books.

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### **Diana G says**

I like honesty. Dervla's revelations were real and not always flattering. I admire people that can make themselves vulnerable without apology.

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### **SarahLeeNotCake says**

Supposedly an account of an unusual upbringing - but instead it felt like coming home, from having lived in the same town as her but 50 years later, having weirdly so many of the same experiences as her (same boarding school, same adventures travelling solo) it was an enjoyable but spooky read for me.

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### **Amy says**

I really like this book! She is born the same year as my father, 1931, in Ireland. I've not read anything else by Dervla Murphy, and I can't remember how I heard about her. At the age of 31, Dervla set off by bicycle to India. It was 1962, definitely the pre-hippy, pre-vagabonding era. Her travel writing brought her renown, but her life prior to her extensive travels is highly interesting, especially given her immense ability to write. Wheels Within Wheels is her autobiography of her childhood and young adulthood, ending at the death of her parents, which is when her serious adventuring began.

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### **Jenny Thomas says**

Well written and engaging, but found it too irritating to finish. Devla was tediously self absorbed - as one probably would be as a child, but how could she remember what she thought and what others said with such clarity at such young ages? Conversations about religious bigotry, politics, levitation - no her 'memories' are farcical.

The style is slightly pompous and arrogant. Why was she so unpopular at her first boarding school and with their 'servant' Maggie? Why couldn't she make herself more amenable? Why couldn't she pass exams, was no good at sport, music, art and domestic science? And what sort of person hates cake??? I'm afraid I was not that keen on her, despite the lively writing.....

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### **Laurie says**

wonderful writer, read it over a long time period to savor. She was great in person at the Banff Mt book Festival a few years back. This is her memoirs and subtitled: the making of a traveller.

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### **Jane Routley says**

This was a terrifically honest book. Dervlas love of cycling, her fraught relationship with her bed ridden mother and the birth of her child stays with me still after 20 years. Clearly a strong minded and independant woman.

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### **Peter Perhac says**

A great book, a must read for every Dervla fan, but! a bit too heavy on the IRA political stuff right from the beginning (i advise to skip/skim over this) and one major piece of information - one that I was so eager to find out about Dervla - was completely omitted. Bummer!

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### **Mukikamu says**

It's not long ago that I mentioned that it would be interesting to know more about Dervla Murphy. Well, I hope all my wishes come through so quickly. I got plenty of exciting travel volumes for my birthday and finished Wheels Within Wheels already. This autobiography from my admired Miss Murphy clarifies most issues about her life and about her motives for escape. Her tough childhood and stubborn personality all come through marvellously readibly in her book and I found it hard to put down. Her sincere voice knows no self deception which is a treat to readers fed up with self-centered travellers. I had an esteem for her since her first book, still my reserve towards her wildness evaporated only now. The book gives a curious view of rural and Dublin Irish society of the XXth century as well as is an exquisite literal experience of the travel of a personality. Her first bike trips to the Continent are also mentioned, but the book is more an insight to her

life. I liked it a lot.

See previous post about her here. >>  
<http://mukikamu.wordpress.com>

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### **David says**

Awesome autobiography!

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### **Earesty says**

How a young woman grows up in isolated Ireland with eccentric but, highly educated parents. She is mostly self-educated and adventuresome. Restricted by convention and a wheelchair bound mother.

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### **Rachel says**

Moving, well-written and unflinching self-examination. Read Full Tilt first and this explained much of her character and ability to live as she did.

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### **Ape says**

I have another of her books kicking about in the mess that is my home, but this is the first of Dervla Murphy's books that I've read, and I really enjoyed it. For some reason I was "shocked" to see that this was written/published in 1979, so it was out before I even existed. Dervla must be a very old lady now, as she was living in Ireland during the second world war - which incidentally seemed to have very little impact on her life.

It was a very interesting read, she is a genuinely interesting person who isn't bitter, despite some serious crap she's lived through and lack of opportunities at some points. She takes what she can get from life at whatever circumstances she's living in at the time. It was also interesting (I keep using this word!) to read about growing up in rural Ireland at that time, and how a number of the stereotypes just aren't true. There were evil evil nuns at the school, but there were also genuinely decent people. And one of her closest friends seems to have been a priest, who was the loudest voice in her corner during the worst years with her mother.

Her parents came from Dublin, from very different families who lived in very different social circles and would have nothing to do with one another. They went to live in Lismore with her father's work at the library. Her maternal grandmother sounded like an absolute troll, randomly called Jeff, and wig-wearing. And her "pappa", paternal grandfather sounded like such a character although a bit rose-tinted about nationalism.

Her mother suffered from severe arthetis as I understood, and spent most of Dervla's life a cripple, unable to

walk or even do very much with her hands. Dervla ended up having to leave school to move home as a carer when she was fifteen-sixteen, which wasn't actually a problem. In her twenties, when this physical illness turned her mother into a bitter, selfish and unreasonably demanding old bag, did she drive her daughter to the brink of madness, making her care for her 24/7, even having to give up her bedroom so her father could sleep there to get some rest and she'd be ready at her mother's bedside for night-time care, not able to get out and live her life, or perhaps really deal with the grief of the death of her lover, of whom her parents knew nothing. It's tough, but she never comes across as bitter or hateful, always reflecting over it and making excuses for people. I suppose time helps.

On a completely random and superficial note, I really like the painting on the front cover =)

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