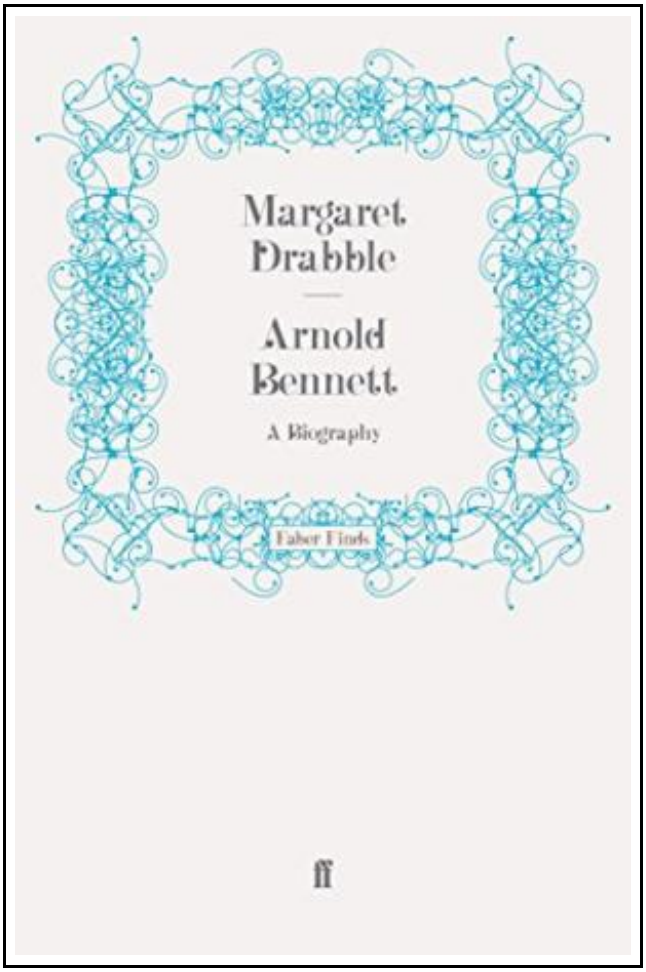
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ARNOLD BENNETT: A BIOGRAPHY

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FABER FABER, United Kingdom, 2011. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Main. 234 x 154 mm. Language: English Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. Arnold Bennett was born in a street called Hope Street. A street less hopeful it would be hard to imagine . Thus begins Margaret Drabble s biography of a man whose most famous achievement was to re-create, in such novels as The Old Wives Tale and Clayhanger , the life, atmosphere and character of the Five Towns region in which he was born and grew up. Arnold Bennett is a very personal book. What interests me , writes the author, is Bennett s background, his childhood and origins, for they are very similar to my own. My mother s family came from the Potteries, and the Bennett novels seem to me to portray a way of life that still existed when I was a child, and indeed persists in certain areas. So like all books this has been partly an act of self-exploration . Of Bennett as a writer Drabble says The best books I think are very fine indeed, on the highest level, deeply moving, original and dealing with material that I had never before encountered in fiction, but only in life: I feel they have been underrated, and my response to them is so constant, even after years of work on them and constant re-readings, that I want to communicate enthusiasm . Of Bennett as a man she paints an affectionate portrait, not glossing over the irritability, dyspepsia and rigidity which at times made him so difficult a companion but reminding us too of his honesty, kindliness and sensitivity. Many a time , she writes at the end of the book, re-reading a novel, reading a letter or a piece of his Journal, I...

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