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Ngaio Marsh: A Life

Margaret Lewis

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Ngaio Marsh: A Life Margaret Lewis
Ngaio Marsh, a died-in-the-wool New Zealander, wrote more than thirty polished, quintessentially English detective novels between 1934 and 1982, the year of her death. How did she, in some senses an outsider, do it? To say would give away the story of her life, better read in these pages than told. But those who have already met her elegant sleuth Roderick Alleyn know he, too, kept his footing in diverse plots, managing the local idiom whether crime cracking in Britain, on the continent, or in New Zealand.
Marsh's talent was as varied as her heritage. A gifted artist, a spirited dramatist, actress, and producer, her crime fiction embraces her triple interests. Scotland Yard's Alleyn is named for famous Elizabethan actor Edward Alleyn.
His wife, Agatha Troy, is a talented artist. Nearly all Marsh's novels reference one of Shakespeare's plays. Many are set in the worlds of art and theater. Most are conceived with the dramatist's eye, a keen one, as her high honors for mystery and her work in the theater attest.
Biographer Margaret Lewis explores these diverse worlds and the rich harvest of Marsh's long life. Lively, acute, sympathetic, she paints a well balanced portrait of a woman leading a single life who was never alone nor lonely, an Edwardian who followed her muses in a thoroughly modern manner, and a writer who, while invincibly Colonial, celebrated England's Golden Age of mystery as royally as its other Queens of Crime.
Our publication is timely given St. Martin's Press' commitment to republish all of the Ngaio Marsh mystery books in Dead Letter paperbacks.

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