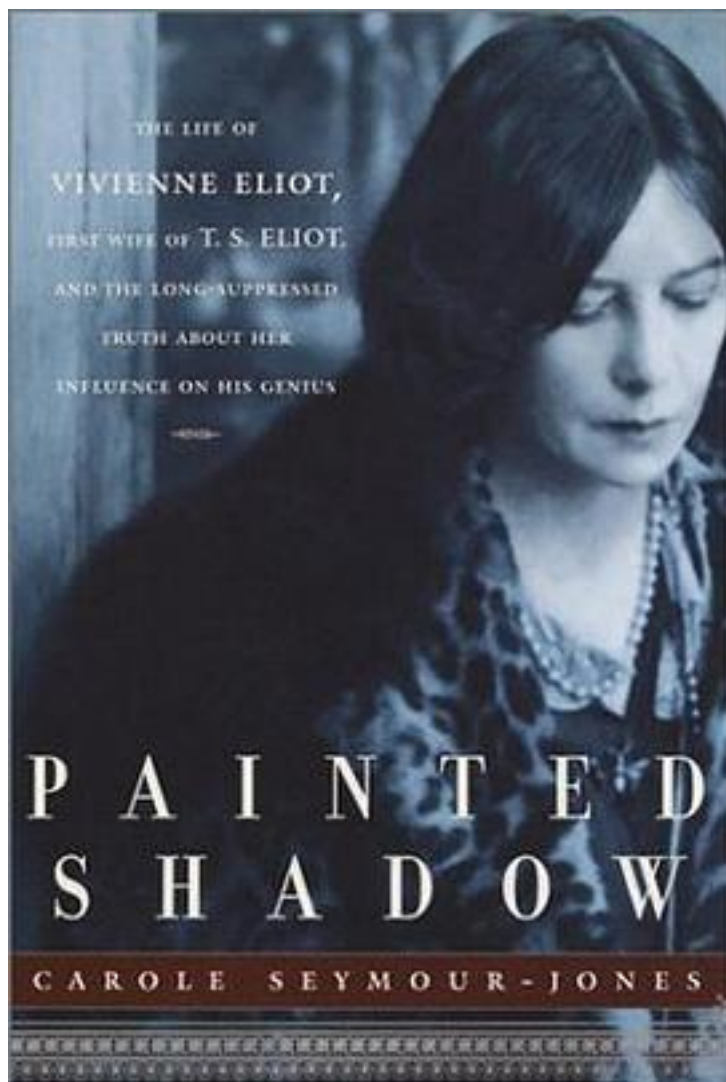


# Painted Shadow



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“It was only when I saw Vivie in the asylum for the last time I realized I had done something very wrong.--She was as sane as I was.”

&#8211;Maurice Haigh-Wood, Vivienne Eliot’ s brother, shortly before his death.

By the time she was committed to an asylum in 1938, five years after T. S. Eliot deserted her, Vivienne Eliot was a lonely, distraught figure. Shunned by literary London, she was the “neurotic” wife whom Eliot had left behind. In *The Family Reunion*, he described a wife who was a “restless shivering painted shadow,” and so she had become: a phantomlike shape on the fringe of Eliot’ s life, written out of his biography and literary history.

This astonishing portrait of Vivienne Eliot, first wife of poet T.S. Eliot, gives a voice to the woman who, for seventeen years, had shared a unique literary partnership with Eliot but who was scapegoated for the failure of the marriage and all but obliterated from historical record. In so doing, *Painted Shadow* opens the way to a new understanding of Eliot’ s poetry.

Vivienne longed to tell her whole story; she wrote in her diary: “You who in later years will read these very words of mine will be able to trace a true history of this epoch.” She believed (as did Virginia Woolf) that she was Eliot’ s muse, the woman through whom he transmuted life into art. Yet Vivienne knew the secrets of his separate and secret life — which contributed to her own deepening hysteria, drug addiction, and final abandonment: the tragedy of a marriage that paired a repressed yet sensual man with an extroverted woman who longed for a full sexual relationship with her husband.

Out of this emotional turbulence came one of the most important English poems of the twentieth century: *The Waste Land*, which Carole Seymour-Jones convincingly shows cannot be fully understood without reference to the relationship of the poet and his first wife. Drawing on papers both privately owned and in university library archives and, most importantly, on Vivienne Eliot’ s own journals left to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Carole Seymour-Jones uses many hitherto unpublished sources and opens the way to a new understanding of Eliot’ s poetry.

作者介绍:

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