

Quartet



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著者:Jean Rhys

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Set in a superficially romantic, between-wars Paris, QUARTET is a poignant tale of a lonely woman. Set against a background of winter-wet streets, Pernod in smoky cafes and cheap hotel rooms with mauve- flowered wallpaper, Marya tries to make something substantial of her life in order to withstand the unreality of her surroundings. Alone, her Polish husband in prison, she is taken up by an English couple who slowly overwhelm her with their passions. Jean Rhys's first novel is both poignant and disturbingly intimate in its vivid depiction of a woman on her own.

作者介绍:

Jean Rhys was born in Dominica in 1890, the daughter of a Welsh doctor and a white Creole mother. She came to England when she was sixteen and then drifted into a series of jobs - chorus girl, mannequin, artist's model - after her father died.

She began to write when the first of her three marriages broke up. She was in her thirties by then, and living in Paris, where she was encouraged by Ford Madox Ford, who also discovered D. H. Lawrence. Ford wrote an enthusiastic introduction to her

first book in 1927, a collection of stories called *The Left Bank*. This was followed by *Quartet* (originally *Postures*, 1928), *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1930), *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939). None of these books was particularly successful, perhaps because they were decades ahead of their time in theme and tone, dealing as they did with women as underdogs, exploited and exploiting their sexuality. With the outbreak of war and subsequent failure of *Good Morning, Midnight*, the books went out of print and Jean Rhys literally dropped completely from sight. It was generally thought that she was dead. Nearly twenty years later she was rediscovered, largely due to the enthusiasm of the writer Francis Wyndham. She was living reclusively in Cornwall, and during those years had accumulated the stories collected in *Tigers are Better-Looking*.

In 1966 she made a sensational reappearance with *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which won the Royal Society of Literature Award and the W. H. Smith Award in 1966, her only comment on the latter being that 'It has come too late'. Her final collection of stories, *Sleep It Off Lady*, appeared in 1976 and *Smile Please*, her unfinished autobiography, was published posthumously in 1979. She was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1966 and a CBE in 1978.

Jean Rhys, described by A. Alvarez as 'one of the finest British writers of this century', died in 1979.

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