

## The Balkan Trilogy Olivia Manning

A Romantic Hero 99 Novels The Balkan Trilogy The Doves of Venus The Danger Tree Olivia Manning Imperial Refugee Warlock Coventry Operation Autonomous Athene Palace Chronicle in Stone The Spies of Warsaw The Levant Trilogy Stalingrad The Spoilt City The Rain Forest Fortunes of War: The Levant Trilogy The Play Room The Wind Changes Olivia Manning The Transylvanian Trilogy Fortunes of War: The Balkan Trilogy Cairo in the War 1939-1945 The Spoilt City The Battle Lost and Won Twentieth-century Epic Novels British Fiction After Modernism Plainsong The Singapore Grip Kazan on Directing Against the Wind A Suitable Boy Olivia Manning The Great Fortune Friends and Heroes School for Love The Balkan Trilogy The Sum of Things The Dean's December

### A Romantic Hero

In this fascinating and uniquely colorful autobiography, a twentieth-century master of suspense fiction candidly examines his extraordinary life, times, and art. One of the twentieth century's most respected writers of adventure and espionage thrillers, Geoffrey Household penned more than twenty novels and short story collections in a career that spanned more than fifty years—and lived a life as eventful and surprising as his acclaimed, pulse-pounding fiction. In *Against the Wind*, the author whom the *New York Times* credits with having “helped to develop the suspense story into an art form” shares his remarkable personal history with candor and wit, while exploring the creative process and his roles as a husband, father, bestselling popular artist, and citizen of his uniquely eventful time. From his years as a student at the University of Oxford to his early career in the cutthroat world of international business and finance to his patriotic service with British intelligence during World War II, with perilous postings in Greece, Romania, and the Middle East that later informed his thrilling fiction, Household evocatively recalls a peripatetic life lived purposefully and often dangerously in some of the most colorful and fascinating regions of the globe.

### 99 Novels

Masterful in its simplicity, *Chronicle in Stone* is a touching coming-of-age story and a testament to the perseverance of the human spirit. Surrounded by the magic of beautiful women and literature, a boy must endure the deprivations of war as he suffers the hardships of growing up. His sleepy country has just thrown off centuries of tyranny, but new waves of domination inundate his city. Through the boy's eyes, we see the terrors of World War II as he witnesses fascist invasions, allied bombings, partisan infighting, and the many faces of human cruelty—as well as the simple pleasures of life. Evacuating to the countryside, he expects to find an ideal world full of extraordinary things, but discovers instead an

archaic backwater where a severed arm becomes a talisman and deflowered girls mysteriously vanish. Woven between the chapters of the boy's story are tantalizing fragments of the city's history. As the devastation mounts, the fragments lose coherence, and we perceive firsthand how the violence of war destroys more than just buildings and bridges.

## **The Balkan Trilogy**

Olivia Manning: A Woman at War is the first literary biography of the twentieth-century novelist Olivia Manning. It tells the story of a writer whose life and work were shaped by her own fierce ambition, and, like many of her generation, the events and aftermath of the Second World War. From the time she left Portsmouth for London in the mid-1930s determined to become a famous writer, through her wartime years in the Balkans and the Middle East, and until her death in London in 1980, Olivia Manning was a dedicated and hard-working author. Married to a British Council lecturer stationed in Bucharest, Olivia Manning arrived in Romania on the 3rd September 1939, the fateful day when Allied forces declared war on Germany. For the duration of World War Two, she kept one step ahead of invading German forces as she and her husband fled Romania for Greece, and then Greece for the Middle East, where they stayed until the end of the war. These tumultuous wartime years are the subject of her best-known and most transparently autobiographical novels, The Balkan Trilogy and The Levant Trilogy. Olivia Manning refused to be labelled a 'feminist,' but her novels depict with cutting insight and sardonic wit the marginal position of women striving for independent identity in arenas frequently controlled by men, whether on the frontlines of war or in the publishing world of the 1950s. However, she did not just write about World War Two and women's lives. Amongst other things, Manning published fiction about making do in Britain's post-war Age of Austerity, about desecration of the environment through uncontrolled development, and about the painful adjustment to post-war British life for young men. As the author of thirteen published novels, two volumes of short stories, several works of non-fiction, and a regular reviewer of contemporary fiction, she was a visible presence on the British literary scene throughout her life and her work provides a detailed insight into the period. Grounded in thorough research and enriched by discussion of previously unexamined manuscripts and letters, Olivia Manning: A Woman at War is a timely study of Olivia Manning's remarkable life. Deirdre David integrates incisive critical analysis of Manning's writing with extensive discussion of the historical contexts of her fiction.

## **The Doves of Venus**

## **The Danger Tree**

## **Olivia Manning**

In April 1942, Hitler and Mussolini meet in Salzburg where they agree on a renewed assault on the Soviet Union. Launched in the summer, the campaign soon picked up speed, as the routed Red Army is driven back to the industrial center of Stalingrad on the banks of the Volga. In the rubble of the bombed-out city, Soviet forces dig in for a last stand. Even as the Germans advance, the Shaposhnikov matriarch, Alexandra Vladimirovna, refuses to leave Stalingrad. Far from the front, her eldest daughter, Ludmila, is unhappily married to the Jewish physicist Viktor Shtrum. Viktor's research may be of crucial military importance, but he is distracted by thoughts of his mother in the Ukraine, lost behind German lines. -- adapted from back cover

## **Imperial Refugee**

The third vol. of her Levant trilogy; the 1st is The danger tree, and the 2d is The battle lost and won.

## **Warlock**

'So glittering is the overall parade - and so entertaining the surface - that the trilogy remains excitingly vivid; it amuses, it diverts and it informs, and to do these things so elegantly is no small achievement' Sunday Times 'A fantastically tart and readable account of life in eastern Europe at the start of the war' Sarah Waters The Balkan Trilogy is the story of a marriage and of a war, a vast, teeming, and complex masterpiece in which Olivia Manning brings the uncertainty and adventure of civilian existence under political and military siege to vibrant life. At the heart of the trilogy are newly-weds Guy and Harriet Pringle, who arrive in Bucharest - the so-called Paris of the East - in the autumn of 1939, just weeks after the German invasion of Poland. Guy's lecturing job awaits, alongside friends and the ever-ardent Sophie - but for Harriet, alone and naive, it's a strange new life. Other surprises follow: Romania joins the Axis, and before long German soldiers overrun the capital. The Pringles flee south to Greece, part of a group of refugees made up of White Russians, journalists, con artists, and dignitaries. In Athens, however, the couple will face a new challenge of their own

## **Coventry**

NPR's Favorite Books of 2019 Rachel Cusk redrew the boundaries of fiction with the Outline Trilogy, three "literary masterpieces" (The Washington Post) whose narrator, Faye, perceives the world with a glinting, unsparing intelligence while remaining opaque to the reader. Lauded for the precision of her prose and the quality of her insight, Cusk is a writer of uncommon brilliance. Now, in Coventry, she gathers a selection of her nonfiction writings that both offers new insights on

the themes at the heart of her fiction and forges a startling critical voice on some of our most urgent personal, social, and artistic questions. *Coventry* encompasses memoir, cultural criticism, and writing about literature, with pieces on family life, gender, and politics, and on D. H. Lawrence, Françoise Sagan, and Kazuo Ishiguro. Named for an essay Cusk published in *Granta* (“Every so often, for offences actual or hypothetical, my mother and father stop speaking to me. There’s a funny phrase for this phenomenon in England: it’s called being sent to Coventry”), this collection is pure Cusk and essential reading for our age: fearless, unrepentantly erudite, and dazzling to behold.

## **Operation Autonomous**

Bucharest, Autumn 1939: newlyweds Guy and Harriet Pringle arrive in a city alive with contrasts and rumour, on edge with wavering loyalties and the tension of war. Guy, teaching at the university, throws himself into Bucharest life, embracing all around him. Harriet, struggling to adjust to married life and to her husband’s friendship with the over-attentive Sophie, finds life in a city cut off from the outside world less straightforward than she first anticipated.

## **Athene Palace**

Elia Kazan was the twentieth century’s most celebrated director of both stage and screen, and this monumental, revelatory book shows us the master at work. Kazan’s list of Broadway and Hollywood successes—*A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Death of a Salesman*, *On the Waterfront*, to name a few—is a testament to his profound impact on the art of directing. This remarkable book, drawn from his notebooks, letters, interviews, and autobiography, reveals Kazan’s method: how he uncovered the “spine,” or core, of each script; how he analyzed each piece in terms of his own experience; and how he determined the specifics of his production. And in the final section, “*The Pleasures of Directing*”—written during Kazan’s final years—he becomes a wise old pro offering advice and insight for budding artists, writers, actors, and directors. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## **Chronicle in Stone**

The first literary biography of the twentieth-century novelist Olivia Manning, this volume is a timely, expert, and well-researched biography that offers a vivid portrait of wartime survival and of London literary life from the 1950s through the 1970s.

## **The Spies of Warsaw**

Oakley Hall's legendary Warlock revisits and reworks the traditional conventions of the Western to present a raw, funny, hypnotic, ultimately devastating picture of American unreality. First published in the 1950s, at the height of the McCarthy era, Warlock is not only one of the most original and entertaining of modern American novels but a lasting contribution to American fiction. "Tombstone, Arizona, during the 1880's is, in ways, our national Camelot: a never-never land where American virtues are embodied in the Earps, and the opposite evils in the Clanton gang; where the confrontation at the OK Corral takes on some of the dry purity of the Arthurian joust. Oakley Hall, in his very fine novel Warlock has restored to the myth of Tombstone its full, mortal, blooded humanity. Wyatt Earp is transmogrified into a gunfighter named Blaisdell who . . . is summoned to the embattled town of Warlock by a committee of nervous citizens expressly to be a hero, but finds that he cannot, at last, live up to his image; that there is a flaw not only in him, but also, we feel, in the entire set of assumptions that have allowed the image to exist. . . . Before the agonized epic of Warlock is over with—the rebellion of the proto-Wobblies working in the mines, the struggling for political control of the area, the gunfighting, mob violence, the personal crises of those in power—the collective awareness that is Warlock must face its own inescapable Horror: that what is called society, with its law and order, is as frail, as precarious, as flesh and can be snuffed out and assimilated back into the desert as easily as a corpse can. It is the deep sensitivity to abysses that makes Warlock one of our best American novels. For we are a nation that can, many of us, toss with all aplomb our candy wrapper into the Grand Canyon itself, snap a color shot and drive away; and we need voices like Oakley Hall's to remind us how far that piece of paper, still fluttering brightly behind us, has to fall." —Thomas Pynchon

## **The Levant Trilogy**

Singapore, 1939: life on the eve of World War II just isn't what it used to be for Walter Blackett, head of British Singapore's oldest and most powerful firm. No matter how forcefully the police break one strike, the natives go on strike somewhere else. His daughter keeps entangling herself with the most unsuitable beaux, while her intended match, the son of Blackett's partner, is an idealistic sympathizer with the League of Nations and a vegetarian. Business may be booming—what with the war in Europe, the Allies are desperate for rubber and helpless to resist Blackett's price-fixing and market manipulation—but something is wrong. No one suspects that the world of the British Empire, of fixed boundaries between classes and nations, is about to come to a terrible end. A love story and a war story, a tragicomic tale of a city under siege and a dying way of life, *The Singapore Grip* completes the "Empire Trilogy" that began with *Troubles* and the Booker prize-winning *Siege of Krishnapur*.

## **Stalingrad**

After being widely portrayed as a virulent racist and a traitor to his city, Professor Albert Corde, dean of the faculty of

Journalism, is forced to leave Chicago. Corde is ill-equipped to handle the outrage that faces him, both as the author of several articles on Chicago's endemic corruption, and as an outspoken figure in the controversial trial of two black men charged with killing a white student. Travelling to Bucharest to visit his ailing mother-in-law, he is unable to escape the comparisons in his mind between the corrupt and dehumanizing aspects of the communist regime, and the abandoned streets of his home city. Meditating on the juxtaposition between two distant worlds, and obsessing over events that begin to unfold both in Chicago and Bucharest, he begins to concede defeat. In this tormented tale, amid the swirling forces that threaten to drown his humanity, Corde slides ever closer to the brink of desolation.

## **The Spoilt City**

National Book Award Finalist A heartstrong story of family and romance, tribulation and tenacity, set on the High Plains east of Denver. In the small town of Holt, Colorado, a high school teacher is confronted with raising his two boys alone after their mother retreats first to the bedroom, then altogether. A teenage girl—her father long since disappeared, her mother unwilling to have her in the house—is pregnant, alone herself, with nowhere to go. And out in the country, two brothers, elderly bachelors, work the family homestead, the only world they've ever known. From these unsettled lives emerges a vision of life, and of the town and landscape that bind them together—their fates somehow overcoming the powerful circumstances of place and station, their confusion, curiosity, dignity and humor intact and resonant. As the milieu widens to embrace fully four generations, Kent Haruf displays an emotional and aesthetic authority to rival the past masters of a classic American tradition.

## **The Rain Forest**

NOW A MINISERIES ON BBC AMERICA STARRING DAVID TENNANT An autumn evening in 1937. A German engineer arrives at the Warsaw railway station. Tonight, he will be with his Polish mistress; tomorrow, at a workers' bar in the city's factory district, he will meet with the military attaché from the French embassy. Information will be exchanged for money. So begins *The Spies of Warsaw*, the brilliant new novel by Alan Furst, lauded by *The New York Times* as "America's preeminent spy novelist." War is coming to Europe. French and German intelligence operatives are locked in a life-and-death struggle on the espionage battlefield. At the French embassy, the new military attaché, Colonel Jean-Francois Mercier, a decorated hero of the 1914 war, is drawn into a world of abduction, betrayal, and intrigue in the diplomatic salons and back alleys of Warsaw. At the same time, the handsome aristocrat finds himself in a passionate love affair with a Parisian woman of Polish heritage, a lawyer for the League of Nations. Colonel Mercier must work in the shadows, amid an extraordinary cast of venal and dangerous characters—Colonel Anton Vyborg of Polish military intelligence; the mysterious and sophisticated Dr. Lapp, senior German Abwehr officer in Warsaw; Malka and Viktor Rozen, at work for the Russian secret service; and Mercier's

brutal and vindictive opponent, Major August Voss of SS counterintelligence. And there are many more, some known to Mercier as spies, some never to be revealed. The Houston Chronicle has described Furst as “the greatest living writer of espionage fiction.” The Spies of Warsaw is his finest novel to date—the history precise, the writing evocative and powerful, more a novel about spies than a spy novel, exciting, atmospheric, erotic, and impossible to put down. “As close to heaven as popular fiction can get.” –Los Angeles Times, about The Foreign Correspondent “What gleams on the surface in Furst’s books is his vivid, precise evocation of mood, time, place, a letter-perfect re-creation of the quotidian details of World War II Europe that wraps around us like the rich fug of a wartime railway station.” –Time “A rich, deeply moving novel of suspense that is equal parts espionage thriller, European history and love story.” –Herbert Mitgang, The New York Times, about Dark Star “Some books you read. Others you live. They seep into your dreams and haunt your waking hours until eventually they seem the stuff of memory and experience. Such are the novels of Alan Furst, who uses the shadowy world of espionage to illuminate history and politics with immediacy.” –Nancy Pate, Orlando Sentinel

## **Fortunes of War: The Levant Trilogy**

### **The Play Room**

### **The Wind Changes**

Part one of a trilogy, They Were Counted paints a portrait of the vanished world of pre-1914 Hungary, as seen through the eyes of two young aristocratic Transylvanian cousins.

## **Olivia Manning**

### **The Transylvanian Trilogy**

A distinguished English novelist portrays Egypt and, in particular, life in Cairo during the Second World War when Rommel's offensive was at its height

## **Fortunes of War: The Balkan Trilogy**

Ivor Porter first came to Romania in 1939 as a teacher of English - to the exotic, semi-oriental Bucharest described by Olivia Manning. After the war had broken out, and Romania had been absorbed into the Axis sphere of influence, he - together with his fellow-expatriates - was forced to leave a colourful, turbulent country to which he had become increasingly attached; but he was to return in 1943 as a member of SOE, parachuted in to play his part in the plot to overthrow the pro-Nazi regime of Marshal Antonescu and install a government more sympathetic to the Allied cause. Operation Anonymous, and the successful coup that followed in 1944, may well have hastened the end of the war by several months by helping the Red Army to sweep through the Carpathians into Central Europe, and south to the frontiers of Greece, yet for the Romanians themselves Russia, rather than Germany, was the ancient enemy. Mixing the author's own experiences with detailed diplomatic and military history, Operation Autonomous opens up an important and neglected aspect of the war - and one that was to have momentous implications for the settlement of post-war Europe.

## **Cairo in the War 1939-1945**

Every age that has produced literary epics has also produced variations on the elements that constitute the epic. 'Twentieth-Century Epic Novels' examines the most popular 20th-century manifestations of epic sensibilities by looking closely at five major examples of the 20th-century epic novel.

## **The Spoilt City**

On the day that Paris fell to the Nazis, R. G. Waldeck was checking into the swankiest hotel in Bucharest, the Athene Palace. A cosmopolitan center during the war, the hotel was populated by Italian and German oilmen hoping to secure new business opportunities in Romania, international spies cloaked in fake identities, and Nazi officers whom Waldeck discovered to be intelligent but utterly bloodless. A German Jew and a reporter for Newsweek, Waldeck became a close observer of the Nazi invasion. As King Carol first tried to placate the Nazis, then abdicated the throne in favor of his son, Waldeck was dressing for dinners with diplomats and cozying up to Nazi officers to get insight and information. From her unique vantage, she watched as Romania, a country with a pro-totalitarian elite and a deep strain of anti-Semitism, suffered civil unrest, a German invasion, and an earthquake, before turning against the Nazis. A striking combination of social intimacy and disinterested political analysis, Athene Palace evokes the elegance and excitement of the dynamic international community in Bucharest before the world had come to grips with the horrors of war and genocide. Waldeck's account strikingly presents the finely wrought surface of dinner parties, polite discourse, and charisma, while recognizing the undercurrents of violence and greed that ran through the denizens of Athene Palace.

## **The Battle Lost and Won**

From one of the classic writers of post-war English literature comes a stunning novel of love, betrayal and redemption. Married but obstinately set in their separate ways, Hugh and Kristy Foster know nothing of Al-Bustan, a far-flung island in the Indian Ocean. Too late they discover how it seethes with unrest and intrigue. Yet now when they need each other, the sullen, muttering forest seems only to intensify their differences.

## **Twentieth-century Epic Novels**

### **British Fiction After Modernism**

This collection of essays offers a wide-ranging and provocative reassessment of the British novel's achievements after modernism. The book identifies continuities of preoccupation - with national identity, historiography and the challenge to literary form presented by public and private violence - that span the entire century.

### **Plainsong**

The classic World War II trilogy: 'The finest fictional record of the war produced by a British writer' Anthony Burgess As Rommel advances in wartorn Egypt, the lives of the civilian population come under threat. One such couple are Guy and Harriet Pringle, who have escaped the war in Europe only to find the conflict once more on their doorstep, providing a volatile backdrop to their own personal battles. The civilian world meets the military through the figure of Simon Boulderstone, a young army officer who will witness the tragedy and tension of war on the frontier at first hand. An outstanding author of wartime fiction, Olivia Manning brilliantly evokes here the world of the Levant - Egypt, Jerusalem and Syria - with perception and subtlety, humour and humanity.

### **The Singapore Grip**

### **Kazan on Directing**

The Balkan Trilogy is the story of a marriage and of a war, a vast, teeming, and complex masterpiece in which Olivia Manning brings the uncertainty and adventure of civilian existence under political and military siege to vibrant life. Manning's focus is not the battlefield but the café and kitchen, the bedroom and street, the fabric of the everyday world

that has been irrevocably changed by war, yet remains unchanged. At the heart of the trilogy are newlyweds Guy and Harriet Pringle, who arrive in Bucharest—the so-called Paris of the East—in the fall of 1939, just weeks after the German invasion of Poland. Guy, an Englishman teaching at the university, is as wantonly gregarious as his wife is introverted, and Harriet is shocked to discover that she must share her adored husband with a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. Other surprises follow: Romania joins the Axis, and before long German soldiers overrun the capital. The Pringles flee south to Greece, part of a group of refugees made up of White Russians, journalists, con artists, and dignitaries. In Athens, however, the couple will face a new challenge of their own, as great in its way as the still-expanding theater of war.

## **Against the Wind**

Olivia Manning's reputation as a difficult personality often threatens to obscure her reputation as a writer. Few twentieth century novelists can have inspired such consistent dislike. The publisher Dan Davin, for example, who was devoted to Manning's gregarious husband Reggie Smith, complained of her as a shrewish woman whose aim was to be as unpleasant to as many people as possible, while the legendary denizen of Fitzrovia, Julian Maclaren-Ross, recalled among his Stag's Head drinking circle the taciturn, undemonstrative and physically unattractive Olivia Manning who, from the vantage point of her bar-stool regarded the others with an expression of amusement, mingled with contempt. Fellow writer Inez Holden christened her "whiney" Manning; Anthony Powell, her otherwise generous editor at Punch, admitted her to be the world's worst grumbler and her publishers at Heinemann were forced to conclude that she was never an easy artist to handle. Even Kay Dick, her lifelong friend and correspondent, depicted Manning in her 1984 novel *The Shelf* as the spiteful gossip Sophie, who, with her wry fragility, delicate hands and penetrating voice . . . often reminded me of a goshawk about to bite.

## **A Suitable Boy**

## **Olivia Manning**

In *The Levant Trilogy* Olivia Manning returns to the story of the young English couple Guy and Harriet Pringle, last seen, at the end of *The Balkan Trilogy*, departing from Athens ahead of the invading Nazi army. Now, in the spring of 1941, they arrive in Egypt as Rommel's forces slowly but surely approach Cairo across the Sahara from the west. Will the city fall? In the streets the people contemplate welcoming a new set of occupiers, while European refugees and well-heeled Anglo-Egyptians prepare to pack their bags. And at night, everyone who is anyone flocks to the city's famed hotels and seedy cabarets, seeking one last dance before the tanks roll in. Manning describes the Pringles' ever complicated marriage and their motley group of friends and foes with the same sharp eye that earned *The Balkan Trilogy* a devoted following. And she

also traces the fortunes of a marvelously drawn new character, Simon Boulderstone, a twenty-year-old recruit who must grapple with the boredom, chaos, and fleeting exhilaration of war.

## **The Great Fortune**

Fourteen subtle and beautifully written stories of varying theme and setting are brought together in this brilliant collection: haunting studies of lonely childhoods, shrewdly perceptive portraits of adult relationships and black comedies of domestic deadlock - all infused with Olivia Manning's precise and consistent wit.

## **Friends and Heroes**

The second vol. of her Levant trilogy; the 1st is The danger tree, and the 3d is The sum of things.

## **School for Love**

This is an account of life, attitudes and events in Cairo during World War II. It describes the historical background of the events of the Desert War, as well as stories and descriptions of personalities gleaned from the Ambassador's diaries and those of her grandparents, Duff and Diana Cooper.

## **The Balkan Trilogy**

Olivia Manning was a superb writer - extravagantly funny and deeply serious at the same time - but her talent was not fully recognised in her lifetime. This beautifully written biography puts the record straight. Born in 1908 in Portsmouth into a naval family, she seized independence at the first opportunity, making a penurious life for herself in London as a furniture painter at Peter Jones, before signing up as a wartime ambulance driver - although she had never learned to drive. Her personality was as idiosyncratic her novels. Her husband, Reggie Smith, was equally a 'character' - a BBC producer, self-proclaimed communist and life-long philanderer. Both indulged in affairs, but their unusual marriage was sustained by his lifelong support for his wife's gifts. After their adventurous war (Reggie was then in the British Council - and probably a spy) they became the centre of London literary life, numbering among their close friends Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Stevie Smith, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Anthony Burgess and Laurence Durrell. Olivia Manning died in 1980 in their house on the Isle of Wight; a cat lover, she left most of her money to the Wood Green Animal sanctuary.

## **The Sum of Things**

## **The Dean's December**

Jerusalem in 1945 is a city in flux: refugees from the war in Europe fill its streets and cafés, the British colonial mandate is coming to an end, and tensions are on the rise between the Arab and Jewish populations. Felix Latimer, a recently orphaned teenager, arrives in Jerusalem from Baghdad, biding time until he can secure passage to England. Adrift and deeply lonely, Felix has no choice but to room in a boardinghouse run by Miss Bohun, a relative he has never met. Miss Bohun is a holy terror, a cheerless miser who proclaims the ideals of a fundamentalist group known as the Ever-Readies—joy, charity, and love—even as she makes life a misery for her boarders. Then Mrs. Ellis, a fascinating young widow, moves into the house and disrupts its dreary routine for good. Olivia Manning's great subject is the lives of ordinary people caught up in history. Here, as in her panoramic depiction of World War II, *The Balkan Trilogy*, she offers a rich and psychologically nuanced story of life on the precipice, and she tells it with equal parts compassion, skepticism, and humor.

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