

100 BOOKS



# The Persephone Biannually

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Tel: +44 20 7242 9292  
[www.persephonebooks.co.uk](http://www.persephonebooks.co.uk)

*'Daphne Spencer' 1951 oil on canvas by Stanley Spencer*  
© Ulster Museum/The Estate of Stanley Spencer/DACS



# OUR BOOKS FOR AUTUMN/WINTER 2012–13

**P**ersephone Book No. 99 is *Patience* (1953) by John Coates. It is a great discovery, being funny (it is in fact oddly difficult to find good funny novels), touching and risqué. ‘The story of a Proper Girl Improperly in Love’ (as it was subtitled when it came out in America, the year after it was published in England), *Patience* is about the eponymous heroine, 28 year-old Patience Gathorne-Galley who has three small daughters and is, she thinks, newly pregnant. In the first chapter her brother, a devout Catholic (whereas Patience is a rather unthinking Catholic, nevertheless she undeniably is one) comes to tea to tell her that her husband Edward is being unfaithful. Patience, who is perfectly happy with her husband, her children and her St John’s Wood life, is not too upset, in fact she is more curious than anything else because a) her husband had never seemed inattentive, on the contrary, b) she is mystified at the thought of another woman going to bed with Edward *out of choice*.

**F**ortuitously (for this is a caper, a farce, a satire, something unreal – which is why coincidence is allowable) Patience meets

Philip and upon going back with him to his room in Regent’s Park ‘realises that through seven years of marriage she has never understood the meaning of married love, has never had a moment of sexual pleasure, has been cheated by her husband of true happiness.’ This is what *Tribune* magazine told its readers, assuring them that there was ‘no melodrama – or pornography here. *Patience* is a truly delightful, idyllic story of a simple soul’s discovery of the beauties of sexual love and her attempts to reconcile it with her mild Catholicism and her ardent maternal love.’

**T**his is only at the end of Chapter Four, thus we have given away very little of the plot, and in any case it is important to point out that in some ways *Patience* is not to be taken too seriously! We are loathe to make comparisons with *Miss Pettigrew* or *Marchioness* or *Miss Buncl* but in some ways it does resemble these titles, firstly because it’s about a woman finding love for the first time, secondly because it’s a novel that was popular in its day and then completely forgotten and thirdly because it can now be seen again as one of those rare books (*The Pursuit of*



*The endpaper for Patience by John Coates is a 1953 design by Wendy Bray.*



*A roller-printed cotton twill designed in 1911 for Arnold Print Works, Mass.*



*‘Côte D’Azure’ a screen-printed cotton by Collier Campbell for Fischbacher 1983*





*John Coates in the 1950s*

*Love* and *I Capture the Castle* come to mind) which are hilarious and touching yet with a serious undertone.

For there is of course a serious side to *Patience*, which is that along the way it is a gentle and subtle exploration of what it means to have a religious (Catholic) belief in the sanctity of marriage. Since *Patience* never wavers in her faith, how is she going to disentangle herself from her husband? We are confident that none of the Catholics among our readers will be offended by this book – Persephone readers are too sensible for that – but we can imagine a few groans, of recognition and of *touché*.

It was vital that we ask someone to write the Preface who has a good sense of humour and Maureen Lipman agreed at once, writing to say that she ‘loved *Patience*. It is a riveting read with the most fascinating characters. The way John Coates manages to give *Patience* such ingenuity, without making her at all soppy, is

quite exceptional. It would make a great film.’

Maureen has been a supporter of Persephone Books for a long time and indeed read *Miss Pettigrew* on Radio 4 in 2002. She says in her Preface about ‘this totally absorbing, slyly innocent, wickedly funny novel... this is such a *naughty* book. Small wonder it was banned in Ireland. Like the best fairy tales, it is about rousing a beautiful and intrinsically good woman from a long sleep by means of a simple kiss, but in fairy tales, this doesn’t happen until the final act. Here, it is the incident that sets the plot apace.’

The author of *Patience*, John Coates, was a 1950s

playwright and author of eleven novels: *Patience* was his greatest success, being turned into a play with Geraldine McEwan in her first leading role in 1955. We are confident that this witty, sophisticated, high-spirited novel will be an extremely enjoyable read and a perfect book to give as a present. A few will be shocked but most will be disarmed by John Coates’s charmingly light touch. *The New York Herald Tribune* called one of his previous novels ‘inordinately witty and delightful...For its wit, its understated sophistication, its fresh and untrammelled honesty and, in some strange and moving fashion, its delicacy, it is tops.’ In every respect the same applies to *Patience*.



*Harold Knight Girl Writing 1931 © Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool/PCF*

Persephone Book No. 100 is *The Persephone Book of Short Stories*. The hundredth book is something of a landmark for us and we wanted to find a way to celebrate the diversity and range of 'our' writers. The best way to do so was by gathering together a varied collection of stories in one large (450 page) volume. We have printed the following comment on the flap: "Most of the stories focus on the small, quiet or unspoken intricacies of human relationships rather than grand dramas" wrote our proofreader, and she pointed out that "the use of metaphor is delicate and subtle; often the women are strong and capable and the men less so; shallow and selfish

motives are exposed, and all the stories except the last are third-person. Interesting!"

There are thirty stories in all, ten stories by existing Persephone short story writers, ten stories that have already appeared in the *Biannually* and therefore will be familiar to some, and ten stories that were completely new to us and are, we hope, new to our readers. The ten stories which are already in print in Persephone editions of their work are by Katherine Mansfield, Irène Némirovsky, Mollie Panter-Downes (twice), Elizabeth Berridge, Dorothy Whipple, Frances Towers, Margaret Bonham, Diana

Gardner and Diana Athill. The ten stories which have already been published in the *Quarterly* and *Biannually* are by EM Delafield (author of Persephone Book No. 13 *Consequences*); Dorothy Parker; Dorothy Whipple (again); Edith Wharton; Phyllis Bentley; Dorothy Canfield Fisher (author of Persephone Book No. 7 *The Homemaker*); Norah Hoult (author of *There Were No Windows*, Persephone Book No. 59); Angelica Gibbs; Penelope Mortimer (author of Persephone Book No. 77 *Daddy's Gone A-Hunting*); and Georgina Hammick.

And lastly the ten stories which are new to us and

# PATIENCE

by  
JOHN COATES

Characters in order of appearance :

Patience	.....	.....	GERALDINE McEWAN
Helen, her sister	.....	.....	JANE DOWNS
Nicholas, her brother-in-law	.....	.....	EDWARD JEWESBURY
Lionel, her brother	.....	.....	ALAN MacNAUGHTAN
Edward, her husband	.....	.....	HUGH WILLIAMS
Philip	.....	.....	JACK WATLING

Directed by JACK MINSTER

Setting designed by HUTCHINSON SCOTT

Scene :

THE DRAWING ROOM OF PATIENCE AND EDWARD'S HOUSE  
IN ST. JOHN'S WOOD

TIME : THE PRESENT

Act I

Scene 1. THURSDAY EVENING  
Scene 2. LATER THE SAME EVENING  
Scene 3. THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON

Act II

Scene 1. SATURDAY NIGHT  
Scene 2. SUNDAY MORNING

Act III

Scene 1. SUNDAY NIGHT  
Scene 2. THE FOLLOWING WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Dresses designed by Hutchinson Scott  
& executed by Elizabeth Curzon Ltd.

Scenery painted by Alick Johnstone; built by Mayfair Displays. Furniture by the Old Times Furnishing Co. Electrical equipment by VenrecO Ltd. Jewellery kindly loaned by Richard Ogden Ltd. Mr. MacNaughtan's spectacles by J. H. Steward Ltd. Flowers by Floral Decor. Nylon stockings by Kayser-Bondor. Lighters by Ronson. Virginia cigarettes by Abdulla.

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Production Manager	.....	Muster Productions	.....	IAN MAIN
Stage Manager	.....	Ltd.	.....	BARRY BARTON
Assistant Stage Manager	.....	and	.....	JOAN HARRISON
Press Representative	.....	Anna Deere Wiman	.....	GEORGE FEARON

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possibly new to Persephone readers are by Susan Glaspell, Pauline Smith, Malachi Whitaker, Betty Miller (author of *Farewell Leicester Square*, Persephone Book No. 14), Helen Hull (author of *Heat Lightning* that we publish next year), Kay Boyle, Shirley Jackson, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Elizabeth Spencer and Penelope Fitzgerald.

One of the reasons for making our one hundredth book a volume of short stories is that Persephone has become well-known for its devotion to the short story as a form. Yet there are still people who say, oh I don't like short stories, and when questioned it seems to be that once they 'get into' a story they would prefer it to become a full-length novel rather than come to an end after just a few pages. We find this incomprehensible: often we are so relieved not to have to plod through a long novel when, in a few pages, the impact upon us can be just as extraordinary and just as unforgettable. So if you have decided that short stories are not for you, we urge you to try this volume. In particular, dip in and out. There is absolutely no necessity to work through from the beginning. Keep it by the bed and read one before going to sleep. Or keep it in your bag and read a story on a train journey. Short stories are the answer in a myriad of situations!

The thirty stories are presented in the order they are known, or presumed, to have been

written; nearly a third are by American writers. This is an interesting proportion and is in fact an imbalance in proportion to our books of which only about a tenth are American; it is probably to do with the unique brilliance of the editors at *The New Yorker* at finding superb short stories. The dates of the stories range from 1909 to 1986, hence there are two endpapers, a 1911

one at the front (for the Susan Glaspell short story) and a 1983 endpaper at the back (for the story by Georgina Hammick). These two stories bookend the entire collection – a story of doomed love in a publisher's office and a story about a young married woman's visit to a gynaecologist to have a coil fitted. Compare and contrast as we used to be told at university.



*Rosemary Rutherford (1912-72) pen and wash drawing of a VAD nurse c. 1941*  
© Private Collection/Sim Fine Art



# THE 2013 PERSEPHONE DIARY

**T**he *Persephone Diary* for 2013, which is £15, is our second diary (the previous one was for 2011). It celebrates one hundred Persephone books – although in fact it has one hundred and one endpapers since *The Persephone Book of Short Stories* has a different endpaper front and back. (*The Victorian Chaise-longue* did this in its first edition, then when we reprinted we were too weary to cajole the printer into getting it right; but when we reprint – with our current, fantastic printer GGP – we shall make sure we have two endpapers again – the first, obviously, was an

1860s Berlin wool design that covered the chaise-longue, the second was a 1950s fabric that the young couple might have had in their house in Islington.)

**T**he *Diary* has a week to a page, a list of bank holidays and religious festivals, quite a lot of blank pages, the first sentence of every one of our books, and the details of each fabric. It also has a separate jacket, like all grey Persephone books, but instead of having a quotation or a biography of the author on the flaps, it has space for the owner of the diary to enter useful details.

**T**he endpapers originally came about because we very much admired the plainness of original Penguins and traditional French paperbacks, but we loved textiles, so many of which were designed by anonymous women designers. Yet these have largely vanished from view, since nowadays we tend to wear and to furnish our houses in plain colours. Using fabrics as endpapers was a way of giving them a fresh airing, as well as reflecting the atmosphere of the time when the book was written, and giving a lift to the grey: so the diary gives us a chance to show off our all our textiles.



MONDAY 11 FEBRUARY Olive New Nor

TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY Olive New Nor

WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY

THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY

FRIDAY 15 FEBRUARY

SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY

SUNDAY 17 FEBRUARY

19 *They Knew My Knight* (1924) by Dorothy Whipple  
It was a fine October morning and the sun was rising. The Exchange clock, stopped by the request of the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem from midnight until six in the morning struck, with its admired sonority, the half after that hour.  
A working block-print in woad colours designed by Rosa Capov in 1922, the fabric has some of the hand-aided quality of machinery; yet the leaves and flowers evoke the large garden by which I live as so fondly remoted. © V&A



MONDAY 20 MAY

TUESDAY 21 MAY

WEDNESDAY 22 MAY

THURSDAY 23 MAY

FRIDAY 24 MAY

SATURDAY 25 MAY

SUNDAY 26 MAY

39 *Amaze* (1938) by Anna Ganesey  
"The cuckoo-clock struck loudly in the hall of the Pension Heintzinger, Lamerzhausen."  
A Wexner Workman fabric called *Post* designed in 1927 in Vienna by Clara Peranzini; the horizontal black lines give a winter quality to an otherwise gentle design. © The Christchurch Museum (Dr AgnesMarie Knott, Vienna and Dr Olga's father)



MONDAY 19 AUGUST

TUESDAY 20 AUGUST

WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST

THURSDAY 22 AUGUST

FRIDAY 23 AUGUST

SATURDAY 24 AUGUST

SUNDAY 25 AUGUST

58 *Hetty Doreal* (1941) by Ethel Wilson  
"The day that Mrs Doreal's furniture arrived in Lytton, Exetshire and I had gone to the station to see the train come in."  
A fine 1920s cotton fabric manufactured in the United States; it has a charm and a freshness appropriate for a young girl living in the country but a sophisticated enough that Hetty too could have worn it. In a private collection.



MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER

TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER

THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER

77 *Paula's Gown A-Hunting* (1958) by Penelope Mortimer  
"Ruth Whiting stepped out of the high train directly it stopped. She had collected her parcels together, the ornamental carrier bags and discreet cardboard boxes from Knightshellege, as the train passed the cemetery."  
Saville's, a printed cotton crepe by R. McGowan for Edinburgh Woollen Mill. Which is the number which the designer? Neither looks particularly unusual. © Frances Galloway

# ASH BLONDE

## BY SALLY BENSON

She had never been a golden blonde. When she was young, her hair had been a sort of flat yellow with a greenish tinge, which she had lightened by surreptitious peroxide rinses. Yet, like all women whose hair is the slightest degree fairer than a light brown, she thought of herself as a blonde, and had acted accordingly. It didn't matter at all to her that she didn't measure up to the popular conception of the type she adopted – she was blonde at heart. She was slender but not willowy; her eyes were small and set rather closely together and their shade of greyish blue did not match the gentian. She went for pastels, and although she reluctantly put aside a yearning to be the stately, buxom blonde type, she did the best she could to make herself a mere slip of a thing. Circumstances helped her. She was an only child, and while her parents lived they treated her with sweet indulgence. Her mother spent hour after hour making exquisite underthings for her. Until they died she was their little Hennie.

She lived on in the big old-fashioned apartment with Annie, the family maid, who lovingly carried on the legend, ironing fine pleats into Hennie's nightdresses and sewing blue bows on them. Annie served her dainty lunches and made cookies

cut in heart shapes, she reminded her to wear her galoshes on rainy days and made her drink hot milk at night; she made embroidered sachets scented with violet for Hennie's bureau drawers and fed the two canaries, telling Hennie she was like a small, yellow bird herself. On the days when the girls descended upon Hennie for tea, Annie made countless little sandwiches of watercress, cream cheese, and ginger, and tiny cupcakes with pale-pink icing. There was something about Hennie's apartment that made the stout, middle-aged women feel young again. It was so exactly as it had always been when their club had met there after school. And Hennie seemed the same, the youngest of the crowd, the smallest, the daintiest, and the silliest.

They didn't notice that she had grown thinner and thinner. Her movements were still quick, but they had lost the darting, birdlike quality she affected and had become fluttering and hesitant. Yet she had never felt the passage of time. Year after year she did the same things, selecting her clothes with the same fastidiousness, going daily throughout the winter to extension courses at Columbia University, where she sat in the classrooms taking notes, listening with a sort of blank intensity.

Once a week she took the Madison Avenue bus downtown, to have her hair done. This was one thing she had never allowed Annie to do for her. Even her mother had not known about the peroxide rinses, or, if she had known, she had never mentioned them. And although permanent waves and finger waves had long been in common use, Hennie still had her hair waved with an iron.

Friday was the day set aside for her hair, and this Friday in November was cold, grey and drizzling. It was pleasant to walk into the warmth of the beauty parlour and be shown to her own particular booth, where Miss Elsie was waiting. Miss Elsie was plump and dark and efficient, and when Hennie came into the booth she discreetly pulled the curtains closed. They had a silent agreement that Miss Hennie's rinse was not to be mentioned unless absolutely necessary and was then to be referred to as 'your softener'.

Hennie took off her coat, put it on a hanger and sat down in the leather chair, which faced a big mirror and the washbasin. There was a bright light overhead. Her nose looked pinched and red from the cold and her hair under the white glare looked very grey. As the rinse was not a dye, it always faded towards the end of the week. Miss Elsie felt Hennie's limp curls with an experienced

hand. She ran a comb through them until they hung down low on Hennie's neck. 'How do you like that effect?' she asked.

Hennie frowned into the mirror. Her hair fell forward and softened the lines of her face and neck. 'What do you think?' she asked.

'I like it,' Miss Elsie told her positively. 'Look, I could put the curls in tight and then fluff them out when I comb them and give you the effect of a long bob. A long bob is very youthful, and it suits you.'

'Very well,' Hennie said. She leaned back and closed her eyes.

It was two hours before her hair was done, and she felt rested and refreshed. The clean curls were soft against her neck and her cheeks were flushed from the heat of the room.

'There now,' Miss Elsie said with satisfaction. 'You look lovely. And your hair's getting to be a real ash blonde.'

'Ash blonde,' Hennie repeated.

'Well! Quite a fashionable shade. Almost the next thing to a platinum blonde.'

'Better,' Miss Elsie assured her.

'Platinum blondes are out. Definitely.'

Out in the street, Hennie walked briskly to the bus. It was still drizzling and she held her umbrella close to her head as she tripped along. Her hair, bobbing under her hat, gave her a carefree feeling and she shook her head so that the curls hung forward around her face.

The bus was crowded and she edged her way to the rear and stood with her umbrella over her arm, hanging to the back of one of the seats. Looking down, she saw a young girl sitting on the aisle. The girl wore a small felt hat and a raincoat buttoned tight around her chin, and her hair hung to her shoulders. It was wet from the rain and it was ash blonde. Hennie smiled to herself. She threw her shoulders back and stood erect, swaying with the movement of the bus. Her own raincoat was a soft, transparent rose, and she thought with satisfaction of her tiny feet in their snug galoshes. It was the day the girls would be over for tea, and she wondered what they would think of her new long bob.

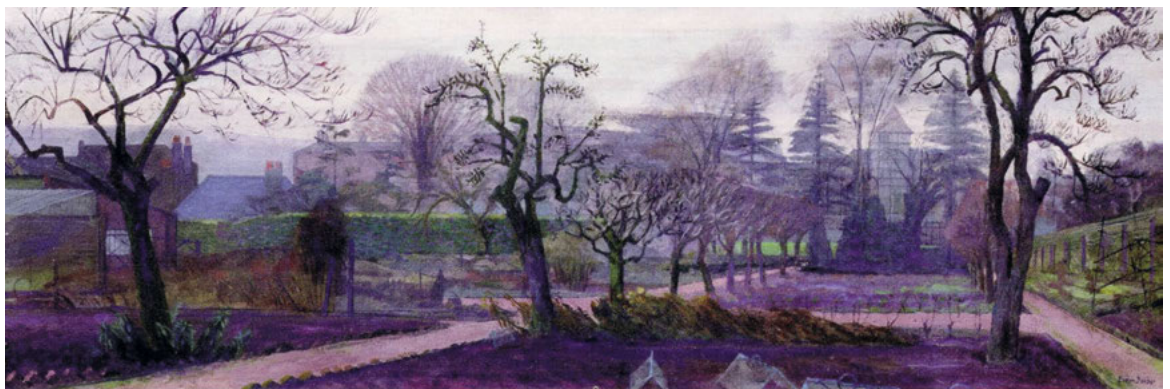
She glanced again at the young girl, taking in every detail of her costume. Really, she thought, we look quite alike, except that her raincoat is blue.

The bus came to a sudden stop and Hennie took a quick step forward to steady herself. She bumped against the young girl, who looked up and smiled. Hennie smiled back and shook her head in merry apology. Once more she felt the curls, soft and comforting against her face.

'Oh!' the young girl murmured. 'I'm sorry.'

She arose and motioned Hennie toward her seat. For a moment Hennie stared at her blankly, not understanding. Then, catching the approving glance of the woman who sat near the window, she knew. She hurriedly slid into the seat and her cheeks flushed. 'Thank you,' she said coldly.

*First published in The New Yorker on 4 November 1939 and in Women and Children First (1943) by Sally Benson.*



*'Winter Garden' Evelyn Dunbar c. 1929-37 © Tate/PCF*



# A 1934 REVIEW OF HARRIET

We are often asked why we publish some titles and not others, and one reply is that 'it's all in the writing'. In this review in *The Spectator* on January 19th 1934 the critic Herbert Read compared Miss Mitchell's new book very unfavourably to Elizabeth Jenkins's *Harriet* – because of the way it was written:

The first of these novels bears the label 'The Choice of the Book Society'; the second a similar label which reads 'Recommended by the Book Society.' Presumably, therefore, the distinguished committee of critics who determine the choice of the Book Society considered these two novels together and decided that *A Warning to Wantons* was better than *Harriet*. I should very much like to know by what obscure reasoning they came to this decision, for by every standard that I can conceive, *Harriet* is immeasurably the better book. It is written in a better style, it is admirably constructed, it is absolutely convincing in its psychology and it is intensely dramatic; whereas *A Warning to Wantons* is badly written, loosely constructed, preposterous in its psychology and fundamentally boring. The only possibility left is that the choice of the Book Society is determined by other than literary standards – by, shall we say, a gambling presentiment of what the public will like; the public, in their opinion, being an emotionally starved and half-

educated section of humanity, avid for any type of sentimental romance. If this is the policy of the Book Society, it is a pity that distinguished critics such as Mr. Hugh Walpole should give it the authority of their names, thereby corrupting, on an extensive scale, public literary standards.

By way of substantiating the criticisms I have made against *A Warning to Wantons*, I will quote an example of the stilted prose in which the whole book is written: 'Though so far imbued with what was due to Kardak and himself – for money was a necessity, and his ancestral estate though large was poor – as to marry an Argentine heiress, he considered he had only received the reward due to virtue, when two years later the lady died bequeathing him her fortune and an heir, this action of hers being to his mind her only one in unquestioned good taste.'

It is hardly possible to agree with the blurb in describing this as 'prose of sheer beauty' and it may seem that I attach too much importance to this question of style, that it is a technical matter of no great interest to the average novel reader. Actually, however, the style of a book is an index to all its other qualities, and Miss Mitchell's prose is a perfect reflector of her crude psychology and incorrigible sentimentality. A romantic setting can be justified, and fantasy is a legitimate alternative

to realism; but fantasy and even romance must give the illusion of its own laws of being. Miss Mitchell's heroine is merely the embodiment of a false romanticism, exhibiting a coy eroticism.

*Harriet* is the reconstruction of an historical event – the Penge murder case of 1875. With some slight adaptation of the circumstances, Miss Jenkins proceeds to reconstruct the motives which led four apparently normal people to commit one of the most cruel and disgusting crimes of the last century. She is perfectly successful. The victim, a young woman of means, is a credible and pathetic figure, and Lewis Oman, the principal villain, a masterly re-creation. It is not a pleasant story – neither is *King Lear*; but the unpleasantness is sublimated in the art, justified by the tragic atmosphere. Miss Jenkins's style has the rare quality of implying more than it states; it is somehow invested with an emotional overtone. Only towards the end of the book does the author seem to falter; the trial of the murderers is related in a summary and disjointed manner inconsistent with the general design of the book. I think something more or something less was needed, either a brief impassive statement, or a fuller treatment on the scale of the rest of the book. But this is a minor fault in an impressive work of art.

# LASKI'S LITTLE BOYS LOST

Being a lover of books and beautiful things, wrote the journalist Annabel Walker in a recent edition of *Slightly Foxed*, my teenage daughter usually discovers a Persephone book in the contents of her Christmas stocking. Last year, it was *Little Boy Lost* by Marghanita Laski. She read it almost immediately and then, appraising it and me with shrewd enthusiasm, said: 'This is a very good book and you'll love it.' She was right on both counts.

*Little Boy Lost* is the story of an English poet who, having lost his Parisian wife and infant son in the Second World War, hears that the child may still be alive and returns to France afterwards in search of proof. An acute psychological study, as well as a tale of secrets and searches, it was first published in 1949 and, thanks to Persephone, reprinted in 2002; but how such an accomplished and gripping novel managed to achieve 'neglected' status in the intervening 53 years is a mystery.

Marghanita Laski's style mixes traditional storytelling techniques – a mysterious disappearance, a romance tragically concluded, an enigmatic night-time visitor and a superbly atmospheric setting – with a view of the affair almost entirely from the perspective of the protagonist, Hilary Wainwright. His state of mind, his mental debates, his private

reactions to the people and situations he encounters, are part of the narrative. You might imagine that this would result in many slow, reflective passages but in Laski's taut economical prose it creates an immediacy that drives the story along.

Hilary is not a particularly likeable character. Having heard that Lisa, his wife of only a few years, has been murdered by the Gestapo for her work with an escape organisation, he guards his grief and disappointment bitterly. He has convinced himself that he has been too badly wounded emotionally to risk exposure to further pain, and that pride and self-pity are a justifiable response to the blow Fate has dealt him. He believes his son to have been irretrievably lost in the process of being concealed shortly before Lisa's arrest, and embarks on a search after the war out of a sense of obligation to the Frenchman, Pierre, who has offered to help.

Pierre is the first of a number of characters in the book whose outlook and principles begin to undermine Hilary's own priggish certitudes. A survivor of the French Resistance, he seems in many ways a suitable companion in Paris (though the Englishman believes him to be his intellectual inferior), just as, later on in the provincial town Hilary visits, the elderly Madame Mercatel and her schoolteacher

son make him feel at ease in their cultured, elegant home. But his patronising assumptions about their limitations are quickly shaken: Pierre has an optimism that Hilary envies, while Bernard Mercatel, a teacher at the Sorbonne before the war, is content despite living quietly in obscurity. Hilary's reaction on hearing this is typical of the way in which Laski reveals the impact his experiences in France have on him: "‘But?’" began Hilary, and stopped... Automatically he found himself deciding that Monsieur Mercatel could not be as intelligent as he had supposed, that he must be a man who was good on his subject and negligible outside it.'

A conversation with the perceptive Madame Mercatel leaves Hilary with the uneasy feeling that he has unwittingly revealed himself to be in some way morally inadequate and that he has never truly understood the relationship he had with his wife. He is a long way from the safety of his London flat and his debates with himself become more urgent with each visit to the orphanage that is home to the boy who might be his son, as he runs the gauntlet of nuns whose priorities are so clear, and whose motives are so uncluttered by moral ambivalence. More than once, his encounters prompt the thought that this story is about more than one lost boy.

The impression of France that emerges from this story is not the charming, cultured, picturesque place in every Francophile's mind. Hilary considers France the most civilised country in the world. But the Paris he finds on his return in 1945 is a place of shattered buildings, makeshift bridges and cafés without butter and milk. The unidentified town, fifty miles from Paris, to which Hilary goes in search of his son, is vivid in its ruination. And Marghanita Laski is forthright about what she clearly felt to be the moral depravity of the black market that prospered then.

In the third and main part of the book, entitled 'The Ordeal', Hilary's selfishness and

moral equivocation spar with his ability, albeit suppressed, to feel pity and, at a deeper and even more suppressed level, love. The focus of this debate is Jean, the 6-year-old boy in the orphanage who may or may not be his son, and the debate is all the more agonised for this reason: that no one can provide proof one way or the other. The boy was parted from his mother before he could form lasting memories of her, and has been in the orphanage for as long as he can remember.

The exchanges between Hilary and Jean are delicately observed and arouse aching compassion. The man who has become used to caring only about himself must carefully consider every word he addresses

to Jean, in order to gain the trust of this sensitive, deprived and institutionalised child and try to decide whether he is his son. Sometimes he strikes the right note, occasionally he is horribly cruel. He is attracted by the idea of becoming a father and receiving the affection of a child; then he is repelled by something the child does or says; and all the while he is terrified of pity catapulting him into a situation he may regret. The final pages of the book are too enthralling to be revealed here and, though a re-reading of a novel can never capture the thrill of discovery first time round, I've enjoyed reading *Little Boy Lost* so much for this piece that I immediately reread it.

© Annabel Walker



'Refugees (bomb shelter)' 1939 Rosemary Rutherford (1912-72) gouache © Sim Fine Art/the artist's estate.



# THE PERSEPHONE 100

1. **William – an Englishman** by Cicely Hamilton Prize-winning 1919 novel about the effect of WW1 on a socialist clerk and a suffragette. Preface: Nicola Beauman
2. **Mariana** by Monica Dickens This funny, romantic first novel, which came out in 1940, describes a young girl's life in the 1930s. Preface: Harriet Lane
3. **Someone at a Distance** by Dorothy Whipple 'A very good novel indeed' (*Spectator*) about the destruction of a formerly happy 1950s marriage. Preface: Nina Bawden, R4 'Book at Bedtime' 2008
4. **Fidelity** by Susan Glaspell 1915 novel by a Pulitzer-winning writer brilliantly describing the long-term consequences of a girl in Iowa running off with a married man. Preface: Laura Godwin
5. **An Interrupted Life** by Etty Hillesum From 1941–3 a woman in Amsterdam, 'the Anne Frank for grown-ups', wrote diaries and letters: they are among the great documents of our time. Preface: Eva Hoffman
6. **The Victorian Chaise-longue** by Marghanita Laski A 'little jewel of horror': 'Melly' lies on a chaise-longue in the 1950s and wakes as 'Milly' eighty years before. Preface: PD James
7. **The Home-Maker** by Dorothy Canfield Fisher Ahead of its time 'remarkable and brave 1924 novel about being a house-husband' (Carol Shields). Preface: Karen Knox
8. **Good Evening, Mrs Craven: the Wartime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes** Superbly written short stories, first published in *The New Yorker* from 1938–44. Five of them were read on R4 twice, and on R7. Preface: Gregory LeStage Also available as a Persephone audiobook (unabridged) read by Lucy Scott
9. **Few Eggs and No Oranges** by Vere Hodgson A 600-page diary, written from 1940–45 in Notting Hill Gate, full of acute observation, wit and humanity. Preface: Jenny Hartley
10. **Good Things in England** by Florence White 'One of the great English cookbooks, full of delightful, delicious recipes that actually work.' Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall
11. **Julian Grenfell** by Nicholas Mosley A biography of the First World War poet, and of his mother Ettie Desborough. Preface: the author
12. **It's Hard to be Hip over Thirty and Other Tragedies of Married Life** by Judith Viorst Funny, weary and wise 1960s poems about marriage, children and reality. Preface: the author
13. **Consequences** by EM Delafield By the author of *The Diary of a Provincial Lady*, this 1919 novel is about a girl entering a convent after she fails to marry. Preface: Nicola Beauman
14. **Farewell Leicester Square** by Betty Miller Novel (by Jonathan Miller's mother) about a Jewish film-director and 'the discreet discrimination of the bourgeoisie' (*Guardian*). Preface: Jane Miller
15. **Tell It to a Stranger** by Elizabeth Berridge Funny, observant and bleak 1947 short stories, twice in the *Evening Standard* bestseller list. Preface: AN Wilson
16. **Saplings** by Noel Streatfeild A novel by the well-known author of *Ballet Shoes*, about the destruction of a family during WW2; a R4 ten-part serial. Afterword: Jeremy Holmes
17. **Marjory Fleming** by Oriol Malet A deeply empathetic novel about the real life of the Scottish child prodigy who lived from 1803–11; published in France; was a play on Radio Scotland.
18. **Every Eye** by Isobel English An unusual 1956 novel about a girl travelling to Spain, highly praised by Muriel Spark: a R4 'Afternoon Play' in 2004. Preface: Neville Braybrooke
19. **They Knew Mr Knight** by Dorothy Whipple An absorbing 1934 novel about a man driven to committing fraud and what happens to him and his family; a 1943 film. Afterwords: Terence Handley MacMath and Christopher Beauman
20. **A Woman's Place** by Ruth Adam A survey of women's lives from 1900–75, very readably written by a novelist-historian: an overview full of insights. Preface: Yvonne Roberts
21. **Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day** by Winifred Watson A delightful 1938 novel about a governess and a nightclub singer. Read on R4 by Maureen Lipman; now a film with Frances McDormand and Amy Adams. Preface: Henrietta Twycross-Martin Also available as an unabridged Persephone audiobook read by Frances McDormand
22. **Consider the Years** by Virginia Graham Sharp, funny, evocative WW2 poems by Joyce Grenfell's closest friend and collaborator. Preface: Anne Harvey
23. **Reuben Sachs** by Amy Levy A fierce 1880s satire on the London Jewish community by 'the Jewish Jane Austen' who was a friend of Oscar Wilde. Preface: Julia Neuberger
24. **Family Roundabout** by Richmal Crompton By the *William* books author, 1948 family saga contrasting two matriarchs and their very different children. Preface: Juliet Aykroyd
25. **The Montana Stories** by Katherine Mansfield Collects together the short stories written during the author's last year; with a detailed publisher's note and the contemporary illustrations. Five were read on R4 in 2002.
26. **Brook Evans** by Susan Glaspell A very unusual novel, written in the same year as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, about the enduring effect of a love affair on three generations of a family.

- 27. The Children who Lived in a Barn by Eleanor Graham** A 1938 classic about five children fending for themselves; starring the unforgettable hay-box. Preface: Jacqueline Wilson
- 28. Little Boy Lost by Marghanita Laski** Novel about a father's search for his son in France in late 1945, chosen by the *Guardian's* Nicholas Lezard as his 2001 Paperback Choice. A 'Book at Bedtime' on R4 read by Jamie Glover. Afterword: Anne Sebba
- 29. The Making of a Marchioness by Frances Hodgson Burnett** A very entertaining 1901 novel about the ensuing melodrama after a governess marries a Marquis. A R4 Classic Serial in 2007. Preface: Isabel Raphael, Afterword: Gretchen Gerzina. Also available as a Persephone audiobook (unabridged) read by Lucy Scott
- 30. Kitchen Essays by Agnes Jekyll** Witty and useful essays about cooking, with recipes, published in *The Times* and reprinted as a book in 1922. 'One of the best reads outside Elizabeth David' wrote gastropoda.com
- 31. A House in the Country by Jocelyn Playfair** An unusual and very interesting 1944 novel about a group of people living in the country during WW2. Preface: Ruth Gorb
- 32. The Carlyles at Home by Thea Holme** A 1965 mixture of biography and social history which very entertainingly describes Thomas and Jane Carlyle's life in Chelsea.
- 33. The Far Cry by Emma Smith** A beautifully written 1949 novel about a young girl's passage to India: a great Persephone favourite. R4 'Book at Bedtime' in 2004. Preface: author
- 34. Minnie's Room: The Peacetime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes 1947–1965: Second volume of short stories first published in *The New Yorker*, previously unknown in the UK.**
- 35. Greenery Street by Denis Mackail** A delightful, very funny 1925 novel about a young couple's first year of married life in a (real) street in Chelsea. Preface: Rebecca Cohen
- 36. Lettice Delmer by Susan Miles** A unique 1920s novel in verse describing a girl's stormy adolescence and path to redemption; much admired by TS Eliot. A novel in verse sounds unappealing – but we highly recommend this book.
- 37. The Runaway by Elizabeth Anna Hart** A Victorian novel for children and grown-ups, illustrated by Gwen Raverat. 'There never was a happier book' (*Country Life*, 1936). Afterwords: Anne Harvey, Frances Spalding.
- 38. Cheerful Weather for the Wedding by Julia Strachey** A funny and quirky 1932 novella by a niece of Lytton Strachey, praised by Virginia Woolf. Preface: Frances Partridge. Also available as an unabridged Persephone audiobook read by Miriam Margolyes
- 39. Manja by Anna Gmeyner** A 1938 German novel, newly translated, about five children conceived on the same night in 1920, and their lives until the Nazi takeover. Preface: Eva Ibbotson (the author's daughter)
- 40. The Priory by Dorothy Whipple** A much-loved 1939 novel about a family, upstairs and downstairs, living in a large country house. 'Warm, witty and realistic' (Hatchards). Preface: David Conville
- 41. Hostages to Fortune by Elizabeth Cambridge** 'Deals with domesticity without being in the least bit cosy' (Harriet Lane, *Observer*): a remarkable fictional portrait of a doctor's family in rural Oxfordshire in the 1920s.
- 42. The Blank Wall by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding** 'The top suspense writer of them all' (Chandler). A 1947 thriller about a mother shielding her daughter from a blackmailer. Filmed as *The Reckless Moment* (1949) and *The Deep End* (2001); a R4 serial in 2006.
- 43. The Wise Virgins by Leonard Woolf** This wise and witty 1914 novel contrasts the bohemian Virginia and Vanessa with Gwen, the girl next door in 'Richstead' (Putney). Preface: Lyndall Gordon
- 44. Tea with Mr Rochester by Frances Towers** Magical, unsettling 1949 stories, a surprise favourite, that are unusually beautifully written; read on R4 in 2003 and 2006. Preface: Frances Thomas
- 45. Good Food on the Aga by Ambrose Heath** A 1933 cookery book written for Aga owners which can be used by anyone; with numerous illustrations by Edward Bawden.
- 46. Miss Ranskill Comes Home by Barbara Euphan Todd** An unsparing, wry 1946 novel: Miss Ranskill is shipwrecked and returns to a completely changed wartime England. Preface: Wendy Pollard
- 47. The New House by Lettice Cooper** 1936 portrayal of the day a family moves into a new house, and the resulting adjustments and tensions. Preface: Jilly Cooper
- 48. The Casino by Margaret Bonham** Short stories by a 1940s writer with a unique voice and dark sense of humour; they were read on BBC Radio 4 in 2004 and 2005. Preface: Cary Bazalgette
- 49. Bricks and Mortar by Helen Ashton** An excellent 1932 novel by a very popular pre- and post-war writer, chronicling the life of a hard-working, kindly London architect and his wife over thirty-five years.
- 50. The World that was Ours by Hilda Bernstein** An extraordinary memoir that reads like a novel of the events before and after the 1964 Rivonia Trial. Mandela was given a life sentence but the Bernsteins escaped to England. Preface and Afterword: the author
- 51. Operation Heartbreak by Duff Cooper** A soldier misses going to war – until the end of his life. 'The novel I enjoyed more than any other in the immediate post-war years' (Nina Bawden). Afterword: Max Arthur
- 52. The Village by Marghanita Laski** This 1952 comedy of manners describes post-war readjustments in village life when love ignores the class barrier. Afterword: Juliet Gardiner
- 53. Lady Rose and Mrs Memmary by Ruby Ferguson** A 1937 novel about Lady Rose, who inherits a great house,

marries well – and then meets the love of her life on a park bench. A great favourite of the Queen Mother. Preface: Candia McWilliam

**54. They Can't Ration These by Vicomte de Mauduit** A 1940 cookery book about 'food for free', full of excellent (and now timely) recipes.

**55. Flush by Virginia Woolf** A light-hearted but surprisingly feminist 1933 'life' of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spaniel, 'a little masterpiece of comedy' (*TLS*). A 'Book at Bedtime' on BBC R4. Preface: Sally Beaman

**56. They Were Sisters by Dorothy Whipple** A 1943 novel by this wonderful writer, contrasting three different marriages. Preface: Celia Brayfield

**57. The Hopkins Manuscript by RC Sherriff** What might happen if the moon crashed into the earth in 1946: a 1939 novel 'written' by a delightful anti-hero, 'Mr Hopkins'. Preface: Michael Moorcock, Afterword: George Gamow

**58. Hetty Dorval by Ethel Wilson** First novel (1947) set in the beautiful landscape of British Columbia; a young girl is befriended by a beautiful and selfish 'Menace' – but is she? Afterword: Northrop Frye

**59. There Were No Windows by Norah Hoult** A touching and funny novel, written in 1944, about an elderly woman with memory loss living in Kensington during the blitz. Afterword: Julia Briggs

**60. Doreen by Barbara Noble** A 1946 novel about a child who is evacuated to the country during the war. Her mother regrets it; the family that takes her in wants to keep her. Preface: Jessica Mann

**61. A London Child of the 1870s by Molly Hughes** A classic memoir, written in 1934, about an 'ordinary, suburban Victorian family' in Islington, a great favourite with all ages. Preface: Adam Gopnik

**62. How to Run Your Home Without Help by Kay Smallshaw** A 1949 manual for the newly servantless housewife full of advice that is

historically interesting, useful nowadays and, as well, unintentionally funny. Preface: Christina Hardyment

**63. Princes in the Land by Joanna Cannan** A novel published in 1938 about a daughter of the aristocracy who marries an Oxford don; her three children fail to turn out as she had anticipated.

**64. The Woman Novelist and Other Stories by Diana Gardner** Short stories written in the late 1930s and early 1940s that are witty, sharp and with an unusual undertone. Preface: Claire Gardner

**65. Alas, Poor Lady by Rachel Ferguson** A 1937 novel, polemical but intensely readable, about the unthinking cruelty with which Victorian parents gave birth to daughters without anticipating any future for them apart from marriage.

**66. Gardener's Nightcap by Muriel Stuart** A 1938 pot pourri: a huge variety of miniature essays on gardening – such as *Dark Ladies* (fritillary), *Better Gooseberries*, *Phlox Failure* – which will be enjoyed by all gardeners, keen or lukewarm.

**67. The Fortnight in September by RC Sherriff** Another novel by the author of *Journey's End*, and of *The Hopkins Manuscript*, Persephone Book No. 57, about a family on holiday in Bognor in 1931; a quiet masterpiece.

**68. The Expendable Man by Dorothy B Hughes** A 1963 thriller about a young doctor in Arizona which encapsulates the social, racial and moral tensions of the time. By the author of *In a Lonely Place*. Afterword: Dominic Power

**69. Journal of Katherine Mansfield** The husband of the great short story writer (cf. *The Montana Stories*, Persephone Book No. 25) assembled this journal from unposted letters, scraps of writing etc, to give a unique portrait of a woman writer.

**70. Plats du Jour by Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd** A 1957 cookery book which was a bestseller at the time and a pioneering work for British cooks. The line drawings and the

endpapers are by David Gentleman.

**71. The Shuttle by Frances Hodgson Burnett** A 1907 page-turner about Rosalie Vanderpoel, an American heiress who marries an English aristocrat, whose beautiful and enterprising sister Bettina sets out to rescue her. Preface: Anne Sebba

**72. House-Bound by Winifred Peck** This 1942 novel describes an Edinburgh woman deciding, radically, to run her house without help and do her own cooking; the war is in the background and foreground. Afterword: Penelope Fitzgerald

**73. The Young Pretenders by Edith Henrietta Fowler** An 1895 novel for adults and children about Babs, who lives with her uncle and aunt and has not yet learnt to dissemble. Preface: Charlotte Mitchell

**74. The Closed Door and Other Stories by Dorothy Whipple** Ten short stories drawn from the three collections (now extremely hard to find) that Dorothy Whipple published during her lifetime. Read on BBC R4 in 2007.

**75. On the Other Side by Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg: Letters to my Children from Germany 1940–46.** Written in Hamburg but never sent, these letters provide a crucial counterpoint to *Few Eggs and No Oranges*. Preface: Ruth Evans

**76. The Crowded Street by Winifred Holtby** A 1924 novel about Muriel's attempts to escape from small-town Yorkshire, and her rescue by Delia, alias Vera Brittain. Preface: Marion Shaw

**77. Daddy's Gone A-Hunting by Penelope Mortimer** This 1958 novel is about the 'captive wives' of the pre-women's liberation era, bored and lonely in suburbia. Preface: Valerie Grove

**78. A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914–39 by Nicola Beauman** A mixture of literary criticism and historical evocation, first published in 1983, about the women writers of the inter-war period.



**79. Round About a Pound a Week** by Maud Pember Reeves A study of working-class life in Lambeth in the early years of the C20th that is witty, readable, poignant and fascinating – and relevant nowadays. Preface: Polly Toynbee

**80. The Country Housewife's Book** by Lucy H Yates A useful 1934 book, suggested to us by the owner of a working farm, on topics such as the storeroom and larder, using garden produce, and game.

**81. Miss Buncle's Book** by DE Stevenson A middle-aged woman writes a novel, as 'John Smith', about the village she lives in. A delightful and funny 1934 book by an author whose work sold in millions. Preface: Aline Templeton

**82. Amours de Voyage** by Arthur Hugh Clough A novel in verse, set in Rome in 1849, funny and beautiful and profound, and extraordinarily modern in tone. Preface: Julian Barnes

**83. Making Conversation** by Christine Longford. An amusing, unusual 1931 novel about a girl growing up which is in the vein of *Cold Comfort Farm* and *Persephone Book No. 38 Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*. Preface: Rachel Billington

**84. A New System of Domestic Cookery** by Mrs Rundell An 1806 cookbook – we have reprinted the 1816 edition in facsimile – which is long, detailed and fascinating. Preface: Janet Morgan

**85. High Wages** by Dorothy Whipple Another novel by Persephone's bestselling writer about a girl setting up a dress shop just before the First World War. Preface: Jane Brocket

**86. To Bed with Grand Music** by Marghanita Laski A couple are separated by the war. She is serially unfaithful, a quite new take on 'women in wartime'. Preface: Juliet Gardiner

**87. Dimanche and Other Stories** by Irène Némirovsky Ten short stories by the author of *Suite Française*, written between 1934 and 1942. 'Luminous, extraordinary, stunning' was the verdict of reviewers.

**88. Still Missing** by Beth Gutcheon A 1981 novel about a woman whose six year-old son sets off on his own for school and does not return. But his mother never gives up hope...

**89. The Mystery of Mrs Blencarrow** by Mrs Oliphant Two 1880s novellas about women shockingly, and secretly, abandoned by their husbands, that were favourites of Penelope Fitzgerald. Afterword: Merryn Williams

**90. The Winds of Heaven** by Monica Dickens This 1955 novel by the author of *Mariana* is about a widow with three rather unsympathetic daughters who eventually finds happiness. Afterword: AS Byatt

**91. Miss Buncle Married** by DE Stevenson A hugely enjoyable sequel to *Miss Buncle's Book* (No. 81): Miss Buncle's marries and moves to a new village. Afterword: Fiona Bevan

**92. Midsummer Night in the Workhouse** by Diana Athill Twelve short stories, mostly written in the late 1950s, by the celebrated editor and memoir writer. Preface: the author. **Six of the stories are available read by the author as a Persephone audiobook.**

**93. The Sack of Bath** by Adam Fergusson A 1973 polemic, with black and white photographs, raging at the destruction of Bath's C18th artisan terraced housing. Preface: the author

**94. No Surrender** by Constance Maud A 1911 novel centring on the struggle for the vote by a mill girl and the aristocrat who becomes her friend. Preface: Lydia Felgett

**95. Greenbanks** by Dorothy Whipple A 1932 novel by our most popular author about a family and, in particular, a grandmother and her granddaughter. Afterword: Charles Lock.

**96. Dinners for Beginners** by Rachel and Margaret Ryan A 1934 cookery book for the novice cook telling her everything in exacting and rather punishing detail: eye-opening and useful.

**97. Harriet** by Elizabeth Jenkins A brilliant but disquieting 1934 novel about the 1877 murder of Harriet Staunton. Afterword: Rachel Cooke

**98. A Writer's Diary** by Virginia Woolf Extracts from the diaries, covering the years 1918-41, selected by Leonard Woolf in 1953 in order to show his late wife in the act of writing. Preface: Lyndall Gordon

**99. Patience** by John Coates A hilarious 1953 novel about a 'happily married' Catholic mother of three in St John's Wood who falls 'improperly in love'. Preface: Maureen Lipman

**100. The Persephone Book of Short Stories** Thirty stories to celebrate our 100th book: ten by Persephone authors, ten from the last decade's Biannuals and ten that are new.



*'The Basket of Fruit' 1925 Mark Gertler oil on canvas © Tate*

# THE OTHER WIFE BY COLETTE

‘Table for two? This way, Monsieur, Madame, there is still a table next to the window, if Madame and Monsieur would like a view of the bay.’

Alice followed the maitre d’.

‘Oh, yes. Come on, Marc, it’ll be like having lunch on a boat on the water . . .’

Her husband caught her by passing his arm under hers. ‘We’ll be more comfortable over there.’

‘There? In the middle of all those people? I’d much rather . . .’

‘Alice, please.’

He tightened his grip in such a meaningful way that she turned around. ‘What’s the matter?’

‘Shh . . .’ he said softly, looking at her intently, and led her toward the table in the middle.

‘What is it, Marc?’

‘I’ll tell you, darling. Let me order lunch first. Would you like the shrimp? Or the eggs in aspic?’

‘Whatever you like, you know that.’

They smiled at one another, wasting the precious time of an over-worked maitre d’, stricken with a kind of nervous dance, who was standing next to them, perspiring.

‘The shrimp,’ said Marc. ‘Then the eggs and bacon. And the cold chicken with a romaine salad. Fromage blanc? The house speciality? We’ll go with the speciality. Two strong coffees. My chauffeur will be having lunch also, we’ll be leaving again at two o’clock. Some cider? No, I don’t

trust it . . . Dry champagne.’

He sighed as if he had just moved an *armoire*, gazed at the colourless midday sea, at the pearly white sky, then at his wife, whom he found lovely in her little Mercury hat with its large, hanging veil.

‘You’re looking well, darling. And all this blue water makes your eyes look green, imagine that! And you’ve put on weight since you’ve been travelling . . . It’s nice up to a point, but only up to a point!’

Her firm, round breasts rose proudly as she leaned over the table.

‘Why did you keep me from taking that place next to the window?’

Marc Seguy never considered lying. ‘Because you were about to sit next to someone I know.’

‘Someone I don’t know?’

‘My ex-wife.’

She couldn’t think of anything to say and opened her blue eyes wider.

‘So what, darling? It’ll happen again. It’s not important.’

The words came back to Alice and she asked, in order, the inevitable questions. ‘Did she see you? Could she see that you saw her? Will you point her out to me?’

‘Don’t look now, please, she must be watching us . . . The lady with brown hair, no hat, she must be staying in this hotel. By herself, behind those children in red. . .’

‘Yes, I see.’

Hidden behind some broad-brimmed beach hats, Alice was able to look at the woman who, fifteen months ago, had still been her husband’s wife.

‘Incompatibility,’ Marc said. ‘Oh, I mean . . . total incompatibility! We divorced like well-bred people, almost like friends, quietly, quickly. And then I fell in love with you, and you really wanted to be happy with me. How lucky we are that our happiness doesn’t involve any guilty parties or victims!’

The woman in white, whose smooth, lustrous hair reflected the light from the sea in azure patches, was smoking a cigarette with her eyes half closed. Alice turned back toward her husband, took some shrimp and butter, and ate calmly. After a moment’s silence she asked: ‘Why didn’t you ever tell me that she had blue eyes, too?’

‘Well, I never thought about it!’

He kissed the hand she was extending toward the bread basket and she blushed with pleasure. Dusky and ample, she might have seemed somewhat coarse, but the changeable blue of her eyes and her wavy, golden hair made her look like a frail and sentimental blonde. She vowed overwhelming gratitude to her husband. Immodest without knowing it, everything about her bore the overly conspicuous marks of extreme happiness.

They ate and drank heartily, and each thought the other had forgotten the woman in white.

Now and then, however, Alice laughed too loudly, and Marc was careful about his posture, holding his shoulders back, his head up. They waited quite a long time for their coffee, in silence. An incandescent river, the straggled reflection of the invisible sun overhead, shifted slowly across the sea and shone with a blinding brilliance.

'She's still there, you know,' Alice whispered.

'Is she making you uncomfortable? Would you like to have coffee somewhere else?'

'No, not at all! She's the one who must be uncomfortable! Besides, she doesn't exactly seem to be having a wild time, if you could see her . . .'

'I don't have to. I know that look of hers.'

'Oh, was she like that?'

He exhaled his cigarette smoke through his nostrils and knitted his eyebrows. 'Like that? No. To tell you honestly, she wasn't happy with me.'

'Oh, really now!'

'The way you indulge me is so charming, darling . . . It's crazy . . . You're an angel . . . You love me . . . I'm so proud when I see those eyes of yours. Yes, those eyes . . . She . . . I just didn't know how to make her happy, that's all. I didn't know how.'

'She's just difficult!'

Alice fanned herself irritably, and cast brief glances at the woman in white, who was smoking, her head resting against the back of the cane chair, her eyes closed with an air of satisfied lassitude.

Marc shrugged his shoulders

modestly.

'That's the right word,' he admitted. 'What can you do? You have to feel sorry for people who are never satisfied. But we're satisfied . . . Aren't we, darling?'

She did not answer. She was looking furtively, and closely, at her husband's face, ruddy and regular; at his thick hair, threaded here and there with white silk; at his short, well-cared-for hands; and doubtful for the first time, she asked herself, 'What more did she want from

him?'

And as they were leaving, while Marc was paying the bill and asking for the chauffeur and about the route, she kept looking, with envy and curiosity, at the woman in white, this dissatisfied, this difficult, this superior . . .

*This story was written in c.1920 and was translated by Matthew Ward. We found it when a taxi driver told us it was the best story he had ever read.*



*Cafe 1918 by Fujita (1886-1968)*



# 'OLD FRIENDS' A POEM BY JUDITH VIORST

Old Friends. We are very old friends, as in We've known each other so long We knew each other back when we were virgins, Back when we helped each other figure out how far to go, And whether we ought to go there, and with whom, Back when we experimented with hating our parents and loving de Beauvoir and Sartre, Back when we talked, with the same degree of passionate intensity, About eyeliner and the meaning of the universe.



*Barbara Loxton was a South African artist and illustrator who was in Europe as a freelance war correspondent from August 1944 to August 1945. Her daughter Polly will talk about her at a Persephone Lunch on February 14th.*

Old friends, grown up and still friends. We exchanged Our recipes for meat loaf and for marriage, And our remedies for when we messed them up, Assuring each other, over the phone calls or coffee, That though we had screamed at our children we were basically decent mothers, And that though we had gained seven pounds we were basically slim, And that though, at this moment, we most sincerely wished to kill our husbands, we basically didn't. And we talked, between the trips to the zoo and picketing the White House, About eyeliner and the meaning of the universe. Old friends, no-longer-young friends, we held hands Through the midlife crisis, the dark night of the soul, The jawline dividing, like Gaul, into three separate parts, While we kept reminding each other that feeling depressed could be a major growth opportunity, While we kept consulting each other on whether we needed a lover, or face-lift, or master's degree,

While we kept on asking each other whether this was as good as it gets, And was that good enough? While we talked, as time speeded up and our metabolism slowed down, About eyeliner and the meaning of the universe.

Old friends, now almost-old friends. And at last We see what our mothers meant When they boringly said, As long as you have your health, Comforting each other when we dealt with diminishing hair in our most private places, Competing with each other when we bragged of our grandchildren's brains and beauty and charm, Crying with each other in the doctor's office when he broke the news.

How am I going to walk in this world without talking to my friend About eyeliner and the meaning of the universe?

*From Suddenly Sixty and Other Shocks of Later Life (Simon and Schuster) by Judith Viorst, author of It's Hard to be Hip Over Thirty and Other Tragedies of Married Life, Persephone Book No. 12.*

# COLLIER CAMPBELL

**T**he *Persephone Book of Short Stories* has provided our first chance to use a textile designed by **Susan Collier** (1938-2011) and **Sarah Campbell** (b.1946). ‘They pioneered the use of rich colour in home furnishings with designs more akin to Matisse and the Fauves, Alec Walker and the early British modernists’ wrote *Lyn Broster in Text: for the study of textile art design and history* (2002). *She continued*: ‘They challenged the monotonous pattern repeat of the mass market. The result was a succession of fashionable, contemporary British textiles.’

Here are some extracts from a conversation **Susan Collier** and **Sarah Campbell** had with *Lyn Broster* ten years ago:

Susan ‘When I was a small child in Manchester our road was filled with refugees and in their houses they had boxes with embroideries and fabrics and things that were precious to them. I could go into any home and be shown treasures... I was influenced by the Fauves because my parents had a book on Matisse, the word Matisse was in a beautiful blue on the cover.

‘Colour has been essential to me. My mother asked what colour I wanted my table and chair that she had got me for Christmas and I said yellow and red without hesitation. What is important is that she didn’t hesitate in giving it to me in yellow and red. Years later she was a very keen “matcher” – I think it was a thing of the time.

She herself had John Piper curtains. She would take us on the bus to London and she would have swatches in her hand to match up lampshades, rugs and sofa covers. One day she left all the swatches behind, but she said “Oh never mind, Susan will remember them in her head.”

‘I didn’t go to art school but decided to go to Italy and look at painting, and to get the money together to pay for that I worked as a theatrical dresser in the evening. Peter Rice was the designer of the show and at the time I was doing cartoons and paintings. I sent him and his wife Pat Albeck a card that said “Happy Autumn”. I stuck leaves on the card and Peter said to me, “You should meet my wife, she’s a textile designer” [she was best known for her work with Horrockses Fashions during the 1950s] and that’s how I came to work as assistant to Pat Albeck.

‘When I left, I didn’t leave with the idea of becoming a textile designer. I wanted to be a painter

so I decided I would paint for textiles as it was the best way of managing my own life. I decided to start from the top and work my way down: at that time Liberty was the top in my opinion. I designed a collection and went to Liberty, to Gustave Weiner. He understood what I was doing, he was a wonderful mentor to young people. He bought six designs – that was amazing.

‘Knowing that I really wanted to paint I found textiles stuffy and stiff. I found I loved fabric but I couldn’t understand why there wasn’t movement in textiles. I didn’t like the big black lines around things. So I had a lot of opinions about textiles! Pat told me not to sell anything to anybody that they were not going to use. It was very good advice. She said they would put it in a drawer and leave it in there, and that they wouldn’t see you again.’

After Susan sold Liberty her first six designs in 1961 she got more and more work for them.



*Susan Collier and Sarah Campbell 'Kasak' for Liberty's 1977*

‘But by then I had two small children and the work got too much for me. Sarah was about 14 and I used to ring her up and say come and help me. She and I painted, I did work at night when my children were in bed and she just came as a sister to be with me and paint.’

In 1964 Sarah went to Chelsea School of Art to do painting and graphics in the ‘new building’ on Manresa Road (alas recently demolished) – hers was the first year to use it. ‘It had a courtyard at the back with water and a mezzanine with plants and sculptures and casts – it was a dream. It lasted like that for a little while then they had to fill it to bursting with students. They had a Henry Moore in the front courtyard.’

In 1971 Susan became design and colour consultant for all Liberty’s fabrics. ‘When I was appointed there had never been an abstract design in the collection. I went to the chairman

and asked if he had seen or heard of the green plastic furniture at Habitat, and he agreed that I should create fabric to be part of this environment, which gave rise to Bauhaus and other designs. Liberty’s at that time had colour combinations – a brown way, a red way and so on. I wanted it to create colour for moods - very strong, very dark, very light – all in one group, because I thought that is how people lived, an indication of the self, an indication of a state.

‘When Liberty refused to allow Sarah’s name to be associated with our work she went to *Soieries Nouveautes* and did remarkable work for them. However not being together and pooling things did not work for us so after a year I joined her and left Liberty. It was an easy decision as Liberty asked me to assign my copyrights. I refused and left. From about 1978 our names were on the selvedge of *Soieries Nouveautes* cloth.’

In 1979 we set up on our own because we wanted far more control of the printing and the cloth. We wanted to do cloth research and development. I went to Jaeger and Habitat and told them we were setting up our own business and we would be their designers if they would undertake to take the cloth that we designed for them. They would pay for the screen and the art work if they didn’t take the design, otherwise they would take the printed cloth. My offer was acceptable to both companies. We had a turnover of about four million pounds when we had about four people.

‘In 1984 we won the Design Award for Six Views, including Cote d’Azure [which we have used as the second endpaper in *The Persephone Book of Short Stories*]. This made a great difference because it gave us a presence in the market place. It was incredibly clever of the Design Council to realise the value of our work at the time, for after the recession of 1979 there was a turning towards archives (drawing on the past). There was little new design but the Design Council award was given to innovators – so in the design world it was saying “there is a future”. Six Views was not co-ordinated. The colours related across designs but they weren’t a co-ordinated design group. We reaffirmed our strategic decision to build our brand name on our capacity to paint.’



*Susan Collier and Sarah Campbell 'Egyptian Birds' 1974; we sell small paper carrier bags and large notebooks, both in this design, in the shop.*



# UNA MARQUESA AND LA SENORITA BUNCLE

José María Guelbenzu, one of Spain's most respected critics, wrote a review (here translated by Ollie Brock) in *El País* of two Spanish translations of Persephone books newly published by Alba in a series called *Rara Avis*.

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924), the author of two children's classics (*Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *The Secret Garden*), also left us this exquisite story: ***The Making of a Marchioness***. Emily, a Victorian lady's maid, becomes a marchioness when she marries one of the most sought-after widowers in England. Before this happens, we are treated to an excellent description of life in an English country mansion; after that intrigue takes over as wicked inheritors appear and a sense of danger, and well-maintained suspense, dominate the narrative. The key lies in one fact: the reader does not know whether Emily is good because she is stupid or stupid because she is good; but in any case the naivety the author inflicts on her is an additional punishment, so that the contrast between the worry of those she lives among who love her, and the sinister trio trying to get rid of her, produces a melodramatic finale that would not have displeased Wilkie Collins. It even makes one wonder whether the author isn't

throwing the protagonist's rather irritating candour in her face, so that the novel itself may be conveying a much broader concept of goodness through this critique. The chapters about Emily's precarious subsistence in London, both as an impoverished young woman and a beleaguered marchioness, lend a Dickensian note; the novel is very well constructed, and the cleverly described settings display the author's outstanding powers of observation and are replete with delightful adjectives — all of which place the book firmly in the canon of English fiction.

DE Stevenson (1892-1973), a Scot and the niece of RL Stevenson, was a very successful writer in her day. ***Miss Buncle's Book*** is a fantastic story: driven by financial needs, a single woman from a small English village writes a novel describing its daily goings-on, although changing the names. Chance puts it in the hands of a wily editor — a lovely piece of characterisation — who soon turns it into a bestseller. But then the novel is passed from person to person in the village itself, upsetting almost all its inhabitants, who now lie exposed in their wretchedness, mediocrity and hypocrisy. Who is this 'John Smith' on the title page? They deduce that it must be someone

from the village, and an investigation begins, eventually culminating in an acrimonious meeting at the house of one of the community's more dominant women (a masterstroke of high comedy). Inquiries continue while Miss Buncle excitedly writes a second novel that is a continuation of the first. The book is not just a wonderful story and an intelligent *étude de moeurs* but, in its lucidity and sense of humour, it easily transcends the limits of the literature of 'local colour'; it is also an extremely entertaining portrait of a variety of characters — some mean, some innocent, others perfectly sensible — all living together in a little English village. All in all, this is a clear-sighted view of rural English life five years before the Second World War. Furthermore, the writing of the second novel subtly marks out the lines of conflict between reality and fiction: things start to happen in reality which were only waiting for something — perhaps the novel — to give them a little push. The *Rara Avis* catalogue promises some excellent reads which, although not at the very summit of literature, will offer some gentle, attainable and stimulating peaks to climb.

# ABOUT 'THE LOTTERY'

'*The Lottery*' by Shirley Jackson is a short story that is read and studied in schools and universities in America but is very little known in the UK; Shirley Jackson's account of reactions to it will naturally be more interesting to *Persephone* readers after they have read the story in *The Persephone Book of Short Stories*.

On the morning of June 26 1948 I walked down to the post office in our little Vermont town to pick up the mail. I was quite casual about it, as I recall – I opened the box, took out a couple of bills and a letter or two, talked to the postmaster for a few minutes, and left, never supposing that was the last time for months that I was to pick up the mail without an active feeling of panic. By the next week I had had to change my mailbox to the largest in the post office, and casual conversation with the postmaster was out of the question, because he wasn't speaking to me. June 26 1948 was the day *The New Yorker* came out with a story of mine in it.

I had written the story three weeks before, on a bright June morning when summer seemed to have come at last, with blue skies and warm sun and no heavenly signs to warn me that my morning's work was anything but another story. The idea had come to me while I was pushing my daughter up the hill in her stroller – it was, as I say, a warm morning, and the hill was steep,

and beside my daughter the stroller held the day's groceries – and perhaps the effort of that last fifty yards up the hill put an edge to the story, at any rate, I had the idea fairly clearly in my mind when I put my daughter in her playpen and the frozen vegetables in the refrigerator, and writing the story, I found that it went quickly and easily, moving from beginning to end without pause. As a matter of fact, when I read it over later I decided that except for one or two minor corrections, it needed no changes, and the story I finally typed up and sent off to my agent the next day was almost word for word the original draft. This, as any writer of stories can tell you, is not a usual thing. All I know is that when I came to read the story over I felt strongly that I didn't want to fuss with it

My agent did not care for the story but she sent it to *The New Yorker* and about a week after the story had been written I received a telephone call from the fiction editor at *The New Yorker*, it was quite clear that he did not really care for the story, either, but *The New Yorker* was going to buy it. He asked for one change – that the date mentioned in the story be changed to coincide with the date of the issue of the magazine in which the story would appear, and I said of course. He then asked, hesitantly, if I had any particular interpretation of my own for the

story, and wondered if I cared to enlarge upon its meaning. I said no. The editor, he said, thought that the story might be puzzling to some people, and in case anyone telephoned the magazine, as sometimes happened, or wrote in asking about the story, was there anything in particular I wanted them to say? No, I said, nothing in particular; it was just a story I wrote.

I had no more preparation than that... Things began idly enough with a note from a friend on *The New Yorker*. 'Your story has kicked up quite a fuss around the office,' he wrote. I was flattered; it's nice to think that your friends notice what you write. One of the most terrifying aspects of publishing stories and books is the realisation that they are going to be read, and read by strangers. I had never fully realised this before, although I had of course in my imagination dwelt lovingly upon the thought of the millions and millions of people who were going to be uplifted and enriched and delighted by the stories I wrote. It had simply never occurred to me that these millions and millions of people might be so far from being uplifted that they would sit down and write me letters I was downright scared to open; of the 300 odd letters that I received that summer I can count only 13 that spoke kindly to me, and they were mostly from friends.

Even my mother scolded me: 'Dad and I did not care at all for your story in *The New Yorker*,' she wrote sternly; 'it does seem, dear, that this gloomy kind of story is what all you young people think about these days. Why don't you write something to cheer people up?'

By mid-July I had begun to perceive that I was very lucky indeed to be safely in Vermont, where no one in our small town had ever heard of *The New Yorker*, much less read my story. Millions of people, and my mother, had taken a pronounced dislike of me. Curiously, there are three main themes which dominate the letters of that first summer which might be identified as bewilderment, speculation, and plain old-fashioned abuse. In the years since then, during which the story has been anthologised, dramatised, televised, and even – in one completely mystifying transformation – made into a ballet, the tenor of letters I receive has changed. I am addressed more politely, as a rule, and the letters largely confine themselves to questions like what does this story mean? The general tone of the early letters, however, was a kind of wide-eyed, shocked innocence. People at first were not so much concerned with what the story meant; what they wanted to know was where these lotteries were held, and whether they could go there and watch. Listen to these quotations:

(New York) Do such tribunal rituals still exist and if so where?

(Nevada) Although we recognise the story to be fiction is it possible that it is based on fact?

(Maryland) Please let me know if the custom of which you wrote actually exists.

(California) If it actually occurred, it should be documented.

(New York) Is it based on reality? Do these practices still continue in back-country England, the human sacrifice for the rich harvest? It's a

frightening thought.

(Los Angeles) I have read of some queer cults in my time, but this one bothers me.

(A London psychologist) I have received requests for elucidation from English friends and patients. They would like to know if the barbarity of stoning still exists in the USA and in general what the tale is all about and where does the action take place.



Leonid Pasternak (1862-1945) *Assia and Olya* © The Pasternak Trust/Private Collection



# HARRIET DISCUSSED ON R3

**M**atthew Sweet went to Penge with Rachel Cooke, who wrote the *Persephone Afterword*, in order to see the place where Harriet (in *Persephone Book No. 97*) died. Back in the studio the book was discussed on *Night Waves* on BBC Radio 3:

**MS:** Rachel Cooke described Elizabeth Jenkins looking back on the Victorian past from the 1930s. How typical is that attitude of horror and fascination do you think, when these two time zones become aligned?

**Kate Summerscale:** I think that we still have it. I think there is something about Victorian England that does seem like there's a mystery about ourselves that we can solve there; that something set in, some rot or hypocrisy and it is endlessly returned to and fascinating, though in different ways. Reading this novel I was struck, for instance, by how comfortable Elizabeth Jenkins was with all the *minutiae* of the period and it struck me that her mother must have been alive at the time that this went on so there is something about our increasing distance and how much stranger it becomes. The domestic detail is adopted very easily and it's fascinating, a lot about what they ate for instance and how they cooked and of course because starvation is at the heart of this novel, and money, all that is intensely relevant.

**MS:** There's a lot about the domestic interior as well isn't

there, wallpaper, the details of furniture recreated. This is one of the sights upon which this horrified fascination takes place isn't it? She cannot tear her eyes away from this domestic detail.

**Kate Williams:** Yes, this is the most thrilling thing because of course at this point the Victorian home is so sacrosanct, the lady of the house, it's the place where the perfection lies. Outside is the bustling world, inside is the glory and the ideal domesticity of the home, the angel in the house and completely undermines that, there is that horror in privacy, in domesticity, Elizabeth Staunton is shown throughout the novel as very retiring, a good wife, she tries very hard to keep Patrick in very comfortable circumstances and look after the children, at the same time all of them are dragged into creating this domestic horror story.

**MS:** Rachel mentioned the Bloomsbury view of the Victorians. Elizabeth Jenkins was very much in the orbit of Virginia Woolf. How responsible is Woolf for fixing our idea of the Victorian woman?

**Lynda Nead:** I was just thinking of that wonderful chapter in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* when she comes to the Victorian era and she notices a cloud in the sky over London that gets heavier and darker as she moves into the Victorian age...

**MS:** It's like England has become a big damp cabbage isn't it?

**LN:** Yes, and everyone walks

around in couples as if they are glued together and the crinoline becomes the symbol of this in Woolf's eyes, this kind of oppressive repressive society, and I think that whole filter that lies over the Victorians, that Bloomsbury filter of clouds and repression is incredibly influential and it was fascinating to read Elizabeth Jenkins' novel as something which, as you say, isn't quite solidly as full of rejection and loathing as the worst kind of vitriolic anti-Victorianism of the Bloomsbury group but it belongs to that moment very firmly.

**MS:** Do we still see the Victorians through the lens of Bloomsbury?

**KW:** Yes and I think what is fascinating about this book is how it is a 1930s version of the Victorians. Kate Summerscale was talking about how important food is, it is a novel about starvation, about hunger and of course the first scene is when the mother is sitting there with her lovely plum cake and the lovely muffins and then, later, poor Harriet, she misses her crumpet, she misses her chocolate; of course 1934 was a time when England was at its hungriest, there were the Hunger Marches in 1932, thousands of people were starving as a consequence of the Great Depression, thus hunger and the fact that a baby just starves in its room alone and the woman dies of starvation is so pertinent to the 1930s imagination.

**LN:** Yes, I was struck too by how close the 1930s were to the

Victorians. You would have had Victorian figures still present, and Victorian housing, but the strange thing is I think nowadays, it still feels very familiar because we have had so much Victorian reconstruction and representation, I feel as if I know the Victorians really well. I think I would know what to wear if I had to be a Victorian for a day.

**MS:** It's a certain kind of knowledge though isn't? We tend to see the Victorian woman in particular as a kind of victim, as a prisoner of circumstance, when I suppose we can certainly say that in the 19th century there was also a class of woman deeply engaged in political life, the Victorian novel was a largely female enterprise. That doesn't seem to quite match up, does it?

**KS:** No, so there is a continual tension and that is again a reason why we are drawn to it, because we are not really out of that moment of a combination of incipient liberation and yet being trapped by the forms and shapes and representations of the past. I think that was the case then as those forms were taking place so there is always a counter-story to be found in any Victorian novel you read. All of those very powerful images of repression, constraint, women trapped in their domestic lives are always being pulled against and that's what keeps it alive for us and keeps it something we go back to.

**MS:** But we seem compelled to think of the 19th century as an era in which women were peculiarly disadvantaged by the law rather than one in which they

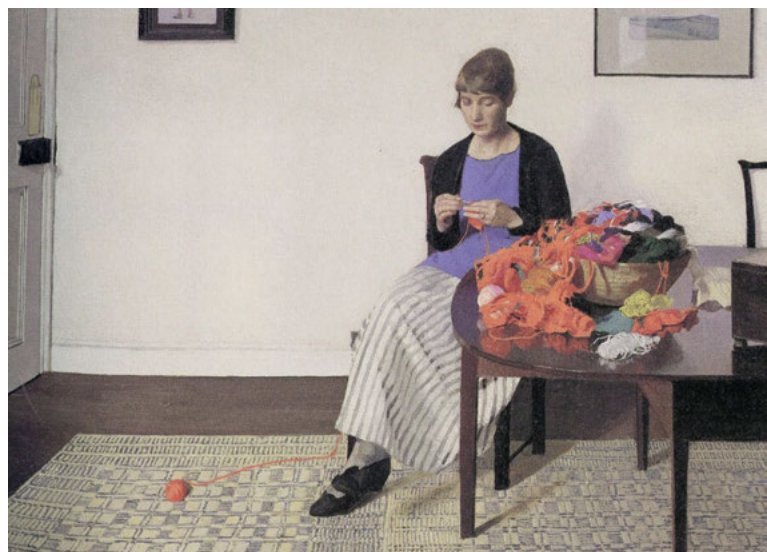
gained a growing number of rights.

**KW:** Yes that is particularly so in *Harriet*: she is the archetypal Victorian woman victim even though she is not the normal woman, as they wouldn't have seen her at the time because she is, as they call her, a natural, she's mentally disabled but at the same time she is locked in the room, she can't speak, she can't say anything, and at the end the decisions are all made for her by men. At the end of the novel we see a panoply of different men who make the decision, it's doctors, it's lawyers, it's judges, she seems to be the ideal passive woman, which I think was also a fascination in 1934 when we have the increase in evil and the only way that we can see that is in the passivity, this is what is coming to us and in the Victorians themselves, so obsessed with the actual criminal mind, with what created evil, here in *Harriet* we see evil is created by just sitting

back and it is this fascinating kind of incremental evil that just keeps happening and they go, 'oh well we might as well just do this actually let's just board up her window and actually let's just not let her come down for dinner' and it grows and grows.

**LN:** But at the same time as she is the archetypal passive victim, the other women in the book are the archetypal passive aggressors who by conforming, in a very narrow way, to the ideals of their time to keep a good home, to be good mothers, to look after family, immediate family, to support the men to keep everything normal and respectable, commit a horrific crime.

**KW:** Yes, that is the chilling bit isn't it, that Alfred needs new clothes so we aren't going to give anything to Harriet and the fascinating play between innocence and knowingness about Alice at the end, is she guilty, isn't she? Did she just do it because she loved a man?



*Harold Harvey Coloured Wools 1919 © Richard Green Galleries/Private Collection*

# OUR BLOGGERS WRITE

‘**A** *Writer’s Diary* is a wonderful and an invaluable book, both for writers and for fans of Virginia Woolf and her work. Her prose style throughout is spectacular. Some of the extracts are more spontaneous than others, but all are written with such marvellous clarity. The exacting seriousness of her work is paramount...each entry is richly written, vibrant, thoughtful and informative, and the piece flows incredibly well as a whole.’ Bookgeeks

‘**T**he *Village* is not only a love story, it is a novel exploring the issues of class and social mobility, family relationships, parental control and the position of women...I thought at first that this book was not as good as *Little Boy Lost*, which I loved, but as I read on I realised the simple direct style of writing contained depth and complexity and by the end I was convinced I was living in the village, among these people at that time ... it is absorbing reading.’ BooksPlease

‘**T**hey *Were Sisters* was recommended as a good place to start as a new reader to Dorothy Whipple and I must say it has whetted my appetite to now read everything she’s written! Masterfully telling the story of the sisters as they move through the challenges of adulthood, Whipple writes a novel that is difficult to put down. I can’t wait to read

another of her novels very soon!’ JottingsWithJasmine

‘**W**ithin the confines of a provocative thriller, in *The Expendable Man* Dorothy Hughes has written a superb evocation of American society on the turning point of change. There is a tangible feeling of temperature and pressure – the effect of this is to produce a metamorphosis in the characters which is as instructive as it is engaging to read. This classic novel appeals on many levels and holds an emotional tone which is bracing, moving and instructive about the creative struggle for goodness, legality, fairness and truth.’ Penwithlit

‘**F**arewell *Leicester Square* is an intriguing novel. Aside from her sensitive exploration of race, Betty Miller’s use of language is exquisite. She is superb at describing the often stifling atmosphere of home for a teenager who doesn’t feel understood or supported, and she is also very good at looking at the nature of family, and how complicated and fraught familial relationships can be...It is a daring and thought-provoking novel in many ways, and it is beautifully and perceptively written with flashes of real artistic brilliance and some wonderful observations...I know it’s going to stay with me for quite some time.’ BookSnob

‘**I**n *How To Run Your Home Without Help* Kay Smallshaw covers just about everything anyone could possibly want to know about keeping house. I loved this book, largely I suspect, because it was a real trip down Memory Lane, reminding me of my own childhood in the 1950s. To anyone younger than me it would probably seem very old-fashioned, but there is a surprising amount of sound advice that could still be followed and adapted to suit modern lifestyles.’ TheBookTrunk

**H**arriet is terrifying. I was gripped by it in a truly horrific way, like the way people can’t help but turn to stare out of the window when they drive past an accident on the motorway. Yes, this is a very upsetting and shocking novel, but it is completely brilliant. It would be so easy to write it badly. Here’s a sensational court case, full of drama – greed, murder ad evil. How easy it would be to overdo it! Elizabeth Jenkins takes an altogether different and masterful approach. Instead of revelling in the horror, she employs a magpie’s eye for finery. The book is as much a fashion magazine as a chronicle of despair. Throughout the novel, everything is rendered in exquisite detail. Appearance is everything.’ EmilyBooks



# AND ANOTHER THING

Our new website has now gone live. It has been quite a performance, made slightly more stressful because we continue to get emails from people saying 'we love your website' and rather wondered why we were bothering! But it was essential. So, for example, the new website has a superb search facility – just type in one word and the book will come up. Everything, including the *Post*, the *Forum* and the *Shopping Cart*, is on our site – previously you had to navigate away from it; also you can 'log in' ie if you have ordered before, when you buy a book you only have to type in your email address and a password and then your name and address comes up.

## EMMA BRIDGEWATER

We are extremely pleased with the Persephone jug and bowl designed and manufactured in a very limited edition by Emma Bridgewater: it is of course decorated with pomegranates, Persephone's fruit. The cost for both the bowl and the jug is £100 and we shall also sell them separately for £50 each. Also, although we do not usually send the Persephone mugs or the other items that we sell in the shop, in this instance, such has been the advance and worldwide interest, we shall be pleased to send both jug and bowl: just telephone or email the shop.

In addition the books are no longer listed in chronological order of publication (1-100) but in categories such as Family and Travel; these have been particularly tricky to sort out but of course you can ignore them and search by author or title, or look through the list from 100 down to 1, but categories seemed the best way of sorting everything. Finally, when you go to a particular book you can read 'Reviews about this book' and 'Blogs'. Please take a look at the new site and tell us what you think.

To celebrate our 100th book we are taking to the road in a 1957 Morris Traveller and, in London, hoping to welcome 100 Persephone readers both to a

party and to the Persephone lecture. We also have The *Persephone One Hundred: Diary for 2013* and the *jug and bowl designed by Emma Bridgewater*.

Next year we bring out: *Heat Lightning* (1932) by the American novelist Helen Hull (1888-1971), and *The Exiles Return* (1956), a novel by Elisabeth de Waal (1899-1991). The former is about a young married woman returning one summer to her Midwestern home. The latter, which has not been published before, is about four exiles' return to Vienna a few years after the war; we publish on March 12th, exactly 75 years after the Anschluss when German troops marched into Austria.



# EVENTS

In celebration of our **100th book**: from *November 3rd-10th* a (rented) 1957 Morris Traveller, packed with Persephone books, will visit 25 bookgroups and bookshops. The route begins at Much Wenlock and continues via Clungunford, Church Stretton, Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bishop's Castle, Ludlow, Hereford, Bristol, Bradford on Avon, Bath, Stow-on-the-Wold and points inbetween; there is still time to ask us to visit.

On **Thursday November 22nd** Nicola Beauman, Publisher Persephone Books, gives the ***Eighth Persephone Lecture*** 'From William to Patience: What is a Persephone Book?' at Swedenborg Hall 20 Bloomsbury Way WC1 at 6.30. Doors open at 6.00 for a glass of wine and cheese straws, and the same afterwards.

On **Tuesday November 27th** there will be a Persephone event at the ***Emma Bridgewater*** factory at Stoke-on-Trent: we shall be shown over the factory, have lunch in the café and see the Design Studio where the limited edition of the Persephone jug and bowl (cf. p. 27) originated.

On **Thursday November 29th** from 6.30-8.30 there will be a party at the October Gallery 24 Old Gloucester Street just south of Queen Square WC1. This free event (for 100 guests) is to thank you for your support over

thirteen years; please ring the shop to put your name on the list.

**Wednesday December 12th** from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. will be our annual ***Christmas Open Day*** when our books are available gift-wrapped free of charge, Jane Brocket will be selling her books



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at a reduced price; mulled wine, canapés and Konditor & Cook mince pies will be served all day.

On **Boxing Day** at 9 p.m. ITV are showing their two hour adaptation of ***The Making of a Marchioness*** (retitled ***The Making of a Lady***) starring Lydia Wilson,

Linus Roache and Joanna Lumley. In celebration there will be a ***Persephone Lunch*** on ***Thursday January 24th*** at which (subject to acting commitments) Lydia Wilson and the producer Stevie Lee will be informally in conversation.

On **Thursday February 14th** Polly Loxton will talk at a ***Lunch*** about her mother Barbara Loxton (cf. p.18), an intrepid freelance war correspondent who was in Europe for a year from '44-'45; she was the subject of a five-part BBC Radio 4 series, ***A Paintbrush Reporter***.

On **Thursday March 7th** from 5.30-8 there will be an informal reading of the play of ***Patience*** first performed in 1955; Anne Harvey will gather together a group of actors, details tbc. Wine and canapés will be served.

On **Tuesday March 12th** at 6.30, 75 years to the day since the Anschluss, Edmund de Waal, author of ***The Hare with Amber Eyes*** (2010) will talk about his grandmother Elisabeth de Waal's book ***The Exiles Return***, Persephone Book No. 102, venue to be confirmed.

All the events cost £20; the ***Party*** is free – let us know if you plan to attend; and please come to the shop if you can on December 12th.

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If we have failed to acknowledge something that appears in the *Persephone* Biannually, please let us know.

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TEL: 020 7242 9292

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