



The Blue Hour: A Life of Jean Rhys

Lilian Pizzichini

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A groundbreaking biography of a psychologically traumatized novelist who forever changed the way we look at women in fiction.

Jean Rhys (1890–1979) is best known for her 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. A prequel to *Jane Eyre*, Rhys's revolutionary work reimagined the story of Bertha Rochester—the misunderstood “madwoman in the attic” who was driven to insanity by cruelties beyond her control. *The Blue Hour* performs a similar exhumation of Rhys's life, which was haunted by demons from within and without. Its examination of Rhys's pain and loss charts her desperate journey from the jungles of Dominica to a British boarding school, and then into an adult life scarred by three failed marriages, the deaths of her two children, and her long battle with alcoholism.

A mesmerizing evocation of a fragile and brilliant mind, *The Blue Hour* explores the crucial element that ultimately spared Rhys from the fate of her most famous protagonist: a genius that rescued her, again and again, from the abyss.

20 photos

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