

Mary Renault A Biography

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Explore the compelling life of Mary Renault, a celebrated historical fiction author whose work redefined classical Greek narratives. This biography delves into her remarkable journey, literary legacy, and the influences that shaped her iconic stories of ancient Greece.

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Mary Renault

The author of *The Charioteer* and *The King Must Die*, Renault studied at Oxford but eventually abandoned the academic world and England for South Africa, where she and her companion, Julie Mullard, remained. "A superb biography of an exceptional novelist" (New Yorker). Named a Notable Book of the Year by the New York Times. Index; photographs.

The Masks of Mary Renault

Born Eileen Mary Challans in London in 1905, Mary Renault wrote six successful contemporary novels before turning to the historical fiction about ancient Greece for which she is best known. While Renault's novels are still highly regarded, her life and work have never been completely examined. Caroline Zilboorg seeks to remedy this in *The Masks of Mary Renault* by exploring Renault's identity as a gifted writer and a sexual woman in a society in which neither of these identities was clear or easy. Although Renault's life was anything but ordinary, this fact has often been obscured by her writing. The daughter of a doctor, she grew up comfortably and attended a boarding school in Bristol. She received a degree in English from St. Hugh's College in Oxford in 1928, but she chose not to pursue an academic career. Instead, she decided to attend the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, where she trained to be a nurse. With the outbreak of the Second World War, she was assigned to the Winford Emergency Hospital in Bristol and briefly worked with Dunkirk evacuees. She went on to work in the Radcliffe Infirmary's brain surgery ward and was there until 1945. It was during her nurse's training that Renault met Julie Mullard, who became her lifelong companion. This important lesbian relationship both resolved and posed many problems for Renault, not the least of which was how she was to write about issues at once intensely personal and socially challenging. In 1939, Renault published her first novel under a pseudonym in order to mask her identity. It was a time when she was struggling not only with her vocation (nursing and writing), but also with her sexual identity in the social and moral context of English life during the war. In 1948, Renault left England with Mullard for South Africa and never returned. It was in South Africa that she made the shift from her early contemporary novels of manners to the mature historical novels of Hellenic life. The classical settings allowed Renault to mask material too explosive to deal with directly while simultaneously giving her an "academic" freedom to write about subjects vital to her—among them war, peace, career, women's roles, female and male homosexuality, and bisexuality.

Renault's reception complicates an understanding of her achievement, for she has a special status within the academic community, where she is both widely read and little written about. Her interest in sexuality and specifically in homosexuality and bisexuality, in fluid gender roles and identities, warrants a rereading and reevaluation of her work. Eloquently written and extensively researched, *The Masks of Mary Renault* will be of special value to anyone interested in women's studies or English literature.

The Nature of Alexander

An "intriguing and invaluable" biography of Alexander the Great by the novelist whose fiction redefined Ancient Greece (*The New York Times*). Acclaimed writer Mary Renault is widely known for her provocative historical novels of Alexander the Great and his lovers. But she also authored this nonfiction classic, a fresh, illuminating look at a man whose legend has remained larger than life for more than two thousand years. From his dysfunctional family dynamics to his molding under Aristotle, from his shocking rise to power at age twenty to the staggering violence of his military campaigns, Renault is clear-eyed about Alexander's accomplishments and his flaws. Infectious in its enthusiasm, this is a penetrating study of an unrivaled conqueror, enduring icon, and fascinating man. Hailed as both "a splendid achievement in nonfiction" (*The Plain Dealer*) and "the perfect companion to her Alexander novels" (*The Wall Street Journal*), Renault's engrossing and accessible biography stands alone in the pantheon of Alexander the Great literature. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Mary Renault including rare images of the author.

Fire from Heaven

'The Alexander Trilogy contains some of Renault's finest writing. Lyrical, wise, compelling: the novels are a wonderful imaginative feat - Sarah Waters Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three, leaving behind an empire that stretched from Greece to India. *Fire From Heaven* tells the story of the years that shaped him. His mother, Olympias, and his father, King Philip of Macedon, fought each other for their son's loyalty, teaching Alexander politics and vengeance. His love for the youth Hephaestion taught him trust, while Aristotle's tutoring provoked his mind and fuelled his aspirations. Killing his first man in battle at the age of twelve and commanding Macedon's cavalry at eighteen, by the time his father is murdered, Alexander's skills have grown to match his fiery ambition. Books included in the VMC 40th anniversary series include: *Frost in May* by Antonia White; *The Collected Stories of Grace Paley*; *Fire from Heaven* by Mary Renault; *The Magic Toyshop* by Angela Carter; *The Weather in the Streets* by Rosamond Lehmann; *Deep Water* by Patricia Highsmith; *The Return of the Soldier* by Rebecca West; *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston; *Heartburn* by Nora Ephron; *The Dud Avocado* by Elaine Dundy; *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark; *A View of the Harbour* by Elizabeth Taylor; and *Faces in the Water* by Janet Frame

The Persian Boy

'Renault's masterpiece. One of the greatest historical novels ever written' SARAH WATERS In the second novel of her stunning trilogy, Mary Renault vividly imagines the life of Alexander the Great, the charismatic leader whose drive and ambition created a legend. *The Persian Boy* traces the last years of Alexander's life through the eyes of his lover, Bagoas. Abducted and gelded as a boy, Bagoas is sold as a courtesan to King Darius of Persia, but finds freedom with Alexander the Great after the Macedon army conquers his homeland. Their relationship sustains Alexander as he weathers assassination plots, the demands of two foreign wives, a sometimes mutinous army, and his own ferocious temper. After Alexander's mysterious death, we are left wondering if this Persian boy understood the great warrior and his ambitions better than anyone. 'Mary Renault is a shining light to both historical novelists and their readers. She does not pretend the past is like the present, or that the people of ancient Greece were just like us. She shows us their strangeness; discerning, sure-footed, challenging our values, piquing our curiosity, she leads us through an alien landscape that moves and delights us' Hilary Mantel 'The Alexander Trilogy stands as one of the most important works of fiction in the 20th century . . . it represents the pinnacle of [Renault's] career . . . Renault's skill is in immersing us in their world, drawing us into its strangeness, its violence and beauty. It's a literary conjuring trick like all historical fiction - it can only ever be an approximation of the truth. But in Renault's hands, the trick is so convincing and passionately conjured. Nowhere is this more evident than in *The Persian Boy* . . . Bagoas is a brilliant narrator. Rendered unreliable by his passion, he is always believable and sympathetic . . . His Persian background allows him to see the king and his Macedonians through the questioning eyes of an alien' - Antonia Senior, *The Times*

The Mask of Apollo

'Mary Renault's portraits of the ancient world are fierce, complex and eloquent, infused at every turn with her life-long passion for the Classics. Her characters live vividly both in their own time, and in ours' **MADLINE MILLER** Mary Renault is a shining light to both historical novelists and their readers. She does not pretend the past is like the present, or that the people of ancient Greece were just like us. She shows us their strangeness; discerning, sure-footed, challenging our values, piquing our curiosity, she leads us through an alien landscape that moves and delights us' **HILARY MANTEL** In the story of the great lyric poet Simonides, Mary Renault brings alive a time in Greece when tyrants kept an unsteady rule and poetry, music, and royal patronage combined to produce a flowering of the arts. Born into a stern farming family on the island of Keos, Simonides escapes his harsh childhood through a lucky apprenticeship with a renowned Ionian singer. As they travel through 5th century B.C. Greece, Simonides learns not only how to play the kithara and compose poetry, but also how to navigate the shifting alliances surrounding his rich patrons. He is witness to the Persian invasion of Ionia, to the decadent reign of the Samian pirate king Polykrates, and to the fall of the Pisistratids in the Athenian court. Along the way, he encounters artists, statesmen, athletes, thinkers, and lovers, including the likes of Pythagoras and Aischylos. Using the singer's unique perspective, Renault combines her vibrant imagination and her formidable knowledge of history to establish a sweeping, resilient vision of a golden century. 'There's much to say about her interweaving of myth and history and, just as interestingly, there's much to wonder at in the way she fills in the large dark spaces where we know next to nothing about the times she describes . . . an important and wonderful writer . . . she set a course into serious-minded, psychologically intense historical fiction that today seems more important than ever' - Sam Jordison, Guardian

The Praise Singer

Ancient Athens paid tribute to its Cretan overlord each year by sending the finest of its sons and daughters to Crete each year to be trained for "bull-dancing"

The King Must Die

'The Alexander Trilogy contains some of Renault's finest writing. Lyrical, wise, compelling: the novels are a wonderful imaginative feat' **SARAH WATERS** In the final novel of her stunning trilogy, Mary Renault vividly imagines the life of Alexander the Great, the charismatic leader whose drive and ambition created a legend. Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three, leaving behind an empire that stretched from Greece and Egypt to India. After Alexander's death in 323 B.C. his only direct heirs were two unborn sons and a simpleton half-brother. Every long-simmering faction exploded into the vacuum of power. Wives, distant relatives and generals all vied for the loyalty of the increasingly undisciplined Macedonian army. Most failed and were killed in the attempt. For no one possessed the leadership to keep the great empire from crumbling. But Alexander's legend endured to spread into worlds he had seen only in dreams. 'Mary Renault is a shining light to both historical novelists and their readers. She does not pretend the past is like the present, or that the people of ancient Greece were just like us. She shows us their strangeness; discerning, sure-footed, challenging our values, piquing our curiosity, she leads us through an alien landscape that moves and delights us' - **HILARY MANTEL** 'The Alexander Trilogy stands as one of the most important works of fiction in the 20th century . . . it represents the pinnacle of [Renault's] career . . . Renault's skill is in immersing us in their world, drawing us into its strangeness, its violence and beauty. It's a literary conjuring trick like all historical fiction - it can only ever be an approximation of the truth. But in Renault's hands, the trick is so convincing and passionately conjured' Antonia Senior, The Times

Mary Renault

More has been written about Alexander the Great than any other figure in history. Like his boyhood hero, Achilles, he traded long life for lasting fame.

Funeral Games

Elsie, sheltered and naive, is seventeen and unhappy. Stifled by life with her bickering parents in a bleak Cornish village, she falls in love with the first presentable young man she meets - Peter, an ambitious London doctor. On his advice she runs away from home and goes to live with her sister Leonora, who escaped eight years earlier. But there are surprises in store for conventional Elsie as her sister has a rather bohemian lifestyle: not only does Leo live in a houseboat on the Thames where she writes Westerns for a living, she shares her boat - and her bed - with Helen. When Peter pays a visit, turning

his attention from one 'friendly young lady' to the next, he disturbs the calm for each of them - with results unforeseen by all . . . Mary Renault wrote this delightfully provocative novel in 1943 partly in answer to the despair characteristic of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. The result is this witty and stylish social comedy.

The Nature of Alexander

Best known for her historical novels—*The Last of the Wine* (1956), *The King Must Die* (1958), *The Bull from the Sea* (1962), *The Mask of Apollo* (1966), and *Fire from Heaven* (1969)—Mary Renault's works have often appeared to readers as collateral reading to Greek literature. She is, doubtless, one of the most creative historical novelists of our era and the only bona fide Hellenist in twentieth-century fiction. What is less well known is that Mary Renault's earlier works, written between 1939 and 1953—among them *Promise of Love* (1939), *Return to Night* (1947), and *The Charioteer* (1953)—were con-temporary pieces, not concerned with antiquity. Covering the entire range of Miss Renault's work, Bernard Dick's pene-trating study analyzes the early works and shows they were filled with classical allusions and dominated by Greek ideals of friendshi

Return to night

A New York Times—bestselling trilogy about the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon and its leader from an author hailed by Hilary Mantel as “a shining light.” *Fire from Heaven* is a gripping account of the formative years of Alexander's life. The story tells of his complex relationship with his parents; of his two great bonds—to his horse, Oxhead, and to his dearest friend and eventual lover, Hephaistion—and of the army he commands when he is barely an adult. Coming of age during the battles for southern Greece, Alexander the Great first takes someone's life at age twelve and swiftly eliminates his rivals as soon as he comes to power, emerging in this novel as a captivating and complex figure. The iconic Persian Boy centers on the Macedon king as seen through the eyes of his lover and most faithful attendant, the eunuch Bagoas. When Bagoas is very young, his father is murdered and he is sold as a slave to King Darius of Persia. Then, when Alexander conquers the land, he is given Bagoas as a gift, and the boy is besotted. This passion comes at a time when much is at stake—Alexander has two wives, conflicts are ablaze, and plots on his life abound. The result is a riveting account of a great conqueror's years of triumph and, ultimately, heartbreak. In *Funeral Games*, a bloody struggle for power rages after the death of Alexander, leaving an empire that extends from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus River. The power players include Ptolemy, two father-son teams, and a cadre of influential women—not least of whom is Eurydike, whose plan is to marry Alexander's disabled brother, Arridaios. Brimming with outsize personalities, brazen plots, and a sweeping sense of history, *Funeral Games* brings to vivid life the world of Alexander the Great, and the seismic tumult in the wake of his death. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Mary Renault including rare images of the author. “Mary Renault is a shining light to both historical novelists and their readers. She does not pretend the past is like the present, or that the people of ancient Greece were just like us. She shows us their strangeness; discerning, sure-footed, challenging our values, piquing our curiosity, she leads us through an alien landscape that moves and delights us.” —Hilary Mantel

The Friendly Young Ladies

Alexander's Lovers reveals the personality of Alexander the Great through the mirror of the lives of those with whom he pursued romantic relationships, including his friend Hephaistion, his queen Roxane, his mistress Barsine & Bagoas the Eunuch. Did you know that Alexander got the idea of adopting Persian dress from a book he read in his youth? Had you realised that Alexander's pursuit of divine honours was part of his emulation of Achilles, that Bagoas undertook a diplomatic mission or that Hephaistion's diplomacy kept Athens from joining a Spartan rebellion? Are you aware that Aetion's painting of Alexander's marriage depicted Hephaistion & Bagoas as well as Roxane and really depicted the King's passions? Which girl was betrothed to Alexander's son? Would it surprise you that Alexander's mourning for Hephaistion was conducted according to models from Homer and Euripides? If you would like to get to know Alexander on a more personal level, then you need to read this book. Second edition, revised & updated.

The Last of the Wine

This collection is concerned with the problems and pleasures of writing literary biography in the context of South African writing. Stephen Gray's introduction outlines the choice faced by the researcher:

between writing revisionist history (à la Strachey) and the personal bias the portraitist must take into account when conducting the retrieval especially of lost and enigmatic figures (à la Symons). Concentrating on the unattached irregulars of the arts in South Africa - often the arts of their times - Gray stresses the value of the free-lance figure in the formation of an evolving colonial and post-colonial literature. Subjects included are: Charles Maclean, alias John Ross, who recorded his experiences of the Zulu King Shaka in Natal's first captivity narrative; Douglas Blackburn, rated as the successor of Swift for his satires of the Anglo-Boer War conflict; Beatrice Hastings, polymath journalist whose lovers included Katherine Mansfield and Amedeo Modigliani; Stephen Black, founder of indigenous South African drama in English; Edward Wolfe, the Bloomsbury painter who began as a child-actor in the mining town of Johannesburg; Bessie Head, who became the Botswana-based wise-woman of African literature before her untimely death in 1986, yet never knew her own origins; Etienne Leroux, the Free State rancher who, in Afrikaans, wrote much-banned postmodernist novels; Mary Renault whose bestselling novels set in Ancient Greece peculiarly represented the shutdown of democracy in apartheid South Africa; Sipho Sepamla, stalwart of the Soweto Poetry school which came to prominence after the 1976 Soweto uprising; and Richard Rive, novelist, cultural commentator and liberation icon, murdered in his prime. The portrait gallery of the figures who have shaped and defined the role of literature in South Africa is both revealing and provocative, showing the route taken by some lesser-known talents in their struggle to establish the rights of authors in an often indifferent or repressive state.

The Charioteer

This early work by Radclyffe Hall was originally published in 1928 and we are now republishing it with a brand new introductory biography. 'The Well of Loneliness' is a novel that follows an upper-class Englishwoman who falls in love with another woman while serving as an ambulance driver in World War I. Marguerite Radclyffe Hall was born on 12th August 1880, in Bournemouth, England. Hall's first novel *The Unlit Lamp* (1924) was a lengthy and grim tale that proved hard to sell. It was only published following the success of the much lighter social comedy *The Forge* (1924), which made the best-seller list of John O'London's Weekly. Hall is a key figure in lesbian literature for her novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). This is her only work with overt lesbian themes and tells the story of the life of a masculine lesbian named Stephen Gordon.

THE LAST OF THE WINE

Set in Greece in the fourth century BC, *The Mask of Apollo* is narrated by Nikeratos, a tragic actor who constantly carries a gold mask of Apollo. The mask eventually comes to serve as Nikeratos' conscience when he becomes embroiled in a political crisis which also involves the philosopher Plato.

The Hellenism of Mary Renault

"The Bull from the Sea" is the story of Theseus, King of Athens, but also Mary Renault's brilliant historical reconstruction of ancient Greek politics. Throughout his reign, Theseus is torn between his genius for kingship and his truant craving for adventure. As Theseus for a dynastic marriage with Phaedra, Pirithoos, the pirate prince, lures him off to explore the unknown Euxine, where he meets and captures the young warrior priestess Hippolyta. She is the love of his life, and that love is the crux of his fate. The bull of Marathon, the battle of the Lapiths and Kentaurs, and the moon-goddess cult of Pontos are merely a portion of the legendary material that Renault weaves into the fabric of great historical fiction. Whether or not these myths have their far-distant origin in actual events, the author's imagination and scholarship have invested them with immediate and magical reality.

The Novels of Alexander the Great

Discusses several Greek battles including Marathon, Salamis, and Thermopylae.

Promise of Love

As it enters its sixtieth year of independence, India stands on the threshold of superpower status. Yet India is strikingly different from all other global colossi. While it is the world's most populous democracy and enjoys the benefits of its internationally competitive high-tech and software industries, India also contends with extremes of poverty, inequality, and political and religious violence. This accessible and vividly written book presents a new interpretation of India's history, focusing particular attention on

the impact of British imperialism on Independent India. Maria Misra begins with the rebellion against the British in 1857 and tracks the country's advance to the present day. India's extremes persist, the author argues, because its politics rest upon a peculiar foundation in which traditional ideas of hierarchy, difference, and privilege coexist to a remarkable degree with modern notions of equality and democracy. The challenge of India's leaders today, as in the last sixty years, is to weave together the disparate threads of the nation's ancient culture, colonial legacy, and modern experience.

Alexander's Lovers (Second Edition)

A WWII soldier embarks on affairs with two very different men in a landmark novel that “transcends categorizations” (The Telegraph). After being wounded at Dunkirk in World War II, Laurie Odell is sent back home to a rural British hospital. Standing out among the orderlies is Andrew, a bright conscientious objector raised as a Quaker. The unspoken romance between the two men is tested when Ralph, a friend of Laurie's from school, re-enters his life, introducing him into a milieu of jaded, experienced gay men. Will Laurie reconcile himself to Ralph's embrace, or can he offer Andrew the idealized, Platonic intimacy he yearns for? This novel has been called one of the foundation stones of gay literary fiction, ranking alongside James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* and Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar*. Celebrated for its literary brilliance and sincere depiction of complex human emotions, *The Charioteer* is a stirring and beautifully rendered portrayal of love. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Mary Renault including rare images of the author.

Free-lancers and Literary Biography in South Africa

Unlike so many other books, *Grace and Power* rejects gossip and conspiracy theory to tell the story of John and Jackie's three years in the White House soberly, comprehensively and sensitively, from beginning to sudden end. Sally Bedell Smith's book on John and Jackie Kennedy was hailed by authoritative reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic as the most distinguished and well-written book on a perennially fascinating subject for years. In the US the hardback was high on the New York Times bestseller list for weeks. It is an immensely poignant chronicle of pivotal historical events seen from the inside out, from within the private home of the President and First Lady. Amidst the superficial opulence of their social circle, we see the Cuban Missile Crisis and the burgeoning American civil rights movement from the perspective of an invalid president often barely well enough to appear in public. Together with his young wife, abandoned by her husband's relentless womanising, nevertheless changed the politics and style of America. *Grace and Power* is the classic account of that time.

The Well of Loneliness

While many books, fiction and nonfiction alike, chronicle Alexander the Great's ascension to power and conquest of the ancient world, few go back to Alexander's early adulthood. In this vividly written and thoroughly researched novel, Lawrence Scheier explores Alexander's early years through the eyes of the renowned leader's best friend and lover, Hephaestion. Scheier's fictional biography is full of political intrigue, family treachery, and enticing romance. Do not waste the opportunity! The words of Hephaestion's father ring in his ears when he first approaches the young Alexander in the Macedonian capital of Pella. Hephaestion hopes to use his father's relationship with King Philip to be appointed as one of Alexander's royal companions. Hephaestion quickly becomes entangled in the complex politics of the royal family. Queen Olympias, Alexander's mother, gives him the position in exchange for his loyalty to Alexander and asks him seduce her son. Hephaestion realizes that he is being used a pawn in the twisted game between the king and queen. Hephaestion must make difficult choices to stop Alexander from being sacrificed on the altar of his parents' dysfunction. At the same time, Hephaestion must confront his own feelings for the prince and the dangerous consequences of Alexander's ambition.

The Mask of Apollo

The Bull from the Sea reconstructs the legend of Theseus, the valiant youth who slew the Minotaur, became king, and brought prosperity to Attica. Chief among his heroic exploits is the seduction of Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons, who irrevocably brings about both his greatest joy and his tragic destiny. Copyright © Libri GmbH. All rights reserved.

The Bull from the Sea

In *The Last of the Wine*, two young Athenians, Alexias and Lysis, compete in the palaestra, journey to the Olympic games, fight in the wars against Sparta, and study under Socrates. As their relationship develops, Renault expertly conveys Greek culture, showing the impact of this supreme philosopher whose influence spans epochs.

The Lion in the Gateway

Kit Anderson is married to Janet, a beautiful but narcissistic woman who seems more shallow to him as time goes by. Their relationship has become strained and cold. Immersing himself in his work as a doctor, Anderson takes consolation in his career. Then, one night he is called out to a dying patient, and meets Christie, who is taking care of her aunt. Warm and vivacious, Christie stands in stark contrast to Janet, providing the passion and intimacy that has been missing from his life. How long can their affair be kept secret and does Kit want what is best for Christie, or only for himself? In this assured, vivid novel, Mary Renault showcases the talents that would make her one of the twentieth century's most beloved novelists.

Vishnu's Crowded Temple

Introduced by Donald Smith. Set in Rome during Nero's reign of terror, *The Blood of the Martyrs* is a disciplined historical novel tracing the destruction of one cell of the early church. With a cast of slaves, ordinary Roman people, exiles and entertainers, it is thorough in its historical interpretation and in its determination to make the past accessible and readable. Written in 1938-9, the novel contains many symbolic parallels to the rise of European fascism in the 1930s and the desperate plight of persecuted minorities such as the Jews and the left-wing activists with whom Naomi Mitchison personally campaigned at the time. With the invasion of Britain a real possibility, she felt compelled to write a testament to the power of human solidarity which, even faced with death, can overcome the worst that human evil can achieve. *The Blood of the Martyrs* is the least autobiographical of Mitchison's major works of fiction, yet, with its implicit credo, is her most passionately self-revealing. ' . . . when a novelist is historically faithful in these treacherous waters of the human psyche, the results are tremendous. As a twentieth-century woman, it no doubt hurt Naomi Mitchison a good deal to describe the savagery of the early Christian persecution in *The Blood of the Martyrs* . . . But it is the pain that gives the history its lifeblood. The imagination that is a novelist's fuel must be harnessed to serve history as history was, not as anyone wishes it had been.' Joanna Trollope

The Charioteer

'Mary Renault is a shining light to both historical novelists and their readers. She does not pretend the past is like the present, or that the people of ancient Greece were just like us. She shows us their strangeness; discerning, sure-footed, challenging our values, piquing our curiosity, she leads us through an alien landscape that moves and delights us' HILARY MANTEL 'Mary Renault's portraits of the ancient world are fierce, complex and eloquent, infused at every turn with her life-long passion for the Classics. Her characters live vividly both in their own time, and in ours' MADELINE MILLER *The sequel to The King Must Die. The Bull from the Sea* continues the story of the hero Theseus after his return from Crete. Having freed the city of Athens from the onerous tribute demanded by the ruler of Knossos - the sacrifice of noble youths and maidens to the appetite of the Labyrinth's monster - Theseus has returned home to find his father dead and himself the new king. But his adventures have only just begun: he still must confront the Amazons, capture their queen, Hippolyta, and face the tragic results of Phaedra's jealous rage. Piecing together the fragments of myth and using her deep understanding of the cultures reflected in these legends, Mary Renault has constructed an enthralling narrative of a time when heroes battled monsters and gods strode the earth. 'There's much to say about her interweaving of myth and history and, just as interestingly, there's much to wonder at in the way she fills in the large dark spaces where we know next to nothing about the times she describes . . . an important and wonderful writer . . . she set a course into serious-minded, psychologically intense historical fiction that today seems more important than ever' Sam Jordison, *Guardian*

The Song of Achilles

****SHORTLISTED FOR THE WALTER SCOTT PRIZE 2019**** 15th century Oakham, in Somerset; a tiny village cut off by a big river with no bridge. When a man is swept away by the river in the early hours of Shrove Saturday, an explanation has to be found: accident, suicide or murder? The village priest, John Reve, is privy to many secrets in his role as confessor. But will he be able to unravel what happened

to the victim, Thomas Newman, the wealthiest, most capable and industrious man in the village? And what will happen if he can't? Moving back in time towards the moment of Thomas Newman's death, the story is related by Reve – an extraordinary creation, a patient shepherd to his wayward flock, and a man with secrets of his own to keep. Through his eyes, and his indelible voice, Harvey creates a medieval world entirely tangible in its immediacy.

Grace & Power

'All my sense of the ancient world - its values, its style, the scent of its wars and passions - comes from Mary Renault. Her Theseus novels are perhaps the most exciting of her Greek fictions, and *The Last of the Wine* the most moving. I turned to writing historical fiction because of something I learned from Renault: that it lets you shake off the mental shackles of your own era, all the categories and labels, and write freely about what really matters to you' EMMA DONOGHUE 'Mary Renault's portraits of the ancient world are fierce, complex and eloquent, infused at every turn with her life-long passion for the Classics. Her characters live vividly both in their own time, and in ours' MADELINE MILLER Combining the scholarship of a historian with the imagination of a novelist, Mary Renault masterfully brings the ancient world to life in this page-turning drama of the Peloponnesian War. Alexias, a young Athenian of good family, comes of age during the last phases of the Peloponnesian War. The adult world he enters is one in which the power and influence of his class have been undermined by the forces of war. Alexias finds himself drawn to the controversial teachings of Socrates, following him even though it at times endangers both his own life and his family's place in society. Among the great teacher's followers Alexias meets Lysis, and the two youths become inseparable - together they wrestle in the palaestra, journey to the Olympic Games, and fight in the wars against Sparta. As their relationship develops against the background of famine, siege and civil conflict, Mary Renault expertly conveys the intricacies of classical Greek culture. 'Mary Renault is a shining light to both historical novelists and their readers. She does not pretend the past is like the present, or that the people of ancient Greece were just like us. She shows us their strangeness; discerning, sure-footed, challenging our values, piquing our curiosity, she leads us through an alien landscape that moves and delights us' HILARY MANTEL 'The most vivid and convincing reconstruction of ancient Greek life that I have ever seen' Sunday Times

Mary Renault

The adventures of Samak, a trickster-warrior hero of Persia's thousand-year-old oral storytelling tradition, are beloved in Iran. Samak is an ayyar, a warrior who comes from the common people and embodies the ideals of loyalty, selflessness, and honor—a figure that recalls samurai, ronin, and knights yet is distinctive to Persian legend. His exploits—set against an epic background of palace intrigue, battlefield heroics, and star-crossed romance between a noble prince and princess—are as deeply rooted in Persian culture as are the stories of Robin Hood and King Arthur in the West. However, this majestic tale has remained little known outside Iran. Translated from the original Persian by Freydoon Rassouli and adapted by Prince of Persia creator Jordan Mechner, this timeless masterwork can now be enjoyed by English-speaking readers. A thrilling and suspenseful saga, Samak the Ayyar also offers a vivid portrait of Persia a thousand years ago. Within an epic quest narrative teeming with action and supernatural forces, it sheds light on the lives of ordinary people and their social worlds. This is the first complete English-language version of a treasure of world culture. The translation is grounded in the twelfth-century Persian text while paying homage to the dynamic culture of storytelling from which it arose.

The Twin Soul of Alexander

Based on the story of King David, traces his journey from an obscure shepherd to a hero and king before his fall.

The Bull from the Sea

The Last of the Wine