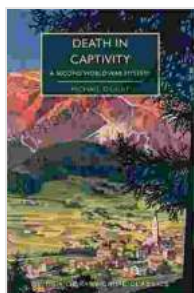


The Enigmatic Enigma: Unveiling the Secrets of British Library Crime Classics from the Second World War

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As the world marked the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II in 2019, the British Library delved into its vast archives to unearth a treasure trove of forgotten crime novels.



Death in Captivity: A Second World War Mystery (British Library Crime Classics Book 0) by Sheila Gates

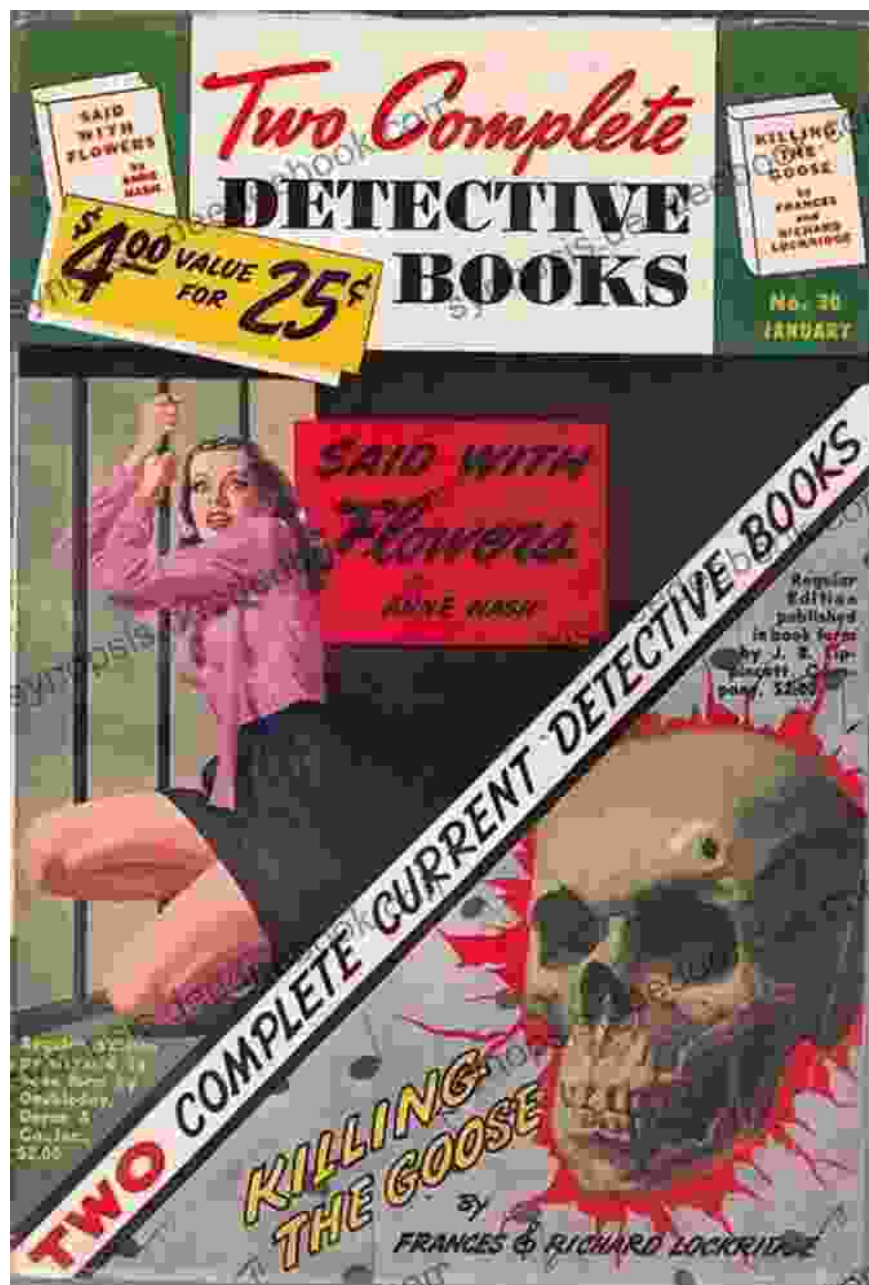
★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 953 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 230 pages



These "British Library Crime Classics" offer a unique glimpse into the social and cultural landscape of Britain during the war years. Written by both established authors and literary newcomers, they reflect the fears, anxieties, and resilience of a nation grappling with unprecedented challenges.

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The Shadow of War

The Second World War cast a long shadow over British life, and crime fiction was no exception. Many of the novels in the British Library Crime Classics series feature plots that are directly or indirectly linked to the war.

In Ngaio Marsh's *Death in a White Tie* (1938), for example, a murder takes place at a diplomatic reception attended by Winston Churchill.

Other novels explore the social and psychological impact of the war on individuals and communities. In Dorothy L. Sayers's *Gaudy Night* (1935), a young woman investigates a murder at a women's college that has been evacuated to Oxford due to the threat of bombing.

Women at War

The Second World War saw a significant increase in the number of women working outside the home, and this is reflected in the British Library Crime Classics series. Many of the novels feature female detectives and protagonists, who often play active roles in solving crimes and fighting injustice.

In Margery Allingham's *More Work for the Undertaker* (1941), a young woman named Joanna Blalock investigates the murder of her father, a prominent scientist. In Gladys Mitchell's *Death at the Opera* (1940), a female detective named Dame Beatrice Adela Lestrangle Bradley investigates a murder at the Royal Opera House.

The Importance of Archives

The British Library Crime Classics series is an invaluable resource for scholars and enthusiasts of crime fiction. It provides access to a wide range of novels that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to find. These novels offer insights into the social, cultural, and literary history of Britain during the Second World War.

The series also highlights the importance of archives in preserving and making accessible our cultural heritage. The British Library's vast collection of crime fiction provides a unique window into the past, allowing us to understand and appreciate the complexities of human nature in times of both peace and war.

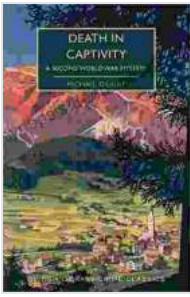
The British Library Crime Classics from the Second World War offer a fascinating and diverse glimpse into a turbulent period in British history. These novels reflect the fears, anxieties, and resilience of a nation grappling with unprecedented challenges. They also celebrate the indomitable spirit of women and the enduring power of literature to entertain, inform, and inspire.

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Recommended Reading

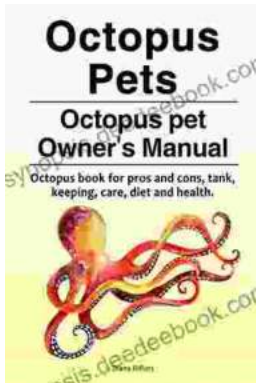
* The British Library Crime Classics website * The Guardian: The return of the British Library Crime Classics * The Atlantic: The British Library Crime Classics That Capture the Shadow of World War II



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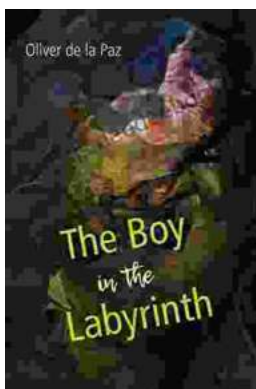
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