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Posted on 12 February 2018 By Ngaio Marsh

# [Ebook] ? Final Curtain ? Weplayit.co

Famous painter Agatha Troy has three weeks to wait for the return of Detective Chief Inspector Roderick Alleyn from four years service in New Zealand during the Second World War as Ngaio Marsh's *Final Curtain* opens. She gets invited well, pretty much commanded to go to Ancreton, the home of Sir Henry Ancred to paint the old actor in his most famous role as Macbeth. After initially turning the great man down, Troy gives in and travels to the castle to paint the man's portrait. While there she meets the whole extended family, all but one of whom work in the theater business, as well as Sir Henry's paramour, Sonia Orrincourt, a failed actress herself. And while there, Troy becomes witness to and subject of some childish pranks that everyone is eager to attribute to the youngest granddaughter, Panty, despite Troy's conviction that Panty has not committed all of these acts. Read the rest of this review and other fun, geeky articles at Fangirl Nation *Final Curtain 1947* by Ngaio Marsh finds Agatha Troy waiting for her husband's return from several years of war work in New Zealand and Australia. Inspector Alleyn is due back any time and Troy worries that the long separation may have spoiled their young relationship. When a request a near royal summons comes from the celebrated actor Sir Henry Ancred for her to paint his portrait in full actor's regalia as Macbeth she is, at first, annoyed at the distraction. But when Sir Henry's son Thomas comes in person to plead the case, she is intrigued by his description of the family and decides that the distraction may be just what she needs. After all, Sir Henry's head fairly begs to be painted. The family lives up to both Thomas's description and the run down she received from Nigel Bathgate as she was leaving on the train for Ancreton Manor. She witnesses the bitter family dynamics and the jockeying for position as Sir Henry is fairly fickle in his favorites. The current front runners are Patricia Panty, his granddaughter, and Cedric, his grandson. But a spanner has been thrown into the works. The old gentleman has taken up with a young chorus girl and it looks like he may be out to prove that the old man still has some life left in him. The family's fears are realized when Sir Henry announces that he plans to marry Sonia Orrincourt. Troy finishes the portrait just in time for a grand unveiling on Sir Henry's birthday. But things go awry when the picture is found to have been vandalized with a flying green cow dropping bombs on Sir Henry's head. There have been several practical jokes in the days leading up to the birthday and nearly everyone including Sir Henry assumes that Panty is the culprit. After all, she does have a history of such things. But both her mother and Troy believe that she's telling the truth when she says she hasn't done any of the tricks played on her grandfather. Someone is up to mischief but who wants the blame to fall on Panty. Then Sir Henry dies apparently from natural causes following his most ill advised over indulgence during the birthday meal. He's safely buried and the family is weathering the shock of discovering that he had changed his will one final time leaving Cedric Ancreton Manor, but nearly all his

money to Sonia That s when things get interesting Alleyn finally arrives back home and during their reunion, Troy tells him about her odd experiences at Ancreton Manor Then anonymous notes start arriving that imply that Sir Henry s death wasn t natural after all So Alleyn, Fox, and company start investigating Like Colour Scheme and a few of the other novels, this is one where Alleyn shows up rather late in the proceedings However, unlike Colour Scheme, I don t actually mind it so much this time because get to spend quite a lot of time with Troy and we learn a great deal about her in the process In some ways she acts as Alleyn s stand in observing the family s behavior and being able to give him a trusted, first hand account of the goings on leading up to the murder She brings an artist s eye for detail and gives Alleyn and us valuable insights on the characters and incidents It provides a very unique build up to the investigation. I think in some ways Marsh has tried to give us another eccentric family like the Lampreys But here the dark undertones overshadow the pleasant oddities There is really something a bit distasteful about most of the Ancreds One thing that struck me about the story was the emphasis on how all the Ancreds were the same overly theatrical they all made that tuh noise etc all, that is except Thomas Having made such a point of how Thomas was an exception to the Ancred rule, I almost expected there to be a revelation that Thomas wasn t really an Ancred after all and that maybe that would figure into the motives somehow Ah, well I guess it was a case of the author protesting too much This was another enjoyable entry in the Alleyn chronicles particularly since we see so much of Troy Marsh did fool me on the killer I had latched onto someone else and couldn t quite shake my belief in their guilt First posted on my blog My Reader s Block Please request permission before reposting Thanks. [Ebook] ? Final Curtain ? Troy Alleyn, Inspector Roderick Alleyn s Beautiful Young Wife, Is Engaged To Paint A Portrait Of Sir Henry Ancred, Famed Shakespearean Actor And Family Patriarch, But She Senses All Is Not Well In The Dreary Castle Of Ancreton When Old Henry Is Found Dead After A Suspicious Dinner And An Unfortunate Family Fracas, Troy Enlists The Impeccable Aid Of Her Husband To Determine Who Among A Cast Of Players Would Have A Motive For Murder And The Theatrical Gift To Carry It Out When a book is written in the 1940 s it can be expected to have the prejudices of the day, but this one had the trifecta of comments about Jews, black people and a character who embodied all of the most offensive gay stereotypes All this stood out in sharp relief because the plot was not that interesting, and all the characters were horrible The murder was not even convincing. I read somewhere that Died in the Wool was Marsh s favorite in her Alleyn series, and I liked it a lot but this one is even better It s not quite five stars to me, since it ends a bit suddenly and it was not as personally satisfying a conclusion as I would have preferred But it was a lot of fun to read. This Alleyn installment has a group of vivid characters, representing the steady growth in fiction writing that I am seeing as I work my way through the series The story does in a way remind me of A Surfeit of Lampreys, though the Lamprey family was charming and delightful and the Ancreds here are far from that But each person in this isolated country

house is quite individual, and not like any previous Marsh character. Alleyn's wife, Agatha Troy, comes to life a lot here than in any previous book. Even interesting, the relationship between her and Rory develops a lot nuance and texture. The issue of how much work one's brings home mentally is still a real one, and interesting to explore. As other readers have pointed out, there are some unattractive ways this book is the product of its era. I find it difficult to see how writers can be expected to write within the context of moral issues not explored in the time in which they live. Yes, there are references we fortunately never use such as the n word. As an aside, though, the fact that we no longer use some offensive terms and stereotypes and this is a good thing we have hardly escaped the mindset which generates them. I understand and to some extent share the discomfort others mention with the Cedric's portrayal. However, I actually sort of liked him, and found his style of speaking fascinating and often funny. Sure, he appears to be an effeminate gay man, but there are indeed people like Cedric, and it's hard to conclude that a writer cannot include a character like this. Yes, it would be preferable to have a nuanced portrayal of gay life, but in the oppressive world of the 1940s, I would think aside from individuals like Cedric, gay life was essentially invisible to outsiders. Anyway, this is a good mystery, well written and well crafted. I enjoyed it. It has been a long time since I read a Marsh mystery. This one has wit and humor but is a little too twee. It also has way too many characters introduced in a rapid fire info dump at the beginning of the book. I found it impossible to keep them, and their relationships, straight. If I had read this 40 years ago I probably would have liked it a lot, but I've moved on from house party murders.

4.5 stars very entertaining classic country house murder, it was good to have Inspector Alleyn back with Fox and Troy in England after wartime duty of three plus years. As the novel opens, Troy has been asked to paint the portrait of legendary actor Sir Henry Ancred. Alleyn is due home anytime, but Troy is deeply tempted to take on the commission. She heads to the great actor's country house and is soon pleasantly immersed in her work, despite being surrounded by the dysfunctional, overly dramatic Ancred family. I loved this part. Troy is a great character, so calm and collected, and her internal musings dealing with this emotional, dramatic family was quite amusing. Marsh gives us a wonderful cast of drama queens with the Ancreds. Sir Henry is also keeping company with a beautiful but clearly lower class actress who is, in the parlance of the era, no better than she should be. Yes, the old lion taken in by a beautiful young gold digger is a hackneyed device as old as the hills, but Marsh plays it brilliantly, pitting the scheming young woman against Sir Henry's resentful, grasping family quite Shakespearean, really, and fun. Adding to the drama, the old man constantly threatens to change his will. The inevitable happens, the old man is found dead, but was it his usual gastric trouble bringing on a heart attack after a too rich birthday celebration and a raging temper tantrum brought on by practical jokes poking fun at him? His ego, of course, is immense and he is enraged by being poked about his young lady friend. Troy is present when the old man is found, but she can't help wondering if someone decided to put an end

to Sir Henry. When the family all receive letters suggesting Sir Henry was poisoned, Alleyn steps in to investigate. A very satisfying Golden Age mystery so glad Alleyn is back in England, I look forward to continuing reading these books with the Reading the Detectives group. I don't think I'll ever get bored of a good mystery. Christie, Tey, and Marsh being my favorite authors.

14th Alleyn book from 1947. Lucky to have read another Felony Mayhem pristine paperback from my library. I can only conclude few patrons have found the trove of Marsh books as each seem brand new to me. Shhh! In the timeline of the married life of Agatha Troy, painter, and her Scotland Yard husband Roderick Alleyn, this book begins at the juncture of Alleyn's anticipated return home after three years of service overseas under Special Branch directive. Troy accepts a commission to go to a country estate of a famous actor to paint his portrait on the occasion of his upcoming birthday. After careful thought, believing she will be able to accomplish this in enough time to be back home for her husband's return. She will have to contend with as various pranks are launched, two of which include defacing her painting, as someone in this large estate has a deeper plan that leads to a death. Troy does leave the country for London to welcome her husband, and of course he is assigned to the murder investigation. I really enjoyed this book.

The reviewer notes on the cover said it was time to stop comparing Marsh to Agatha Christie, and start comparing Christie to Marsh, implying and elsewhere boldly stating that Marsh was the better writer. I've read just about everything Christie put out, and quite a bit of Marsh's oeuvre, and while I like Marsh's work, it doesn't seem to be any better than Christie's. Yeah, I used the word oeuvre in a sentence. Jealous much. This particular work is pretty good, but of course there are a couple things I don't like about it. There are a number of instances of the writer playing the I think we all know what I'm talking about here game, where I got completely lost. I got the references to Cedric being a pouf and I realize that when this was written, in 1947, Marsh would not have been able to come right out and say Cedric was gay, but there are a number of other instances where I felt like everyone else was in on the joke and I was left out. Marsh also spent a bit of time exploring the relationship between her detective, Roderick Alleyn, and his wife. The crux of the issue here was whether, after being separated for so long by the war, the two would be able to pick up where they left off, relationship wise, or whether they would have lost any feeling for each other. All very interesting, and probably very vital to the post-war readers of Marsh's books, but really in a mystery novel it just seemed to muddy the waters. As I said, overall an enjoyable example of the genre, but definitely not worthy of the better than Christie hype.

# NGAIO MARSH



## FINAL CURTAIN

**'...purty ngai perfect.'**

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