



# The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: Manic Depression and the Life of Virginia Woolf

By Peter Dally

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Combining his knowledge as a doctor and a lifelong fascination with Virginia Woolf's life and work, eminent psychiatrist Peter Dally offers a haunting and compelling look at the depression that tormented Virginia Woolf throughout her adult years.

On three occasions Virginia went mad. Symptoms of these episodes included conversations with her dead mother, and hearing birds speak in Greek. Though a quiet life cushioned her childhood, the renown Woolf achieved through writing inspired the bouts of depression and elation that she regularly experienced as an adult. This terrified Virginia, and though the experience offered extraordinary insight into her craft, Woolf lived in constant fear of her dreadful affliction.

Virginia's most vital protection from stress was her husband, Leonard. Without his constant vigilance and care, it is doubtful she would have been so creatively productive. Yet, paradoxically, their marriage ultimately precipitated her most dangerous bout of madness. Toward the end of her life, when events outside the couple's control led to Leonard's own depression and gradual withdrawal, Virginia found herself facing madness alone, and with tragic results.

Compassionate and disturbing, this fascinating study is the first to look at Virginia Woolf's life from the perspective of her illness.

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"*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is a biography with a difference...Dally's professional insights shed new light of familiar details.." --*Boston Globe*

"Peter Dally has written a book about Virginia Woolf unlike any other...Dr. Dally's slim volume is thrilling, both for reader interested in mental disorders generally, and Virginia Woolf in particular." --*The Washington Times*

"Dally puts Woolf on the couch." --*Kirkus Reviews*

#### **About the Author**

After qualifying from St. Thomas's Hospital in 1953, Peter Dally specialized in psychiatry and was consulted psychiatrist at the Westminster Hospital until his retirement. He lives in England.

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