

# M. M. KAYE

the Raj who used her experience of life in the Empire to create her romantic bestseller *The Far Pavilions*

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Kaye at her Sussex home, whose walls were hung with the memorabilia of the British India that had shaped her outlook

ing at Calcutta: "... jasmine garlands and everything — the temples, the fruit bats, the smells, the noise — was all Indian. I looked around me and thought: 'I'm home, I'm home. . . I'm home!'"

For the 18-year-old Mollie Kaye life now became a whirl of parties, romances and marriage proposals, with a con-

But this could not go on for ever. In 1935 her father died and his daughter, by then 27 but still unmarried, found she could not live on the pittance of a pension allotted to an Indian civil servant's daughter. She returned to England and from a tiny flat off King's Road, Chelsea, tried to make an income from selling her

tively illustrated by Margaret Tempest. Among them such titles as *Black Bramble Wood* and *Gold Gorse Common*, remained popular reading for very young children for the next 20 years.

For Kaye the income generated meant one thing: she was able to return to her beloved India, where she stayed in Simla

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She now combin officer's wife (they ing their marriage had already publis el, *Six Bars at Seve* tined in this ve *Death Walks in I* Cyprus and *Later* republished as *De* next 20 years. suspense novels w sued with *Death* much later, wrote dren: *The Ordina* *Thistledown* (1981)

The first of Kaye *Shadow of the Ma* 1957. It embodi research she had sometimes to the interest which th merged in the fea successor, *Trade V* set in Zanzibar (s with her husband insurgency), it was but not in term acclaim.

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## OBITUARIES

### M. M. KAYE

Daughter of the Raj who used her experience of life in the Empire to create her romantic bestseller *The Far Pavilions*

**A** daughter of the Raj, born in Simla in the years before the First World War, M. M. Kaye put her childhood experience and voluminous reading of history to good use in her epic romance of British India in the 19th century, *The Far Pavilions*, which was published in 1978. The story of a boy, orphaned in childhood, brought up as a Hindu and growing to maturity in the sub-continent before the Indian Mutiny, it became a runaway best-seller and an immensely popular television drama.

It was by no means her first novel. She had been writing children's fiction (as Mollie Kaye) from 1937 onwards, and published several novels with Indian themes in the 1950s and 1960s. She also wrote as Mollie Hamilton, the surname of the army officer whom she married during the war. She had researched the Indian Mutiny meticulously, and detail of its causes — and the savagery with which it was conducted — and then repressed — are the subject matter of several of her books. But it was *The Far Pavilions* that defined her as a writer about India, and which made her a household name.

Before taking up writing, Kaye had been a painter, taking her easel wherever she went on her rambles in India, and

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