The Cardboard Crown: Text Classics

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Set in Australia and England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, *The Cardboard Crown* presents an unforgettable portrait of an upper middle-class family who love both countries but are not quite at home in either.

At the centre of this scintillating and immensely readable novel is Alice Verso, whose unexpected marriage to Austin Langton not only brings financial stability to the Langtons but founds an Anglo-Australian dynasty. But when her grandson finds her diaries and begins to uncover her story he chances on an intricate web of deception and reveals the complex fate of his family over three generations.

This remarkable novel, first published to a chorus of acclaim in 1952, is one of the lost classics of Australian literature. Martin Boyd is a deeply humane novelist, a writer of family sagas without peer.

This edition features an introduction by one of Australia's best-known and award-winning biographers, Brenda Niall.

Martin Boyd was born in Switzerland in 1893. He was brought to Australia when he was six months old and where his family of painters, sculptors, architects and writers was to make an unparalleled contribution to Australian cultural life. Boyd divided his time between Australia and England but in 1957 moved to Rome where he died in 1972. *The Cardboard Crown* is the first novel in his Langton quartet, the work for which he is best known and which is loosely based on his family.

Brenda Niall is one of Australia's foremost biographers. She is the author of four award winning biographies, including her acclaimed accounts of the Boyd family. In 2004 she was awarded the Order of Australia for 'services to Australian literature, as an academic, biographer and literary critic'. She frequently reviews for the *Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Australian Book Review*.

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'A spirited and highly accomplished novel, done with the most engaging liveliness and intelligence.' *Times*

'A rueful, cheerfully savage novel...lit with unearthly fires and enchantments.' *New York Times*

'The grace and wit of his best writing, the subtlety with which he captures social nuances, and his placing of intimate family dramas against a broader social background, make Boyd quite individual as an Australian novelist.' *Australian*

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