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Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert

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Phyllis Shand Allfrey: A Caribbean Life Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert
Phyllis Shand Allfrey is the first biography of one of the Caribbean's most intriguing writers and politicians. Allfrey (1908-1986) is best known as the author of The Orchid House, a fictionalized account of her early life that was turned into a highly acclaimed film for British television. Born to a prominent family of formerly wealthy sugar planters in Dominica, Allfrey followed an unexpected path: a rising novelist (who is often paired with Jean Rhys in critical discussion) and Fabian socialist in England and the United States, she returned to Dominica to organize the peasantry and estate workers into the island's first political party. Ostracized by the white elite into which she was born, she led the Dominica Labour party to power and became the West Indian Federation's only woman (and only white) minister, only to find herself expelled from the party when the rise of black nationalism made it expedient. The biography recreates Allfrey's life as it unfolds against the background of twentieth-century Caribbean political and literary history, from the decline of the planter class through the rise of party politics and the efforts to join the anglophone West Indies into a federation, to the troubled sixties and seventies, decades marked by racial violence and the emergence of the former British territories from colonial control. This volume includes five autobiographical stories that have long been out of print.

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