

FAGYAS, Mary

Dance of the Assassins

By M. Fagyas.
383 pp. New York:
G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$7.95.

The assassination of King Alexander of Serbia and Queen Draga was a particularly atrocious job of work in a country that had had enough practice at regicide to have done better. After dancing the kola and getting stoned on *klevovacha*, a mob of soldiers invaded the *Konak*. Thereupon they shot, hacked and stomped the royal couple, and flung them still alive out of a *Konak* window. (This was an Obrenovich Alexander, not to be confused with the two Alexanders of the Karageorgevich dynasty, one of whom was also assassinated.)

The year is 1903, the threshold of the Balkan War and the incredible intrigue leading to the climactic assassination at Sarajevo. Marie Fagyas, widow of the playwright Ladislaus Bush-Fekete, is deeply into Balkan trivia and the Serbian mystique that helped to set off World War I, and she has tucked into this mess of monarchic politics the unhappy love story of Alexander and Draga—a kind of mini-Mayerling. The novel hinges on 24 hours in the life of one of the plotters; every conspiratorial moment counts.

N.Y. Times Book Review
1974 Jan. 6.