

**CATHI  
UNSWORTH  
WITHOUT  
THE  
MOON**



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## PROLOGUE

*Monday, 27 April 1942*

Greenaway stood on Waterloo Bridge, breathing in the London night. Above his head, searchlights criss-crossed the sky in broad, geometric sweeps, cutting through the clouds and illuminating the dome of St Paul's Cathedral like some vast modernist artwork, created by the forces of war. Below his feet, heedless of all conflict, the ancient Thames roiled on.

Greenaway's gaze rested beyond the horizon of the blacked-out city and back through time. For two unrelenting weeks this past February, he had chased a pair of killers through the unlit streets of the capital, from bedsit rooms in Paddington and Soho, through Brick Lane barbershops to the place where he now stood – a bridge being constructed even as bombs fell all around it. The carnage he had witnessed flowed through his mind in crimson waves: he had not seen the like of it since he had served his country in the last war. The bitter irony being that both the men he pursued were trained killers – Allied servicemen who used their skills not against the enemy but on the easiest of prey – the women who worked London's streets.

As a Detective Chief Inspector, it had been Greenaway's

task not just to catch these men but also to make sure that justice was done. Today he had failed in that duty. Only one of them was now due his rightful date with the hangman. The other was free, out there somewhere in the dark, with plenty more victims to choose from. Never before had Greenaway arrested a villain who had not been duly sentenced, but today had made a mockery of him. Which was why he had returned here. His ingrained knowledge of the criminal mind and its habitual quirks that so often overruled common sense told him that the killer might just do the same. So he watched and he waited.

Greenaway did not allow himself to think beyond what could happen next. Like everything else today, he faced territory previously unknown. He could only trust that when the moment came, the right instincts would prevail.

He looked down at his hands, began to rub them together. As he did, he caught something out of the corner of his eye. The thin beam of light from a torch, bouncing a trail along the side of the bridge. A figure behind it, coming his way.

Greenaway took a deep breath. His nemesis strolled towards him.

PART ONE

HUSH, HUSH, HUSH,  
HERE COMES THE BOGEYMAN

# 1

## MOOD INDIGO

*Friday, 19 December 1941*

“What’s it say, Duch?”

The Duchess could smell her before she even heard the soft footfall, felt the weight of hands on the back of her chair. The scent of soap and violets.

Lil’s peroxide curls brushed against her companion’s cheek as she leant down beside her. The table was set for afternoon tea, in all the Duchess’s finery – a silver pot engraved with an Oriental dragon, matching sugar bowl and tongs, hand-painted Japanese cups of exquisite delicacy – all throwbacks to an era long departed, a way of life neither of these two women would ever know.

Beside them, today’s copy of the *Daily Herald* screamed headlines of German retreat from Moscow and Leningrad. But these had been folded beneath an advertisement, ringed around in pencil, reminding readers that the paper’s most celebrated journalist, Mr Hannen Swaffer, would be lecturing tonight at the Christian Spiritualist Greater World Association, Notting Hill Gate. A gas lamp of similar vintage to the crockery, shaded in engraved pink glass, emitted a rose glow across the blacked-out parlour. Al Bowlly, by



now a ghost himself, crooned on from beyond through the radiogram.

Outside the windows, the traffic of Praed Street rumbled along as the dim remains of the afternoon shaded into evening. The heels of commuters scuffled and clacked their way towards Paddington, guided by the thin beams of torches and the shouts of newspaper vendors at the station gates. Just around the corner, in their rooms at the top of the mews, Duch and Lil were cocooned from all that; the rest of the world passed by as if it might have been a dream.

Duch's lashes flickered as she inhaled Lil's scent, the calling card of a profession that linked them to the time when their tableware was new. It was the first thing Duch had ever noticed about Lil, before she even turned to see her face – that beautiful, aquiline profile and those dark brown eyes that made her think of an Egyptian queen, and the shining silvery sea of curls that foamed around her shoulders – what had attracted her in an instant. Duch considered it her fate to protect this girl, young enough to be her daughter, as well as serve her. Even if the tea leaves kept telling her otherwise.

“Will he be all right?” As usual, Lil was not thinking of herself.

Duch's eyes rested on the speckled whorls while her gaze reached beyond, summoning instead the features of the man she knew resided in Lil's mind's eye.

He was handsome, all right. So handsome he could have been in the pictures, one of those dark-haired, chisel-jawed men who wore his trilby at an angle and his mac folded over his arm, shrouded in the smoke of cigarettes and his own intensity as he chased the likes of Jimmy Cagney across the big screen. This one wasn't quite a private eye though. He was

a journalist, on the *Evening Sentinel* – or a *crime reporter*, as he liked to put it. His byline read Frank Power, but he wanted you to call him Tom. A man who liked to live two lives, Duch thought, and this was what unnerved her.

They'd first met him in a club in Archer Street, the sort of place where all the Little Caesars of London, the bogeys from the Yard who pursued them, and the inky-fingered hacks who took it all down, rubbed up together of an evening. He'd lit Lil's cigarette for her, stared into her eyes, breathed in the scent of violets and completed the trajectory of his doubles in the cinema – fallen hard for the wrong sort of dame.

Duch couldn't really blame Lil – there'd been times she'd been no better herself for keeping the wrong sort of company. But there was this strange sort of innocence about the girl, despite the number of men who, on any other day, would have been steaming through this parlour and into the boudoir beyond, faster than the punters at Paddington rushing for their trains. Or maybe it was because of it. Lil went at her work like it was a vocation – Duch had never met a girl before who was so popular, so good at making most every kind of man feel happy – except for him, of course.

“Vocation” was a word Tom Power might have used himself, being as he was a Roman, but he couldn't understand that part of Lil. He kept on wanting to save her, and Duch had been worried, for as long as the affair had been going on, that he might just end up succeeding.

Then he'd got his call-up papers. He was being shipped out tomorrow, his regiment posted all the way to Africa. For all Lil knew, this night could be their last, and her anxiousness transmitted itself as she rested her hand on Duch's elbow, as palpable as an electric current running between them.

Duch exhaled slowly, trying not to take the tension into herself. She knew what she said next must be spun with the utmost care. Lil put a lot of store in what the tea leaves, the tarot and Mr Hannen Swaffer said – and the skill with which her red-haired maid with the green gypsy eyes relayed it to her. All Duch had to do was soothe her friend, repeat how the lines entwined in tiny flecks on the china represented two lives that could not be parted, that this was only a separation and not an ending. Make it sound convincing, keep Lil happy for as long as she pined for her Fleet Street player, while at the same time hoping that for all their sakes this wouldn't really come true, that Lil would soon get bored with waiting and Tom Power would not be back this way again.

Even if the tea leaves kept telling her otherwise.

- . -

Under the clouds that blotted out the moon, across the rooftops where the fire-watchers waited, around Piccadilly Circus and into a narrow thoroughfare just behind, was the club where Lil had met Tom.

*Entre Nous*, read a small brass plaque by the side of the front door.

Leaning against the bar, Detective Chief Inspector Edward Greenaway wore a frown. In the bevelled mirror behind the optics he could see an assortment of familiar faces milling in the opposite corner of the room: men in handmade suits and women swathed in mink, all dressed as if for Ascot on a Friday night in Soho. By his side, Scotland Yard Chief Commander Peter Beverley studied the form of this little parade with a benign smile, matching memorised descriptions of stolen property to the coats, stoles and

jewellery currently on display, and planning forthcoming pinches like chess moves. It was a ritual that the two of them would have followed up on together until recently, Greenaway being Beverley's former second-in-command. But the pained expression worn by the newly promoted DCI was not caused by the conspicuous consumption of the Archer Street clientele. It was the racket emanating from the piano, where a tall, gaunt man with a shock of white hair was loudly revisiting his youth.

*"Live for tonight!"* bellowed Hannen Swaffer, long fingers attacking the ivories. *"And scorn the morning's care/Are not the wine-flasks full, the women fair?"*

Greenaway caught the barman's eye, asked for a large Scotch.

*"Evening's for drinking and for making love,"* Fleet Street's finest continued, his mind back in the Roaring Twenties and the music halls where he had once performed. *"And not for asking How and wond'ring Where."*

"Cheers," Greenaway handed his change across the bar, picked up the glass and said to Beverley: "Think this might shut him up?"

Beverley chuckled. "You can try," he said.

Greenaway crossed the small dance floor, plonked the whisky down on top of the piano as Swaffer trilled out a triumphant arpeggio.

"Dear boy!" the journalist greeted him.

"Swaff," nodded Greenaway, offering his cigarette case in a further attempt to distract attention. The flare of a Ronson lit up cadaverous features, the face of a Victorian undertaker. By contrast, Greenaway's own countenance was that of a sleepy boxer, his heavy lidded brown eyes camouflaging the restless

intelligence that sparked behind them. The two men studied each other briefly. Swaffer spoke first.

“How goes life on the Murder Squad?” he asked. “Got used to it yet? Or are you still longing for the great outdoors?” His grey eyes sparked like flints in the candlelit gloom of their basement surrounds.

Greenaway flicked a glance to the swells in the corner, the remnants of one of the racetrack gangs that had recently been interned for their Italian heritage. Throughout the Thirties, Greenaway had pursued the London triumvirate of Elephant Boys, Sabinis and Yiddishers across the nation’s turf, a sporting life that had suited him just fine. But the war had changed all that. The Elephant Boys and the Sabinis had dispersed, their leaders respectively fleeing to America or locked up on the Isle of Man. The Yiddishers, with whom Greenaway went back furthest, had found the privations of war limited their gaming endeavours, so had turned their skills to bank robbery. But the spectacular backfiring of a daylight heist had brought their leader Sammy Lehmann to book and since then, with so many younger officers volunteering, Greenaway’s superiors had decided his talents would be better spent investigating murders. He missed the Flying Squad.

“I don’t need your help with the Ouija board yet,” he said.

“Ah,” Swaffer touched the side of his nose conspiratorially. “But you’re still not comfortable with it, are you, confined to barracks on Tottenham Court Road?” His fingers danced across the keyboard, nicotine-stained dabs plucking out the first few notes of “The Camptown Races”. The occupants of the club began to dance, the women twirling their stoles, the men mimicking the actions of jockeys on their horses, all smiling and gesticulating in Greenaway’s direction.

“You got me,” said Greenaway, wanting to put an end to that number before it went any further. But Swaffer stopped of his own accord.

“Tell me,” he said, modifying the volume of his plummy tones, “one of your former colleagues from those halcyon days, a certain Ross Spooner – I gather he’s been seconded to the Ministry?”

Greenaway shrugged. “I know they had him up the Scrubs, going through files of enemy infiltrators, at one point.” He raised his pint to his lips. “Things could be worse than the Murder Squad, I s’pose.”

“A little bird told me,” said Swaffer, “he’s got a comfortable berth for himself, under the wing of the Chief. Bright boy, is he?”

Greenaway summoned Spooner’s face to mind, a pale oval, dominated by wire-rimmed spectacles, fringed with unruly red hair. Unlike himself, Spooner was not a man of action. He was the type that went through files and phonebooks with a magnifying glass, joining the dots to make a case watertight. The type that was just right for MI5. He wondered where this was going and who Swaff’s informant might be. The old devil always hinted at powerful sources within the establishment, from Churchill himself to his former employer, the deceased Lord Northcliffe, with whom he still claimed to be in constant communication.

“Apparently there’s some funny business going on down in Plymouth,” Swaffer went on. “The Chief’s on his way down there now. Have you heard anything about it? I wondered if he’d taken young Spooner with him?”

Greenaway frowned, shook his head. “How d’you reckon I’d know a thing like that, Swaff?” he said. “Spooner ain’t really a close pal of mine, you know.”