

The House With the Stained Glass Windows by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd.)

A story, like this one, in which several murders and other crimes are marshalled and all exposed at once, could scarcely fail to prove a thriller. An attempt by a guardian to drive his ward mad, because he had embezzled her large fortune, and the strange happenings in a big, old-fashioned country house, are portrayed vividly, but some of the incidents are too extravagant to be convincing.

The Adelaide Chronicle, 17 January 1935

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Whether or not this is Mr. Graham's first excursion into this realm of fiction, one is not sure, but he certainly has all the tricks of the trade, using that phrase in no derogatory sense. He writes vividly and briskly. It is an exciting tale right from the first chapter to the last. Altogether a thoroughly competent piece of work.

Excerpt from a review (date unknown) in *The Scotsman*

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"THE HOUSE WITH THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS" by Winston Graham (Messrs. Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd., 7/6 net) offers reading of a very thrilling character, and those who have a liking for tales of the "creepy" order will find plenty to their taste here. Weird happenings in the dead of night find a prominent place in the scheme of things, and the story is well worked out. It did not occur to Richard Egerton that the specialist who examined him and gave him but six weeks to live might be mistaken. Dick argued that life, being so brief, should be lived dangerously. An opportunity for knight-errantry presenting itself, he seized it. As a matter of fact, the man who delivered the fateful edict was an imposter, but adventures and sensational experiences follow in quick succession.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 2 November 1934

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Anyone who bags [The House With The Stained Glass Windows by Winston Graham, Ward Lock, 7s 6d] is assured of ... exhilarating reading. There were mysterious and criminal ongoing in the house - with the stained glass windows and a ghost chamber - where a gang tried to drive an heiress to insanity and thus rob her of a fortune. But they reckoned without two detectives who had "wangled" their way into the house party. And chiefly their machinations were frustrated by a young fellow who, having been told that he could not hope to survive heart trouble for more than six weeks, performed much knight-errantry for the girl in the case.

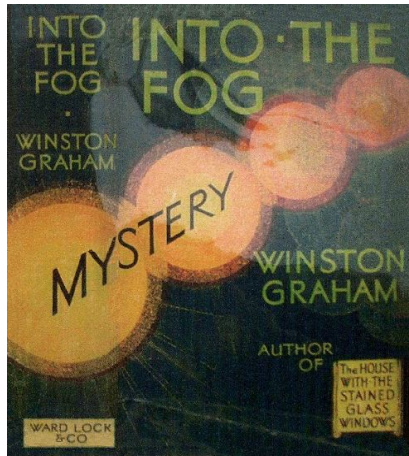
The Aberdeen Journal, 29 October 1934

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Excerpt from an ad in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 18 May 1946, placed by DAVID JONES' SELF-SELECTION BOOK SHOP, Lower Ground Floor, Elizabeth Street Store. The text re *Ross Poldark* reads:

"ROSS POLDARK," by Winston Graham, is a novel of 18th Century Cornwall. It recreates the period with rare success, but is chiefly a novel of people, and of Ross Poldark, whose story brings life and movement to every page.



Into The Fog by Winston Graham

A MYSTERY STORY

Winston Graham has written what will prove a popular mystery thriller in "Into The Fog." Anthony Craig meets Miss Eline Vincent when motoring in a thick Cornwall fog. He receives a rude shock a short time afterwards, when, on coming across her car again, he is just in time to see her kidnapped. Her attackers have to move slowly in the fog, and Craig is able to follow them to a large country home. Here, in due course, he makes contact with a gang, of which Rev. Frayne is the leader. He also finds that Miss Vincent's brother, a Scotland yard detective, had been murdered by the gang, and that Miss Vincent had been decoyed, and was likely to meet a similar fate. To tell more of the plot might spoil an exciting story. There is plenty of action and no lack of tense situations.

Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners' Advocate, 10 May 1935

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Into The Fog

ART OF THRILLING ~ Winston Graham Has It

Many an author has set out to write a thriller, and after succeeding reasonably well for the first few chapters has fallen down on the job. Mr. Winston Graham, however, is too experienced for this, and as a result his latest novel, "Into The Fog," which has just been published by Ward, Lock & Co. (London and Melbourne) is a welcome addition to the book shelves.

The theme is simple and perhaps well worn, but that does not matter. Anthony Craig, motoring through Cornwall in a fog, sees a girl kidnapped. Most of us would probably have contented ourselves with getting in touch with the local police, and have left it at that. But heroes in novels never see the thing in that light. At any rate, Anthony Craig did not. He followed the girl and her captors to a lonely house. There he forced his way into a cellar where his first encounter was with the corpse of an obviously murdered man.

Just as obviously you and I would have turned back at this stage, and, despite our earlier enthusiasm for adventure, gone in search of the policeman we had ignored at the outset. Not so Anthony. He went right ahead, and forced his way into the house, and, of course, was taken prisoner by the crooks who have kidnapped the girl.

In reading the book I naturally expected that Anthony would fight his way out, and in this I was not disappointed. But Mr. Graham does not make the thing as simple as all that. Many a novelist at this stage would have called in Scotland Yard, and worked to a tame finish. Mr. Graham, however, knows better than that, and for many a chapter thereafter he kept me on tenterhooks - in fact, I switched out the light at 5 a. m. before I reached the distressing word "finis."

There is an art in making the hair on the back of one's head stand up, and this author knows all about it. It is a long time, for instance, since I have been so absorbed as I was in the desperate climb of Anthony Craig up the face of the Cornish cliff, which was his only way back to rescue the girl of the fog. Mr. Graham has the art of suspense at his command, and before he allowed me to read of the final downfall of that unusual crook, the Rev. Paul Frayne, he gave me many a bad moment.

T.D.H., Launceston Examiner, 27 April 1935

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"INTO THE FOG" by Winston Graham (Messrs Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd., 7/6 net) is a fast-moving story, written with considerable skill by the author of "The House With the Stained Glass Windows," which was favourably commented upon in this column. When passing through Cornwall in a motor car, Anthony Craig sees a girl kidnapped, and he follows the girl and her captors to a lonely house. He forces his way into the house, where he encounters the corpse of an obviously-murdered man. From this point onwards, the story develops with rare power, and the novel is well suited to the leisure hour.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 29 March 1935

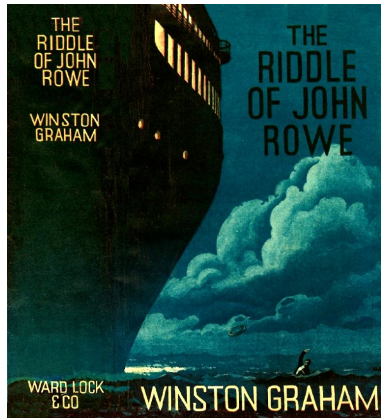
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INTO THE FOG by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock and Co.)

'Into the Fog' bears all the hallmarks of a most successful mystery yarn. There is an excellent plot, an air of mystery that grips one from the start and a pleasant love interest which make a delightful combination. Anthony Craig, returning to London through a dense fog, follows the car of a girl who appears to know the way. He sees her kidnapped on a lonely stretch of road, and in following to rescue her, he falls into an amazing adventure, and barely escapes alive. Mr. Graham's yarn of crooks and crookedness is extremely well told.

The Brisbane Courier Mail, 1 June 1935

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The Riddle of John Rowe by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock & Co.)

Winston Graham's story concerns the lives of two young men brought up together, but born in different stations. When the son of the erstwhile gardener succeeded in marrying the girl the other desired a feud resulted. The bridegroom, on the honeymoon, went missing from the ship - fallen overboard was the verdict - and the widow eventually married her other suitor. Then, years afterwards, the husband got blackmailing letters from the dead man - or supposedly dead man - accusing him of the crime. Mr. Graham has imagined a most intriguing situation.

The Brisbane Courier-Mail, 8 February 1936

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There is not much doubt that most readers of light books will enjoy this story, with its excitement, romance, adventure, and unexpected thrills. It would be unfair to call it a thriller solely, but it has the merits of such, with some others of its own. Beginning with a feud between two men, one the son of a wealthy baronet, and the other his adopted son, it leads to rivalry between them to win Marguerite Staines. What this produces will provide the reader with a good deal of interesting matter in which the developments are unexpected. Murder enters into the later phases of the story, and further romance, and with a good deal of action it moves to a reasonable finish that will satisfy most people. On the whole, a good tale.

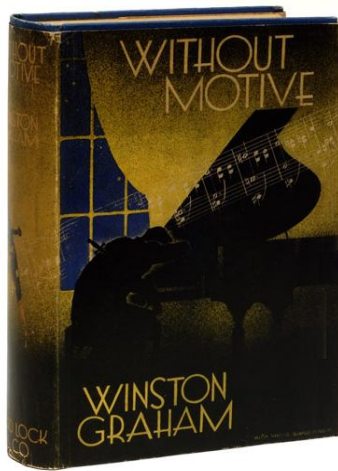
The Hobart Mercury, 1 February 1936

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This is a clever murder mystery of the confuse! type. There were fourteen persons on board the small yacht Scylla - six passengers, one servant, and a crew of seven. They were well out to sea when Arnold Gresham, the owner, was found poisoned. Professor Crabtree, one of the passengers, took up the role of detective, and though his methods were unorthodox, he got the results. As a background there is related the bitter feud between Gresham and John Rowe and the supposed tragedy which resulted. This story will keep you guessing right to the end.

The Aberdeen Journal, 30 October 1935

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"Without Motive" by Winston Graham. Ward, Lock and Co., London. 7/6d

All Mr. Graham's mystery stories are distinguished by soundness of plot and careful workmanship. In his new book he has selected a sinister setting for a decidedly macabre tale - a house, not particularly old in itself, but built on the foundations of an ancient abbey with a grim legend attaching to its past history. One of the members of a weekend house party at Rackford School is murdered, apparently without the smallest motive, and the headmaster of the school, Philip Stanton, takes upon himself the onus of the crime. The mystery is finally resolved when Colonel Clay, Chairman of the School's Board of Governors, stages a reconstruction scene at Rackford, at which the same members of the party are present, with the exception, of course, of Philip Stanton; and after a denouement in which the reader is held in hardly bearable suspense, the secret motive of the murder is revealed according to an entirely plausible chain of circumstances.

The West Australian, 10 October 1936

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"WITHOUT MOTIVE" by Winston Graham (Messrs Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd., 7/6 net) is a mystery story, fashioned on original lines, and characterised by that skilful style of writing that ensured success for earlier books by this author such as "The House with the Stained Glass Windows," "Into The Fog," and "The Riddle of John Rowe." In this latest novel by Mr. Graham we have the problem not so much of discovering the person who actually committed a murder but of fathoming the apparent lack of motive. The author deals with this situation in a manner that sustains the interest of the reader from beginning to end, and there is a fascinating atmosphere about the way in which the story is developed. Winston Graham never allows the interest to flag, and his characters are delineated with power and skill. Vividly and briskly the plot is unfolded, and it is safe to say that those who have been thrilled by the previous novels for which this author has been responsible will find "Without Motive" well up to the high standard set by them.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 1 May 1936

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Winston Graham has produced a very readable novel in "**The Dangerous Pawn.**" Opening in colorful Burma, one witnesses the smashing of an engineer who, for the moment, thought more of philandering than certain ominous cracks that appeared in the banks of a river. Result: flooding of many miles of country, loss of life, end of romance, and the exit of a civil engineer. From Burma the reader is brought to London, where the hero undertakes the duties of secretary to a rather eccentric and wealthy man who rents an island in the Scillies and goes to live there with a very charming wife - and his secretary. From that part of the story to the finish the "eternal triangle" is evident, and is dealt with ably by the author. Mr. Graham draws some very fine pen pictures of the Scilly Isles, Burma, and Hongkong, which raises the story from the ranks of the average novel and makes it free of dullness.

("The Dangerous Pawn," by Winston Graham. Publishers: Ward, Lock & Co., London and Melbourne.)

The Perth Sunday Times, 25 April 1937

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'The Dangerous Pawn' by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock & Co.)

David Ashton has made his way to a position of responsibility as an engineer in connection with a water conservation scheme in India. But, through his negligence, a dam is destroyed, a large tract of country inundated, and two men killed. David resigns his post and the story follows his subsequent career for some years. The plot is cleverly conceived and the incidents are narrated with due attention to detail.

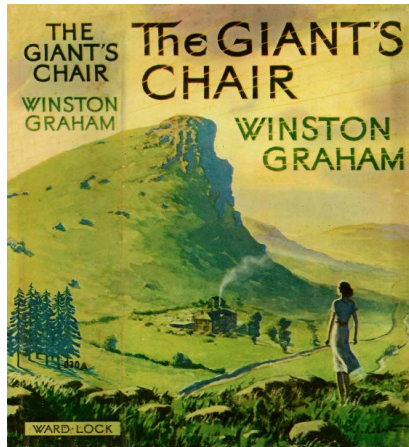
Adelaide Chronicle, 19 August 1937

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The author is skilful in illustrating the combined weakness and charm of his hero. Most of the action takes place in the Scillies, and what readers, I think, will most remember is the sense of the islands themselves, their loneliness and wildness and menace.

Howard Spring, The Evening Standard, date unknown (excerpt)

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'The Giant's Chair' by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock)

Faced with the necessity of earning her own living, Norah Faulkner gladly accepts the offer of a secretarial post with a woman she knows and likes. But in the lonely house where her duties begin, she is caught up in a swiftly moving drama which has no real connection with her, yet of which she becomes the all-important centre. It's an exciting tale.

Adelaide Chronicle, 7 April 1938

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"The Giant's Chair" by Winston Graham (London : Ward Lock, 7s 6d)

Norah Faulkner accepts a secretarial post with a woman she has already met and liked. But when she arrives at the lonely house to commence her duties she finds herself being used as a tool by Mrs. Syme in some deep game she is playing. Norah finds an ally in Christopher Carew, a visitor to the district, and between them they succeed in defeating Mrs. Syme's sinister designs.

The Dundee Courier, 23 June 1938

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The heroine of "The Giant's Chair," by Winston Graham (Ward Lock. 7s 6d.), in order to earn her living takes a secretarial post with a woman she has met by chance on a train. She took a good deal for granted. Events move rapidly after she goes to the lonely house in Wales - and the atmosphere is well portrayed.

This story is full of improbabilities, but the reader who likes excitement may swallow it with pleasure. The reader will need to keep his wits about him to follow the intrigue and incidents, which are many and various. But some readers like to be kept "on edge" and to them we could recommend "The Giant's Chair."

E.M., The Western Morning News, 17 February 1938

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This is a curious book, for its opening chapters lead one to anticipate some weird supernatural happenings. Everything is set for such a sequel. The wild, rugged Welsh background, the repelling mountain, "The Giant's Chair," the uncanny atmosphere of the house in which Nora Faulkner has come to act as secretary to a middle-aged woman, and the curious ways of the dwellers in the house give the reader an idea that something evil outside human understanding lurks within the house. As the story proceeds the author's idea becomes plain, and although the plot works out in a different manner to that which may be anticipated, the theme is a dramatic one, and the reader's interest is effectively held.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 21 January 1938

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'Keys of Chance' by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock)

An aeroplane carrying an important financial mission to France is wrecked off the French coast. Two years later a medium at a seance claims to be in touch with one of the victims, who asserts that the crash was due to sabotage. Mary Seymour finds herself thrust into the centre of the unusual situation resulting; and from that moment - when the story opens - events move with increasing momentum and with a sense of the inevitable towards a dramatic climax. This story has mystery and excitement; but the sensitive treatment of the romance running through it entitles it to be considered also, as a 'straight' novel.

Adelaide Chronicle, 23 March 1939

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Keys of Chance

SWIFT-MOVING, this story has all the qualifications of the thriller judiciously mixed with the merits of the straight novel. The plot combines the excitement of a crashing plane with the mystery of an informative medium and the romance of a sensitively treated love affair. An aeroplane, carrying a most important financial mission from England, is wrecked on the French coast. Two years later a medium, claiming to be in touch with the spirit of one of the victims, asserts that the tragedy was the outcome of sabotage. From this point the narrative rapidly gathers momentum, and, like most of Winston .Graham's books, is full of unexpected twists and fillips to the imagination.

("Keys of Chance" by Winston Graham. Publishers: Ward, Lock and Co. Ltd.)

The Perth Sunday Times, 19 February 1939

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"Keys of Chance" by Winston Graham (Messrs Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd., 7/6 net)

There is no lack of exciting incident in this story, the plot being worthy of an accomplished author, who may always be relied upon to provide entertaining reading. Those who have read such good stories as "The House with the Stained Glass Windows,"

"Into The Fog," and "The Riddle of John Rowe," will appreciate the power and virility that impart such charm to Winston Graham's novels, and in "Keys of Chance" we have a tale that maintains in every way the high standard of previous efforts from this talented writer. Mystery and excitement are here in plenty, and there is also running through the book a neat romance, treated with considerable skill. The whole leads up to a dramatic climax. An aeroplane crash with a suggestion of sabotage, a seance, in which a medium claims to be in touch with one of the victims of the disaster, and many other intriguing situations, ensure a quick-moving story, and there is little doubt that "Keys of Chance" will increase still further the already large circle of readers who admire the works of Winston Graham.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 13 January 1939

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A fine blend of excitement and mystery, and the treatment of the romance that runs through it is very well dealt with. The characters of the book are so real that it is exceedingly difficult for one to cease reading until the dramatic climax is reached.

Excerpt from a review (date unknown) in The Sussex Daily News

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From the beginning there is the sense of confounding issues, and the reader becomes so intrigued that he knows no peace until light begins to dawn. There is not a dull moment in the whole book.

Excerpt from a review (date unknown) in The Daily Telegraph

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One of the newest novels of the New Year is "Keys of Chance" by Winston Graham. The book is a good type of the modern novel, and teems with thrilling situations and mysterious happenings. The author skilfully brings his plot to a pleasingly dramatic end.

The Cornishman, 19 January 1939

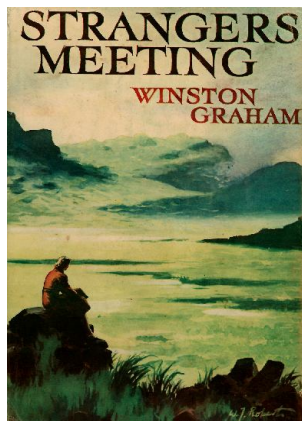
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"Keys of Chance" by Winston Graham (London : Ward Lock, 7s 6d).

Mary Seymour tries to bring to justice the men who were responsible for the air disaster in which her father was killed. She is helped in this by Bill Raymond, but circumstances lead her to think he is really in league with the crooks. How she gets to the bottom of the mystery provides an interesting detective story in which a touch of spiritualism is introduced.

The Dundee Courier, 15 April 1939

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Romance, Pathos and Psychology

"STRANGERS MEETING" by Winston Graham, is a novel of unusual interest, and probably the best work yet by this author. Although only a young man, Mr. Graham has been rather a prolific writer, such books as "The House with the Stained Glass Windows," "The Riddle of John Rowe" and "Keys of Chance" having received extremely favorable comment in both hemispheres.

Although "Strangers Meeting" is not in the category of problem novels, it is a book that calls for profound thinking by the reader.

The story opens on board Mr. Patrick Bluyfont's steam yacht, with Table Mountain as a background. There is a party in honor of the twenty-first birthday of Mr. Bluyfont's daughter, Leila.

It is at this party that Susan Grey, a fairly well-to-do orphan, meets Gerald Tollis, thirty-five, South African farmer with definite charm of manner.

The scene then rapidly moves to England, Where Susan Grey and her fiancé, Gerald Tollis, are spending a holiday with Susan's half-sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John Herridge.

In the quaint old Cornish fishing village where they are holidaying, come several people of different walks of social life. There is Peter Crane, poet, who is suffering the after effects of a serious illness. He is certainly one of the most colourful characters in the book. Then there are "Mr. and Mrs." William Fawcett, in reality Mr. William Fawcett, a fairly wealthy manufacturer, and Sheila Thompson, one of his employees, who has decided to fling her cap over the windmill for three weeks of "freedom."

These vastly differing people make excellent ingredients for Mr. Graham's novel, and out of the casual contacts he makes surprising results spring, the while keeping what one could rightly call a magic touch with his readers.

Complications

Between Peter Crane and Sheila springs up a mutual understanding and sympathy, during which Sheila tells Peter that Fawcett is not her husband. Peter's reactions to this information are cleverly portrayed by the author.

Then there are distinct complications which at times threaten disaster, but which must be left to the author to straighten out in his own way.

"Strangers Meeting" may justly be termed one of the best novels of the year. Winston Graham has not overdrawn his characters, and has definitely given us new angles to psychology.

"Dilettante," Perth Sunday Times, 14 April 1940

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In the very capable hands of the talented author, the various characters are exceptionally well delineated and are drawn in such an attractive manner that STRANGERS MEETING should be one of Winston Graham's most popular and engrossing novels, and should add considerably to his already great popularity with the reading public.

Excerpt from a review (date unknown) in The Cork Examiner

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"STRANGERS MEETING" by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock & Co., 3/6).

An unusual story is that which Mr. Graham tells us amid a Cornish setting. Seven people come to spend a holiday in a little seaside village, and romance and mystery are well intermingled in an absorbing manner. The author develops the story in interesting fashion, and shows his talent in drawing characters, each of whom has individuality. "Strangers Meeting" is sure to interest, for the manner in which Mr. Graham has written it is so convincing. Peter Crane, John and his wife, Mr. Fawcett and Sheila, Susan and Gerald, to mention the chief characters, are cleverly handled. The mystery is there, and though things may not be fully explained, the reader will have little difficulty in solving it when the end of the book is reached.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 20 October 1939

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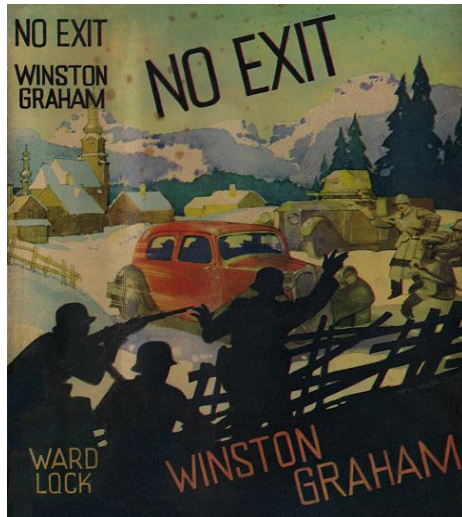
"STRANGERS MEETING" by Winston Graham (Ward Lock)

WHEN the heroine of Mr. Winston Graham's new novel returned to England to visit her step-sister she was accompanied by her fiance, a farmer from South Africa. From the moment they join the family party in a Cornish village dissension raises its head, and the holiday ends with the death of the girl's fiance. But in the meantime a happy family has almost been ruined.

How the tragedy was prevented, and why it should have been a tragedy, makes a quietly exciting yarn, while the denouement is unexpected and dramatic.

The Brisbane Courier-Mail, 23 March 1940

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No Exit by Winston Graham (Ward Lock's Colonial Library)

Tales With Action

Some of the best thrillers and spy stories are written round the unsuspecting amateur who unwittingly becomes involved in affairs far removed from his normal mode of life and, finding his acquired knowledge either dangerous or profitable, has to fight like a tiger to survive.

John Carr is a quiet and decent Englishman on business for his firm in Bucharest, but he stumbles on some secrets which involve him in the most exciting three weeks of his life. He becomes so annoyed with a certain gang of agents in Rumania that consenting to aid their enemies actively is easy to him. Then he finds that his adventures carry him farther North, and the last scene of his unexpected spy career sees him escaping across the Austrian-Hungarian frontier with three other refugees, hotly pursued by carloads of brown-shirted Nazis.

The author gives life and personality to his characters, and the action is fast and furious. The picture of John Carr gradually warming up into an astute and determined "antic," is excellently done and the plot throughout is kept clear and decisive. Mr. Winston Graham tells an excellent story.

The Straits Times, 6 October 1940

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Winston Graham in **No Exit** (Ward Lock, 7/6) spins a captivating yarn concerning the adventures that overtook Carr, an English engineer, who had gone to Bucharest on business and who unwittingly found himself embroiled in political intrigue of the gravest kind - all through decoding a message Morsed over a water-tap in his hotel and following up the funeral of an unknown man.

Events inveigled him to visit Prague just as the rape of Czecho-Slovakia was taking place, the bearer of a document which proved to be a list of prominent Czech citizens whom the Germans had marked down to be "liquidated."

Soon, for Carr and two companions, there was seemingly to be no exit to safety. The author, however, devises for the trio who become the principals of the story a most adventurous escape from pursuing Nazis to Poland. The story has a convincing ring about it and is well garnished with such elements as mystery, espionage, bravery and ruthlessness.

The Aberdeen Journal, 24 July 1940

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John Carr was an engineer on business in Bucharest but strange things were happening at his hotel and he became curious, with the result that he excited the interest of the Nazis in that city. He travelled to Prague and became involved in stranger happenings concerning the Nazis who had just taken over the rest of Czechoslovakia. Owing to an unfortunate incident Carr had to get out of the country, which he accomplished with other refugees.

This is the story unfolded by Winston Graham in "No Exit." The author's brisk style is easy to read and he does not allow an uninteresting moment from the beginning to the end. It is published by Ward, Lock and Co., London.

The Perth Sunday Times, 25 August 1940

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No Exit by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock, London)

An English engineer, on business in Bucharest, becomes involved in matters far removed from commerce. He receives a message from an unknown source, attends the funeral of a man he has never seen, and is made the unwitting bearer of important tidings to a capital further north. But there his difficulties only begin, and he narrowly escapes with his life in a thrilling and adventurous climax.

The Adelaide Chronicle, 3 October 1940

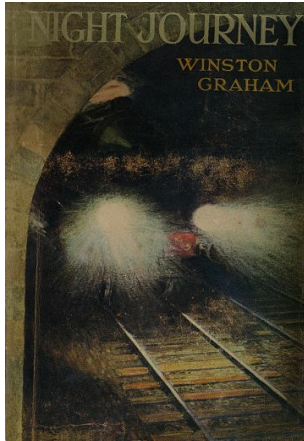
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"No Exit" by Winston Graham (Messrs Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd., 7/6 net)

This is another rattling good story by an author who knows how to pack the maximum amount of thrilling adventure into every chapter. Those who remember "The House with the Stained Glass Windows" and other fascinating novels that have come from the pen of Winston Graham will appreciate that they are in for good entertainment when it is stated that "No Exit" compares favourably with the work that this writer has already to his credit. An English engineer, on business in Bucharest, finds himself involved in strange adventures, and he has many narrow escapes during the difficult situations in which he finds himself. Winston Graham has worked out the plot with characteristic ability, and the book should make a popular appeal.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 2 August 1940

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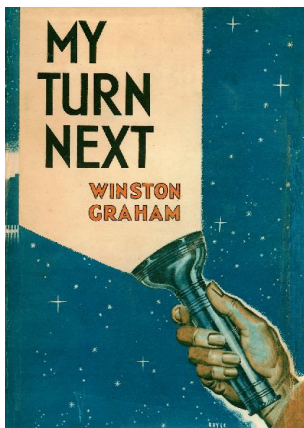


***Night Journey* by Winston Graham**

Secret service story of the present War which grips throughout.

The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 12 December 1941

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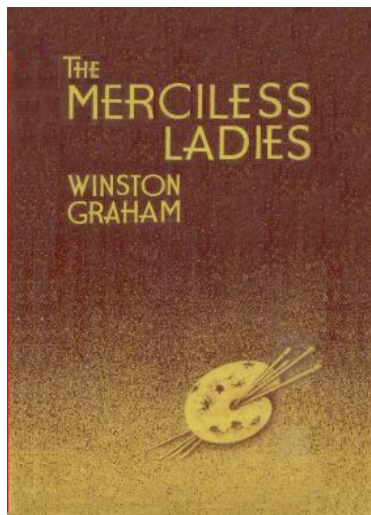


***My Turn Next* by Winston Graham**

A distinctive type of mystery story with an unusually effective love interest.

The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 24 July 1942

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"The Merciless Ladies" (Ward, Lock & Co., 8/6 net) is a long novel by Winston Graham, which grips the imagination at the outset and holds it with increasing interest to the dramatic end. It tells of the rise of a young artist to fame and his fight for an ideal. A broken marriage and a new romance are skilfully woven into the thread of the story, and readers will be quite as interested in the life of the artist's friend as in that of either of the others. Incidentally the power of a woman's hate adds to the forcefulness of an unusual book by this capable writer.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 11 February 1944

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That success is "a beautiful merciless lady with a knack of destroying those she accepts as lovers" proves almost completely true in the case of Paul Stafford, a talented young portrait painter whose work commanded much attention and lucrative fees until ...

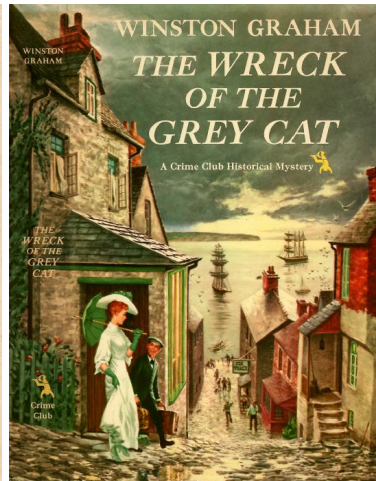
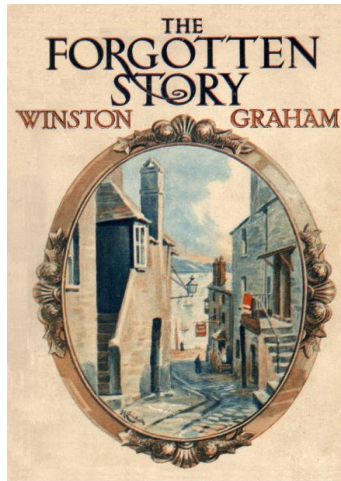
In **The Merciless Ladies** (Ward Lock and Co., 8/6) Winston Graham describes Stafford's rise to fame and how he was brought to the verge of ruin, financially, physically and mentally through the unceasing greed and malice of his first wife, whose unscrupulous revenge knew no canons of decency towards the artist and the second Mrs. Stafford.

Another merciless woman, similarly actuated, took a hand in attempting to break the man who had depicted her ugly characteristics in a portrait whose exhibition in certain disreputable surroundings resulted in an action for damages.

A startling discovery forms a remarkable denouement to an altogether unusual story of baseness in high society.

The Aberdeen Journal, 6 April 1944

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THE WRECK OF THE GREY CAT by Winston Graham, Crime Club, \$3.75

Sailors' eatery at Falmouth, England (time: 1898), is scene of slyly-plotted skulduggery with eleven-year-old orphan lad as chief observer; peephole in floor reveals much; missing will, and all that, plus exhumations; barquentine on rocks provides smash climax; lovers' spat adds piquancy. Extra-pleasant period piece.

[Sergeant Cuff, *The Saturday Review*, 9 August 1958](#)

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THE WRECK OF THE GREY CAT by Winston Graham

In the summer of 1898 young Anthony came to the Cornish port of Falmouth to live with his uncle Joe Veal. Life at "Smoky Joe's" cafe was dull and lonely for the boy until he discovered a peephole through which he could peer into his uncle's study - until his cousin Patricia suddenly left home - until he unearthed a dead man's will - until he realised, too late, that he had seen far too much, and found himself aboard THE GREY CAT on her disastrous last voyage.

Here Winston Graham has brilliantly recreated the colorful, salty atmosphere of an English sea-coast town at the turn of the century.

[The Anderson Daily Bulletin, 1 July 1958](#)

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The Crime Club, which publishes mysteries and similar books, has chosen Winston Graham's historical mystery "**The Wreck of the Grey Cat**" (Doubleday and Co., 220 pp., \$3.75.)

The story revolves around 11-year-old Anthony, who is sent to live with an uncle, Joe Veal, in the Cornish port of Falmouth after his mother's death.

There he finds himself, though he hardly realizes the situation, drawn into the untimely death of his uncle, and finally he is on board the Grey Cat on its last voyage.

Graham is an excellent story teller, but to us he has one drawback - he often leaves the story somewhat "open-ended," leaving the reader with the feeling that he should expect a sequel soon.

The Abilene Reporter-News, 13 July 1958

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The Wreck of the Grey Cat by Winston Graham

An inviting drama borrows the Cornish background of this author's earlier period tales and some of the enigmatic elements of his suspense stories and combines to offer an unquestionably holding story. Anthony, eleven, whose mother has just died while his father is off in Canada, is sent to stay with his Uncle Joe Veal in the seaport village of Falmouth in 1898. No one, save his cousin Patricia - rather preoccupied with her own troubles - (she has left her well-to-do, well-born young husband Tom) takes any interest in the boy. Joe is a gruff and grudging figure, concerned only with the not inconsiderable money he makes from his restaurant and shipping interests; his new wife, the fleshy, frowsy Madge is disliked by all; his jovial brother Perry - who can be furtive on occasion - is more drunk than sober. Joe, after several attacks of the fluke worm said to have killed his first wife, also dies, and the will reveals that he has disappointed and disinherited all except Madge. Patricia goes away to work, so Anthony is even more alone as he eyes with suspicion - later confirmed by the discovery of a new will - the dubious partnership of Madge and Perry. Confiding in Tom, he sparks the autopsy which makes murder manifest and Madge, in her attempt to escape with Perry, is trapped by an unsuspected fate. A discreet drama of a crime with a pleasant peripheral romance (Patricia and Tom), these are assured assets for entertainment, and the turn of the century background might suggest the market of Joseph Shearing as well as the author's own.

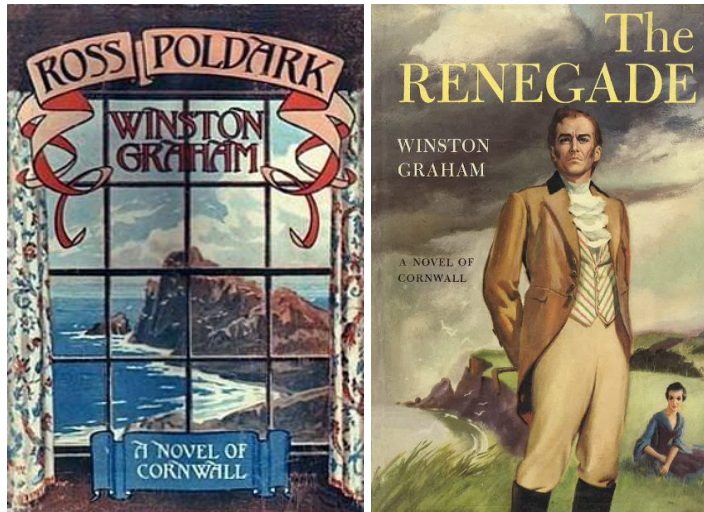
Kirkus, unsigned, undated

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Cornwall at the close of the 19th century is the setting of Winston Graham's "**The Forgotten Story**" (Ward, Lock; 8s 6d). A ship goes ashore near the village of Sawle, North Cornwall, in a December gale, and the rocket crew hurry to save the passengers because £1 a head is paid for such rescues. How the passengers came to be there is the basis of the book. The plot moves slowly, brooding in Celtic mystery, from Smoky Joe's eating tavern in Falmouth, where Chinese and other nationalities mingle. Our professional mind suggests that the reporters from the Plymouth newspapers are overdrawn in the callous way they get interviews. In any case, they got on the spot amazingly quickly for 19th century communications.

The Western Morning News, 3 April 1945

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Captain Poldark's Return

Capt. Ross Poldark, moody Cornish hero of "**The Renegade**," is the sort of character who might feel at home in a novel by Bronte (Emily or Charlotte). A kind of Heathcliffian Mr. Rochester, Captain Poldark is separated from Cornwallis' defeated army after the Peace of 1783. Returning to England in a marrying mood, he finds his childhood sweetheart wed to another ...

As you may have gathered, this melodramatic tale by Winston Graham has a decided nineteenth-century flavor, stylewise, even though its action takes place a century earlier. Victorianism in literature is not entirely a drawback; the nineteenth-century novel sometimes possessed solid virtues. Its leisurely pace allowed an author to examine the foibles of even minor characters. It had solidified social relationships and moral values to write about. And frequently it worked up lofty indignation at the plight of the "lower classes."

All these attributes help make "The Renegade" a different and, in its small way, distinctive historical novel. Most of its historical background is what we call nowadays "social history." Swallowing his romantic disappointment, young Captain Poldark sets out to revive his family's worked-out tin and copper mines. We readers are thereupon given glimpses of the short and simple annals of Cornwall's poor (thickly idiomatic tenant farmers, fishermen and miners) and their children, who went down into the pits at the age of 8 and coughed blood at 11 or 12.

We get a good idea too of how provincial gentry lived in the reign of George III. Cornish society, be it said, reacted most unfavorably when one of its paid-up members - the same Captain Poldark - adopted a ragged 13-year-old (female) waif named Demelza Carne. By the time Poldark, Pygmalion-like, has deloused, befriended and educated his ward, four years have elapsed, and Demelza is a big girl now. Poldark is the last to notice this, but he catches on eventually.

[Richard Match, *The New York Times Book Review*, 9 December 1951](#)

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ROSS POLDARK by Winston Graham

I was in the mood, with Ross Poldark, for an intergenerational historical epic and I got waaaaaaay more than I bargained for. Honestly, it's both terrible and terrific at the same time in a way I can't quite define.

To give you some background, this series of books were started in the '40's by Winston Graham, the same man who would write the book for Marnie of all things. So what this book was designed for was escapism right after WWII. If you remember, London in particular was under near constant bombing through the war, and even right after the war there was a great deal of rebuilding to do. Shortages still happened, and people needed stuff to distract them.

In a way, this book makes sense. It's set in a far away time, so there's not a whiff of the current issues at hand, many of the characters are humorous, it's very pro-England, while also being critical of social issues that were no longer issues.

Also the people live pretty terribly. Maybe it was comforting to watch people dealing with desperate poverty, I don't know, but other than the nobles, everyone is uniformly dirty, ignorant, and barely scraping to get by. So in no way is this book nostalgic for the 1780s, never showing the world as glamorous at all.

So basically the historical pretext is that Ross Poldark is returning to Cornwall after serving some years in the American War of Independence. It's actually fascinating, as an American, to see things from the point of view of the other side. England at the time, if this book is to be trusted, was in the middle of a sort of crisis of confidence, just like America had after Vietnam.

So Ross is disappointed to find that the woman he wanted to marry, Elizabeth, is going to marry his cousin. So far, the common start to every historical romance ever made. After this, the story just goes everywhere and nowhere. The pacing is extremely odd, either staying completely still or racing ahead at a pace in such a herky-jerky way that it reminds me of a scratched DVD.

We've got four main plot threads. First, we've got the opening-the-mine story which is by far the boringest. It goes into excruciating detail on the funding, running, and growth of Poldark's mine. In fact the worst part of this book is even when something happens, instead of following up on it, we immediately have to go to Ross's plans for a mine, or Ross raising money for the mine, or the status of the mine. Don't get me wrong, mining was very important to the area historically, but at the same time, it would be like reading *Gone With the Wind* and just after the burning of Atlanta, we have to go through the history and economics of cotton growing for 10 pages. Heck, the mine isn't even functional by the end of the book, and we still get to hear pages and pages about it.

The second story is more interesting - the Jim and Ginny Carter misery thread. Jim is a miner who's out of work because he's got weak lungs. Ginny is a pretty girl who's being followed by a creeper. Jim and Ginny get married, and then the creeper sneaks into their home and stabs Ginny and her newborn baby. The creeper then jumps out of

an upstairs window to his death. Ginny and the baby survive, though Ginny is less happy than before. Jim takes to poaching to feed his family. He gets caught, and not only sentenced to two years of hard labor, but also they find out that he is dying of tuberculosis. From here, this story tapers off, with Jim in prison, Ginny now is the house maid, so that's okay I guess.

Then we get into the Ross / Francis / Elizabeth love triangle. The first half of the book is mainly about this, and it's strictly romance novel stuff - Ross thought that he would marry Elizabeth, but Elizabeth is marrying his cousin Francis instead. Ross had been gone so long that it was quite natural really. So Ross and Francis get in a fight in a mine and strand themselves there over having a pissing match over Elizabeth. Elizabeth tries to stay just good friends, but Ross pushes himself, so he gets banned.

They make up once Ross gets married, but at this point she pressures him to get Francis under control - as Francis is gambling and supposedly hanging out with other women. At first this story is relatively uninteresting, but by the end, how Elizabeth turns out, a little cold, very unhappy, and finding only happiness in her child, shows that she's a much different person than Ross initially imagined she was. She's also so dedicated to her child that she doesn't sleep with her husband, intimating that this is tied up to the whole Francis roaming thing. At first I was ready to damn Ross for not getting involved, but Elizabeth's insistence does seem a bit pushy. Also I'm reminded of the best advice my father ever gave me, which is don't get involved in other people's love lives - it only causes strain.

Finally, the best, and craziest bit, is Demelza. Ross first meets Demelza when her dog (which is annoyingly cute) is being teased, Annie-style, in the city. He takes her in, noticing that she's abused by her drunken father. Then he proceeds to strip her and hose her off in his backyard, and then we get pages of describing bug removal (ewwww). Okay, so not only is this scene a bit creepy (why couldn't he have had the lady servant do the washing), it's kind of mean, Ross taking no mind to the girl's nakedness and how she tries to cover herself up. Despite this, Ross is entirely uninterested in Demelza - at first. When she comes of age (thank god), Demelza realizes that her father intends to have her back home, so she seduces Ross while wearing his mother's nightie. (Yes, you heard that right). Apparently he realized his desire at this point and they marry.

The main conflict from this point on is how Demelza will fit in with the elite since she's come from the bottom. She has a good deal worrying about dirty underpants. Anyway, she goes to the Poldark's ancestral home and is a raging success after singing a love ballad, a dirty shanty song, and getting in some drag-queen style conversation with the jealous ladies. Also she's pregnant and gets rousingly drunk.

Finally there's one other small story, about Ross's cousin Verity, who fell in love with a sea captain, despite the fact that he threw his last wife down the stairs in a drunken rage and killed her. Naturally, her father is against this. Ross tries to plot around it -and it ends up in a big brawl and the Captain wanders off to lick his wounds. Verity starts to fade. Demelza who has grown fond of Verity starts plotting to get them together again with some of the craziest abuse-logic I have ever heard.

"I know Verity was not born to be an old maid, dryin' up and shrivellin' while she looks to someone else's house an' children. She'd rather take the risk of being wed to a man who couldn't contain his liquor."

Yep folks, it's better to be married to a drunk killer than to be single. It's THAT BAD. And while I can give Verity some credence, as she believes that the captain has reformed, what if he hasn't? According to Demelza, that STILL would be better than being left alone.

And then there's this gem: "If you love someone, tesn't a few bruises on the back that are going to count. It's whether that other one loves you in return. If he do, then he can only hurt your body. He can't hurt your heart." This is wrong on so many levels I can't even begin to fathom how to begin. I know that Demelza came from an abusive home she was so afraid of that she slept with her master instead of even chancing the return. She also didn't trust her father's reformation, noting that he could go back to his old state at any time. So how her experience informs her speech on this is beyond me. Also, this sets her relationship with Ross (who is the "Daddy" in the relationship) in a thoroughly creepy light. He doesn't beat her - though he threatens to a couple of times, not very seriously - he is very much the man of the house whose permission she has to ask for things and sneak behind his back if she deems it necessary.

Besides the pacing problems, the story has VERY stilted dialogue that doesn't sound realistic at all, the comedy bits are either cute or not very funny, and the view of the book on classes is rather opaque. The book is clear that the poor should be treated better and is in favor of social movement. However, it is not arguing that the division between the gentry and common folk should be any different than it is. The poor should be husbanded better, that's all.

Despite these issues, hell, because of these problems, this book is a surprisingly satisfying read (even if you'll feel a little gross for it afterwards.) I was shocked to get that post-book Zen state after finishing this because at the time I was mostly scratching my head and gawking at gender relations that are mercifully behind us. If you want to read something good-bad, I'd say give it a go, but I can't go so far as to recommend it.

[Pewterbreath, *wordpress.com*, 9 September 2013](#)

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Sets the opening tone and plot beginnings for the series that follows, but stands easily in its own right - a self-contained encapsulation of the mood, social structure, and economic drivers of Cornwall in the late 18th Century, all interpreted through the attractive main characters. These are real people, with thoughts and opinions that are both oddly modern and absolutely of their time. Winston Graham's writing is understated and consequently all the more powerful; his humour catches you on the back of the knees before you've noticed. If you want to know what real life was like in the Georgian era, read this.

[K. Davies, *Amazon.co.uk*, 11 May 2007](#)

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A Lady by Adoption

Although "**Demelza**" is not a masterpiece of historical fiction, both casual readers and those familiar with the eighteenth century will be interested in its reconstruction of the troubled years of the French Revolution in remote Cornish towns. The French Revolution seems to be a publisher's staple this year, but Mr. Graham's book is both solid and readable. He has obviously done extensive research into the period, and he even reproduces, with some fidelity, English speech of the age ...

"Demelza" is more than a collection of romances. It makes us participate in movements which control the destinies of its character. It offers realistic and somber descriptions of Cornish farmers, fishermen and miners pushed to the verge of revolution by unjust laws.

W.A.S. Dollard, *The New York Times Book Review*, 8 March 1953

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Tragedy Strikes at Nampara

This is the second of the twelve Poldark novels. As such, I began it a little worried that, like far too many sequels, it wouldn't live up to expectations. *Demelza* begins a few months after *Ross Poldark* and with the birth of Ross and Demelza's first child, Julia. It covers a turbulent time for the couple, as poverty and illness ravage Cornwall and relations with cousin Francis have once again become strained. As Demelza spreads her wings and begins to find a place in society, Ross becomes involved in a venture that threatens the Warleggan's financial stranglehold on the county, putting the young family in danger from their shadowy influences. Meanwhile, there are developments between cousin Verity and the disgraced Captain Blamey and a love triangle develops between the new doctor Dwight Enys, miner Daniel Martin and his new wife Keren.

I'm delighted to say that this book was as far from a disappointment as you can get. Once again, Mr Graham evoked a powerful sense of time and place which was completely absorbing. The plot is a rollercoaster of joys and misfortunes which culminates with a dramatic description of two ships being storm-wrecked and looted, a

pivotal event which is intrinsic to the next book. I would thoroughly recommend this book to any fan of Cornwall or historical fiction. Unlike much historical fiction, the world that this author creates feels all the more realistic because it doesn't shy away from tragedy or exclude the humour of everyday life. As such, both *Ross Poldark* and *Demelza* stand out for me and, once again, I hope that the remaining ten books in the series do not disappoint! 5 stars (of 5)

WriteStuff, Waterstones.com, 26 December 2010

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In 2008 the *Western Morning News* ran a series of articles about Cornish villages. The one below was published on 6 May. The author is unnamed. (See also *Warleggan*.)

Chance sight of road sign gave author his heroine

It was while driving an old Austin Seven across Goss Moor in the late 1950s that I first saw the sign to Demelza.

Years later, when I met Winston Graham, he explained that was where he too first became aware of the name.

He went on to say he'd been looking for the name of his Poldark heroine and, from that moment on, his quest was over. He instinctively knew.

Demelza, the novel published in 1946, is the second part of the Poldark saga: a girl, born into poverty and squalor, but rescued from it all by Ross Poldark and taken to be his wife.

Splicing the miner's daughter and the impoverished Cornish aristocrat was perfect match-making - both having much to learn of each other and each other's ways. They are bound together by the birth of their first child but their marriage faces tough and testing times as fierce industrial struggles surge around them.

Angharad Rees was a magnificent, captivating Demelza in the TV series. Winston counted her a special, dear friend. Long after the series, he told me how his popularity at the Savile Club in London suddenly soared whenever he invited Angharad to lunch. "Men would think up reasons to come over and speak to me," he said.

Demelza is a hamlet, roughly a mile from St Wenn as the Cornish chough once flew. My initial visit, more than 40 years ago, remains a diamond-sharp memory.

I wrote in my notebook at the time: "The narrow twisting lanes, leading to it from the A30, may be used by motorists in summer but, on this brilliant October afternoon, the only traffic we encountered was four-legged: five riders on horseback.

"We were glad we came because this is the Cornwall of inland hamlets, cottages and isolated farms. If you ignore the TV aerials and the telephone wires, this is basically the Cornwall our grandparents knew."

One afternoon I met two brothers whose family had farmed hereabouts for more than two centuries. Then, down at Golant one evening, I met a real life Demelza, the daughter of author Denys Val Baker and his potter wife Jess. And, very recently, I met another Demelza, aged just two and a half. Her mother, dental hygienist Katrina Craig, said: "We wanted a real Cornish name and Demelza seemed just right. As a young girl, I'd seen the Poldark series on television."

My latest visit to Demelza coincided with a brilliantly sunlit morning. On such a day it is easy to understand how and why the clarity of our Cornish light has attracted so many painters. It is also easy to recognise that there is nothing to beat outstanding scenery - and on that subject Winston Graham once admitted: "By the time Poldark came to be written, it was not only the scenery that had got into my blood."

When he started writing Poldark, he intended it to be just one book.

"But the stream broadened so much, there was no way of containing it in a single volume."

An example of skilful transition at Demelza in 2008 is the conversion of the 1871 chapel into a private residence. Mr and Mrs Taylor told me the name of their property, Henjapel, means "old chapel" in Cornish and that the elegant chandelier which once adorned the chapel has been given to the church at St Wenn, a further example of the cordial relations between different denominations.

A visit to Demelza is a reassuring experience: the spirit of Poldark is in the air - and as long as books are read Winston Graham's fictional heroine will be remembered with affection.

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Pros: Detailed writing, smart characters, interesting plot twists

Cons: Keep your hankies handy for the final chapters

Bottom line: The second book in the Poldark series, showing both daily life and plenty of dramatic confrontations

Years ago, when I was a teen, one of the television series that I loved watching was the *Poldark* series, set in late eighteenth century Cornwall, telling the stories of the Poldark family and their friends and rivals.

At the start of the second novel, *Demelza*, Ross and his wife, the title character, are settling into life at their home, Nampara. They are awaiting the arrival of their first child, a daughter they name Julia. As is the custom, they throw a party to celebrate the christening, but Demelza frets that Ross's aristocratic family and friends will look down on her much more common family. It's a delicate situation made none the better when Jud, Ross's drunken manservant, is sent to take the message to the Carnes.

Of course, Jud messes up the timing, and the miners arrive at the same time as the Poldarks, with a riotous clash of cultures ensuing. Demelza, mortified, is quite certain

that everyone is laughing at her. But Ross takes it in his stride, viewing it all as a misadventure.

One person at the party understands Demelza's plight, Ross's cousin Verity, whose heart was broken in her romance with Captain Blamey. Seeing Verity's unhappiness, Demelza decides she is going to do something about it, and embarks on a plan to see the couple reunited. meanwhile, Ross is getting ensnarled into gambling as he works to build a mining consortium.

As with all good stories, there's an element of tragedy here, especially when Ross starts to run afoul of the Warleggans, an up-and-coming family of humble origins. The Warleggans are bankers, and rather touchy, especially George, a man of Ross's own age. Then there's Demelza's brother Mark, who falls in love with a travelling actress, Keren, who is lovely, but scarcely has a brain in her head. Worst still, when a new arrival in the neighborhood, Dr. Dwight Enys, is seen with her, the troubles soar to a frightful pitch.

All of these stories come together, and the author Winston Graham uses the natural setting of Cornwall, the politics of England, and plenty of personality to drive the story forward. It's quite a tale, and while the writing may seem slightly dated to some readers, the style is rich, and very good.

What I really enjoy about these novels is that all of the people, both major and minor, become very real. We get to know who they are, what they want, and their own fears and hopes. The setting is so well crafted that I could picture events unfolding in my head as Ross and Demelza try to keep their little family together in a world that is about to experience great change in the coming decades. I love the fact that Graham avoided making either of his lead characters too perfect as most modern writers do. Everyone here is deeply flawed, but in spite of mistakes, they keep going.

All in all, this gets four stars from me. It's the sort of historical novel that is very satisfying to read, and well worth the trouble to find. Very much recommended.

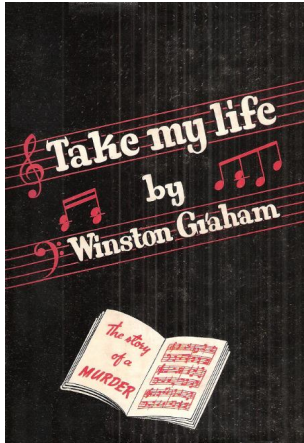
[Rebecca Huston, *epinions.com*, 29 August 2013](#)

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Am I the only one disturbed by the attitude towards men who kill their wives? One such character I didn't give much thought to, but when there's a second wife killing, and everyone's sympathies are with the killer - that makes me uncomfortable. I realise the author is accurately portraying the attitudes of the time, but that doesn't make it any easier for me to accept. I found it alienating. It brought me out of the story, and made me more aware of my different attitudes. Likewise, the looting of the wrecked ship. I realise the villagers were near-starving and desperate, but their behaviour towards the wrecked sailors took my sympathy away. God, I sound like a school marm! 4 stars (of 5)

[Emma Woodcock, *goodreads.com*, 1 May 2012](#)

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"Take My Life" by Winston Graham (Ward Lock, London)

In his story of a woman's desperate search for a man who committed a murder of which her husband is wrongly accused, Winston Graham creates a drama of mounting suspense. "Take My Life" is the English "thriller" at its best - competent, carefully written, exciting without being hysterical. Mr. Graham develops his story of mistaken identity into a situation that could happen to any one of us, and in doing so makes it exceptionally interesting.

[*The Adelaide Advertiser*, 21 February 1948](#)

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Enjoyable Tale, Colorful Folks

TAKE MY LIFE by Winston Graham. Doubleday, 191 pages, \$3.95

Through hard work and talent combined with beauty and charm Philippa Shelley has attained the highest acclaim in the operatic world and is about to achieve a crowning triumph of success in her native England. A brilliant career is stretching out ahead in a promised American tour and lucrative contracts. This is the happy scene that is soon disrupted by tragedy and terror that temporarily upsets these best laid plans.

Nicholas Talbot, Philippa's husband and manager, becomes the dupe and victim of an untenable situation which proves a threat to Philippa's life as well.

A chance meeting by Nicholas with Elizabeth Rusman, a musician, stirs the memories of a burnt out love affair that had ended long before Nicholas and Philippa met and married. Things happen too rapidly for Nicholas to explain to Philippa and after a quarrel, he finds himself enmeshed in a tangle of circumstantial evidence and accused of the strangling of Elizabeth Rusman. Further clues are missing and the hapless Nicholas is arrested and faces trial for murder.

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PHILIPPA is determined to prove Nicholas's innocence and sets out on her own to trace down every angle that hinges on anything or anyone remotely connected to

Elizabeth's past. Her keen perception and musical knowledge leads her on a hazardous search and she soon faces the danger of getting too close to the truth.

Ironically, Nicholas wins acquittal by jury, but it is only through Philippa's sleuthing that he wins complete exoneration by the confession of the real murderer.

Winston Graham is an old hand at creating suspense and hairy situations, but "Take My Life" lacks much of the mounting terror and psychological twist of some of his other novels. However, it is an enjoyable tale about interesting people and although holding no great elements of surprise, is thoroughly readable. After all, it is difficult for present day fiction to compete with the excitement of a Super-Bowl game or the horror of the very real presence of crime in our streets.

[Rosalie M. Raphael, *The Delta Democrat-Times*, 15 January 1967](#)

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"TAKE MY LIFE" by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock and Co., Ltd.)

As Captain Talbot, late of the Coldstream Guards, recently married to the singer, Philippa Shelley, is leaving the theatre after his wife's successful appearance in "Madame Butterfly," he meets an old flame who writes her address and some words on his programme. In the taxi Philippa, who had observed the meeting and had exchanged with the girl, Elizabeth Rusman, a glance of "implacable understanding," alludes to the incident and to his amorous past and at home continues to talk of her and his discarded mistresses. They quarrel, and throw things at one another and he is cut on the temple. Rushing from the house, he walks the streets for hours, enters a hospital to have his wound dressed, and finds his exit barred by Inspector Archer. (His old sweetheart had meantime been discovered strangled in a smouldering bed at her dismal lodgings and a locket on the scarred body contained his photograph.) He is later charged with murder, and the evidence seems irrefutable, but the regretful wife is confident of his innocence and begins a search for counter proof, and continues it during the trial. The alternation of court proceedings and the stages of her detective pilgrimage is remarkably effective.

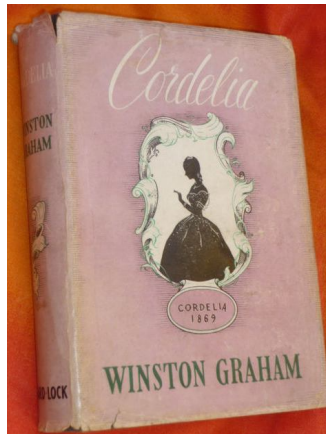
The novel was made from a screenplay (of the author's and Valerie Taylor's), and doubtless its conciseness owes something to this transmutation, but there is no sense of artificiality, the dialogue is selectively pertinent, and the plot develops naturally, without a straining of probability, if one allows for war and post-war conditions. The confirmed reader will enjoy a well fashioned thriller.

[The *Launceston Examiner*, 11 September 1948](#)

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For home birds who like to have their fiction in the present age is "Take My Life" (Ward, Lock) by Winston Graham This murder story has many new twists, and culminates in a confession delicately described. Set in an atmosphere of grand opera, the plot is excellent.

[The *Hull Daily Mail*, 24 January 1948](#)



Cordelia Blake

Cordelia Blake by Winston Graham is set in 1866. Frederick Ferguson decided that his son, Brook, needed a new wife, the old one being dead but six months. Cordelia was the girl he chose as she had the requisites he thought his son should have in a wife - she was young, had good health, and was well-mannered.

The Blake family sanctioned the marriage and Cordelia was flattered to accept. The Fergusons were a step above the Blakes as far as money and social prominence was concerned.

Brook was weak and his marriage did nothing to strengthen his character. His father dominated him and insisted that he work in the dye works. Brook wanted to write poetry. Cordelia was strong and she gradually inspired respect from her father-in-law. He even suggested that she take over some of the administration of the dye plant.

With an unsatisfactory home life as a motivation, she became involved with a man, Stephen Crossley. When affairs progressed too far for retreat she promised to leave her husband. At this point Brook became seriously ill and she could not leave him.

When the sickness was over she stopped seeing Crossley. Her husband died six years later. She went to London to find Crossley. He was involved with another woman. She returned to Grove Hall where her father-in-law received her graciously.

Really the only point of the story is to show that time can possibly cure a good many hurts and that it takes strength of character to choose the most difficult way out of a problem

[*Ida J. Briggs, The Dunkirk Evening Observer, 25 February 1950*](#)

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Old Manchester

"Cordelia" (Winston Graham) dates back to 1866 when hansom cabs and horse-drawn buses were the popular means of transport. The most attractive character in this bright novel about old times is the girl whose Christian name prompts the title. She was the

third child in the Blake family of 14 and, though not yet 20 years old when Brook Ferguson's first wife died, the pair found their lives much interwoven and finally she said: "I want to come back."

Ward, Lock and Co., Ltd. (London) are the publishers.

The West Australian, 25 June 1949

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"Cordelia" by Winston Graham is a strange and moving love story of a girl with beauty and independence of mind, whose rich capacity for gaiety was not always in harmony with the traditions of Victoria's England.

The Chicago Daily Herald, 3 March 1950

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Cordelia marks a further stage in the artistic progress of Winston Graham. Never before has he known and understood a character as he does this mid-Victorian woman and her pontifical father-in-law, the one more vital and rebellious than her status as housewife allowed, and the other more human than his dignity countenanced. The moving story is set in the author's native Lancashire. He should now return to his adopted Cornwall to apply his developing art. (Ward, Lock, 9s 6d.)

The Western Morning News, 2 June 1949

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Cordelia, Winston Graham, Ward Lock, 9s 6d. The study of a girl with a personality of her own. Her marriage into a household ruled by her husband's father, the clash of personalities and the new romance she found in her new home make a powerful tale against a background of Manchester in the 1890s.

The Western Daily Press, 6 July 1949

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Mid-Victorian days, when milady's bustle was stuffed with the Manchester Guardian and wax-moustached chairmen presided over the garish lights and noisy tables of the music hall, are strongly pictured in "Cordelia," an entrancing novel by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock). The scene is laid in middle-class Manchester of 80 years ago, the Manchester of hansom cab, horsebus and concerts at the Free Trade Hall, and the story tells of a girl's marriage on the rung above, and her struggle to adapt herself to life at "the big house" dominated by a martinet of a father-in-law. The characters are sturdily built, and the romance finely drawn. Indeed, the progress of this family and those who influence their lives almost has the Galsworthy stamp.

The Hull Daily Mail, 3 June 1949

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A novel of realism, drama, and suspense ... excellent reading.

Chicago Tribune (undated)

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Agreeably Victorian in mood and material ... leisurely, detailed, but keenly observant.

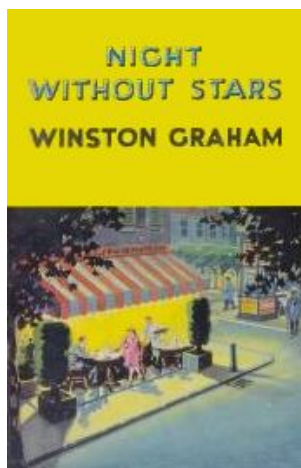
New York Herald Tribune (undated)

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Mr. Graham has written CORDELIA in the great storytelling traditions of Victoria's England. The novel has wit, suspense, and good characterizations.

San Francisco Chronicle (undated)

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NIGHT WITHOUT STARS, by Winston Graham. Doubleday. \$3.

Although Winston Graham is not well known to American readers, only one of his books, "Cordelia," having been published in this country, he is an old hand at romance-adventure tales. He maintains a brisk pace, he crams excitement and suspense; yet with this he manages to bring his characters to life without making them mere vehicles for the plot. The love story in "Night Without Stars" (an English-French affair fraught with the perils of all English-French affairs) is valid and often touching. The author is less convincing in the realm of ideas and ideologies.

"Night Without Stars" is the story of the sudden entanglement of Giles Gordon, a blind man, with a group of leaders in the French resistance. These men, ranging from cutthroats to men of international repute, have found civilian life too tame for their tastes; they compensate by engaging in the thriving and highly dangerous black market. Gordon enters this nether world via a salesgirl in a shoe shop in Nice, the sister of the

well known lawyer Charles Bénat. Bénat, "still a name to conjure with. Twice captured, seven identity cards, decorated by De Gaulle," runs the black-market gang, arguing eloquently for his personal immunity from the laws of "a sick Europe." Beginning as an "Anarch," he eventually admits to believing in "only one God, Charles Bénat, world without end, amen." Through his pursuit of Alix Delaisse, Giles Gordon is drawn into contact with this self-styled deity and before he can extricate himself he has become embroiled in intrigue, skulduggery, and murder.

As stories of this sort go, "Night Without Stars" keeps fairly well within the bounds of credulity. A blind man turned sleuth is a strain, of course, but the author remedies that by having Gordon regain the sight of one eye through a thoroughly described iridotomy.

A well-written adventure story, a pleasant evening's reading.

Arthur C. Fields, *The Saturday Review*, 16 September 1950

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Winston Graham's **Night Without Stars** (Fontana, 60p) becomes "historical" only because of the delay in paperbacking a romantic thriller first published in 1950. Immediately post-Second World War, the story is concerned with the aftermath of the heroine's involvement in the French resistance; an involvement which does not end with the cessation of official fighting. A gripping tale.

Elizabeth Grey, *The Times*, 7 August 1976

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Adventure Story Told With Skill

Night Without Stars by Winston Graham. Doubleday, 275 pps, \$3.00

"A novel of love and adventure in the south of France," so declare the publishers on the south-of-France picture jacket of "Night Without Stars." That is a quick description of the contents of Winston Graham's new novel. But it does not convey the exciting contents of the book, nor the real skill with which the author tells his love and adventure story. A young Englishman is partially blinded by a war wound. Gradually, he almost loses his sight entirely - and, he also loses the English girl who was his fiancée. Desperately, he goes to the South of France, hoping to find peace for himself and a time in which to plan for a future of blindness. He meets a French girl who befriends him. She is a war widow and he is attracted to her. She takes him to a strange cafe on the Riviera, and he senses that her activities are linked up with a rather curious set of people. Following his instinctual feeling, he is led into a series of thrilling and almost fatal events.

The story is told in a good clean prose. One event leads to another with rising intensity and surprising disclosures that will hold a reader in taut suspense. On the back of the book jacket the publisher tells that Mr. Graham is at present working on the script of a

movie based on "Night Without Stars," which will be produced in England later this year. We wish the motion picture producers of this story would hurry up and film it. We know for a certainty that we're in for an exciting hour or so at the local cinema house when we see it.

R.W., The Delta Democrat-Times, 8 October 1950

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Winston Graham's well-merited success, in this country and America, springs partly from the fact that his work always has something highly unusual and romantically intriguing to capture readers. He is also adventurous in his choice of themes, and writes attractively. His latest novel, "Night Without Stars," (Hodder and Stoughton, 9s 6d), is, as its title suggests, a story of blindness, and the courage and determination brought to bear against such an affliction. There have been several best-sellers written on this theme. Mr. Graham's will not challenge them. But "Night Without Stars," which has for its theme intrigue and adventure in post-war France, has a freshness and an impetus that raises it shoulder-high above the ordinary.

The Dundee Courier, 24 February 1950

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Admirers of CORDELIA ... will expect a great deal from this new novel ... They will not be disappointed ... Deceptively casual, written in a low key, NIGHT WITHOUT STARS is that rare occurrence - a well-furnished 'suspense novel' which is credibly motivated and compelling as to character and plot.

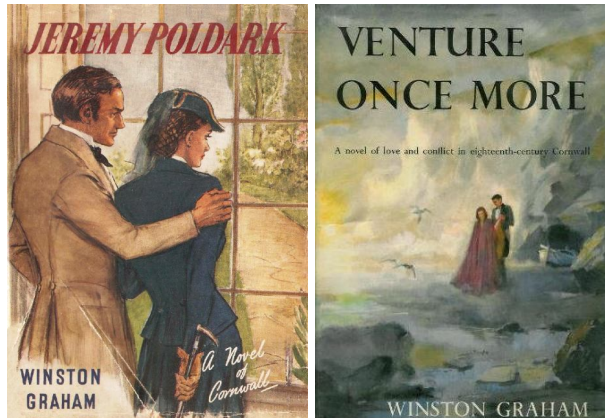
New York Times (undated)

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This is a gripping and romantic tale with an interesting set of characters and some bang-up action ... it is excellent reading.

Los Angeles Times (undated)

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Poldark's Progress

In the years 1790-91 the mining village of Sawle in the County of Cornwall has a peaceful air, but under its quiet surface feelings run high, particularly in the Poldark Family. In "**Venture Once More**," Winston Graham continues the narrative of this family to whom he has devoted two previous novels. Essentially, this is the story of Ross Poldark, "a small farmer squire with a mining interest" and his wife Demelza, a miner's daughter. Theirs is a story typical of that time and place, one of pride versus poverty, of feuds and reconciliations.

Charged by the Crown with having instigated the plunder of two ships wrecked in the harbor and for the ensuing riot with the excise men, Ross is facing trial at the summer assizes ...

From this hamlet, the scene shifts to Bodmin, "a town of 3,000 inhabitants and twenty-nine public houses" where the elections and assizes are held consecutively. Here Mr. Graham displays his skill in describing urban turbulence as well as country tranquility. Ross is acquitted when Jud Paynter turns the tables with his surprise testimony.

Freed of his public shadow, Ross returns to his personal problems which include dealing with the scurrilous fellow who is trying to gain control of the mines, and preparing for the birth of his son, Jeremy. Spending a while with the Poldarks in Sawle should appeal to those who suffer from the hustle and bustle of today. It is a leisurely novel which transports the reader to its milieu and makes its characters one's friends.

[Whitney Betts, *The New York Times Book Review*, 9 May 1954](#)

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Book three of the Poldark series is a lull after the excitement of the first two novels. A lot happens, of course - Winston Graham always manages to cram the whole of the human condition into every book - but the action is slow to start. Ross's trial, following on from the climax of the previous novel, is drawn out, and both he and Demelza are still grieving their loss. Other characters follow the Poldarks to Bodmin - Dwight Enys meets the imperious Caroline Penvenen there, and Francis hits rock bottom. The cousins later agree to bury the hatchet, and extend the truce to form an uneasy reconciliation with Verity and her husband Andrew. Verity also meets Andrew's

children, the surly Esther and wonderfully exuberant James. Ross grows closer to Elizabeth, which doesn't bode well, fights with the obnoxious George Warleggan, and sets up a new business venture with Francis. And of course the novel ends on a positive note, with the birth of Ross and Demelza's son, Jeremy.

Once the trial began in earnest - the talk of elections went over my head - I enjoyed this charged continuation of the epic Cornish saga. Caroline is a delight, forthright and witty, and George Warleggan is building steadily into a detestable enemy. I know there are supposed to be shades of grey in all of Winston Graham's characters, but I have always hated George's superficial charm and stubborn, underhand ways. Also, his illicit courting of Elizabeth is nauseating. The ending was perhaps a little rushed - skipping over Demelza's difficult labour - but now the fun really starts!

3 stars (of 5)

[Adonis Guilfoyle, *librarything.com*, 11 July 2011](#)

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***Jeremy Poldark* by Winston Graham (Ward, Lock & Co. Ltd.)**

To those who like historical novels with a background of the Cornish countryside, this new Poldark story will come as a welcome successor to "Ross Poldark" and "Demelza." Complete in itself, yet continuing the story told in the former two, this novel is rich in drama, humour, lively dialogue and strong characterisation.

[The Launceston Examiner, 30 December 1950](#)

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JEREMY POLDARK by Winston Graham

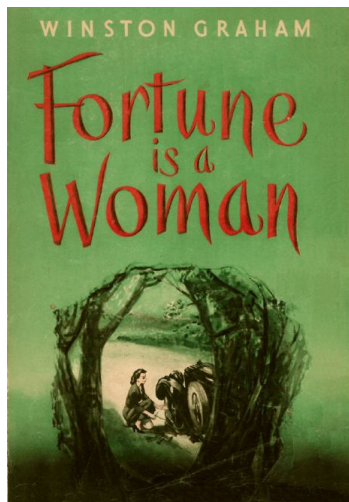
Winston Graham is very much at home when he writes about eighteenth-century Cornwall. His latest Poldark novel, **Jeremy Poldark**, though complete in itself, continues the story of Ross Poldark and his wife Demelza. They are of the Cornish gentry, withal rather impoverished.

A good deal of the story concerns the circumstances which led Ross Poldark, proud, unbending to the local Assizes, accused as an inciter of a pillaging expedition, and the consequent riot, when two shipwrecks occurred off the coast.

Apart from many interesting glimpses of a Cornish town during Assizes week, we are introduced to a whole lot of people, good and bad, and it is here that the author's fine gift of characterisation becomes entertainingly evident.

[The Aberdeen Journal, 8 December 1950](#)

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An Adjuster's Adventures

The best [insurance] adjuster, one suspects, would combine civility with cynicism and have the honesty of a poet. In Winston Graham's quietly told, suspenseful novel, **"Fortune Is A Woman,"** Oliver Bramwell qualifies on only one count - he evinces a healthy cynicism. As a member of the venerable firm of Abercrombie & Co. adjusters, Bramwell - who is something of an English Mike Hammer - has notable success. He discovers the real cause of an actor's black eye and avoids payment to his film company; he uncovers phony thefts and phony cases of fire damage; he avoids the clutches of a tall blonde. Then he discovers, by accident, a shocking fact: his firm is being duped by a supposedly well-off friend of his.

That Bramwell is in love with the man's wife makes the situation intolerable. Desperately tracking down clues, he finds further evidence of arson and the forgery of paintings and comes upon a corpse. To protect his friend's wife, despite his suspicion of her duplicity in the series of frauds, Bramwell hides his findings from his company. Blackmail and violence ensue. Mr. Graham, the author of "Night Without Stars," has peopled his book with lifelike men and women and positioned them on an unusual chessboard; a reader could hardly wish for a tenser, more compact psycho-thriller.

[Rex Lardner, *The New York Times Book Review*, 20 September 1953](#)

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"Fortune is a Woman" by Winston Graham, (Hodder and Stoughton)

Unlike Freeman Wills Crofts, Graham is a writer concerned as much with character as with crime. Based on a fire insurance fraud and an accompanying death, "Fortune is a Woman" must take a high place among English thrillers. Besides having excitement, suspense and surprise, the story is exceptionally well told. Every character, pleasant or otherwise, carries conviction.

[The Adelaide News, 26 June 1953](#)

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The Last Gamble by Winston Graham

Fourth in this series (The Renegade, Demelza, Venture Once More), well met again are Ross and Demelza, as Ross engages in his "last gamble" - Wheal Grace, a speculative copper mine - and their uneven marriage is again troubled, this time by his love for Elizabeth, his partner Francis' wife. Hopes for Wheal Grace diminish, and lives are lost with them, among them Francis', until the mine is salvaged by Caroline Penvenen. Caroline's romance with Dwight Enys, the young doctor who attended her in the earlier book, brightens but is impeded by her wealth and a guardian's opposition. Ross becomes involved in contraband and a raid keeps Dwight from the secret elopement with Caroline who then breaks with him. Elizabeth, now widowed, marries the wealthy banker whom Ross hates - and his intercession here fails - but is more successful when used to reconcile Caroline and Dwight. Again, a well-filled chronicle of Cornwall in the late 18th century, the drama does not abate and should more than please the readers of the earlier books.

Kirkus, undated

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The Poldark Saga

Across the craggy landscape races Ross Poldark - Cornwall's answer to Rhett Butler - with a covey of excisemen in hot pursuit. Musketry crackles, shillelaghs thump, penal servitude looms, and a grim future faces the master of Nampara House. Even should Ross elude the revenue agents, the bankruptcy of his ailing copper mine and the loss of his wife's affections are likely possibilities. Such unpleasant prospects form the framework of "**The Last Gamble**," Winston Graham's fourth instalment dealing with the Poldarks of eighteenth-century Cornwall.

Well, if you think that Ross's troubles will finally prove too much for him, you just don't know much about the Poldarks, or about historical novels either. It would take more than bad investments to ruin the hero of the Poldark saga. And even though he may lose his head momentarily over his cousin's wife ("Don't, Ross. You're hurting me."), the marriage ties between Ross and his Demelza are strong enough to last several more sequels. Mr. Graham engineers the adventures of the Poldarks in a

manner that hangs on to the reader's interest, and he manages to keep about four plots constantly simmering without abandoning a pleasantly leisurely style.

Martin Levin, *The Saturday Review*, 12 March 1955

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In 2008 the *Western Morning News* ran a series of articles about Cornish villages. The one below was published on 13 May. The author is unnamed. (See also *Demelza*.)

Village gave its name to villain

I never go to Warleggan without thinking of George Warleggan. Winston Graham had this gift of finding names for his fictional characters. He said: "Warleggan was not only the right length but, I believe, gives the right impression of power and industrial strength."

I recently visited Warleggan on a grey, blustery afternoon, tall trees creaking, a brace of magpies hovering. No car or walker on the road from Mount - I found an open, empty church. You almost felt you were the last person on Bodmin Moor. The church, with its low granite tower, has an atmosphere not easily defined and, for all its isolation and perhaps because of it, there is a deep spirituality.

I am not surprised to learn that Densham's ghost has been seen in and around the church and rectory. You get the impression he has never left the place. There is a rare photograph of him in the church, standing on two sticks in a group photograph.

Though he was at war with the church members, he enjoyed cordial relations with local Methodists. He had a spell in India and was probably closer to Gandhi's teachings than conventional Church of England.

As for George Warleggan, he is the son of the founder of the Warleggan and Williams Bank and eventually becomes head of the bank. He is knighted too by Pitt in return for political support.

His first wife is Elizabeth Poldark, the widow of Francis Poldark - Ross's cousin - and previously promised in marriage to Ross. There is deep suspicion about the father of her son Valentine.

Winston Graham knew all about the importance of conflict and dilemma.

Following Elizabeth's death giving birth to another child, George Warleggan embarks on a second marriage. Climbing the social ladder, he marries Lady Harriet Carter, sister of the Duke of Leeds. She and George live at Carclew, a mansion bought from the Lemon family and situated on the spine of Cornwall, looking towards Restrouquet Valley.

In the television series, Ralph Bates played the role. Winston reckoned he made a first-class George Warleggan.

In a scene where Aunt Agatha expresses the view that George is not the father of a son born to Elizabeth, Warleggan storms from room to room - the old woman's venom sinking in.

"One of the finest pieces of acting in the series," was the author's verdict.

Winston Graham may have been born in Manchester but he was addicted to Cornwall: a love affair he never let go. He arrived in Perranporth in 1925 at the age of 17 and stayed there for the next 34 years.

More than once on these expeditions I found myself remembering that Shakespearean line: "In following him I follow but myself." The fact is Mr Graham refused to walk or to run in a narrow groove, a man faithful to something beyond himself - his stars, his destiny drawing him forward.

I last saw Winston at the du Maurier Festival in 2002 when he came to Cornwall to promote his final novel, *Bella Poldark*. Sitting in his wheelchair, he said: "This is the end of Poldark but I'm still writing, working on my memoirs. Do you think enough people will want to read them?"

"Of course they will," I responded.

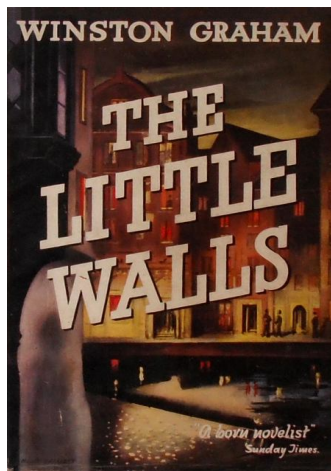
"I'm not so sure."

He half-smiled and added: "A lady friend has read the first half and said, 'They're interesting enough, Winston, but you haven't done a lot of sinning'."

He smiled again: "I'm working on that."

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The Little Walls (1955) - see below - second of three fifties WG novels with a (partly) Mediterranean setting, won for its author the inaugural Crime Writers' Association best crime novel of the year award. (Though known since 1960 as the Gold Dagger Award, what Mr. Graham and other early winners received was the rather more prosaically named Crossed Red Herring Award.) Subsequent recipients have included Eric Ambler, John Le Carré, Ruth Rendell, Colin Dexter (all twice), Ian Rankin and Henning Mankell (author of the Wallender novels). To date, just one author - Lionel Davidson (1922-2009) - has notched three wins. P. D. James won three runners-up Silver Daggers but never a Gold. The three short-listed books beaten by *The Little Walls* in 1955 were *Blind Date* by Leigh Howard, *Scales of Justice* by Ngaio Marsh and *The Man Who Didn't Fly* by Margo Bennett. Oddly, the second man to win a Crossed Red Herring Award was Edward Grierson for *The Second Man*. In the wake of his 1955 success, no other WG title was ever short-listed. In 2005, to celebrate the Gold Dagger's golden jubilee, CWA members chose as "best of the best" and winner of their "Dagger of Daggers" John Le Carré's 1963 epic *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*.



Winston Graham writes both historical novels and suspense stories, but not, if "**The Little Walls**" (Doubleday, \$3.50) is a prime example of the latter, with equal facility. If memory serves, Mr. Graham's last novel of old England crackled with eighteenth-century huggermugger. "The Little Walls" on the other hand - which follows a man's search for his brother's murderer from Amsterdam to Capri - is disappointingly static and cluttered with irrelevancies.

[Martin Levin, *The Saturday Review*, 1 October 1955](#)

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A Suspenseful, Surprising Novel, Exploring Labyrinths of Belief

THE LITTLE WALLS by Winston Graham, Doubleday, 256 pages

Here is compelling reading ... suspenseful, conveying equally well the moods of Amsterdam's shadowy red light district and the bright blue playground of Capri. But more than this, it is intelligent, thoughtful writing, digging deep into character and motive and exploring the labyrinths of man's beliefs.

It is the story of Philip Turner and his quest for the truth about his brother's death in a dank, dark canal in the part of Amsterdam the good burghers knew nothing about - or preferred to know nothing.

The police said it was suicide. Philip didn't believe it. But suicide or not, he knew there was something terribly twisted behind the presence of his brother, a famous archaeologist and former physicist, a brilliant and noble man in that infamous rendezvous for the depraved and criminal.

PHILIP TELLS THE STORY himself, with no wasted words and no fancy writing, and yet with the literate narrative style of an educated Englishman. It is not full of action in the way of an American crime story, yet it is always alive; it is not exactly swift-moving, for there are many passages of thought and of conversation, yet it has a steady current and takes sudden turns in unexpected directions.

Philip comes home to England on a week's leave from his business in the States, thinking to straighten out the confusion over Grevil's death once he is on the scene. But talks with the authorities in London and Amsterdam intensify the mystery, and once he has gone that far he sees he must follow wherever the trail leads in his hunt for the two people who seem to be involved in the tragedy.

One of the two is, as might be guessed, a beautiful woman ... a woman he knows first only as Leonie. The other is Buckingham, a strange amoral man Grevil met while on his expedition to Java - a man Grevil admired for his intellect, liked for his charming personality, and hated for his iconoclastic beliefs which violated every standard men are taught to live by.

PHILIP'S ONLY HELP came from Martin Coxson, to whom the police had sent him as a man who had once known Buckingham. Martin went to Holland with him and then bowed out, but answered Philip's summons from Capri, where he believed he had his quarry trapped. There the lovely Leonie becomes real, the elusive Buckingham is eventually cornered and Philip learns a great deal about them both, about his brother and about himself. Mr. Graham's followers, who have enjoyed his other novels of suspense such as "Fortune Is A Woman" and "Night Without Stars" should not be disappointed in this new adventure.

[Florence Lovell, *The Bridgeport Telegram*, 11 September 1955](#)

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A Suspense Novel By Winston Graham

THE LITTLE WALLS by Winston Graham (Doubleday, 256 pages, \$3.50)

This is a suspense novel, a story of Philip Turner, who investigates the alleged suicide of his brother. The search goes from England to the Netherlands to Capri and involves certain unsavoury characters, as well as suave individuals of international society. In investigating his brother's life, Philip locates Leonie and finds love. The story is one of adventure, and the continuing inquiry of Philip into his brother's affairs holds the reader's attention. The author has written eleven other novels, including "Night Without Stars."

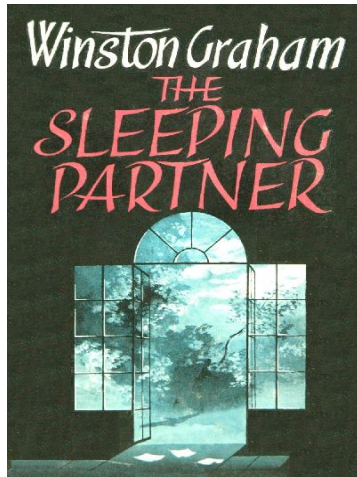
[R.S., *The Kansas City Star*, 10 September 1955](#)

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Winston Graham is one of the most intelligent as well as competent of the comparative newcomers and has achieved the quite remarkable feat of making a compelling and even exciting book out of the clash of two opposing philosophies ... The compulsion lies in Mr. Graham's ability to draw character and in what he has to tell us. This seems to me a book which in its genre it would be hard to praise too highly.

[Francis Iles, *The Sunday Times*, date unknown \(excerpt\)](#)

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The Sleeping Partner by Winston Graham (Hodder & Stoughton, 12s. 6d.)

Here, too, death doesn't strike until the middle of the book, but by that time the characters, and their possible motive for the crime that's going to happen, have been readably established, and so has a sort of Balchinesque modern factory. A readably matter-of-fact piece about people no more naturally violent than ourselves who are caught up, nevertheless, in murder.

[Christopher Pym, *The Spectator*, 29 June 1956](#)

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VANISHED WIFE

In "**The Sleeping Partner**" (Doubleday, \$3.75) Winston Graham has written a more than adequate thriller based on a classic situation: the search for a murderer by an innocent suspect. Michael Granville, a young manufacturer of electronic apparatus, is suddenly confronted with a set of unpleasant facts concerning his lovely but inscrutable wife, Lynn. Lynn has disappeared leaving a trail of disturbing clues, assorted lovers, and a petition for divorce. When the lady's remains turn up under rum circumstances Granville begins an exhaustive search for the murderer before the police can decide to nab the obvious candidate. Like some of Mr. Graham's other heroes, Granville is a pensive and unhurried customer; he carries on with his work and with a serious love affair while on the prowl for the killer. This versatility adds substance to "*The Sleeping Partner*," which makes up in credibility what it may lack in suspensefulness.

[Martin Levin, *The Saturday Review*, 15 December 1956](#)

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Mr. Graham digs faultlessly into the decadent half-world of upper middle-class society to uncover a social portrait that would not disgrace Nigel Balchin or Graham Greene.

[The Daily Sketch, date unknown \(excerpt\)](#)

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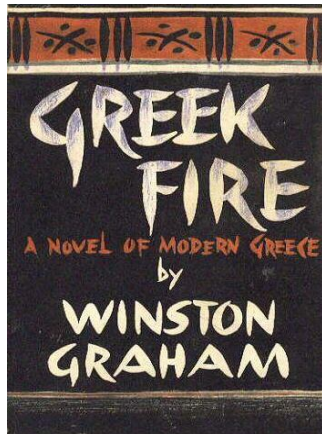
Winston Graham was not only just about "Poldark" and historical stories, he was also a dab hand at psychological thrillers like "Marnie" and "The Sleeping Partner". Mike Granville is so engrossed in his "top secret" job that he doesn't realise his marriage to Lyn is going sour until she suddenly leaves him and demands that he only contact her through her solicitor. Now of course he finds all the time in the world for tracking her down and learning some pretty shocking facts about her private life. Half way through the book he finds her body - in the coal cellar of their home that he vacated a few days after her leaving. Before he can inform the police they come calling - apparently the bank is suspicious about her signature, so he finds himself tracking down any of her past associations who bear a grudge - and there are quite a few. If you have ever seen any British crime movies from the 1950s - John Mills would have made a good Mike Granville - you know what to expect.

Diane, [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com), 12 July 2013

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A scene from *Poldark*, series 2, episode 13. The elderly gent about to kiss the bride is Winston Graham. He recounts in *Memoirs* that the scene had to be shot several times. After the fourth or fifth take he whispered to Jane Wymark: 'I believe I'm getting more fun out of the wedding than the groom.' Smiling through her teeth, she replied: 'Yes, and more than he's ever going to get too.'



WINSTON GRAHAM : *Greek Fire*. 254pp. Hodder and Stoughton. 12. 6d.

Greek Fire is a sophisticated, fast-moving thriller on contemporary lines, about a quiet American in Athens. Though Gene Vanbrugh fought with the Greek Resistance, and later against the Communists, he is, at the time of this story, strictly a lone wolf; and pure altruism draws him from his publishing office in Paris when he gets wind of another attempt at a Communist *coup*. The smiling villain of the piece is mystery man George Lascou, whose new centre party, with high-sounding ideals, threatens to sweep the polls at the next election. Vanbrugh is in search of proof that Lascou is a Communist, written proof that, via a troupe of entertainers, has found its way to Spain. He induces the Spaniards to part with the letters, and at the same time works on Lascou, not entirely disinterestedly, through his mistress. There are the proper number of alarms and counter-alarms, murders and escapes; there is the necessary and effective idyll on Mount Parnassus. In fact the book is nearly a model of its kind, and if it has a flaw it is that the meaning of the incriminating letters when they are read out is not immediately clear. Mr. Graham's plot is excellent, and his characters are attractive, but his story-telling still needs a little more incisiveness, a little less ambiguous understatement.

[The Times, 9 January 1958](#)

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HELLENIC INTRIGUE

Why is it, asks a character in "**Greek Fire**" (Doubleday, \$3.95), "that a respectable publisher should come to Greece and stay at a third-rate hotel ... and then move on from one dingy apartment to another so fast that the police cannot catch up with him?" Why, indeed, unless said publisher is a central figure in a novel of suspense - in which case his behavior is hardly exceptional. Gene Vanbrugh, the shifty publisher, has evidently more on his mind than signing up new authors, and once one accepts his quixotic motivation, Winston Graham's latest novel moves along with compelling pace and authority.

An American Graecophile and wartime Balkan operative, Vanbrugh appears in Athens with the self-imposed mission of scotching a Communist coup being hatched by an ostensibly liberal politician named Lascou. Vanbrugh barges into his adversary's love

life as well as his political intriguing, and before long is involved with a pair of exotic murderers, purloined letters, and Lascou's stunning paramour. "Greek Fire" is Mr. Graham's best book in some time.

[Martin Levin, *The Saturday Review*, 1 March 1958](#)

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Greek Fire by Winston Graham

Gene Vanbrugh, an American alone in Athens, and privy to the murder of a night club performer, Juan Tolosa, realizes that the dead man was in possession of papers dangerous to George Lascou, a politician with high ambitions in a forthcoming election and low affiliations with the Communist Party. Present at Lascou's murder at the hands of Tolosa's wife, Vanbrugh is considered responsible for the crime but given a temporary refuge in the apartment of Anya Stonaris, Lascou's mistress, with whom he falls in love. Trying to get out of the country, he is caught, and it is Anya who bargains for his freedom with the incriminating papers although in so doing she must forfeit their chance to be together. [Though not Winston Graham's] best, this is still a silky form of suspense entertainment.

[Kirkus, undated](#)

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[*Greek Fire*] is an unexacting, workmanlike, blood-heat-and-no-more thriller about an American involved in Greek politics, and a bad, beautiful woman with a heart of plutonium.

[Pamela Hansford Johnson, excerpt, date and source unknown](#)

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Ancient Cities In Modern Literary Vogue

"Greek Fire," by Winston Graham, Hodder & Stoughton, 12/6d

Greece and Rome are in vogue in literary circles once again, it seems. The study of classics may be struggling to survive, but while there is an opportunity to set every conceivable type of story in Greece, we shall not be unfamiliar with at least place names and snippets of history thrown over the shoulders of characters.

"Byron. That statue. He loved Greece more even than his own land," says the hard-bitten American Gene Vanbrugh, hero of Winston Graham's thriller "Greek Fire."

Mr. Graham's characters look down on Omnia Square from their office windows, drink in Greek "tavernas"; sit gazing at the Parthenon, but they might as well have stayed in America and performed the same antics for all the atmosphere of Greece that has been infused into this novel.

Set against the background of political strife in Communist-endangered Greece, the novel tells of the attempts of would-be socialist, George Lascou, to lead Greece into the maws of the waiting reds, but Vanbrugh, the American of Greek extraction, thinks otherwise, and sets himself a one-man task of freeing Greece from this threat.

Yet there is no doubt that Mr. Graham knows how to write an exciting narrative that holds the reader to the last page.

The Canberra Times, 17 May 1958

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Greek Intrigue

An American adventurer engaging in the intrigue of a Greek election and a beautiful Greek girl who takes part in the cloak-and-dagger work battle Communists in GREEK FIRE, a novel by Winston Graham.

In the same vein as some other novels of international scheming, the book still is highly readable. Climax comes as only a minor surprise but is very satisfactory.

B.C., The San Antonio Express and News, 23 February 1958

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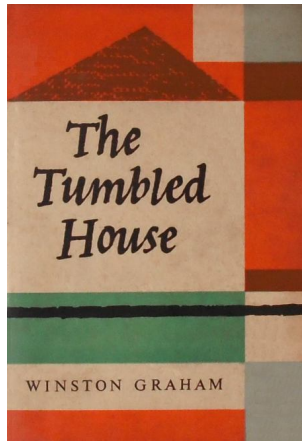
Greek Fire perfectly encapsulates a love story of the 50's, even the 'smart' word play is in period; set in Greece with murky Greek politics, too - the great 50's novel in my book, pity he never wrote a follow up. 5 stars (of 5)

A. Taylor, Amazon.co.uk, 7 February 2010

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For a selection of variant book jackets of this and other titles, see separate pdf files [Jackets \(1\)](#) and [\(2\)](#)



NO TIME FOR FREUD

Someone should do Winston Graham a kindness and tell him that his latest novel, **"The Tumbled House"** (Doubleday, \$4.50), is passé. As every aspiring writer knows, we are smack in the midst of the literary era of the small plot and the large neurosis. Yet what has foolish Mr. Graham done but written nearly 400 pages alive with five major characters and an excellent large supporting cast, all working out their tangled destinies with determination and dignity, just as if they had never heard of Dr. Freud.

The plot (one might carp a bit and say two loosely joined plots) strides briskly across the face of London, pausing for revealing glimpses into the underworld, the best clubs, concert halls, newspaper offices, slums, and law courts, to mention most of the choice stopovers. En route, there's a Montague-Capulet romance, a race against death, a spot of marital infidelity, and a fine libel trial. These teasing suggestions of what awaits the reader are offered in the hope of offsetting the publisher's clumsily written dust-jacket blurb: "A novel about a man who in trying to destroy another man's reputation destroyed his own. "

In brief, "The Tumbled House" has everything but the proverbial kitchen sink, and with Winston Graham's talent, he could probably work that in successfully. No, his novel is not an important work of literature; yes, you can dine out this season without having read it. It's just a good story about a baker's dozen of likable people - even the villains - and if there's anything wrong with writing that type of novel, you can stand me up beside Mr. Graham and tell the firing squad to proceed.

[Haskel Frankel, *The Saturday Review*, 6 February 1960](#)

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Winston Graham, "The Tumbled House"

Why does Roger Shorn, a noted, handsome, middle-aged English journalist set out to destroy the reputation of an old acquaintance, the late Sir John Marlowe, barrister and philosopher? Is it because he is jealous of Sir John's son Don, a young, rapidly rising conductor; because he desires the latter's wife, Joanna, an actress with whom he has had an affair, or simply to further his own ends? Whatever the reason, his attacks upon Sir John in two anonymous newspaper columns set in motion the events that blight his

personal plans, visit tragedy upon his own son, Michael, and the latter's fiancée, Bennie Marlowe, and almost destroy the marriage of Don and Joanna. A brilliant portrait of an egocentric at work.

The Delta Democrat-Times, 20 March 1960

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[*The Tumbled House*] comprises several ingeniously woven stories that together portray with accuracy and force a section of London society ... The complications of the plot are brilliantly controlled and the reader's attention is held closely throughout.

The Times Literary Supplement, date unknown (excerpt)

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The Tumbled House is by far [Winston Graham's] best work to date - one likely to please both the critics and a wide general public.

The central character is Roger, an urbane, suave, thrice-divorced man-about-town and journalist. There are two themes. Firstly, Roger's a-moral, muck-raking, self-righteous attitude to his newspaper work and, secondly, the effect of his attitude to life on his son, Michael

Roger, on flimsy evidence obtained by theft, sets out to destroy the reputation of a recently dead barrister and philosopher, the father of one of his friends. The resulting court action raises points of public interest concerning the law of libel and concerning the relations of press and public as well as providing the basis for a study of the fictional characters involved. It is this which makes the book thought-provoking and memorable, although towards the end, it is the story of the son, Michael, his love affair and dabbings in crime, which take command of the book in an exciting and tragic climax.

Such a summary cannot do justice to a plot which is long and involved, though concisely written and clearly unravelled. There are readers who demand a "good, long read" with a strong plot; others who demand an analysis of characters' thoughts and motives; some who want the novel to have a "message", some who demand blood and action. *The Tumbled House* has something of all these elements, yet its highly skilled construction adds up to a well-rounded, realistic picture of an important slice of contemporary life.

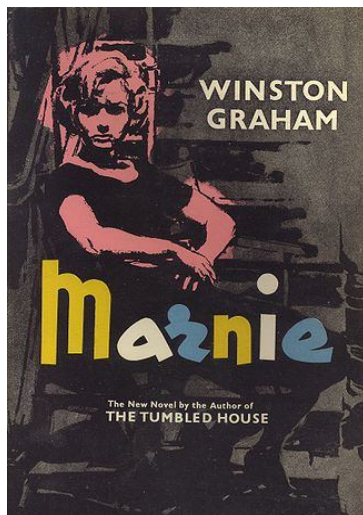
W. G. S., *Books and Bookmen*, October 1959

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Thriller-like suspense, romantic interest and acute observation. (*Sunday Times*)

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He excels in making his characters come vividly alive. (*Daily Mirror*)



MARNIE by Winston Graham. Doubleday. \$3.95

English gal, congenital thief (she does right well at it, too) accepts marriage as an alternative to exposure - and then the plot *really* thickens. Psychological factor stressed; good motion.

[Sergeant Cuff, *The Saturday Review*, 25 February 1961](#)

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Marnie ... is a secretary and stenographer light-fingered at the typewriter and the cash-box. She gets a job, cases the new office, personnel and routine, walks off with a few hundred pounds and moves to another hunting ground, adopts a new name, and sets her trap again. Her mother, who also has an interesting history as you will find out, keeps warning her not to let her supposedly rich employers take advantage of her supposed innocence, but she is against men. Her deliberately dowdy dresses are her armor against amour. But this can't go on forever, men being predatory, so when she makes the mistake of working for Rutland's, Mark and Terry, rivals in business, become rivals in love, too - despite what they discover about her thievery.

... Graham is more sentimental than [another writer under review]. Neither will give you nightmares, but they knowingly whip up a tension that'll keep you on the edge of your chair till love finds a way ...

[The High Point Enterprise, 8 January 1961](#)

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Movie to boost Sale of 'Marnie'

MARNIE, by Winston Graham, Fawcett Publications Ltd, 272 pgs. Fifty cents.

"Marnie" will undoubtedly be on the best seller lists this spring - if for no other reason than Grace Kelly has announced that she will return to the screen in the title role under direction of Alfred Hitchcock.

"Marnie" is a novel of suspense.

Marnie is unlike anyone you've ever known - unless you're the kind of person who isn't wary of strangers. To look at Marnie you'd never think she was in trouble. But beyond her quiet manner and innocent young eyes, Marnie is a thief, a liar, a forger, an embezzler.

No one knows her real name, where she came from, where she went. Which was exactly as she wanted it, for as she stole from her employers she only wanted to disappear - so she could steal again.

But one time her plans go awry and she finds herself in a trap. And the man who caught her, and married her, finds himself caught in the trap as well.

How Marnie and her husband disengage her from this trap makes fascinating reading.

The Abilene Reporter-News, 22 April 1962

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Winston Graham - "Marnie"

This is an absorbing novel by the author of "Night Without Stars," "Fortune Is A Woman," and several other tales of adventure. Marnie is an adventuress of a sort - she tells of her career of obtaining cashier's jobs under various pseudonyms, gaining her employer's confidence, and then walking off with the cash. One cannot help admiring her independent spirit; her gradual entrapment by a man's love is fascinating. The flashbacks to her sordid childhood in a British slum are well done, but the psychological explanation for her amoral behavior may not convince some readers. While this is not great literature, it is a good novel and will be enjoyed by those who like English psychological suspense stories.

The Delta Democrat-Times, 5 March 1961

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Marnie by Winston Graham (Hodder and Stoughton, 16s.)

Long, immensely readable character study of young woman thief, a-moral as to her employers' pay-rolls, but highly puritanical as to her favours. It may be that both the light fingers and the sexual primness have their origins in her psyche, and Winston Graham explores it thoroughly (as though in the girl's own words) in a crime novel with no violence, considerable suspense, and of great distinction.

Cyril Ray, The Spectator, 19 May 1961

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MARNIE is a pretty girl and clever; she is a pathological liar; and her bad habit of taking things has now reached a point where she has pulled off three large thefts - most

recently the £1,100 payroll of the firm where she is working, under an alias. While the police do not catch up with her, Mark Rutland, a member of the firm, does, returns the money, and suggests the marriage which she cannot refuse. Only later does he realize that her dislike of all men extends to a deeper sexual disgust. Mark persuades her to see a psychiatrist, but she tries to fool him with her facile fantasies and accomplished prevarication. Only occasionally is she unnerved when the doctor touches on her past poverty and the mother she claims is dead. She is responsible for the accident in which Mark is injured - and her horse (her only real object of affection) is killed. And she finally runs away, to learn that her mother has just died and to face the submerged but half-sensed tragedy which ends any further escape. Winston Graham, a versatile storyteller, adds sympathy and suspense to this misspent life to provide some well-spent moments of entertainment for the reader.

Kirkus, undated

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So much more than Hitchcock's "Marnie"

MARNIE is a much grimmer story than the movie (despite its own grim tones) led me to believe. Although I'd always liked the movie, I like the book so much more. Winston Graham's Marnie has more depth than Hitchcock's Marnie, and Marnie's traumatic past and the effect it has upon her is not as easily resolved in the book as it is in the movie. As the book is written in the first person, we are privy to Marnie's thoughts and emotions (while the movie is told more from the point of view of Marnie's frozen-out husband Mark).

Graham was an expert at creating a woman with no conscience; someone who is always at one remove from life. Everything about her is false, including what she thinks she knows about her past. Then, when Marnie's careful tightrope of a life begins to slowly implode, she's slowly brought forward into becoming - well, a human being. It's a masterful portrait of a woman on the brink brought back from the brink, and I'm a little surprised that Hitchcock didn't use more from the original story in his film version. Unfortunately, Hitchcock seems to have exclusively focused on Marnie's frigidity, which is only a small part of her personality and her problems. I'm very glad to have finally read the book, and to discover that the written Marnie was so much more interesting a creation than the film version. 4 stars (of 5)

Suzie Q, Amazon.com, 28 October 2009

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Marnie by Winston Graham. A deeply troubled woman, who has carefully avoided romantic entanglements, decides to marry when she is faced with a choice of marriage or a prison term for theft. Marnie planned the exit from her dilemma carefully, but in a climactic twist of events she was to experience, and learn from, an unexpected truth.

The Hazleton Plain Speaker, 24 March 1961

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Winston Graham's 1961 novel *Marnie* is best known today as the source of Alfred Hitchcock's 1964 movie of the same title. The movie was somewhat controversial at the time for its relatively frank treatment of sexual problems and today if anything it divides audiences even more.

The novel was very successful at the time. Winston Graham (1908-2003) was a best-selling author most widely known for his Poldark historical novels. He also wrote thrillers and *Marnie* fits into the latter category. It's a psycho-sexual crime novel with much more emphasis on sex than on crime.

Marnie is a thief. And a very successful one. Her crimes are intricately planned and daring. She has devised a remarkably successful modus operandi. She invents a false identity for herself, talks her way into a job and then manoeuvres herself into a position where she has access to the company's money. This is easy for her because she has a natural gift for mathematics which employers quickly recognise. She is also a very competent employee and even in the short time she stays in a job she usually wins promotion. After that the successful completion of the robbery is just a matter of waiting for the ideal time. It may take weeks, but the results are inevitable. Marnie has created a whole series of these false identities and has carried out a whole series of robberies but she covers her tracks very thoroughly indeed.

The fact is that Marnie is so gifted and capable that she could easily make a success of any job. She has no real need to steal. At least she has no material need to be a thief. But she does have a deep psychological need to do so. Marnie has issues, and although she has never admitted it to herself those issues revolve around sex. It also has to be admitted that she enjoys stealing although again it's as much the fulfilment of a psychological need as it is the excitement of the life she leads.

Marnie believes she is happy. She also believes that she steals in order to support her invalid mother. As with most things in Marnie's life there's a fair amount of self-deception in this, a self-deception that is entirely unconscious.

All goes well with her criminal career until she gets a job with a printing company called Rutland's. She makes the mistake of staying there longer than usual, and she makes the further mistake of becoming involved on a social level with the people there. In particular with two men. Marnie has never had any interest in men, or in love or marriage or sex. She especially has had no interest in sex. She is a virgin and she intends to stay that way. Her mother has told her how disgusting the sexual aspects of marriage are and Marnie has no intention of finding out about such distasteful matters for herself. Despite this she allows herself to become friendly with two men, Terry Holbrook and Mark Rutland, both descendants of the original founders of the firm.

In the case of Terry it's certainly not Marnie who is the instigator of things and she really dislikes him. With good reason, since he's a rather unpleasant young man. With Mark it is different. He's really the first man who has ever interested her as a person, the first man she's ever felt at ease with, and the first man who seems to understand her. She's fended off Terry's advances quite successfully and she's confident she can avoid going too far with Mark. She certainly would not let either of them touch her, but without realising what has happened she has developed rather a liking for Mark's company.

She finally decides she has stayed too long, cleans out the company's safe and disappears. But her one passion in life, her love of horses, has led her to make a fatal mistake. Mark has discovered where she keeps her horse stabled and tracks her down. She assumes that he will hand her over to the police but Mark has other plans. He intends to get the money back, but he also intends to marry Marnie.

This is where the book really starts to get interesting. The marriage is a complex web of misunderstandings, wishful thinking, deception and self-deception. The way Marnie sees it is that she has been blackmailed into marriage. The way Mark sees it is that he loves her and she loves him. He knows she is a strange woman but he believes that love will conquer all. He can save her.

As you might expect their wedding night is not a success. In fact nothing happens. Nothing happens for a week or more until finally Mark's passions get the better of him. Marnie is so obviously appalled that that is the last time he tries to have sex with her. But he still loves her and he still believes that patience and understanding will prevail and that Marnie's fear of sex can be overcome. After all psychiatrists are good at that sort of thing aren't they? Surely a psychiatrist will find this to be a relatively simple matter. In fact her psychiatrist finds her to be anything but an easy case.

This is a mystery-suspense novel but the mystery and suspense come more from the unravelling of the secrets of Marnie's past, and her mother's past, than from the unravelling of a crime. In the course of this unravelling Marnie will make some startling discoveries but by the time she does this she has other problems to worry about. Her criminal past is also about to catch up to her. Now the challenge is not just to escape the chains of the past but also to stay out of prison.

If you think the explanation of Marnie's problem is the sort of obvious explanation that a modern writer would choose you will be surprised. Writers in 1961 were rather more original and rather more subtle than writers of today and the explanation is not the obvious one at all.

The plot and the themes are rather similar to those of the film but with a few important differences. In particular the Marnie-Mark relationship is different in several respects, the explanation of Marnie's sexual problems is somewhat more complex and also different in important respects compared to the film, and the ending is quite different. So if you've seen the movie don't assume that this is going to be the same story. Hitchcock and his screenwriter Jay Presson Allen use the same basic plot as a jumping-off point but they do different things with it so if you have seen the movie the novel is still well worth reading for both its similarities and its differences.

Marnie is a fine example of a crime novel in which crime is not really the focus. The author has other intentions besides writing a crime novel but even judged as a crime novel it's exceptionally interesting. Of course the assumptions about psychiatry and about the solving of psychological problems purely by discovering the hidden trauma in the past are a little dated but Winston Graham handles the story with sufficient skill to make this a fascinating read.

Apart from being a kind of sexual mystery it is also a novel about identity, or rather different layers of identity. Marnie has other reasons for her constant re-invention of

herself besides its usefulness to her as a criminal. She needs masks to hide behind and perhaps in some ways this is more important to her even than thieving. The lies we tell ourselves, the lies we tell others, the lies that we live, these are all issues addressed in this novel. The truth exists, but do we really want the truth?

Highly recommended. 5 stars (of 5)

Dfordoom, [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/115273.Marnie), 31 August 2012

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Surprisingly intelligent. Surprisingly because intelligence is not a quality that one associates with the literary source of a Hitchcock film. It might have been interesting to see *Marnie* filmed by someone like Chabrol or Duvivier or even a journeyman British director like J. Lee Thompson, with the original bleak ending preserved.

As for Marnie herself - whom Hitch called one of the most unusual heroines he'd ever encountered (and then proceeded to milk her for the usual melodramatic clichés) - she is not so unique: she could be a *femme fatale* from any American *roman noir*, or from something by James Hadley Chase. What's unusual is making her the narrator and delving into her past and her psychological make-up. And then, of course, there is the ever-present British class aspect which adds an extra dimension.

5 stars (of 5)

N N, [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/115273.Marnie), 18 December 2013

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I first read *Marnie* when my parents bought me a second-hand Readers Digest condensed book whilst I was recovering from an operation back in 1988. Of the four stories in that book, *Marnie*, by Winston Graham, captivated me utterly. Readers Digest condensed books are disliked by many - and perhaps rightly so - but *Marnie* got under my skin. I still have the condensed book, which has probably been read well over a dozen times.

Towards the end of last year I coincidentally read all twelve books of the 'Poldark' series. These proved to be a highly enjoyable read, and I was surprised to see that they were also written by Winston Graham. Then, at a fete in September, I found a 1974-issue paperback of the full novel *Marnie* on a second-hand stall.

It took me six months to start reading it. There were several reasons for this: firstly, I wanted to finish off the Poldark books; secondly, I preferred to read books that I had not read before. The main reason, however, was that I loved the condensed book so much, and I was afraid that the full novel would somehow be disappointing.

I need not have worried.

Marnie tells the story of Marnie, a young English woman at the start of the 1960s. It is clear from the very start of the novel that she is a thief - she joins a company as a

secretary, waits until payday, then steals the payroll. She invents identities and throws them away at will - in one company she is Mollie Jeffrey; at another, Mary Taylor. This leads to the central question of the book: who is Marnie?

Unfortunately for Marnie, she commits one crime too many. Whilst working at a printing firm in London she comes to the attention of a director, Mark Rutland, a young widower, who falls in love with her. She steals the payroll and takings, and disappears. Mark discovers the theft and replaces the money out of his own pocket. Then he sets out to track Marnie down.

There are two loves in Marnie's life: her mother, a widower living in Plymouth, and Forio, an ex-racehorse she bought with the takings of her earlier crimes. Her love for Forio is superbly written, and it becomes obvious that her only true relationship is with the horse. All of her other relationships are, to varying degrees, lies.

Mark tracks Marnie down and forces her to marry him. This is the one piece of the book that unsettles me - he rapes her on their honeymoon. Afterwards he realises that she is physically repulsed - not by him, but by the mere concept of sex. He bribes her into seeing a psychiatrist, who starts getting a little too near the truth for her liking.

A business partner and rival of Mark suspects there is something dark in Marnie's past and starts digging. He soon realises that she is not who she claims to be. He is driven by a combination of jealousy, pettiness and hatred for Mark.

As events close in on Marnie, she and Mark go on a hunt. As she sees a fox being butchered she flees on Forio, riding off in a random direction, letting Forio run. Mark follows. She jumps a hedge to find a stream on the other side. This is, for me, the most powerful part of the book. Mark follows her over the hedge and ends up lying face-down in the mud.

That noise, that unbearable noise, was coming from Forio. He was trying to get up but he couldn't. I pulled myself up and fell down again, got up again, staggered towards him. Then I saw Mark. He was lying very still. I ran towards Forio.

Her husband is lying unconscious in the mud, and her first reaction is to run towards her horse. This one snippet details her utter disconnection with the rest of humanity.

She tries to steal the company's payroll as Mark is recovering in hospital. She finds herself in front of the open safe, unable to bring herself to take the money. Instead she flees down to Plymouth, only to find that her mother has just died. This leads to the unveiling of the truth behind her past, and the reason she has chosen to live her life as a series of ever-changing identities.

After her mother's funeral she is tracked down by Mark's business partner, who returns her to London. Once there, he takes her to meet representatives of the companies she has stolen from. She is faced with a choice: to run, or to face up to her past and her crimes. She chooses the latter, anchored by Mark's love for her.

As with all Graham books, it is essentially a character piece. Marnie's character is so brilliantly written - the reader should dislike her as much as she dislikes herself, but in the end she turns out to be a captivating creature. Mark's character is also superb - he loves Marnie utterly, and will do anything to help her, whatever the cost. Yet Marnie does not want to help herself, as that would mean facing up to her past.

In 1964 Hitchcock made the book into a film starring Sean Connery. I cannot stress how much I hate the film. For one thing, Hitchcock changed the action from England to Philadelphia, and thus lost the quintessential English character of the book. Additionally, Marnie's character and motivations were very much moulded by the hardships of the Second World War.

All in all, I love this book as much as when I first read it. It is very much a book set in that post-war period; Marnie's life and crimes would be very different nowadays. I give this book five out of five stars. Highly recommended.

[David Cotton, *A Walker's Ramblings*, 26 February 2010](#)

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How the novel *Marnie* compares to the Hitchcock film

Many of Alfred Hitchcock's classic films have been based on great literature. One of the best examples is *Marnie* by the prolific British author, Winston Graham. Both the book and the film, which starred Tippi Hedren, tell the story of a beautiful embezzler, whose life of crime was provoked by an unspeakable childhood trauma.

The plot thickens when Marnie is caught by one of the male executives she's robbing. Although understandably angry, he also happens to be very much in love with Marnie; a fact that isn't changed by the knowledge that she's a thief. When forced to choose between jail and marriage to the executive, she reluctantly chooses marriage even though the same childhood terrors that cause her to steal also cause her to be disgusted by the thought of being touched by a man.

Though the plot and characters are very similar, there are also many significant differences. The book takes place in England while the film takes place in various parts of the United States. The book features a key character, a rakish executive continually pursuing Marnie, who is completely absent from the film. The tone of the book is noticeably darker than the film, particularly the ending. But the biggest difference between the two is the episode from Marnie's childhood that became the source of her emotional problems. The book's explanation was much more shocking and disturbing than the one in the film.

Overall the book is a very interesting and suspenseful read. Surprisingly, it is also quite romantic. I highly recommend *Marnie*, particularly to fans of the late Winston Graham.

[examiner.com, 17 July 2012](#)

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Marnie as a gritty parable

O'Connor's stage adaptation of the Winston Graham novel about Marnie is a case of style over substance.

In his 1964 film, Alfred Hitchcock had located the story of the compulsive liar and thief in Philadelphia, but O'Connor restores the British post-war backdrop with some success. Marnie's tragedy is played out not merely as psychodrama but as a gritty parable of repressiveness in which sex, class, money and even vowel sounds are major motivators.

Set in what looks like a vast tiled public lavatory, which echoes Marnie's obsessive urge to wash herself clean after every "job", the production seamlessly melds past and present, linking the damaged psyche of the apparently cold-hearted, frigid Marnie with her 10-year-old self, appearing down the train tracks of the past. From the endlessly ticking clock to the shadows thrown up against the back wall and the pre-Coalite smog that invades the stage, this is all exquisitely done, simultaneously conjuring the dream world of psychoanalysis and the harsh reality of a strictly stratified society where hypocrisy and privilege flourish.

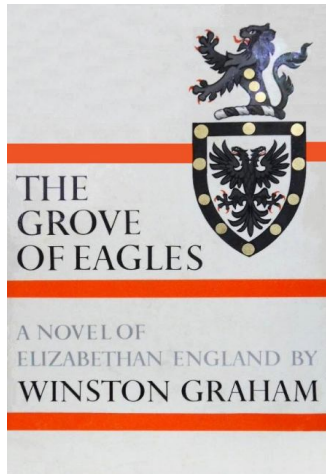
But for all his stylistic flourishes, O'Connor - like Hitchcock before him - never really gets inside either Marnie's frozen heart or her strange, forced marriage to Mark Rutland, the boss from whom she steals and who then traps her like a wounded animal. Just as most of the attempts to explain Marnie's behaviour look ludicrously simplistic to a modern audience - the workings of the subconscious are infinitely more understood than they were 40 years ago - so the failure to explore Rutland's equally bizarre behaviour and motives in marrying Marnie create a hollow centre. The absence makes this otherwise watchable evening seem cynical, sometimes even repulsive.

Try as they may, the actors can't always fill the emotional gap. Sophie Shaw as Marnie initially substitutes woodenness for emotional reticence and damage, but gets better as the evening progresses; in the final scene, the vision of a lonely future, cut off from all humanity, is truly pitiful. But by then it is a close run thing as to whether you will have lost all interest.

Until February 3. The production then transfers to the Gateway, Chester from February 7.

[Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian*, 24 January 2001](#)

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THE GROVE OF EAGLES by Winston Graham

A stormy novel of late 16th century Cornwall in the times of threats from Spanish war vessels. It is about a noble family that is deep in religious controversy and some neighborhood feuds. The men of the family are known for passion and violence, and Maugan, the young hero, a bastard, is no exception to this tradition. This long novel is rather slow-paced but the details of customs of the time are interesting, and Maugan is a real and sympathetic central character.

Lebanon Daily News, 9 January 1964

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The Grove of Eagles by Winston Graham

This long novel never falters and is an historical tale of the Killigrew family which lived on the Cornish coast at the time of Sir Walter Raleigh, war with Spain and danger from the sea. It is in the established series of period pastiches which Graham alternates with his modern entertainments. The Killigrews are an important family, and their estate is visited by such as Raleigh. Maugan, the eldest (and illegitimate) son, is apprenticed out at 15 as a clerk in a warehouse. He discovers that his family name is not well liked and it becomes evident that his father may be linked with pirates. Then, during a Spanish raid, the lad is abducted and carried off to Madrid where he becomes a page at Philip's court. He attends an auto-da-fe, meets the aged Cervantes, then is returned to England with a message for his father who is to aid the Second Armada when it lands at Cornwall. The form is conventional, but the straightforward sweep and complexity of the plot and characters bring the book stirring to life.

Kirkus, undated

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The time of the latter years of Queen Elizabeth's reign was one when England, still adjusting to Henry VIII's breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church, was in a state of constant fear of invasion from Philip II's Spain. The great Armada had been defeated in 1588, but by the middle of the 'nineties the Spaniards had come to hold

Calais and parts of the Brittany coast, so that conditions for an attempt to conquer England were much more favorable to them than they had been earlier, and sooner or later another fleet would surely sail.

In these circumstances the story of such men as John Killigrew, the Governor of Pendennis Castle, commanding the most vital position on the Cornish coast, is the story not only of their lives but of the history of the time.

The mounting crisis of these years is seen in this novel through the eyes of Maugan Killigrew, John Killigrew's oldest son. Winston Graham has produced an extraordinarily honest portrayal of a young man who is many times less than a hero but who emerges for all his frailties as a character in the round, believable, sympathetic, and, above all, a person of his time.

In this brilliant combination of the state of nations with the fate of individuals Elizabethan England comes vividly to life, as do the Cornish men and women who play such a notable part. Much original research has gone into the writing of this novel, and there are many outstanding character studies - not least that of Walter Raleigh. In "The Grove of Eagles" great events, great characters, and great narrative writing fuse into a huge and significant whole. It is an absorbing and completely authentic novel.

[Angela Cisco, yahoo.com, 21 November 2009](#)

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"The Grove of Eagles" by Winston Graham is rated as a major novel of Elizabethan times and of the Second Armada which sailed to conquer England in 1597. Much original research went into the writing of this historical [novel] and there are many outstanding character studies, not the least of which is that of Sir Walter Raleigh.

[The Statesville Record and Landmark, 15 January 1964](#)

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Religious Wars Of The 16th Century

THE GROVE OF EAGLES by Winston Graham, Hodder and Stoughton, 31/-

[*The Grove of Eagles* and *Henry of Navarre*] deal with the religious wars of the late 16th century as seen from both sides of the English Channel. The first is a long (576 page), robust novel of Elizabethan England ... primarily about the Killigrews, a not unimportant Cornish family, and based on the scant records of a real family of that name. The central figure is Maugan Killigrew, the natural son of John Killigrew, and the action centres on Falmouth, Mousehole, Penzance and the Cornish coast just before and after the second Spanish Armada.

A. L. Rowse, a historian expert on the Elizabethan period in general and on Cornwall in particular, has called Winston Graham a second Charles Kingsley and says *The Grove of Eagles* is better than *Westward Ho!* Certainly, it has none of the wordy

moralising that marred the work of some minor Victorian novelists and the period detail is based on the latest available knowledge.

Modern versimilitude, however, can be as stultifying as Victorian padding and the practised reader will miss the swift uncluttered narrative brought to this sort of story by Dumas, Stanley Weyman and Conan Doyle.

Piracy

The main narrative line tells how Maugan Killigrew grew up on his father's ramshackle and debt-ridden estate at Arwenack, commanding the mouth of the River Fal. There, he becomes aware that the Killigrew "nest of eagles" has an interest in piracy and loot in addition to responsibility for the defence of the Cornish coast.

At 16, Maugan is taken captive to Spain, where he sees the work of the Inquisition close up. He himself is treated well, unsuccessfully schooled in Catholicism, and sent back to bribe his father into betraying his patriotic trust. Maugan himself is above suspicion but his father is disgruntled and in debt.

Winston Graham skilfully recreates the atmosphere of the counter-Reformation and the moral dilemma of good men faithful to the old religion but faced with political demands that oppose it. Nor does he ignore the fortunate fact that most men are satisfied to conform with the demands of a politically "safe" religion and to follow their self-interest where it takes them.

What happens to John Killigrew and his natural son is something the author must be left to work out in his own way and at his own pace. A reviewer, to be fair, need only assure the reader of excellent entertainment from a practised craftsman. Although most of the action is localised in Cornwall, with the Killigrews and their adherents at the centre of the stage, the story is unfolded against a background of the greater world of London, with vivid glimpses of Raleigh and Essex and the Queen in Council.

[N.B., *The Canberra Times*, 4 January 1964](#)

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A Cornish Hero in Elizabethan England

One could make a good case for the absolute impossibility of writing historical novels. We do not see or feel or pray as men prayed and felt and saw 500 years ago, and we have only the remotest idea how men behaved at the time of Socrates. Only the geniuses can leap into the past; those who are not geniuses make the journey by a hundred hesitant approximations, by a series of cunning maneuvers. The past is more elusive than we think and much, much farther away.

Winston Graham is a good, even an excellent historical novelist - though we are made continually aware that he is an adept at cunning maneuvers and his approximations remain approximations. In his new novel, "The Grove of Eagles," he does not wrestle

with the angel; the fire of the past does not burn very brightly. He goes about the task of describing Elizabethan England with a scholar's load of proper mischief. He has soaked himself in local lore, knows his history, his towns, the shape of the vanished land; he has read the account books, and he can follow his people through the daily round, hour by hour and minute by minute.

Something is still missing. We are never completely convinced that it happened as he says it happened; the blaze of conviction is absent. One needs a kind of perversity in order to make the leap: one must get out of one's skin and become someone else altogether, as in her perverse fashion Dame Edith Sitwell became Elizabeth when she wrote about Elizabeth. She wrote of Elizabeth from the inside. Mr. Graham writes of the Queen, her court and her sometimes disloyal subjects from a safer distance.

This immensely long novel is set in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, and there is an impressive list of gaudy characters. Sir Walter Raleigh, arrogant and debonair, moody and tempestuous by turns, almost takes pride of place, and there are satisfying glimpses of the even more rebellious Essex. The hero, who tells his own story, is the young Cornishman, Maugan Killigrew; he is, in fact, no hero at all. He, too, has a flair for rebellion, suffers from paralyzing moments of self-doubt, and advances perilously only to retreat more perilously. In the end he is brought to trial before the Queen's Privy Council together with his father, who only just escapes the hangman's gibbet.

It is probably the best scene in the book: the old Queen in her orange wig, very *decollétée*, sitting at the head of the table, amused, tolerant, wonderfully majestic and gracious even when dealing with subjects accused of traffic with the enemy.

It is all excellent, beautifully and carefully studied. The characters talk too much and say too little - but that is a common fault in long novels. What one misses is the fire from heaven, the thunder, the trumpets, the light in the eyes, the spurt of blood. It is all a little too leisurely.

As a Cornishman, I applaud this picture of an Elizabethan Cornishman, but I wish devoutly that Quiller-Couch had not troubled the waters. "Q" left his imprint on literary Cornwall, and it may take another generation to wash it away. Mr. Graham has much of "Q's" insight and elegance. One only wishes he had more of Dame Edith Sitwell's perversity. ([Robert Payne, *New York Times*, 12 January 1964](#))

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Elizabethan Cornwall

The Grove of Eagles by Winston Graham

Collectors of intriguing little items of miscellaneous information will be interested to learn that the name Killigrew, of venerable Cornish origin, means, apparently, "a grove of eagles". One dictionary declares it to mean "a crow with red feet and beak" and in actual fact this description might better fit these particular Killigrews, the "not unimportant Cornish family" around whose existence in the last decade of the sixteenth century Winston Graham has fashioned this superlative historical novel.

Mr. Graham is, of course, an immensely practised novelist. "His output," says his publisher, "ranges from historical novels to stories of character and suspense and modern novels in the most contemporary style". In America five of his novels have been major book club choices, four have already been filmed and a fifth is about to be filmed. And the novel under review is a Book Society choice in his native England.

It is therefore not surprising that it is impossible to detect the mechanics of the technique by which he rolls back the mists of time to plunge us into what we unhesitatingly accept from the outset as the authentic ambience of Elizabethan England. Absorbed in the budding manhood of Maugan, "base" son of John Killigrew, growing up in the family eyrie on the Cornish coast, we are played upon by the sounds and smells and the minutiae of the daily country life of the period. We follow a very human youth into its swashbuckling adventure, its greatness, its cruelty and its venery, sharing his first idealism and then his compromise with disillusionment. We see through his eyes how it must have been in the gathering tensions of the wars with Spain, the sacking of Cadiz, the abortive Armada, the murder and the stench and the romance. And this is how they really must have been, this host of characters motivated by greed and lust, ambition and religious zeal. Here are Raleigh, Drake and Hawkins, Elizabeth, Essex, Cecil, Cervantes in Spain, the fathers of the Inquisition, the nobles, the peasants, the sailors, all so expertly drawn that illusion seldom falters.

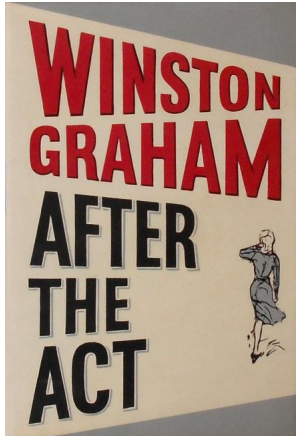
One hardly needs his "Postscript for Purists" to assess the fastidiousness of Mr. Graham's research. It is obviously not without labour that he has earned praise in England as "one of the half-dozen best novelists in this country". Which, in England, is high praise indeed. ([Sarah O. Cross, *The Montreal Gazette*, 21 December 1963](#))

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This historical novel, published in 1963, is a slow starter ... However, "The Grove of Eagles" is well worth your effort ... It is set primarily in Cornwall in the period between 1578 and 1598, the reign of Elizabeth I. As well as portraying typical lives and issues of people living then, it tackles political and military scenarios. It is told in the voice of the oldest and base-born son of a somewhat dissolute major property owner in what is now Falmouth. Graham appends a note explaining where he took liberties (few) with historical facts. He often uses archaic terms and expressions, including nautical references [and] also creates lengthy battle scenes which may please some readers but which I find tedious. At times it is difficult to keep track of the many characters, geographical references and events. The characters, however, are realistic and well fleshed out. Graham even entwines an enjoyable mystery in his pages. Overall, I found the effort of reading this novel well worth it. 5 stars (of 5)

[nonpareil, *Amazon.com*, 5 September 2011](#)

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DESTRUCTION OF A MAN IS RECORDED

"AFTER THE ACT," by Winston Graham, Doubleday, \$4.95

This is a tense, tragic novel of a man who impulsively commits murder and escapes the consequences, but then must wait while his conscience slowly destroys him.

The murderer is an English playwright, newly successful after years of near-misses. The victim is his wife, a temperamental but loyal woman some years older than he. Part of the motive is a beautiful young French girl whom he has fallen in love with at a theater cocktail party in Paris.

All this seems to happen without any particular viciousness, which makes the whole thing doubly tragic. Morris Scott has loved his wife, though she annoyed him at times, and she loved him. The young girl, so new, so attractive, caught him off guard. The murder itself was committed on the spur of the moment; an impulse following an accumulation of annoyances.

It is no wonder that Scott's mind cannot stand up under his remorse, and the telling of the story by the author of "Marnie" is skilfully done.

[B.H.H., *The Anniston Star*, 17 April 1966](#)

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Good Suspense In This Novel

The readers wonder first how playwright Morris Scott is going to get rid of his wife, and secondly whether he will be punished for it in Winston Graham's AFTER THE ACT (Doubleday). Compelling factor in Scott's life is a sweet young thing he meets in Paris on a business trip.

All in all the novel is a far better than average psychological suspense story.

[B.C., *San Antonio Express and News*, 15 May 1966](#)

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Criminals at Large: 'After The Act'

Winston Graham attempts his most ambitious novel in "After The Act," an examination of a successful murderer which scraps all accepted clichés about remorse and retribution and tries to analyze, completely anew, what his reactions must be. Much though I admire the intent, I am forced to report that this is a moderately tedious book, despite exciting glints of insight. It takes forever to reach its starting point, and then continues to move, at the pace of a snail who has given up all hope of the Olympics, through a fuzzy thicket of imprecise words.

[Anthony Boucher, *The New York Times Book Review*, date unknown, 1966](#)

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British suspense at its best ...

Morris Scott is quite full of himself as a successful playwright, but could he have been so without his wife, Harriet? He gets into a rather sticky mess, but of course, it is not his fault. Chilling, engrossing and completely believable. I think Winston Graham is the master of this genre. He slowly takes you on a psychological walk into the mind of his protagonist and you step over the line with him. The author's gift of creeping suspense and impending doom is just so darn satisfying. Winston Graham may be my favorite author and this book is one good reason why. Some great reading, highly recommended. 5 stars (of 5)

[Nancy Myers, *Amazon.com* / *goodreads.com*, 4 February 2014](#)

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After The Act. By Winston Graham. (Hodder and Stoughton, 21s.)

... Mr. Graham lays out a serious theme. Does the act of killing change one profoundly? It is timely. Most men over forty encountered at a party have probably killed; have dropped the bomb on a schoolroom, bayoneted a Fascist, tossed a petrol bomb into an old lady's lap, or joined the Bank Holiday roarers on the roads. What do they now feel? Mr. Graham takes a young playwright married to an older woman and now, in the heady moment of success, falling for a very young girl. He disposes of the wife by pushing her over a balcony. But can he, in a brief suspension of morality, carry on as if nothing had happened: or even convince himself that Harriet died accidentally? Can he be, like Richard III, himself alone, in a defeatable world? Here is a real opportunity to chart fears, superstitions, guilts and freedoms latent in most of us. Sadly, however, despite a firm grasp of contemporary living and a dash of Buddhism and progressive Christianity, Mr. Graham tackles far less of human nature than did his nineteenth-century predecessors. Fuller implications seem sacrificed to the needs of a popular, neatly rounded story.

[Peter Vansittart, *The Spectator*, 9 July 1965](#)

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NIGHT JOURNEY by Winston Graham

Graham wrote this foreign intrigue in 1940 and after 700 copies were sold, its type and sheets were destroyed in an air raid. Ironically enough it deals with an Italian scientist's formula for a persistent gas which is destroyed in a bombing, along with his life. But not before a few notes are passed on to a German and Robert Mencken's attempt to keep him from reaching Germany ends in a picturesque sequence aboard a train. Authoritative action along with a pleasant subsidiary romance.

[Kirkus](#), undated

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Reprint Of A Noted Thriller Proves It Stands Test Of Time

NIGHT JOURNEY by Winston Graham. Doubleday, 237 pages, \$4.95

"Night Journey" was first published in England in 1941 and has been revised for this new release in the United States. It is reassuring to contemplate that basically good construction of a novel and articulate writing does not alter with the passage of time. Mr. Graham's story is no exception and this account of espionage and ruthless antagonists holds the same feeling of hovering dangers and fresh alarms that permeated the World War II years, when this was written.

A young scientist, an Austrian refugee, is recruited by British Intelligence to undertake a vital and risky mission into enemy territory. He is assigned to war-girded Italy where he is to track down certain information on a new and deadly gas and prevent it from reaching the Nazi High Command.

Robert Mencken, a brilliant researcher and expert linguist, is less learned than his enemies in the art of spying, but soon becomes as adept as they in the duel of mind and ideologies. The trail leads from London to Venice and Milan and each second is filled with "edge of chair sitting" thrills and tense expectancy. The magnificent antiquities of Venice enhance the 20th century realism of this account of a mission to be accomplished at any cost, and the introduction of an angle of romance rounds out the

picture of contrasts. Mr. Graham subtly suggests the atmosphere of the stench and filth of the canals lapping at the worn but haughty beauty of the Venetian Palazzos as almost a symbol of corruption and treachery masked by a facade of respectability.

The characters are all expertly defined and convincing. The clash of the rival agents and the savage realism of their encounters makes for engrossing and stimulating reading. The graphic account of a wild and terrifying train ride and the shocking events that transpire during its rumbling passage through Italy and Switzerland, is a high point of the suspense.

Mr. Graham has injected into "Night Journey" a zest and feeling of authenticity which combine to produce a tale of chilling and gripping sequences.

Mr. Graham is the author of a long list of successful books, usually tinged with mystery or intrigue. "Night Journey" represents one of his best efforts. Travel abroad is being restricted, but go first class on this tour (I hate to use the word "TRIP") and be taxed with reading pleasure only.

[Rosalie M. Raphael, *The Delta Democrat-Times*, 11 February 1968](#)

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Novel's Plot Centers On Poison Gas

"Night Journey" by Winston Graham, Doubleday, 237 pages, \$4.95

The secret of a deadly and horrible poison gas, discovered by an Italian during the early part of World War II, is at the center of this spy story.

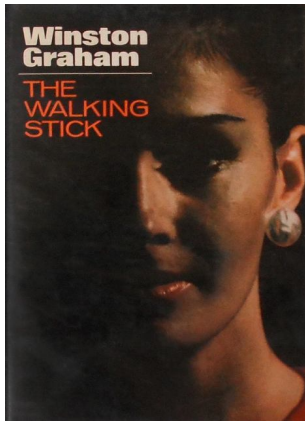
Robert Mencken, a young Austrian chemist, but a naturalized British subject, is compelled to serve as an agent for British Intelligence to make a trip to Italy to pick up the formula for the gas. He finds, however, that the secret has been taken by a high-ranking Nazi scientist who is planning to return to Germany with the formula, which is unknown even to the Italians.

From the expected role of a mere courier, Mencken is propelled into the role of active agent, and the chase is on. It becomes a race against time as the British attempt to halt the German's departure from Italy, with the usual spy intrigue and complications in Venice and Milan.

In weaving his way through this tangled web, Mr. Graham, whose previous works include "The Walking Stick" and "Marnie," spins an engrossing tale of terror and suspense. This is only his second spy story, but I am sure he will not leave this field without more plowing.

[Roy Hudson, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 February 1968](#)

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On the edge of modern morality

The Walking Stick by Winston Graham. Collins. 318pp. Price \$3.15

The Walking Stick is a fine novel that probes a winding side-street of modern morality, the grey perimeter that shrouds the edge of recognisable evil. British author Winston Graham (previous novels were *The Sleeping Partner* and *The Grove of Eagles*) has successfully mapped, in delicate detail, the slow descent of a physical cripple into the world of the spiritually lame.

Broadly speaking, *The Walking Stick* is a story of two people who destroy themselves, one through love and the other through greed. Deborah Dainton is a 26-year-old virgin with a polio-withered leg. Her parents are two middle-aged juveniles whose delinquency lies in their indifference. She has two sisters; one of average promiscuity and the other an attractive and brilliant student. Enter Leigh Hartley, third-rate artist, riverside layabout and congenital liar.

For all her adult life, men for Deborah Dainton have been those people who come to take her sisters out to dinner and parties. A walking stick has confirmed her place as the family misfit, an obviously unenviable but curiously bearable position for one who has accepted it as the norm. Outside this strange cell of circumstance, her life centres only on antique china and porcelain at Whittington's, an auctioneering establishment of the Sotheby's genre.

Not surprisingly she crumbles under the determined onslaught of Leigh Hartley whose glib tongue and blunt approach to her physical disability conceal his own twisted brand of rationalisation. He wins his wondering cripple, sealing his conquest during a sunny idyll in Spain.

This is not to say that Deborah is a simple-minded, love-starved woman clutching blindly at the first trousered straw that waves in her direction. Physical love makes the agreement in principle, a point she freely admits. At first she withholds her intellectual signature but eventually this too is given. The first seeds of doubt are sown soon after she moves into his flat.

For Leigh, crime against person - a young hood bashing an old man for a wallet, for instance - is wrong. But crime against property - robbing an organisation that has the stolen goods insured anyway - is another question.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, Deborah falls victim to this Robin Hood way of environment and a group of Hartley acquaintances whose near-hypnotic effect is based on that same strangeness.

She supplies Leigh with the information necessary for a robbery at Whittington's. In a last-minute switch of plans, she takes part in the crime, which is successful.

The end is as grim as one would predict and the power of Winston Graham's writing is the strength of his characterisation.

Ian Hicks, *The Canberra Times*, 12 August 1967

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Suspense Story is Well-Paced

THE WALKING STICK by Winston Graham. 278 pages. \$4.95. Doubleday.

Though otherwise attractive, a polio-withered leg and the accompanying walking cane have, to her thinking, doomed 25-year-old Deborah Dainton to eternal spinsterhood. Her position as appraiser of antique china in one of the top London auction houses is secure and life is quiet and serene. All this changes with the entry of the young painter, Leigh Hartley.

Appealing to her dormant sexual impulses, Leigh woos Deborah and draws her completely and irrevocably into his life, his studio-apartment, and finally into his money-making sideline - burglary. Part of a clever ring of professional thieves, he inveigles the smitten girl into becoming the "inside man" in the planned robbery of some priceless jewelry her employers are handling in a forthcoming auction.

Graham, author of "Marnie" and several other mystery novels, has come up with not only a well-paced suspense story but an interesting character study as well. The subtle, abrasive technique used in turning a young woman of good upbringing and high principles into an accomplice in a highly illegal adventure makes for engrossing reading.

J.P., *The Arizona Republic*, 5 November 1967

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'Walking Stick' Top Suspense

"The Walking Stick" by Winston Graham; Doubleday; \$4.95

The walking stick is Deborah Dainton's. She used it because she was crippled in one leg by polio as a child, and walks with a pronounced limp.

Deborah is the heroine of this novel by Winston Graham, one of England's foremost suspense writers, author of books like "Marnie" and "After The Act." Partly a love

story, partly the account of a robbery, "The Walking Stick" tells of an introverted girl's venture out into the world.

Deborah is an expert on chinaware, and is employed by Whittington's, one of London's fine auction houses. Her work there is fascinating, and she has made it her whole life.

At a party she meets Leigh Hartley, a dynamic artist of the more Bohemian persuasion, who draws her out of her comfortable retreat into his own unsettling world, where the abnormal is normal and people live dangerously. At the book's climax, there is a carefully planned and executed robbery, a highly dramatic episode done with loving care by an experienced mystery writer.

[B.H.H., *The Anniston Star*, 18 June 1967](#)

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A Novel of the Week

MOST crime-suspense stories are about crimes and about suspense but scarcely about people. In such tales the vogue of our day calls for puppets. Often they are very attractive puppets, talented, versatile, clever of tongue, immaculately groomed or engagingly rumped. perfect as guests for cocktail parties.

But you don't normally go to crime-suspense stories for characterization. So it's a happy change to discover that you do go to Winston Graham for characterization. In his newest tale, for example, THE WALKING STICK, you get action and pace and tension and certainly a crime. But the crime is engineered by real people. And what happens afterwards, for the crime is neither the initial event nor the climax of THE WALKING STICK, happens because of the kind of people they are.

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WHAT to do here when the people are the vital thing? Let's see - well, there was this rather beautiful girl and one day at a party at her sister's house she - But I can't let this telling get into the control of "my friend who goes to the movies."

But still there was this girl. It was her walking stick. She was extremely attractive as to head and hair. Intelligent too. She came from a family of London doctors; both father and mother practised; two sisters were going into medicine.

For the other fact about Deborah besides the talented family she came from was that she had had polio as a child. Fearsome irony to have had doctor parents who didn't recognize the symptoms. The horrors of the iron lung, and always afterwards a phobia about confined places. Two operations and a great deal of therapy, most of it successful.

But she had been left with one leg withered and several inches shorter than the other. Hence the walking stick. Hence a brilliant reading background that happened to have revolved around antiquities. Hence a swift professional rise in a firm that could assume

that an intelligent crippled cataloguer of china and porcelain would be unlikely to marry and would probably stay with them forever.

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Deborah assumed it too. She had a phobia about her non-attractiveness to men. This just at the time when her two sisters were going through the courtship rituals, one quite sanely, the other with hedonistic flightiness.

But that's it. I can go no further. Deborah and her particular complex of skills and problems is the key to the whole story. If you enjoy playing imaginatively with some given human situation - as teachers of writing courses sometimes do with their students - what kind of story would you weave around Deborah?

THE WALKING STICK by Winston Graham. Collins, 318 pages, \$5.50

[*Dorothy Bishop, The Ottawa Journal, 25 November 1967*](#)

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THE WALKING STICK by Winston Graham; Doubleday; \$4.95

A pretty English girl, long crippled by polio, discovers - somewhat unwillingly - that sex is more fun than sublimation in this novel by a well-known British suspense writer. She also discovers, to her sorrow, that the price is a good deal higher, too. But except for an excellent description of a crime in the act of commission, there is too little suspense - and far too much conversation - in what is, at best, only lightly diverting reading.

[*The Modesto News-Herald, 3 December 1967*](#)

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Winston Graham has a high reputation as one of our best modern story-tellers. *The Walking Stick* shows just how well-merited that reputation is. The narrative has a steady, engaging rhythm to it that indicates a writer who is concerned with form as well as content.

[*Birmingham Post, date unknown \(excerpt\)*](#)

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Winston Graham's **The Walking Stick** is a suspenseful novel of the moral disintegration of a beautiful young girl. Deborah, who tells the story, has a crippled leg and uses a walking stick. At a party, she meets a charming young artist, Leigh Hartley, who brings new life and love into her drab existence.

[*The Dover Weekend Daily Reporter, 29 July 1967*](#)

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The Walking Stick ~ a psychological study

THE WALKING STICK by Winston Graham. Doubleday. \$4.95

Deborah Dainton, 26, member of a well-bred family, works for a large art auction firm in London. She meets Leigh Hartley, a young untalented artist who is not very couth.

Because she was lamed by polio in her childhood, and walks with a stick, Deborah has had little experience with young men. She is vulnerable to the persistent attentions of Leigh, and gradually allows herself to be drawn into an affair with him.

But Deborah's seduction is only the first chapter in Leigh's campaign. After he has succeeded in getting her to live with him, he patiently works her into the position of providing information about the auction house, its security measures and its treasure vaults.

There is only one reason for gathering this information, of course. Leigh's somewhat shady friends are preparing a coup. The target is a large collection of jewels, about to be put up for sale.

So far as the action is concerned, the raid on the vaults is the climax. But there is more to the story than that.

For besides being a tale of a well-plotted burglary, with the usual trappings of a detective thriller, this novel is a psychological study. There is the pattern of the spider and the fly, the pathetic struggle of a naive young woman caught and used by a scheming misfit. The final resolution of the story is a comment on the differences between the well-bred and the not so well bred.

Graham is such a skilled storyteller that he guides the reader into following the subtleties of his narrative, and makes the whole affair seem quite engrossing.

[Miles A. Smith, *The Oneonta Star*, 10 July 1967](#)

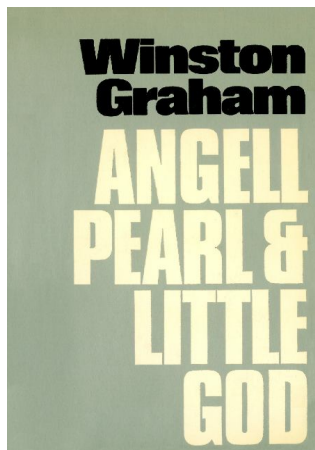
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"THE WALKING STICK" by Winston Graham

Lame, reserved, attractive daughter of an extrovert medical family in London, Deborah Dainton has settled for a quiet, ordered life as a porcelain specialist in a famed auction house serving the British aristocracy. She meets a young, would-be artist who breaks through her defenses with his persistent tenderness. He wins her love so thoroughly that he is finally able to embroil her, against her moral inclinations, in a group-planned robbery of her company. The denouement comes not with the theft itself but with Deborah's discovery that she has been deliberately wooed and used. Skilful characterization in a tense love affair-suspense story for popular reading.

[The Monongahela Daily Republican, 22 January 1968](#)

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Winston Graham - "Angell, Pearl and Little God"

Winston Graham has written a stunning novel of subtle suspense. His skilled portrayal of human frailties, his expert probing of the feminine psyche, his masterful storytelling, have produced a spellbinding psychological drama that compels the reader from the first word to the last.

The Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune, 9 January 1970

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Computers cannot write popular novels

ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD by Winston Graham. Collins, 380pp, \$4-95.

WINSTON Graham is a much published English popular novelist (translations into 15 languages - the mind boggles at the possibilities - and "major" book club choices in four countries), and 'Angell, Pearl and Little God' is pretty close to the sort of nightmare one would have after a six weeks' crash course in "major" book club choices.

Angell is a wealthy, corpulent, middle-aged solicitor with numerous deviations hinted at but never developed, Pearl a pretty, young, suburban shop-girl pusher, Little God a flashy boastful, over sexed little boxer: the tangle of popular fiction themes in which they are involved includes the classical old cuckold-young wife dilemma, the middle-aged solicitor's wooing of a young bride, the social climber's rejection of flashy lower and acceptance of stolid upper, the attraction of animal male for prurient female, the social climber's inevitable failure to bury the past ("but where do you go to, my lovely, when you're alone in your bed"), a good dose of boxing bloodlust and suitably decorous sadism, the rise and fall of the insufficiently dedicated in sport, the odd fast car dashingly driven, and - as if that were not enough - the eccentric English aristocrat regularly bedded by her chauffeur. Small wonder if the capitalist English image abroad is declining.

There are more: it is in fact the ease and consistency with which stock characters and themes are introduced that leads the reader to hope - if not to expect - that the writer's

obvious talents (and the reader's energies) are not being pointlessly dissipated. But the cumulative effect of this calculatedness leads ultimately to the realisation that the pervading sense of unreality has not even the decency of escapism, that computers cannot yet write even popular novels.

W. S. Ramsots, *The Canberra Times*, 4 July 1970

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Angell, Pearl and Little God by Winston Graham

Three quite unlikeable individuals are the principals in this novel of modern London.

Wilfred Angell is a pompous, greedy, self-centered snob, a dilettantish solicitor (lawyer), the sort of man who takes an uncomfortable night flight on business so he can pocket the difference in fare between that and the day flight for which he charges his client.

This prosperous penny-pincher is the last person you'd expect to take up with, let alone marry, beautiful but dull shopgirl Pearl Friedel. But marry her he does, and fits her into his well-ordered life - much as he would a newly-acquired painting or a piece of antique furniture.

Pearl's sexual interest in Godfrey "Little God" Brown, an animalistic, small-time boxer, is more predictable.

The adventures of this odd triangle make surprisingly interesting reading. The plot is saved from banality by the author's talent for characterizations and a prose style that wastes no words.

The Anderson Daily Bulletin, 11 May 1970

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A Novel Of The Week

TO CALL a Winston Graham murder story a psychological thriller is to place it in a pretty loose category. The phrase is really an effort to suggest that Mr. Graham is interested in crime not as the focal point of a lot of run-around action, as in many suspense stories, but as the outcome of complex human weaknesses.

What a complex he makes of the central triangle in his new tale just out this spring, ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD.

The names themselves suggest layers of symbolism and irony quite other than anything the mystery genre started out with. Conan Doyle might have called this "The Case of the Missing Evidence."

But in these matters, Mr. Graham does not overload his story. He plays it colloquially. To the smallest and most sinister point in the triangle, Godfrey Brown, best known to

himself as "Little God," and the girl he fell for (in so far as he ever fell for anybody) he usually chose to call not Pearl but "Little Oyster."

The "Angel" of the trio is a paunchy London lawyer, Wilfred Angell, bachelor in his 40s, gourmand, connoisseur of art, wealthy and quietly tight-fisted. Mind you, he would have preferred that I describe him as "gourmet," "not really a rich man," "careful with his money." Indeed, he is respectable, even admired, a man rather fuller of *amour propre* than some, slightly amusing to his friends, not hard to scorn if you ran foul of him.

"Little God" thought him a balloon, a jelly. "Little God" makes an almost grotesque foil for Angell. He is a tough orphan kid, with an arrogant, rude aggressiveness both in the ring as a featherweight boxer determined to go to the top and as a womanizer. We meet him first on the dance floor, dark, short, handsome, touchy, far too attractive for any woman's good as also for his own.

Pearl Friedel, the shopgirl, the reserved, attractive, blonde daughter of an Austrian wartime refugee, unfortunately falls for both men. And that is the beginning of their troubles. Though "fall for" proves to be an angry reluctant passion for the little man, and a passionless acceptance of the dignity, the wealth, and the cultivated tastes of the big one. But perhaps something of her own self-love as well.

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WINSTON GRAHAM has the true novelist's power to make you feel at one with each of these characters. He is a master of those minor insights into the inherent biases that make his characters on paper "come alive" as we like to say.

May I confess, then, that every so often, as I read, the normally winning forward edge of his story seemed to go dull for me.

Suddenly I would find myself asking, Who are these people that I should get involved with them? What do their tensions and their tangled passions matter to me?

Normally the question is fatal to the illusion of fiction. A little trust in Mr. Graham's power to reclaim his lost reader worked always, after a few pages. But that there could be a break at all - unless it were merely my dullness and not his - was disquieting.

I began to speculate on depth of characterization as an over-plus in some kind of fiction. Had his three bright creations - and truly they are enviably skilful - run away with him? Tempted him to too many labyrinths of emotion? Was he a surgeon (to change the image) so skilled in dissection that he lost the wise and saving speed of the operating table?

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The analogy of the surgical operation lingers on in the mind. We know most of what there is to know about Angell, Pearl and Little God by the time the dissection is over, by the time three have become two and those two so oddly locked by a swiftly contrived alibi and a swift respectful trial.

But because the "not wisely" of their loves does flourish in lively memorable scenes - Little God's bout with the Japanese champion, Lady Vosper's handling of her racing car (the only time Little God ever lost his cool), the sale of paintings at Christie's, the confrontation in the abandoned manor house - one suspects the novel will follow half a dozen of its Graham predecessors into the films. In good hands, perhaps the better for it.

ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD by Winston Graham. Collins, 380 pp., \$6.95

[Dorothy Bishop, *The Ottawa Journal*, 21 March 1970](#)

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Powerful Novel By Graham

A triangle is the classic form for a novel of conflict, but it is rarely given the depth and dimension that Winston Graham creates in ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD (Doubleday).

Angell is Wilfred Angell, a gourmet, late 40s, fat, prosperous, bachelor dilettante. A London solicitor of almost boundless rectitude. Pearl is Pearl Friedl, beautiful, young, a shopgirl. Little God is Godfrey Brown, featherweight boxer with promise, vital, arrogant, ignorant, animalistic.

Graham slowly unfolds the story that entwines these three lives to the point of murder. It is a sordid story beautifully told by a man who understands greed and lust, hate and love, fear and power: people.

It is a powerful psychological novel without any lecturing by the psychologist. The reader will never know any three fictional characters better than he will know Angell, Pearl and Little God. The relationships are built with a subtle suspense which impels the reader onward.

The story is not complicated. A young girl is attracted to a tough young man but is also afraid of him. She marries an older man for wealth and security, but the younger man is not put off, and they have an affair which she loves and hates. The husband discovers the affair and exacts a revenge which, in one way or another, destroys all of them.

[S.H., *The San Antonio Express and News*, 25 January 1970](#)

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Graham creates an atmosphere of intriguing psychological drama as these three people are played off against each other, and the aura of unmistakable violence which pervades the novel finally becomes the undeniable reality of murder.

[The San Bernadino County Sun, \(excerpt\), 25 January 1970](#)

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A rather thick novel

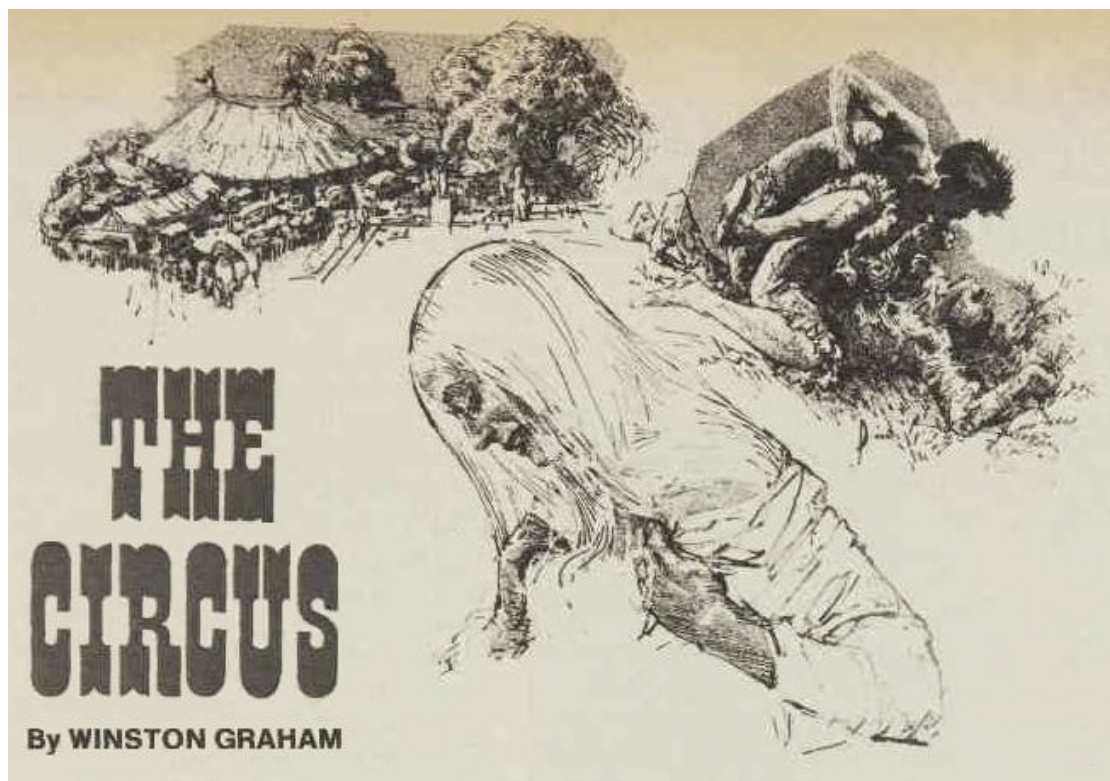
Winston Graham is one of England's best-selling novelists and his recent best seller, 'Angell, Pearl and Little God', is a very English novel (Fontana, \$1.25).

It is a conventional character novel with a strong plot, it is told in 1920s novelese, is full of middlebrow, middle class, writing-school dialogue, and is about a fat solicitor and a boxer fighting for a girl's affection. She sympathises with the solicitor and is physically attracted to the boxer.

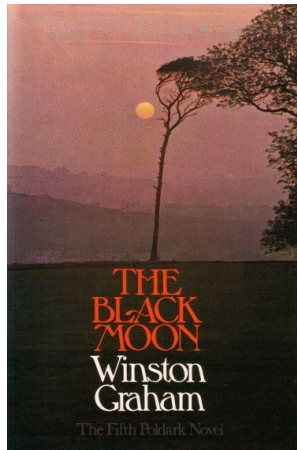
If you've heard it all before and liked it, you can console yourself with the thought that there is 414 pages of it this time and not one of them will make any intellectual demands on you.

The Canberra Times, 29 April 1972

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The Circus : a WG short story published in *The Australian Women's Weekly* of 23 April 1975 and viewable online via NLA's Trove website



The Black Moon by Winston Graham (Collins, £2.95) ... rewards the suspension of disbelief. It is the fifth in Winston Graham's honest and eventful saga about squires and miners in eighteenth-century Cornwall. There are love affairs, feuds, releases from prison, a dusting of verisimilitude. I read all five Poldark novels as fast as I could, unable, despite reviewing a week's other novels, to put them down. Winston Graham ... enjoys and inhabits his story, and likes his characters, and this is infectious.

[A.S.Byatt, *The Times*, 11 October, 1973](#)

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The Black Moon

The setting for "The Black Moon," an historical novel of Cornwall during the late eighteenth century, is near Truro and Falmouth. The span of years is not great, but the events and people crowd a fine tapestry. On the whole the novel is well-organized and well-researched - a bit of European history brought to life by a skilled craftsman, abounding in imaginative reality.

[Lucille Crane, in *Best Sellers*, Vol. 34, No. 9, 1 August 1974, pp. 208-09](#)

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A sequel in the offing?

THE BLACK MOON by Winston Graham. Doubleday, 424 pages, \$7.95

The birth of Valentine Warleggan in 1791 is during an eclipse ... the dark moon. The celestial phenomenon is also witness to a period of unrest, revolution and the emergence of drastic changes in the world socially, politically and in the field of religion.

The American Revolution has ended, but the catastrophic happenings in France are in full force. Both of these upheavals have seeped their ideas into the rigid social structures of England. The gentry is being "married into" by tradesmen and commercial entrepreneurs of a class heretofore ignored and disdained.

Mr. Graham has chosen Cornwall as the setting of his novel, which reflects the extraordinary flux of new thoughts and attitudes in the late 18th century. Such is the situation in "The Black Moon" where the old families of Poldark and Chynoweth have begun to merge with members of less background and lineage.

Elizabeth Chynoweth is married to George Warleggan, whose father guaranteed him great wealth, by developing tin mining in the district some years before. Valentine is their son. George is Elizabeth's second husband and one who has assumed all the snobbery and narrowness of the upper class he emulates. It is this bigotry which has prompted a bitter hatred between the Poldarks and Warleggans.

Ross Poldark, a former suitor of Elizabeth's and a brother-in-law from her first marriage, is typical of the new crop of liberals and is in opposition to the Warleggan theories of suppression of the working class. The interrelation of the families creates an atmosphere of economic and social rivalry that inevitably results in difficult confrontations. This presents threats to the stability and well being of the community.

Ross's defense of the miners and the underprivileged marks him as a leader in the fight for justice and rights. Again in this role, he finds himself joining in the opposition to the menace of the French as they meet the British in naval battles in the Channel. When British seamen are imprisoned in France, Ross becomes involved in a daring rescue mission to free a friend. This adventure adds suspense and thrills to this graphic narrative of an exciting period of history.

The characters are numerous, but intermingle into a homogeneous pattern against a fascinating background. From the aristocratic French émigrés to the illiterate miners, it comprises an outstanding cast of participants.

The flavor of the story and its people is reminiscent of Delafield and Cookson in its rich interpretation of the English countryside. The writing is explicit and the descriptions colorful in this meaty historical romance.

The ending has a certain abruptness which prompts one to surmise that there is a sequel in the offing. Perhaps in the not far future, one may share further in the trials and tribulations of the Warleggans and Poldarks.

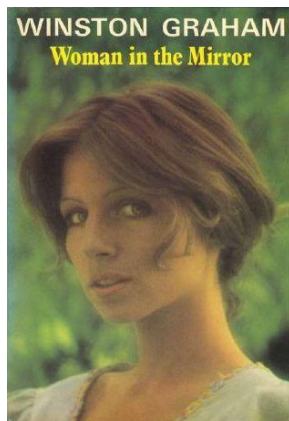
Rosalie M. Raphael, *The Delta Democrat-Times*, 30 June 1974

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Winston Graham takes his readers through the trials of the new Methodist sect, the emotions of attempting to save Englishmen imprisoned in France by the Revolutionists, the breaking up of a love affair because of the class system, the triumph of a dying woman. There is mystery, adventure, history and romance here to hold the reader's attention, and it may even suggest that a bit more reading of the English history of the time may be worthwhile.

Helen Haggie, *The Lincoln Evening Journal*, (end only), 16 June 1974

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Woman In The Mirror by Winston Graham (Bodley Head, £2.50)

Where Iris Murdoch takes an extraordinary situation and makes it credible by prestidigitation, Winston Graham takes a superficially ordinary situation and gradually pervades it with enigma and domestic menace. Is there something nasty behind the woodwork of the great, half-deserted house in mid-Wales? Or is there something even nastier in the secret places of somebody's psyche? Elliptical replies never quite centre on their questions. A rocking horse rocks at night in an empty room that smells of desuetude. Personalities turn out to be successions of Chinese boxes, one within the other; each contradictory to the one before. Cracks in middle class convention reveal primitive emotions beneath the surface.

It is a spooky book, fit for Hitchcock's direction : not to be read late at night, and even in broad daylight its climaxes make the hair on the nape of the neck ripple.

[Philip Howard, *The Times*, 17 April 1975](#)

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A writer's craft: Remoulding in gothic

Woman in the mirror by Winston Graham. 238 pages. Clark, Irwin. \$9.25

WRITERS of thrillers and suspense stories aren't always as fastidious about the quality of their work as is Winston Graham.

Consider the case of the disappointing author: Frederick Forsyth and his glittering hit everybody was reading a while back, **The Day of the Jackal**. No Sherlock is needed to unravel the next step in his career. He himself makes no mystery of the fact that the Jackal's successors, **The Odessa File** and **The Dogs of War** are mere potboilers, written to complete a three-book contract.

Winston Graham belongs to a different fraternity, that of self-critical craftsmen. Even his filmed successes such as **Marnie** and **The Walking Stick**, his now routine success with each new book, his great wealth, have not made him relax his personal standards. He lists 22 books as his body of work. But he refuses to list the first six he published. Mere apprentice stuff he now considers them.

He became a full-time writer at 19 supported at first like Shaw by a widowed mother. He was published first at 23. All his early books sold badly. But he was persistent as he has remained retiring. He once called himself "the most successful unknown novelist in England."

This spring he gave his first interview in seven years. In it he declared about those early tales: "Simply to reissue them would be a bit of a con of the readers of my later books."



Instead he's been doing something very different. His newly published **Woman in the Mirror** is the second time in recent years he has reached back into the disowned six to drastically rewrite one of those early plot ideas. No mere rehash, he maintains, any more than a Renoir or Cezanne tackling freshly an old subject.

Some may consider the analogy presumptuous. But in any case out of the apprentice trial of **The Giant's Chair** comes **Woman in the Mirror**, set in remote Wales, a gothic thriller tautly written with an experienced craftsman's care. Its chief hold on the reader is its opening seductive naturalness, the quiet persistent way you are eased into the believable psychological tensions of that huge Welsh estate hidden away along one of those mountain roads marked by the A.A. as "Impracticable for Motorists" and dominated by the granite rock of Cader Morb.

It all may end as in du Maurier's **Rebecca** in the traditional flames of gothic suspense, but it begins most casually. The slow train - no Orient Express - "three carriages and

an engine shaped like a bathroom cistern." Norah, our heroine of 23 listening to today's railway men's chatter that these local trains will have to be dropped. They aren't paying their way.

Norah, recently bereft by the death of her father, is on the way to try out for a month or so a job as secretary to an older woman met in other years' travels, who warmly offers hospitality and a possible occupation in this lost time.

The household proves to have its eccentrics. For neighbor it also has a cottage-dwelling freelance young photographer. These traditional trappings of the romantic thriller are less important than the grace and ease with which Graham gradually introduces you into the mysteries of the household; gradually unfolds the real and quietly sinister reason behind Norah's invitation.

Curious how in this day when so much of art is both violent and exhibitionist, Graham can lead you along, impel you in fact to stay with him. He's like the soft immaculate voice that out of a surrounding of din you find yourself concentrating intently to listen to, lest you miss a sentence of his tale.

[Dorothy Bishop, *The Ottawa Journal*, 28 June 1975](#)

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Suspense Novel Full Of Questions

Woman in the Mirror (Winston Graham, Doubleday, \$7.95)

Norah Faulkner's father passed away leaving her alone, especially after her romance ended. She was delighted when the famous author Althea Syme wrote inviting her to visit her at Cader Morb with the possibility that Norah would become Mrs. Syme's private secretary. Cader Morb was in a remote and untamed countryside in Wales.

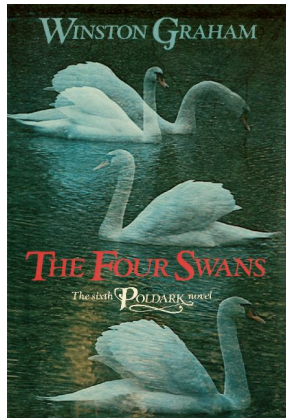
She soon learned that she bore a marked resemblance to Mrs. Syme's niece who had lived at Cader Morb and a few years prior drowned in a lake. This seemed to play an important yet subdued part for everyone living at the house, even for some neighbors.

Cader Morb - and the people in it - posed many questions for Norah Faulkner. Questions she had to resolve not only for the peace of her mind but for the safety of her life.

Winston Graham was born in Manchester, England, and moved early in life to Cornwall. As one of England's most famous Gothic suspense writers, he is the author of such well-received novels as *The Walking Stick*, *Marnie* and *The Black Moon*, and has collaborated on movie scripts of some of his works. Graham and his wife now live in Sussex.

[Linda Hart, *Abilene Reporter-News*, 4 May 1975](#)

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Winston Graham's sixth Poldark novel comes in good time to remind us what a solid achievement the series is, in its *genre*. The thinness and debility of the recent television serial did these books no justice. Mr. Graham gives what he promises, full to the brim and flowing over: historical romance is nowhere done better, and the going in *The Four Swans* is as good as ever.

[Derek Parker, *The Times*, 20 May 1976](#)

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The Four Swans : 1795-1797

The Four Swans, book six, marks the mid-point in the Poldark series. Set in Cornwall and also elsewhere in England at this time, The Four Swans sees Ross Poldark, survivor of war, feuds, plagues, murder attempts, raids, rivalries and marriage to the longsuffering but fiery Demelza Carne, discovers a new danger in his midst when a young (and gradually dying) naval officer he rescued from certain death in a French prison, becomes openly enchanted with Demelza, and quietly seeks to gain the love of this ever-loyal, beautiful woman. Trouble also stirs in the Enys household, where tragedy pays a visit to Caroline and Dwight, and the doctor's health is still not all it could be as a result of his incarceration. And even amid the extravagance with which George Warleggan surrounds himself and his family, all is not well. George tries to quell fears about Valentine's paternity, but his terrible suspicions that the child he is raising as his own heir is in fact the offspring of his enemy Ross Poldark, sets off a venomous fever that imperils his relationship with Elizabeth, the only woman he has ever loved. Meanwhile Morwenna's wedded life with the moneyed cleric, Osborne Whitworth, is an ongoing nightmare from which a pure-hearted boy, Demelza's younger brother Drake Carne, wishes to rescue her, unaware of the danger in which he places them both.

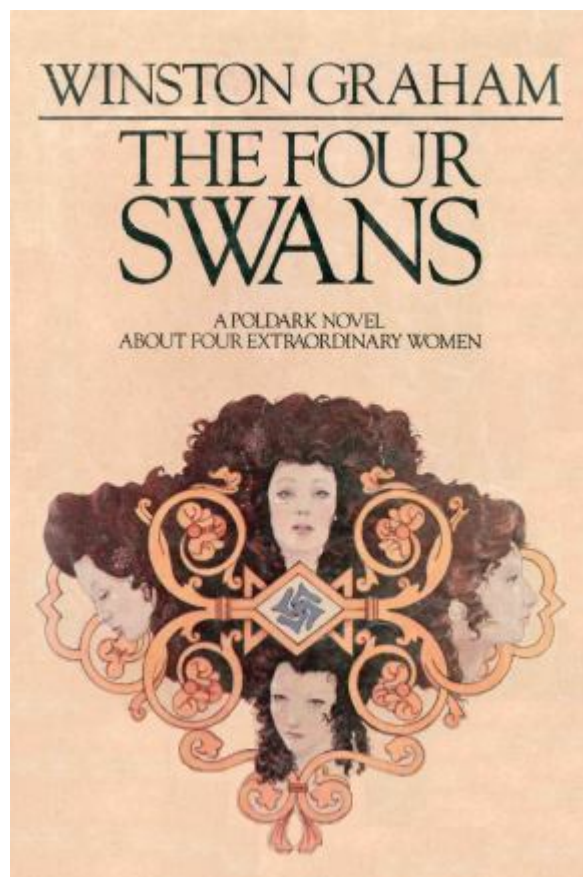
The Four Swans was perhaps the last time Graham allowed such a deliberate pace to be used in his Poldark books, and this novel stands as a sort of gift from the writer to those who love the series, and lets a reader sit back and feel the totality of this immense literary undertaking go on around him... right before the series leaves familiar waters and plunges into the rapids of the year 1799 and the violent nineteenth century after that. 5 stars (of 5)

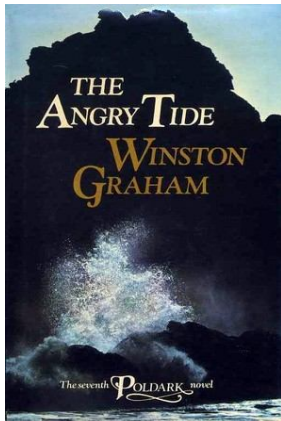
[Dai-keag-ity, *Amazon.com*, 23 October 2006](#)

Here a prolific British writer returns to his novels of Cornwall. Although a newcomer to the series will long for family charts and a late 18th-Century map of Cornwall, these wishes will not detract from the enjoyment of the story. The convoluted tale revolves around the rival houses of the Poldarks and the Warleggans and includes romantic intrigue, a riot by miners, contested Parliamentary elections, and a philandering vicar. However stock the plot, Graham's narrative skill and his ability to evoke interest make this lengthy book eminently readable. His Cornwall followers, long denied this sequel, will be pleased to know that the door was left ajar for another. For light fiction collections.

Ellen Kaye Stoppel, Drake Univ. Lib., Des Moines, Iowa, 15 January 1977

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The Angry Tide : 1798-1799

Metaphorically The Angry Tide is a novel well-named. This is the watershed volume in the series, and also the one that breaks from the eighteenth-century which readers of Poldark had heretofore known, and brings to conclusion many storylines, situations ... and characters. Death is more plentiful in this Poldark book than in any other, if not in all others combined. Several central figures do not survive this story, and one who is lost here is not only someone known from the series' start, but a person surely everyone had thought truly irreplaceable: which this person was, for the series is never the same afterward, nor is the shadow cast by this figure's death ever absent in the five books that bring Poldark to its 1820 conclusion.

In The Angry Tide, Captain Ross Poldark, a man of independent thought, is elected a member of parliament for the borough of Truro, Cornwall, and he and Demelza travel by coach across the breadth of England, arriving in a London splendidly described by Winston Graham. (After the chapter that sets the characters firmly in the capital, you'll feel as if you've just taken a guided tour of the world's largest city in the concluding years of the 1700's.) In London, Ross and Demelza settle in only to be swept up into the tide of political life and intrigue, as the nation gossips of little else besides the new man of the hour, whose reputation as a master of warfare carries his name fearfully to every mind: Napoleon Bonaparte. Elsewhere, Elizabeth, desperate to heal the rift in her marriage to George, takes the most drastic step imaginable and consults with a famed foreign obstetrician, intend on inducing premature birth of the child she carries, hoping a second premature delivery might lay to rest George's doubts about his being the father of her son, Valentine. In another marriage in the series, the portly, despicable Reverend Osborne Whitworth, far from a sinless clergyman, rediscovers the charms of a more than willing substitute for his psychologically traumatized wife Morwenna, and in so doing gets more than he could ever have bargained for. And lastly in London, the calculating George Warleggan befriends a sadistic former infantry officer, a man who loves killing and fears no one, a celebrated marksman who has emerged the victor in many past duels, and whose lust for Demelza - and distaste for Ross - comes to a head with pistols at dawn in one of the city's parks ...

5 stars (of 5)

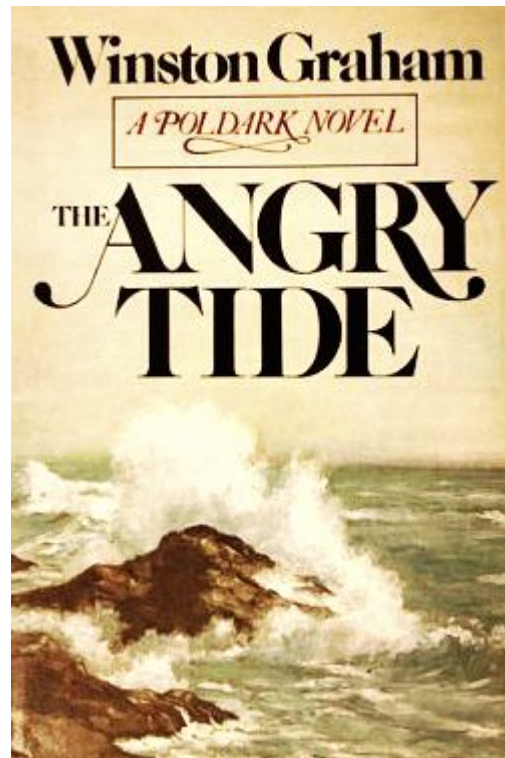
[Dai-keag-ity, Amazon.com, 23 October 2006](#)

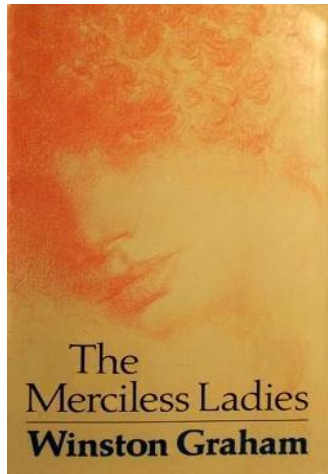
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Seventh novel in the Poldark series, this one carries its dozens of characters through the last two years of the 18th Century. It's rich in details of life in Cornwall and London, but shallow in its treatment of the characters. Without reading the previous books, it's hard to tell who they are or why they act as they do, since each gets such a short scene. Though it doesn't stand on its own very well, it's a must for libraries collecting the series or whose patrons watch *Masterpiece Theatre*.

[Melanie Axel-Lute](#), formerly with Montclair P.L., New Jersey (undated)

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The Merciless Ladies by Winston Graham

The author of the Poldark series writes an engaging tale of London's ambitions and passions between the world wars. The narrator is well-bred journalist, Bill Grant, but the focus most of the way through is on Paul Stafford - a slow boy from a poor family who happens to have an enormous gift for drawing.

[The Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune, 5 September 1980](#)

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The Merciless Ladies (1979)

Prolific, versatile Graham (the Poldark series, etc.) now sends us a skin-deep yet deliciously engaging tale of London ambitions and passions between the world wars. The narrator is well-bred journalist Bill Grant, but the focus most of the way through is on Bill's best chum since prep-school days - Paul Stafford, a slow boy from a poor family who happens to have an enormous gift for drawing, a gift that Paul (though he studies with an idealistic teacher) soon parlays into chi-chi success as a fashionable London portrait painter. To Bill's displeasure, artist Paul seems totally satisfied with this libertine, sell-out lifestyle ... until, inspired by a trip to Paris, Paul paints a thoroughly unflattering, Roualt-ish portrait of his former (married) mistress and mentor, a leader of the Noel-Cowardy fast set; she, of course, is furious - especially after Paul exhibits the picture alongside his studies of history's famed courtesans - and sues for libel (superb courtroom action). And after losing the case in gentlemanly fashion, Paul surprises Bill by announcing his engagement to brainy, un-pretty Holly Lynn (whom he met on a disastrous ocean-travel expedition with Bill); not only is Paul still legally wed to a swank, twitchy painter named Olive, but the sloppy, academic Lynns (an eccentric ménage sketched with affectionate wit) are hardly the sort for the bon vivant artist. Nevertheless, Paul and Holly are determined, Bill helps to convince Olive (his one-night lover) to give Paul a divorce, and the newlyweds take off to a truly rural existence - where Paul turns his back on fortune and struggles to find a genuine style of his own. (The "merciless ladies" are success and failure.) But there's a villain lurking: Money. And a villainess: Olive, whose vicious alimony demands are driving dedicated Paul into debt and sickness. So it's valiant, rather dim Bill to the rescue: he'll eventually try to get Olive into a sexually compromised, alimony-canceling

position - and he'll wind up an unintentional murderer. Chic melodrama? Perhaps. But also social comedy. And all of it played so briskly and with such unforced stylishness that you'll never stop to put a label on it. Familiar themes twirled into that genuine rarity: a slim, sure novel that leaves you yearning to find out more about what happened to its tremendously likable characters.

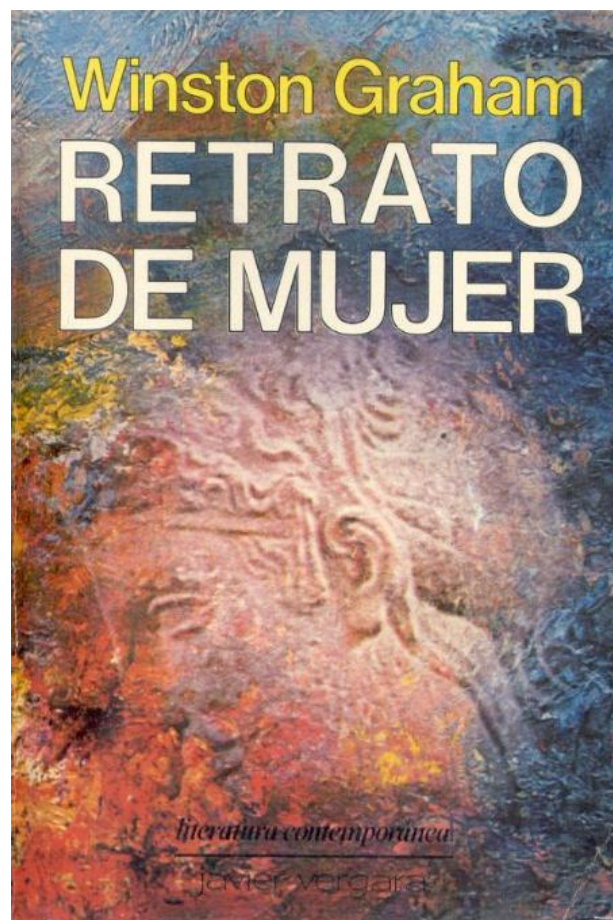
Kirkus, 25 April 1980

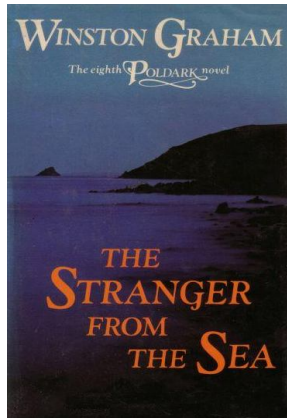
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A plodding but never quite dull novel of an English artist's rise and fall during the first half of the 20th Century. Paul Stafford is an egocentric genius whose mismanagement of his personal life has terrible consequences for his closest friend, Bill Grant. Told by Grant in the first person, the story is superficially about Stafford's life, his disastrous liaisons with two grasping women, and his transition from trendy London portrait painter to starving serious genius. The reader realizes that Grant himself is a gifted journalist and a decent man who is sacrificing far too much for his friend. Ultimately, Grant's life is ruined that Stafford, married to the woman Grant loves, might paint in peace. Grant's fascinating introspection and honesty, and Graham's sparkling dialogue, save this book from being boring.

Barbara Parker, *Library Journal*, 1 April 1980

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Winston Graham is an old hand ... With *The Stranger from the Sea* (Collins, £7.95) we reach the eighth in the Poldark series, made all-pervasively familiar from the television series. We have reached 1810 and a new generation of Poldarks, the children of Ross and Demelza, beginning to come forward into the limelight (or television cameras). At the beginning, Ross is in Portugal, with Wellington. If you are a fan, this is as familiar as your own family history. Will George Warleggan marry again? What harm will the mysterious stranger, found more than half dead on a raft in the sea, do to the family? Who will the beautiful Clowance marry? Will Jeremy, her brother, continue to be such a disappointment? In tandem with the family we range over the Peninsular war, politics (Ross is a friend of Canning) the industrial revolution, steam engines, the treatment of the insane (the King having gone mad).

[Philippa Toomey, *The Times*, 23 December 1981](#)

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Poldark adventures

Those many thousands of readers throughout the world who have faithfully followed the fortunes of generation after generation of Poldarks in Winston Graham's series of novels will not be disappointed with the eighth, nor with the clear hint at the end of more to come.

The opening sentence of his new story is the key to what follows:

"On Thursday, the 25th October, 1810, a windy day with the first autumnal leaves floating down over the parks and commons of England, the old King went mad."

This was the start of the Regency, but not the upheaval in Britain which many firmly hoped would follow. The Whigs rejoiced, for they believed the Prince of Wales would dismiss the Tories from office and come to terms with Bonaparte to halt the war in Portugal conducted on the Allied side by the suspect Arthur Wellesley.

With his British Army is Captain Ross Poldark, MP, with a roving commission, to report to his political masters on the conduct of the war, while at his home in Cornwall his wife Demelza and son and daughters Jeremy, Clowance and Isabella-Rose go about their affairs.

Mixed in with this are the doings of various Chynoweths and Warleggans, kin to the Poldarks, and some admirable descriptions of the campaign in the Peninsula.

There are some other good passages about proceedings in Parliament, some contrasts between the manners and modes of society in London of the day and mining in Cornwall, while central to the story is the gradual unfolding of the truth about Stephen, the "stranger" of the title, and the courting of Clowance by Lord Edward Fitzmaurice.

In this comfortably long, well constructed novel of considerable historical interest, Winston Graham has given us another admirable instrument for whiling away these chilly nights of winter.

THE STRANGER FROM THE SEA by Winston Graham. Collins, 445pp, \$14.95

[Leonard Ward, *The Canberra Times*, 8 August 1982](#)

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Followers of the Poldark series on *Masterpiece Theatre* or the novels on which it is based will welcome this latest addition, which sets the scene for yet another sequel. The action begins in 1810 with the younger generation coming to maturity. Jeremy, Ross and Demelza's eldest, is engrossed in designing a steam engine that may expedite reopening a mine once owned by the Poldarks and now held by their longtime rival, George Warleggan. Jeremy and his sister Clowance have several romantic interests. Hers include Stephen Carrington, who is shipwrecked on the shores of Cornwall but whose origins are not altogether clear. Newcomers to the series may find it difficult to sort out the convoluted relationships and even those familiar may grow impatient with a novel basically building suspense for the next. Nevertheless, readers will appreciate Graham's skill in handling dialogue and characterizations.

[Ellen Kaye Stoppel, Drake Univ. Lib., Des Moines, Iowa, 15 February 1982](#)

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The Stranger From The Sea : 1810-1811

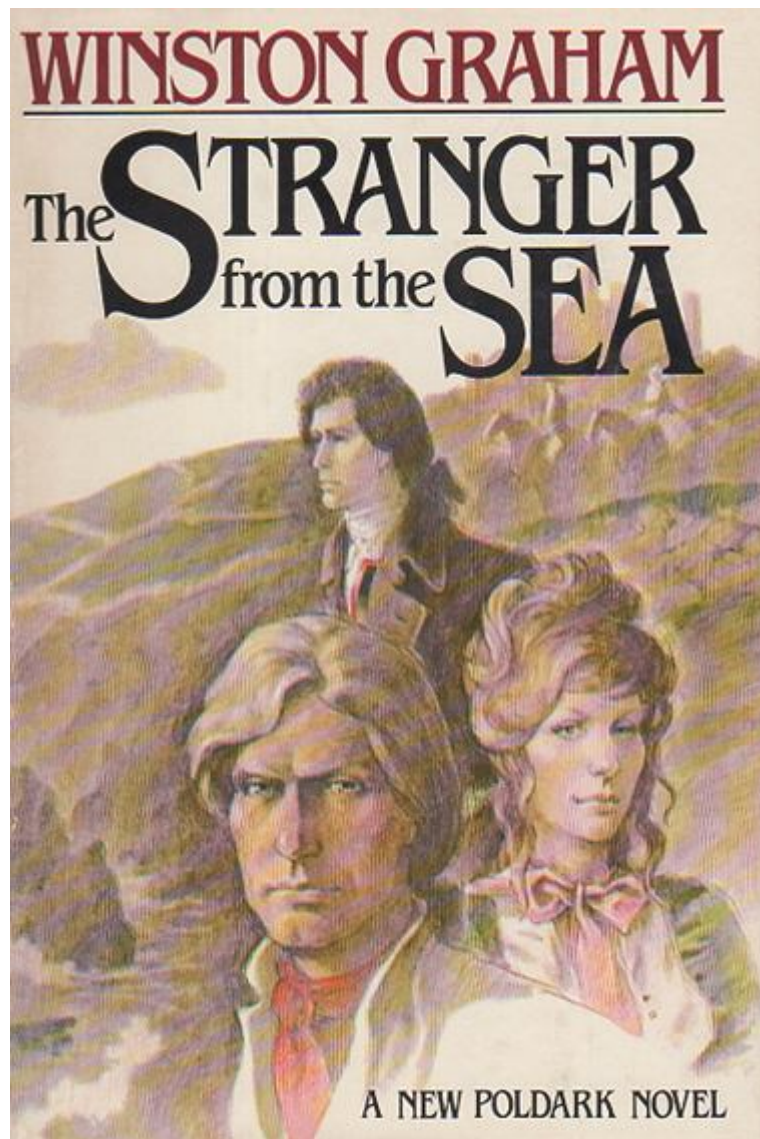
After the powerful ending to *The Angry Tide*, Winston Graham made the intelligent, bold, but sometimes criticized decision to move this next Poldark novel a decade into the future from where the last instalment ended. It is now 1810, the eighteenth-century is but a memory, the war with France, which has claimed hundreds of thousands of British lives and drained the national treasury, plows into its third decade, and in Cornwall, the tragically costly Warleggan-Poldark feud has, in Graham's words "cooled to ashes." In this segment of the series, the children of the aging but far from antiquated Ross and Demelza move onto center stage and it is as much on their lives as those of the now older generation that the plot focuses. Clowance Poldark, oldest surviving daughter of the Nampara household, and her older brother Jeremy, each become fixated upon love interests. Jeremy is infatuated with the gracefully elegant Cuby Trevanion, a young woman from an ancient but impoverished family of the gentry, while the normally sensible Clowance loses her heart to the title character of

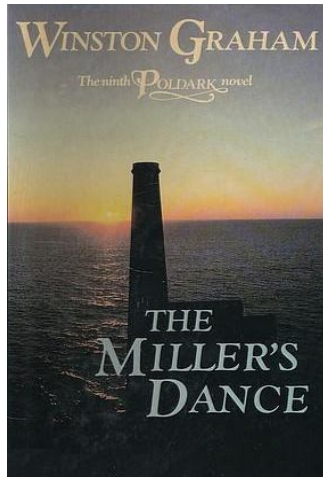
this volume, the mysterious Stephen Carrington, the "stranger from the sea." When Carrington is first introduced to the series, it is as he is pulled nearly dead and clinging to the wreckage of a ship that washes in near Nampara Cove. While recovering in the Poldark home, Carrington seems reluctant to discuss his past, and is judged (probably correctly) to be a privateer or smuggler. However the energetic, rugged Carrington, partly an ambitious ne'er do well, partly a sort of lower-class version of the unconquerable Ross Poldark himself, soon asserts his presence in the local community, and becomes popular for his bravery and grand plots to gain wealth.

4 stars (of 5)

[Dai-keag-ity, Amazon.com, 23 October 2006](#)

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The Miller's Dance : 1812-1813

The Miller's Dance continues the Poldark saga in the new century. In this volume the younger Poldarks continue to be featured, but unlike *Stranger From The Sea* there is a greater balance between Graham's eighteen-century cast and the newer one who come of age in the 1800's. Geoffrey Charles Poldark, Francis's son, once something of a mama's boy, is now a war-hardened, much-wounded military officer battling Bonaparte in Spain. Jeremy, a young man who, contrary to his more pastoral-minded father, sees industrialization and mechanization as the way of the future, pursues the aristocratic Cuby Trevanion, only to find heartbreak for his reward. Stephen Carrington, the handsome, rogue-like adventurer and would-be social climber becomes involved with Clowance Poldark, much to her parents' concern. Here in *The Miller's Dance* the offspring of other unions also now take their places in Winston Graham's long tale. Perhaps most interesting of anyone, however, is the life and nature of the wealthy banker George Warleggan. Far more than a mere villain, this complex man, aging foe of the Rhett Butler-like Ross Poldark, the series' "hero" never quietly accepts his role as adversarial foil, and instead proves once more to be the most intricately-realized figure in the novels. George has spent a decade in a personal version of mourning, even as he has re-doubled his business empire and raised his family. Lately Warleggan has re-married a somewhat coarse but erotically-attractive woman, no substitute for the eternally beloved first Mrs. Warleggan, but still a strong "youthening" influence on George's life.

This novel finds its pace early on, unlike its immediate predecessor, whose necessary role as introduction to a new era hamstrung its plot. While in my opinion the Poldark books that are set after the turn of the nineteenth-century never quite measure up to the eighteenth-century novels, they are interesting in their own right, and tell a tale of a time and place and its people with a spark that no one but Winston Graham could quite achieve.

5 stars (of 5)

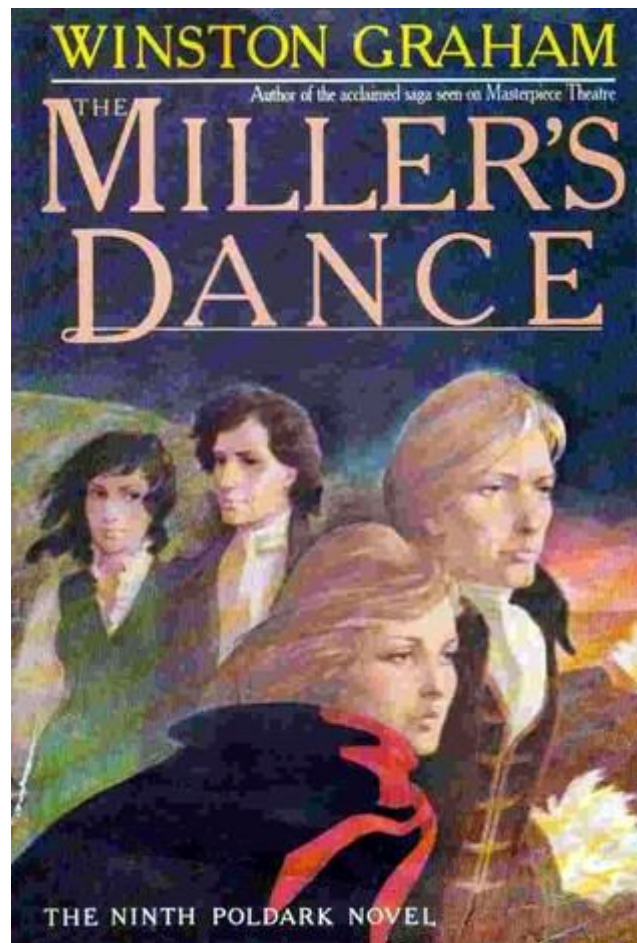
[Dai-keag-ity, Amazon.com, 23 October 2006](#)

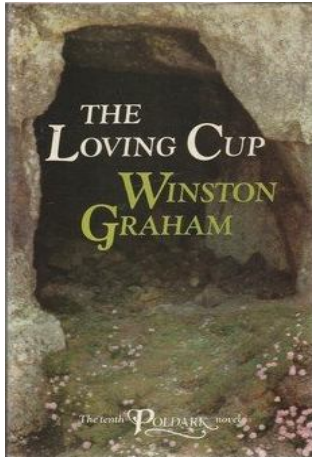
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Graham's ninth novel of life on the Cornish coast in the late 18th century and the fluctuating fortunes of the Poldark family concentrates on the lives and complicated love affairs of the two oldest Poldark children, Jeremy and Clowance, rather than on their parents, Ross and Demelza. The Poldark story has emphasized events over character development, but *The Miller's Dance* does so more than previous books. To the reader unfamiliar with the Poldark family, friends, and enemies, the large and varied cast of characters presented immediately and without introduction will be confusing. Though Graham involves his characters directly in the exciting events of the day, there is not enough continuity to sustain high interest.

Cynthia Johnson, *Library Journal*, 15 May 1983

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The Loving Cup : 1813-1815

1984's *The Loving Cup*, a novel released almost exactly forty years after the Poldark saga began, marks the tenth occasion Winston Graham visits Cornwall with his cast of characters. In this novel we witness Britain's reaction as the seemingly eternal war with France grinds down to what appears to be victory, and as a consequence Geoffrey Charles comes home at last from the front with a Spanish bride in tow. He takes up living in the old house he remembers from his childhood, when his father and mother, Francis and Elizabeth Poldark, resided there together in the far happier times of the 1780's and 1790's. But while this one homecoming passes, another Poldark takes a commission and goes to the perilous front, as the lovelorn Jeremy, at last accepting that the woman he'd hoped to marry will never have him in the face of her family's opposition, leaves behind all he has ever known and seeks his fate elsewhere.

The Loving Cup is a novel about war, the results of an act of crime, and about the power of the place one dubs one's home. It tells tales of love and heartbreak, of ambitions successfully attained, and plans dashed by the whim of fate. In this book old friends from this long series are given exposure and updated, and many familiar men and women carry on with lives that seem very real beyond this literary context. As with all of Winston Graham's novels, this is historical fiction at its highest caliber.

5 stars (of 5)

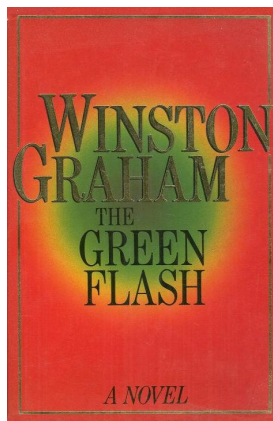
[Dai-keag-ity, Amazon.com, 23 October 2006](#)

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I really enjoyed reading *The Loving Cup*. I have read all of the previous books in the Poldark series and this one was just as interesting and exciting as the previous ones. Winston Graham is able to make the second generation characters as compelling as the parents. I am glad, however, that Demelza and Ross continue to be integral to the storyline. 5 stars (of 5)

[wmbo, Amazon.com, 22 October 2010](#)

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From the versatile Graham (The Miller's Dance, the Poldark series, etc.), a grabby psychological suspense novel set in the murky half-lit world of on-the-make London. Narrator David Abden has a keen nose, a shrewd business sense, and a ruthless been-down-too-long attitude. At 24, he's a promising prospect when he meets Mme. Shona, Russian refugee turned Cosmetics czarina, who hires him to jazz up the sales end of her old-world firm. But David craves his at-times dictatorial boss and, between marketing triumphs, relentlessly presses his case. And the inevitable love affair is, for years, a success: Shona's the boss in the office, but after hours they're verbal sparring partners and skilled and compatible lovers. Then the balance fails: David starts to think of Shona as old; his attraction is diluted. He inherits a draughty manor in Scotland and begins to feel twinges of paternal longing. So he marries Erica, a mutual friend who's obsessed with fencing, and, quickly detesting her, devotes his considerable energy to tracking down a band of fragrance counterfeiters. Another love affair, an accidental killing and much tromping around Scotland's harsh but healing outback follows as hard-edged David inches towards a brief dark glimmer of self-discovery. Graham is a master of characterization, and these vaguely unpleasant powerhouses of characters entertain and occasionally fascinate: in particular, David as narrator turns the mood nasty with his selfish, hypercritical observations. The suspense line suffers, though, at the expense of a lingering look at David's particular brand of moral and emotional development. So: despite fragmentary action, a compelling, ugly portrait.

Kirkus, undated

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David Abden is the scion of a well-to-do Scottish family, a con man whose scams once landed him in jail. Almost by accident he enters the perfume trade, eventually becoming sales manager and lover to Mme Shona, a mysterious Russian cosmetics magnate. A series of events, including an unexpected inheritance and an unsatisfying marriage, lead Abden to make hard choices about his life's direction. Abden is not an easy character to like in the beginning, and several hundred pages of his smug, exceedingly clever point of view make for more than a few tedious passages. Yet the writing is solid, the characterization good, and Abden's emotional maturity is convincingly portrayed and ultimately affecting. 3 stars (of 5)

Jawin, *librarything.com*, 4 January 2007

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Complex novel of city types

THE GREEN FLASH by Winston Graham. Collins. 416pp. \$24.95

WINSTON Graham is a novelist with some 30 books to his credit, the best known being the 10 in the Poldark saga which have sold over five million copies in several different languages.

The Green Flash is a complete break away from the historical theme that runs through that series but loses nothing by comparison as an absorbing human tale of a group of people who, in their various ways, are the product of their upbringing, their personal experiences sometimes traumatic, and the business in which they are engaged which is perfumery.

The leading character is David Abden, in turn non-hero and hero, and we meet him at age 11 in the surgery of a London psychiatrist following the death of his father, at which event he was present

Father, brother of a Scottish baronet, was also a drunk whose relationship with his son varied from parental affection to sadism, and the suspicion is that a frightened young David had a hand in the death.

With that background, it is no surprise that he grows up to be something of a con man and serves a short term in jail.

His regeneration via a tortuous path in which business success is punctuated by several love affairs that leave their mark, is the subject of this story.

At a cocktail party David, now aged 24, working for Yardleys and cautious about crooked dealing after his jail experience in spite of a recurrent urge, meets Madame Shona, Russian refugee with a grim background of the second World War, who has built up a successful business manufacturing and marketing exclusive perfumes.

She finds out all about David's murky past but nevertheless offers him a job on the sales staff and from there the story takes off.

David really puts his mind to the job and is a success.

Although business brings him into frequent contact, he can never get close to Madame Shona's husband, John Carreros, a self-effacing chemist who works out the ingredients of the company's products.

In other ways, David's path to an almost indispensable position in the business is not smooth. His own violent temper lets him down on more than one occasion and at a business party in New York he has a brush with a member of the Mafia. If that sounds too melodramatic it is not. That sinister organisation, it is now well-known, has infiltrated legitimate business in many ways and what probably saves David from brutal reprisal is that John Carreros himself has ties with it.

Business relations with Madame Shona ripen into something more, but David's affections later stray to Erica Lease, a woman fencer almost good enough to make the British team and in the end he marries her.

In the meantime, Dr Malcolm Abden, next in line for the baronetcy, is killed in a motor accident and not long after the baronet himself dies and David finds himself unexpectedly, and not entirely happy about it, a titled member of the community.

On successive visits to the rather impoverished Scottish estate, described surprisingly with pitiless realism by an author who, from his name, could be a descendant of the Montrose himself, David becomes involved with the dead Malcolm's widow Alison.

This lengthy tale which, from this synopsis, might sound trite and contrived but is far from it, comes to a startling apogee with a ghastly dinner party followed by stark tragedy in which David himself is a central figure.

The shock straightens him out and on the last page he returns to the path from which he should never have strayed.

The more than 400 pages of this first class novel encompass a complex story peopled by familiar city types - smart business people, crooks outwardly respectable in good social standing, more or less reformed jail birds and a few pathetic homosexuals earning precarious livings on the fringes of the perfumery trade.

An English reviewer quoted on the dust jacket puts Winston Graham as a story teller in the same class as R. C. Hutchinson and Graham Greene.

I agree with him.

[Leonard Ward, *The Canberra Times*, 12 April 1987](#)

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(1) What can you expect from a Winston Graham novel that begins with:

When he killed his father they sent him to a psychiatrist ...

The protagonist, David, is, unusually, a rather unlikable character - through various adventures and intrigues one perceives his evolution as a person. Romance is, of course, included. 4 stars (of 5)

(2) An unusual character, I feel, for a Winston Graham book. David Abden kills his father at the age of eleven. As you might guess, this haunts him all his life. He is not blamed for this except in his own thoughts and mind. It actually drives everything that happens to him and the people he associates with. I would rate this book much higher except I couldn't find any sympathy for the characters until the very end. 3 stars (of 5)

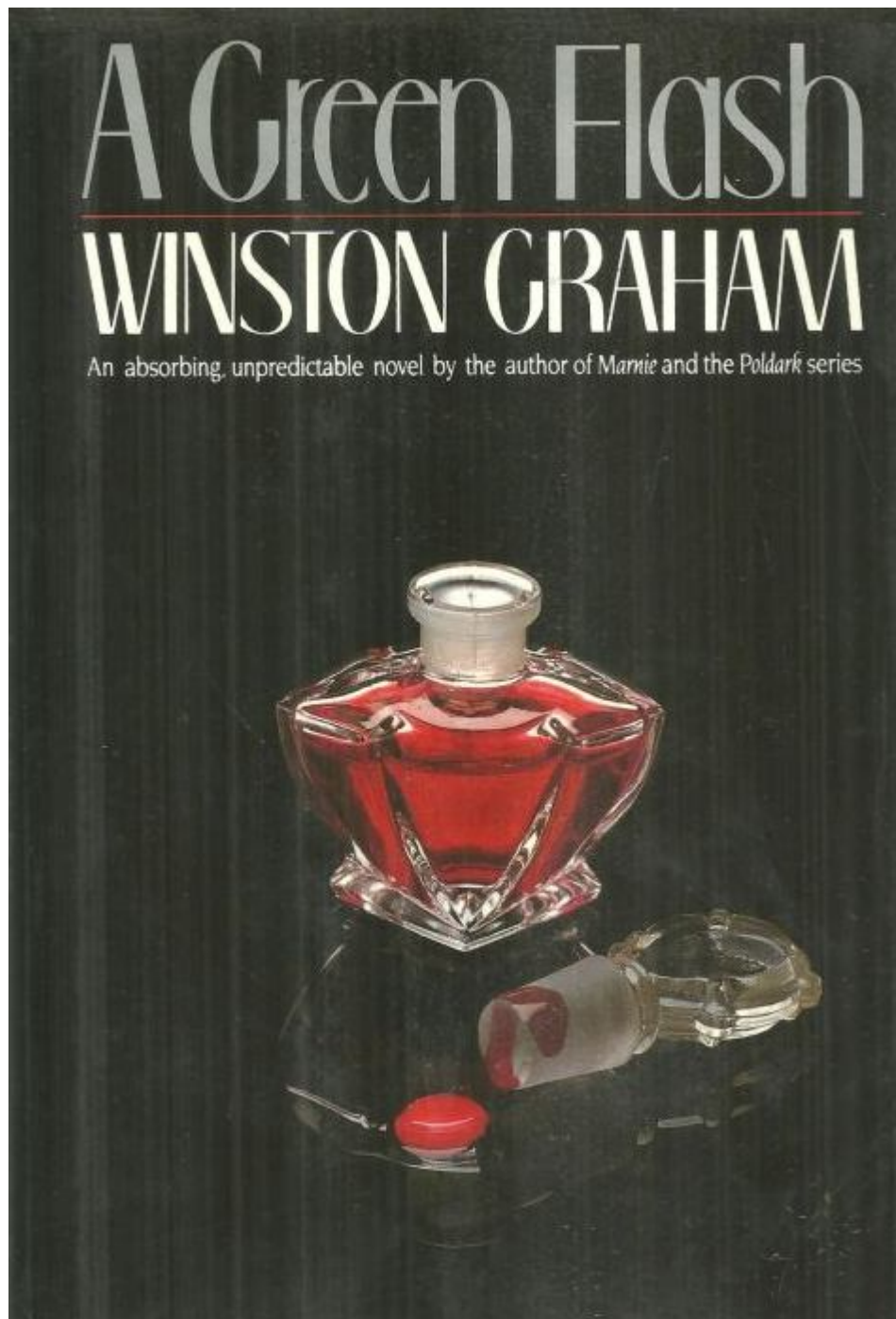
[\(1\) Bea Alden, 22 August 2009 / \(2\) Naomi, 5 March 2012, *goodreads.com*](#)

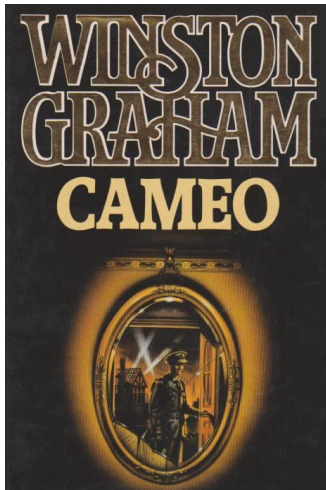
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'When he killed his father they sent him to a psychiatrist called Meiss in Wimpole Street. ' Even before we know the extenuating circumstances we sense that the whole affair is going to be less afflicting, for readers and protagonist (hero, patient, victim?) alike. We watch the development of a cold, calculating schoolboy into a cold, calculating adult. Not a pretty sight, but it makes an excellent story. There's just one trouble about some of the unpretentious, doing-all-right writers who modestly boast about being 'just good storytellers'. They aren't. Winston Graham unarguably is.

Norman Shrapnel, *The Guardian*, 21 November 1986

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Atmospheric

I enjoyed this book about a young squadron leader home on leave in London during the blitz who finds himself involved in murder and espionage. The story moves at a deceptively leisurely pace with the author building up the atmosphere of that period, giving his characters some flesh and bone and allowing the reader to develop empathy with the two main characters. My only criticism (which is very minor) is a five page section on the philosophical views on "the new way forward" between a German and an English writer just at a time when the story is building to its denouement. A very pleasurable read.

4 stars (of 5)

[Michael Watson, Amazon.co.uk, 30 March 2006](#)

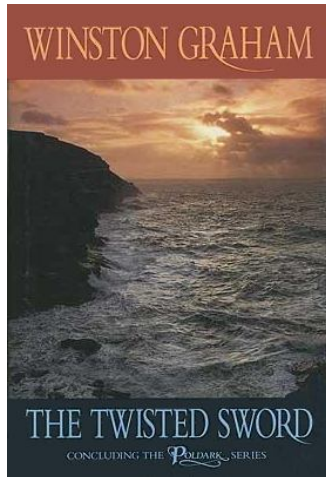
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Winston Graham, best known for his Poldark series of novels has gone back to World War II for the setting of his romantic thriller, *Cameo* (Fontana, 238 pp, \$9.95). It involves a murder committed during an air raid and trails leading to spies and fifth columnists.

A young RAF fighter pilot turns amateur sleuth to help trap the nasties and, with an attractive young secretary, provides the suspense and romantic interest. It is an easy-to-read, though pretty much run-of-the-mill thriller, enjoyable mainly for its nostalgic evocation of life in wartime Britain.

[The Canberra Times, 24 September 1989](#)

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The Twisted Sword by Winston Graham (Chapmans, £13.95).

Ross Poldark (now a baronet) is off to Paris on a secret mission, accompanied by Demelza, in 1815, just before Napoleon's return from Elba. Arrested as a spy, in danger of his life, he is as resourceful as ever, as is Demelza - unsophisticated but able to deal with danger and death in her own way. Sadness comes to the family, and to us, as Ross declares he will settle down as a Cornish landowner, and his creator has decreed that this is the last of the saga.

[Philippa Toomey, *The Times*, 13 September 1990](#)

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The Twisted Sword : 1815

The eleventh Poldark novel takes place entirely within the tumultuous year of 1815, and while not all of it concerns war, the conflict on the continent is certainly central to the telling of the tale in this penultimate book in the series. While the apparent surrender of Bonaparte is celebrated across Europe, the French tyrant plots to break his word and return from exile on the island of Elba. Unaware of the imminent re-appearance of this foe, the Poldarks, like their countrymen, mark the coming of peace with parties and gladness of heart. Geoffrey Charles reflects on his years in the army and speaks of his pride in having seen the war through to its conclusion. Even Jeremy, stationed across in the Low Countries, returns home to Cornwall and at last is married to his great love, Cuby Trevanion. Ross and Demelza are overjoyed for their son and wish him and his bride the deepest of happiness. All seems too well, and it does not last, of course. As England rejoices, Bonaparte sneaks back into France and reignites his adopted nation in vicious anti-British militancy. At the head of an army bent on revenge, he marches north, and now the English scramble to again field a force to meet him. The newlywed Jeremy abruptly leaves a shocked Cuby behind, and is accompanied to the front lines by his veteran cousin Geoffrey Charles, as they begin a hasty journey toward destiny at a Belgian town called Waterloo. 5 stars (of 5)

[Dai-keag-ity, *Amazon.com*, 23 October 2006](#)

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The Twisted Sword: A Poldark Novel

Winston Graham, Carroll & Graf, \$21.95 (510p)

In this 11th and concluding novel of the Poldark saga - a bestseller in England - Graham once again follows the fortunes of the Cornwall family. Series readers will not be surprised at the centrality here of Ross Poldark and his wife, Demelza, who have matured from youthful emotional turbulence to become people of substance. His American war experience behind him, Ross is now a titled MP, called to England's secret service on the Continent during the Napoleonic wars. The Poldark children are also involved in the war, with tragic consequences. Old feuds and frustrated romances shadow the domestic scene, as Ross undertakes the role of patriarch, reflecting on the three decades that have elapsed since his meeting in 1783 with the incomparable Demelza. With customary grace, Graham handles a busy story, deftly conveying a stormy period in England and France while managing to provide helpful recaps of prior Poldark history.

Publisher's Weekly, 1 April 1991

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The Twisted Sword by Winston Graham

In this, the last novel in the popular English Poldark series, the Cornish family - home and abroad - suffer abrupt changes of fortune in the year 1815, when Napoleon returns from Elba to march on Paris. Ross Poldark, a brand-new baronet, is now on assignment in Paris to snoop out, for the Crown, varieties and degrees of sentiment in high Parisian places as to the future French leadership and direction. Demelza, his wife, is along with toddler Henry and teen-aged Bella, enjoying the balls and the unsought but satisfying male attention. But then the news comes that Bonaparte is on the march. Ross (at one point a prisoner of a sadistic anti-Bourbon villain) and Demelza (accompanying a spy and another traveller with the crown jewels) escape by various routes. Meanwhile, son Jeremy, whose coach robbery (*The Miller's Dance*, 1983) haunts Demelza, is in Brussels with pregnant wife Cuby; and in Cornwall daughter Clowance learns a shocking bit about reckless husband Stephen's past. By the close, there are two deaths, births, and an amusing comeuppance to an old enemy. And there's a view of the terrible battle and carnage of Waterloo. With flights and cliff-edge rescues, pretty indoor appointments, and Cornwall vistas, and with all the loose ends finally tied up, this is a must for the series' followers - although a newcomer can also easily plunge in.

Kirkus, 1 March 1991

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So happy I decided to read this series - superbly written. Well worth discovering Winston Graham and his ability to take you back to a time gone by.

Surfergirl, *Amazon.co.uk*, 29 January 2013

Last and best in Poldark saga

THE TWISTED SWORD by Winston Graham. Chapmans. 510pp. \$29.95.

The Twisted Sword is the 11th and last lengthy novel of the Poldark saga and is a fitting conclusion to a series which probably has had more popular appeal in the last generation or so than any other in the English language.

The series has a solid historical basis and opens in the year 1783 when Ross Poldark meets and marries Demelza Carne. This final book opens in 1915 when Ross and Demelza are holidaying in Paris, a holiday rudely interrupted by the outbreak once more of war between Britain and France.

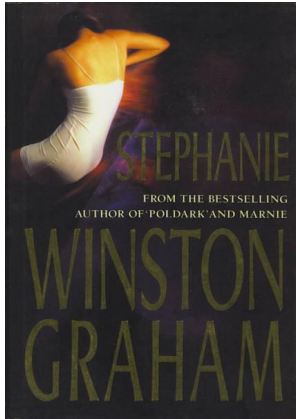
While their lives are disrupted, the war also affects other members of their family. Son Jeremy, a reluctant soldier, finds on the field of Waterloo that he is a natural leader of men. For their daughter Clowance and her husband Stephen, the war brings prosperity. Woven through these bare facts is a powerful and complicated plot, told with Winston Graham's usual skill.

While the 11 books in the series tell of the lives of a number of people in an uninterrupted narrative spread over more than 30 years, each book is a complete novel in itself. *The Twisted Sword* is possibly the best of them.

[Leonard Ward, *The Canberra Times*, 16 February 1991](#)

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STEPHANIE by Winston Graham : Chapmans, 301 pp., f14.99

While there's death there's hope

After more than 30 novels translated into 17 languages, with seven of them filmed - most notoriously as Hitchcock's *Marnie* - and two huge BBC historical drama serials based on the 11 Poldark books (the last and concluding saga published in 1990), Winston Graham is one of those writers, like the late Irwin Shaw, who is rarely in fashion but even more rarely out of favour. Such men are invariably described by their publishers as 'master storytellers', and disliking modern novels with no stories, I always like the sound of this (although recently, I've noticed, they even have the nerve to say it about Jeffrey Archer).

Having enjoyed *The Tumbled House*, *Marnie* and *Angell*, *Pearl* and *Little God* as a teenager, I was reminded soon after starting this book of the singular lack of feel for time and place Graham has. Set in England, his stories might as well be set in New England; set in the Fifties, the Seventies. It might well be that when you have ploughed through 11 novels' worth of research on the minutiae of life in 11th century Cornwall, the southern England of the late 20th century all looks pretty much the same across the decades. And, anyway, after the recent deluge of brand names and Nintendo games in modern fictions, this merely gives Graham's books a refreshingly Martian feel.

But you can, of course, have too much of a good thing - and by the time I'd finished the first sentence - 'The Portuguese colony of Goa was taken over by India in the spring of 1961' - I was starting to nod a little in my chair. This is good, plain writing, you think soundly - and then it dawns on you that good, plain writing, like good, plain cooking, is far better in theory than in practice.

Never mind; press on up the 'unspoiled beach' and through the 'rich vegetation' and we walk slap bang in on fornicating Stephanie, a blonde undergraduate (but 'she looked older' - that's all right then, M'Lud) and flash, married Errol, her middle-aged fancy man. He, for good or ill, has a mobile, humorous, sophisticated face with an expression that suggested he had seen a lot of life and found most of it wryly amusing. Go on, admit it - you thought he was going to have 'a mobile phone', didn't you?

Not surprisingly; calling the principal characters of a novel Stephanie and Errol does make it sound like a Mike Leigh nouveaux-on-parade satire, something the Indian Ocean locale only serves to bolster. And when we discover that Errol wears a post-

nooky 'thin black Chinese silk robe', that he is rude to waiters (which Stephanie doesn't like, but comforts herself with the fact that 'a lot of famous men have done it') and that he plans to open a theme park, if you please, in Agra ('Ugh! ... Sorry!' says snooty Stephanie), you don't need the word ROTTER tattooed six inches high on his forehead to know that Errol is Up To No Good.

As I've said, Mr Graham is no slave to linguistic fashion, and Errol talks like this to Stephanie: 'And what mischief will you get up to while I'm gone?' And after a night of cavorting on hash cookies, thus pronounced Stephanie: Be damned to hash. Good luck to them as liked it, but it was not for her.

In contemporary novels, *Something Nasty in the Briefcase* has replaced *Something Nasty in the Woodshed*, and sure enough peeping Stephanie finds a huge wad of money in Errol's, together with lots of cryptic notes about import, export and Customs. Being an Oxford undergraduate she soon puts two and two grammes together and comes up with drug smuggling. By this stage I was ready to go out and buy the entire collected works of Alain Robbe-Grillet and become a highbrow if it killed me. But then, on page 102, Stephanie is found dead in bed and the book begins to pick up as her father, James Locke, a lame gardening expert with a brill war record, drags himself on his crutches through the mire of the Oxford fast set in search of her killer. James Locke has his origins in Ron Smith, father of Helen, and John Ward, father of Julie, and it is very understandable why a novelist would want to write about such men. In an age when fathers are universally portrayed as neglectful, cruel or lecherous, they exhibit a driven, protective, self-sacrificing love which has unfairly been marked out as the province of mothers. In a culture of compromise, they risk ridicule and endless pain in search of a justice which, held a beat too long, is pathologised as crude and unwholesome. Such men are the nearest we have to classical heroes and even a pale fictional shadow of them tends to be impressive.

It is a shame that it takes the heroine's death to make this book come alive, but it is true. In *Stephanie*, Graham's wooden ear hits new heights of risibility. Talking about the tricky problem of drugs to her father, she comments: 'This is the new scene for my generation, isn't it?' Actually, no.

It is nothing to do with the fact that Mr Graham is a crumbly; no one writes better about teenagers today than the decidedly mature Shena Mackay and Georgina Hammick, whose creations are a good deal more authentic than those in the books of allegedly young writers like Amis, Winterson and Kureishi. The problem may, for once, be one of gender; not only have women writers spent more time with their teenage children, but there is also not the element of sexual interest that old men, as a rule, have in young women which makes them portray girls more as sexual ciphers than as real people. If Stephanie had been a spiv's widow of 55, this book would have been a lot better. The lessons are, I suppose, that you should never go to Goa with a man who's rude to waiters - and that if you're a middle-aged man you shouldn't bother trying to get inside the body of a 20-year-old girl. In literature, as in life, you'll always end up looking ridiculous.

Julie Burchill, *The Spectator*, 21 August 1992

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Stephanie

Winston Graham, Carroll & Graf, \$19.95 (301p)

This atmospheric suspense thriller by the author of the Poldark series and Marnie roams from India to England. James Locke, a disabled WW II hero and gardener extraordinaire, refuses to accept an inquest's ruling that his daughter Stephanie's death was "by misadventure." A "cheerful rebel" of 21, Stephanie had taken up with 38-year-old, twice-married Errol Colton, a photographer involved with international "tourist development." On a business trip to sweltering, sultry Goa, India, Stephanie discovers that Errol's briefcase holds a suspicious wad of money along with receipts for flax (code jargon for heroin). At the same time, young law clerk Narish Prasad is forced by a loan shark who backed his gambling debts to ingest 80 condom-clad packets of heroin to smuggle into England. Their stories collide when Locke pursues the trail of an "accumulation of untoward circumstances" including a grammatically incorrect suicide note and a long-ago murder in Edinburgh. Intriguing characters range from a philanthropist who is about to receive Oxford University's highest honor to nefarious underworld thugs who are involved in a drug ring that stretches from India to Corfu to England. Graham's page-turner combines characters with rich dimensions and spiraling plot twists, and the penultimate scene in Cardiff's Llandaff Cathedral is mortifyingly trenchant.

Publisher's Weekly, 29 March 1993

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Stephanie by Winston Graham

Vacationing in India with her married lover Errol Colton, Stephanie Locke accidentally discovers his connection with the drug trade and returns home uncertain about what to do - and, on the evidence, still undecided at the time of her death of a barbiturate overdose shortly thereafter. As her crippled war-hero father James, determined to get revenge on Colton, begins the dogged rounds of his own investigation, Naresh Prasad, recruited as a heroin carrier by Errol's associates, arrives in England and his own personal nightmare. Both James and Naresh, in their different ways, soon develop ambiguous relationships with the police: to say more would spoil the fun. Not much real mystery or detection here, but plenty of surprises from old pro Graham ...

Kirkus, 15 February 1993

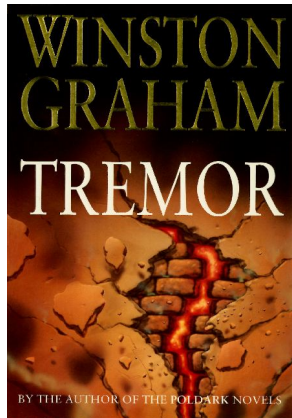
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Old fashioned tale

Written from an OAPs point of view, with use of OAP language (a sort of reverse *Clockwork Orange*!). It's a well crafted tale, which is an easy read. 4 stars (of 5).

David Rodger, *Amazon.co.uk*, 4 May 2003

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Tremor by Winston Graham, St. Martin's Press, \$22.95

Though the publisher touts this latest from Graham, author of the Poldark series, as a disaster thriller "in the tradition of *Grand Hotel*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, and *Towering Inferno*," it offers more subtle pleasures than those potboilers. In re-creating the real-life destruction, in February 1960, of the Moroccan seaside resort of Agadir by an earthquake that took 12,000 lives, Graham has produced a compelling drama of sacrifice, loss and redemption. Agadir's majestic Hotel Saada is ground zero for this story and its collection of intriguingly oddball characters. These include a trio of boisterous French prostitutes celebrating a windfall; a young English writer fleeing his embittered wife; a pompous French banker fumbling to hide an indelicate secret; a beautiful French actress disillusioned by her career; an American lawyer recovering from his greatest personal trial; and an English bank robber hiding from the police and his own gang. The mingling of their lives and secrets begins casually enough as relationships develop, some with fresh promise, others with brittle coolness. Then the earthquake strikes. Out of the rubble emerge several new lives full of change, hope and love. Emotionally resonant narration, snappy dialogue and clever plotting make this a captivating tale not only of natural havoc and human tragedy, but of the uncertainty and misdirection of life.

Publisher's Weekly, 29 January 1996

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***Tremor* by Winston Graham**

A curiously mundane title for an acutely observed novel of manners cum thriller: the prolific Graham (Stephanie etc.) showcases a commanding grasp of human foibles and yearnings, as well as an appetite for - literally - earthshaking coincidences. Center stage in the ensemble cast is 28-year-old Matthew Morris, an unsuccessful American novelist, recently separated, now bound for Agadir, Morocco, for a two-week holiday. On his flight are Jack Frazier, a small-time con who's just pulled a London bank job and absconded with his cohorts' share of the cash, and Nadine Deschamps, a gorgeous French actress biding her time between films. Frazier needs to get advice from his father (Pop has underworld connections) on how to obtain a new passport before his fellow thieves track him down, while Matthew undertakes a seduction of Nadine - an undertaking that brings her Gallic reserve into collision with his coltish American style

and finds the lovebirds enjoying the largesse of local royalty. Meantime, Graham throws in a band of wayward French prostitutes on holiday, along with a stuffed-shirt Parisian dignitary and his shrewish wife, who doesn't approve of her husband's familiarity with one of the vacationing harlots. There's also an awkward but poignant May-December romance between an elderly American lawyer and his 30ish housekeeper. Setting everything up with care, and offering deft description of place and mood, Graham propels the disparate strands of his story toward a tragic climax: the February 29, 1960, destruction by earthquake of the resort city of Agadir - a classic *deus ex machina* but pulled off here with tremendous verve. No one remains unaffected by the disaster, with Matthew Morris receiving perhaps the harshest punishment - as well as the steepest reward. Deliberate and old-fashioned storytelling - the good, patient, rewarding kind.

[Kirkus, 15 December 1995](#)

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I finished it - barely

The first thing that struck me about the book was the writing style. I kept looking at the copyright date, because the language was so arcane. It made it seem like a bad nineteenth century gothic novel. The flowery, Victorian references to sexual situations were especially laughable for a book written in the mid-1990's. (One character, wondering if a woman was a lesbian, referred to it as "non-platonic love for another woman".)

Assuming you get past the way it is written you will find the characters one dimensional and stereotypical. There isn't any depth to any of them and because of that you won't care if they survive the earthquake or not.

That's also my final complaint about the book. The earthquake is really not the central event in the book. If you are looking for a disaster / adventure book, you will be very disappointed. The earthquake happens near the end and then it is over. In the case of one character, there is an earthquake, they are trapped for 24 hours and then rescued, all in the space of a single page. How did they react to being trapped? What went through their mind while being trapped? I don't know. Apparently the author didn't think that was important.

My recommendation is to skip the book and just go rent *Earthquake* the movie. 1 star.

[Bookseller, Amazon.com, 9 July 2004](#)

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Tremor recounts the story of a 1960 earthquake in Agadir, a Moroccan resort town, that killed some 12,000 people. On the surface it is a disaster epic, but in Graham's hands it becomes much more: a penetrating examination of diverse lives brought together by disaster.

[Isabel Quigly, Encyclopedia.com, 2001](#)

Two men sit side by side on a flight from London. One is Matthew Morris, a semi-successful novelist, who has just left his wife. The other is Jack Frazier, a criminal who has run off with the loot from his gang's latest robbery. It is February 1960, and they are bound for Agadir, Morocco, and one of the worst earthquakes in history. Graham is bidding for the Twister territory here, putting his mix of oddballs against the violence of the elements. But he tends to write in an annoying shorthand: descriptions and characters tumble out in half-sentences as if he can't wait to get on with the plot.

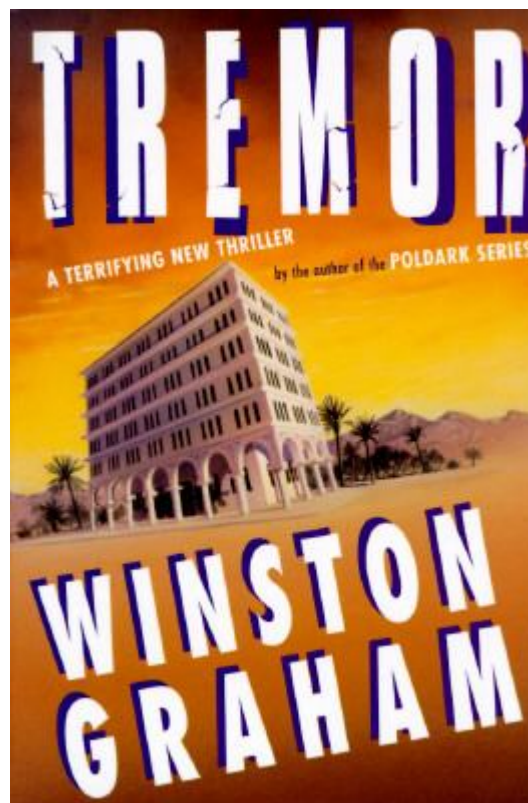
[Ian Critchley, *The Sunday Times*, 20 October 1996](#)

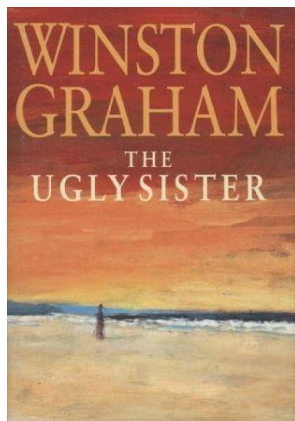
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What awaits six disparate people on holiday in Agadir, Morocco? Graham (author of the Poldark series) skilfully unfolds the story of each: the bank robber on the lam, having double-crossed his cohorts; the ne'er-do-well English writer, escaping a failed marriage; three French prostitutes celebrating recent good fortune; and an aging American lawyer getting a new start on his life after his wife's desertion. Their paths barely cross in Agadir when an earthquake levels the resort city and changes their lives in ways they never imagined. Graham builds each character in deftly painted scenes and conversations. Minor players - the Moroccan doctor, the bickering French banker and his wife, and the two thugs sent to ferret out the traitorous thief - are also brought to life. Recommended for public libraries.

[M. J. Simmons, Duluth P.L., Minnesota \(undated\)](#)

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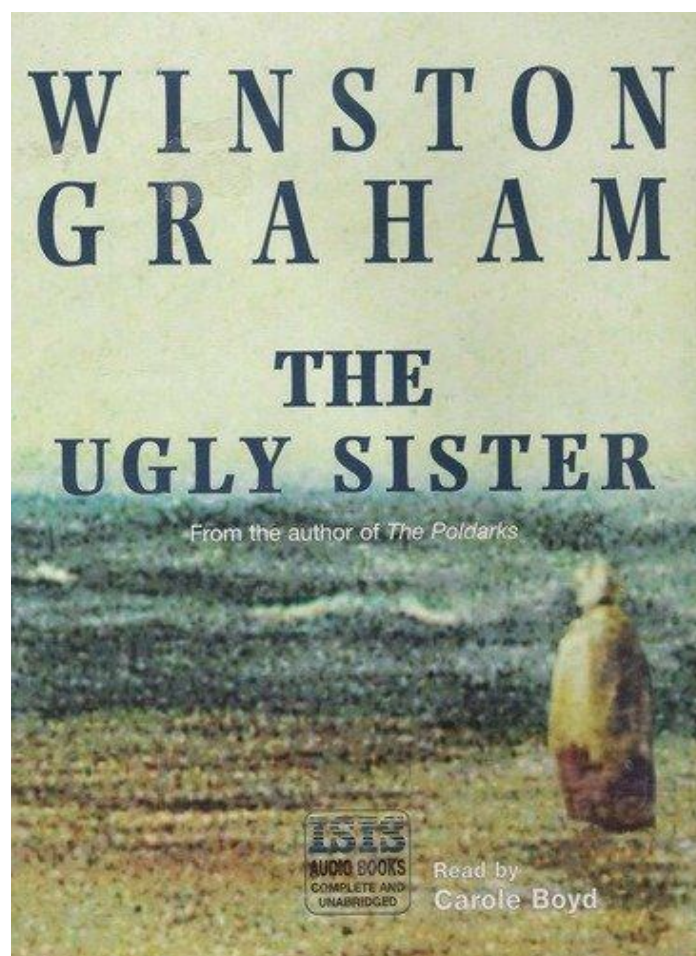


The Ugly Sister by Winston Graham

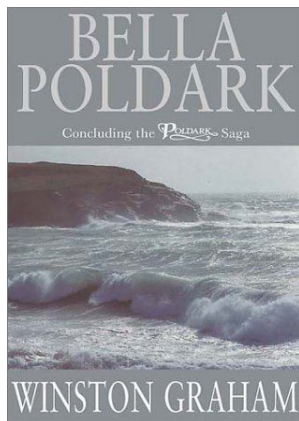
Set in Cornwall in the early 19thC, the story of Emma Spry. Lots of events happen in her young life and in quite a short novel. Some parts slightly predictable and not entirely historically accurate. Nevertheless an enjoyable story with a satisfactory ending (and a guest appearance by Isambard Kingdom Brunel). 3 stars (of 5)

Windy, goodreads.com, 9 September 2012

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One of several WG titles available in audiobook format



BELLA POLDARK by Winston Graham (Macmillan, £16.99)

FOR ME and a million fans, Poldark will always be the actor Robin Ellis, galloping across the TV screen in the Seventies, with his leather riding boots, tight-fitting twill breeches and his ponytail flying. Now, hurrah, Poldark rides again through the action-packed pages of Winston Graham's long-awaited concluding volume of the hugely popular Poldark saga. From the very first lines - 'The evening was loud and wild. Black clumsy clouds were driving up from the north ...' - we tingle with the sense that we are in good hands, transported by Graham's atmospheric prose back to 1818 and the treacherous coast of craggy Cornwall.

Being the 12th Poldark story, Graham thoughtfully prefaces his novel with a helpful list of characters and a brief resume of key previous events. Ross is now Sir Ross, aged 58, member of the Cornish gentry, a big fish in a small pond, and still living at Nampara, his estate of tin mines and farm land. Demelza, now 49, the miner's daughter and housemaid who, at 17, married Ross, is more or less unchanged in looks, apart from the fact that she secretly dyes her red hair and the feisty glint has vanished from her eyes since the death of the couple's eldest son at Waterloo. It is her fourth daughter, 17-year-old Isabella-Rose (Bella), who takes centre stage, engaged to be married to Christopher Havergal, who encourages her in her ambition to become an opera singer.

Despite Demelza's misgivings, Bella goes off to London. The journey from Nampara to Pall Mall takes three days by coach (interestingly, Great Western trains seems to take almost as long today) and soon Bella is being feted by music enthusiasts who all agree that she has an exceptional singing voice.

Her singing tutor is in raptures, and so, too, is the dishy young French conductor, Maurice Valery, who waves his baton in her direction and lures her to sing in the theatres of Paris. Her intended, naturally, is none too pleased and takes to drink and to frequenting houses of ill repute.

Meanwhile, back in Cornwall, Ross's old enemy Sir George Warleggan is even more dastardly than he was in the previous books. Having always suspected that his son, 26-year-old Valentine, is actually the child of Ross Poldark, he treats the young man with sneering contempt. Valentine, despite his charm, is certainly up to no good, dabbling in smuggling and seducing numerous susceptible wenches, much to the dismay of his

longsuffering wife. As one furious father of a seductee expostulates: 'He's no more than hell's spawn to treat her like a strumpet!' Rumour and gossip flash like lightning from village to village or, as Valentine puts it 'This country thrives on whispers', speeding up the plot and keeping us readers on our toes. To make matters even more gripping, a mysterious maniac is lurking about the rutted tracks on moonless nights and cutting the throats of innocent village girls.

For me, the Cornish sections of the book work better than those set in London and Paris. You know where you are in Winston Graham's Cornwall, where the locals all talk like this shopkeeper: 'Tis not for me to differ from my betters, Sur. Especial too when they'm my customers ...' Graham is excellent at depicting the grimness of rural living conditions in the early 19th century - the squalor, disease, brutality, unruly children and smells - which contrasts so vividly with the order and loveliness of the countryside.

The following passage conveys that beauty and is Graham's writing at its very best: 'All these woods were stunted in growth, sheltering from the savage winds ... but there was much to be found here even in midwinter - pockets of primroses already flowering, the sharp, spiked, grey promise of daffodils thrusting through a cushion of falling leaves and hart's tongue fern, and one ungainly apple tree hung with the remains of wild clematis and looking like an elderly lady in Russian fables.'

Married for 32 years and still besotted with each other, Sir Ross and Lady Demelza have reached a Darby-and-Joan state of contentment. Demelza enjoys her drop of port and Ross, obviously afflicted by male menopause syndrome, likes kicking up his heels and flirting at the occasional ball. The fact that women still fancy him is not surprising for, as Graham tells us, age has not bowed his shoulders. He stands tall and slim, still has high cheekbones and the famous scar (goodness, I have forgotten how he obtained that scar, but I recall that it did wonders for Robin Ellis's ratings) and the irresistible swashbuckling smile.

An almost fatal illness, an almost fatal accident and an almost hideous murder are the climaxes of this novel, plus one bedroom scene in Paris that is remarkably steamy when you consider that the author is 92 and was born in an era when a glimpse of female ankle was considered shocking.

I have a hunch that Graham probably planned to polish off Ross and Demelza in this final volume but has grown so attached to them over the years that he simply couldn't bring his pen to do the deed. This is good news for Poldark fans, as it leaves the way clear for someone in the future to take up the story where Graham leaves it. As Ross says: 'In 50 years the tide will be coming in and going out just as it does now, the blowhole will spout, the wind and the sun will blow and blaze just the same, but we shall all be gone.' Yes, but he and all the other Poldark characters will still be there, immortalised in print in volume after volume for new generations to discover and to love.

[Val Hennessy, *Daily Mail*, 17 May 2002](#)

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Bella Poldark : CODA 1820

It was as I was reading *Bella Poldark*, a novel I never expected to be written (The Twisted Sword seemed to end the series and it came out in 1991) that I learned of Mr. Graham's passing. The knowledge that this really, truly and for all time marked the ending of this voyage back to Cornwall of two centuries ago, made the book I had before me infinitely more meaningful.

I do not think Graham intended to continue the series, even had death not taken him so soon after *Bella Poldark* was done. He was in his nineties and this novel is filled with omens that the end had been reached. (Ross illustrating to Demelza his thoughts on the brevity of life and futility of ongoing rancor with his remark on how in fifty years they'd all be gone and yet without them the tide would still rise to spout through the hole worn in the sea-cliff was one such example.)

Graham left us with this gift of a book. It is probably the best in the section of the Poldark series since the titles "graduated" from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. I read the other eleven Poldark volumes between 1995-1997 and in the years since they have frequently crossed my thoughts, along with certain unanswered questions. The lingering mystery of Valentine's paternity becomes an issue yet again and is resolved before the book's conclusion. The "curse" literal or fanciful that struck down both Stephen Carrington and Jeremy Poldark after their robbery of the Warleggan carriage emerges to inflict its harm on a participant in that long-ago event. Ross and George Warleggan verbally spar as they have done for forty years, and Bella, the beautiful, angelic-voiced final child of Demelza and Ross, takes to the stage, her spirit set on becoming an opera star.

I wish the Poldark saga could have lasted forever, but since it could not, at least we had this one last visit among old friends to console us before our departure.

5 stars (of 5)

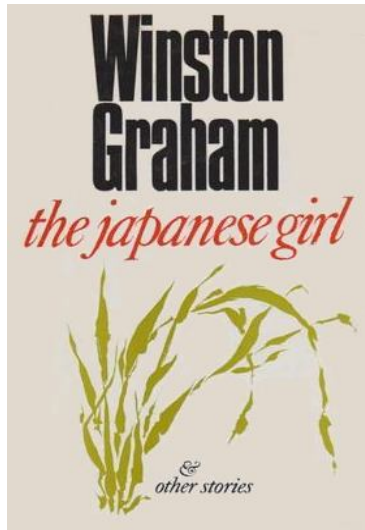
[Dai-keag-ity, Amazon.com, 21 August 2005](#)

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Five years ago I wrote the author, Winston Graham urging him continue the Poldark saga. Having read the books and watched the BBC videos I fell in love with this series years ago. Mr. Graham responded to my letter that he was 80 years old and had always written his series three or four books at a time. This way he could have sub plots that revolved around the lives of his main characters Ross and Demelza. He further informed me that he doubted if he had enough remaining time to do another three books. I was very pleased to see that he had enough energy and intellect to provide us with this final book. It is an excellent finish to a great saga. I highly recommend this book. Would anyone like to visit Cornwall? I would. 5 stars (of 5)

[Rob Billings, Amazon.com, 11 January 2003](#)

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The Japanese Girl & Other Stories by Winston Graham

Winston Graham is always a very practiced entrepreneur of a genre which incorporates a good many traditional features and primarily suspense and you will recognize many of the backgrounds here (Cornwall, the ring, Sotheby's) which have occasioned some of his novels. There are 14 short stories here of assorted length and strength: the disappearance and / or discovery of a "Medici Earring" which becomes an affair of qualified trust; the lifelong vigil in Cornwall for a sailor who comes out of the mist; the convict who breaks jail, steals a car and borrows a bicycle to see his own child, a hit-and-run victim; the phantasmagoria of "The Island" and further possession in a tenanted "Basket Chair"; while the title story deals with the best laid plan to make off with a large sum of money, deliberately serve a jail sentence, and then enjoy it fully when ... Mr. Graham needs no introduction and his showmanship is so assured that it does seem decisive.

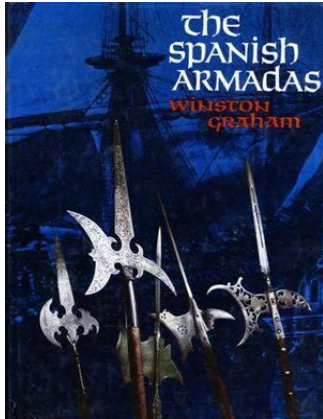
Kirkus, unsigned, undated

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The Japanese Girl by Winston Graham is a collection of short stories, of which [the title story] is perhaps the best. It would do credit to O. Henry and is nearly as good a yarn as [that writer's] classic "Gift of the Magi". One or two of the stories are rather slight; almost fragmentary - for example "The Island" which I felt fell short of the mark. "The Medici Earring" and "At The Chalet Lartrec" are excellent and none of the stories is dull. I do enjoy short stories as well as poetry as a change from my more constant diet of novels and this is an extremely good collection.

The Lockhart Post Register, 14 September 1972

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The Spanish Armadas by Winston Graham: Doubleday, \$4.95

The Great Armada of 1588, that gigantic onslaught of Spain against England, was the main all-out attempt but there were others as the title of this book tells. However, the heart of this chronicle is that significant 1588 confrontation that sets the path for Spain and England and much of western Europe. Stars of the spectacle were Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Drake, Lord Charles Howard, Philip II of Spain - and the English weather. An English novelist, Winston Graham has combined storytelling magic with historical research.

The Des Moines Register, 31 December 1972

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Mr. Graham has been known up to now as a novelist rather than an historian. But his gift for narrative and firm knowledge of his subject combine to make [*The Spanish Armadas*] an excellent piece of popular historiography. The catchpenny title is misleading, since the real subject of the book is the Elizabethan war with Spain. The war is never described as a whole and the operations in the Caribbean are omitted, together with their vital economic consequences; nor are European operations confined to armadas ...

The Times Literary Supplement, opening only, date unknown

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History of a different sort? Try Winston Graham's "The Spanish Armadas" (Collins, \$12.50). I thought the Armada was that brief 1588 interruption to Sir Francis Drake's game of bowls. Wrong. There were three more Armadas launched against England. Graham's book tells the whole story of the row between the two countries, starting with Philip of Spain's marriage to Queen Mary (she was the second of his four wives), and following right through to the end of the Tudors. This is painless and entertaining history, with 32 color plates (16th century masters) and more than a hundred black-and-white illustrations.

The Australian Women's Weekly, 13 December 1972

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'Ever higher prices, the infirmity of central government, the infiltration of the new rich everywhere ... the raising of rents ... disregard of public rights ... corruption and profiteering on a scale hitherto unknown' - it sounds like 1972, but it has all happened before. It was the prologue to the glories of the Elizabethan age.

Mr Graham covers all Spain's naval crusades against Britain, from Philip's matrimonial raid of 1554 to Spinola's last throw in 1603; and he shows that 'crusades' is the word, for over the Holland canals and the Spanish Main, the bogs of Meath and the court of His Most Catholic Majesty, all through the long reign of the Sun Queen, lies the miasma of blind faith, the madness and mindless religiosity which ravaged, demoralised and bankrupted Spain, England, Scotland, France and the Low Countries.

The Great Armada, the one we enjoy sinking in retrospect almost as much as the *Bismarck*, is closely studied. Several myths are demolished: before 1588, England suffered sixteen invasions, and all but two were successful. Picturesque notions of a David-and-Goliath encounter between a few leaky trawlers and a mighty fleet of galleons are revised: Frobisher's *Triumph* was as big as anything on the Spanish side; the English had about half as many ships to begin with, but when reinforcements joined they outnumbered the Spanish; England had the better guns and would have had complete superiority in firepower had not some patriotic gentlemen of Sussex made a fast ducat selling arms to the Spaniards.

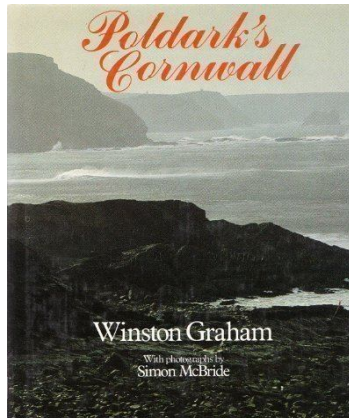
But what a curious action it was, that week-long running skirmish - one is reminded of Wolfe's remark after Falkirk: "'Twas not a battle, for neither side would fight." Destruction was not total: well over half the Spanish fleet got home all right. Most vessels were lost through acts of God and the hazards of navigation. (Uncanny, how warships which regularly convoyed treasure fleets across the Atlantic went to pieces as soon as they started working their way up the English Channel.)

The heaviest casualties were among British sailors, ashore, from neglect and starvation, after the danger had passed.

Mr Graham's is the sort of book reviewers dread, because they have to read every word, and some twice over. He disentangles the complex threads of sixteenth-century European history with a novelist's expertise and calls up a host of brilliant characters to give the era its proper flamboyance.

The Spanish Armadas is a pleasure to read and to handle. For beauty of design and illustration it is quite out of the ordinary. The printer and binder - Jarrold of Norwich, as we might have guessed - deserves particular mention.

Blackwood's Magazine, October 1972



A must for all lovers of Poldark

Poldark's Cornwall is a must for all lovers of the Poldark series of books by Winston Graham, or followers of the two TV series. The first part of the book is partly autobiographical explaining Winston Graham's connections with Cornwall, and providing a really evocative presentation of the wonderful Cornwall county abundantly illustrated with beautiful and well-selected photographs by Simon McBride.

Many of these are linked with areas used as settings in the books and for the TV series, and this is especially so in the later part of the book, where the author explains how certain places or names in Cornwall were used in his books and also how the filming for the TV series was undertaken.

This provides ... a fascinating account [of] and background to these books and films and leaves the reader wanting to visit Cornwall to see more for themselves at first hand.

An excellent book in all respects. 5 stars (of 5)

[Colin Wells, Amazon.co.uk, 21 September 2009](#)

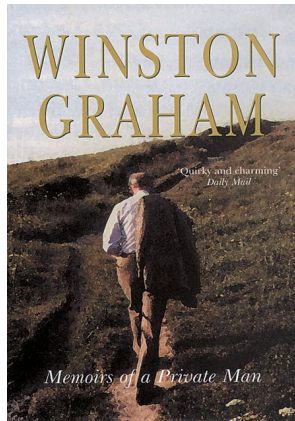
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Poldark's Cornwall

I found this book gave me more insight into Mr. Graham and his love of Cornwall. The characters were so much a part of the land and the land so much a part of the characters. Nampara, the sea, the beach, the cliffs, the mines, Demelza's flower garden, the places and distances they traveled, I found fascinating and wanted to know more. I wanted to be there. *Poldark's Cornwall* took me there. Mr Graham leads us through the area as he experienced it and we can understand where his characters came from. The book is full of new and vintage photos of the area and also the Poldark series filming locations. I encourage anyone who loves the novels and the Poldark film series to purchase this book. 5 stars (of 5)

[pmoritz, Amazon.com, 20 March 2012](#)

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MEMOIRS OF A PRIVATE MAN by Winston Graham

The Poldark secrets of a man laid bare

THINK Winston Graham. Think Poldark. The late, publicity-shy Graham, author of 43 novels and various plays, found the writer's pot of gold with his immensely popular stories of 18th-century Cornish folk.

Adapted for TV in the early Seventies, Poldark the series was a massive hit. Who can ever forget pistol-packing Robin Ellis in the title role, cantering across Bodmin Moor in his tight breeches and tricorne hat? Or indeed the enchanting Angharad Rees as Demelza, with her ringlets, petticoats and naughty twinkle?

Certainly Graham himself could not forget them. As he explains in his quirky and charming memoir, they sprang out of the ether in the early 1940s, active personalities haunting his imagination and demanding to be written about. They came to him during his days of war duty as a Cornish coastguard.

When Ross Poldark, the first in the series, reached the publisher, he was mutedly enthusiastic but suggested Graham cut 20,000 words because of wartime paper shortages. Graham refused. The publisher relented and the book became an immediate success, continued to sell well and has never stopped selling in the 50 years since.

Yet, as Graham writes, a trifle defensively: 'I am, I suppose, what is generally called a popular novelist. So I am not particularly regarded by the literary trend-makers of our time.' Nevertheless, he was driven to write. A sickly, home-loving boy, somewhat mollycoddled by his doting mother, he was born and raised in Manchester in a respectable neighbourhood where a live-in maid was the norm. A brother fell in love with Cornwall and when Graham was 18, the family moved to a furnished bungalow in Perranporth.

At 21, Graham, still happily living at home, still scribbling, finished his first novel and took to bed with exhaustion and stomach problems. Three novels later, he was signed up by publishers and at last he was off ... a real writer, being paid for his pains and never once starving in a garret or suffering hardship for his art. Marriage, owning and running a hotel, two children and more books followed. The money started rolling in.

A screenplay sold and Graham was offered a temporary flat in Central London, secretary, chauffeur-driven Rolls. His wife Jean went too, of course, and the Grahams' wonderfully long and happy marriage is a constantly recurring theme throughout this book.

Successful at last, Graham joined London's Savile Club, where he hobnobbed with famous characters such as H.G.Wells, William Golding and Somerset Maugham. He and Jean took to whizzing around the globe on luxury jaunts.

Tax exile loomed. From 1950 until 1970, three-quarters of Graham's wealth came from American book sales. An anonymous producer (who turned out to be Alfred Hitchcock) bought the film rights to his book *Marnie*, turning it into a successful picture and earning Graham heaps of dosh long before *Poldark* had 'made' him.

Shunning the limelight - 'I do not want to go to literary lunches, open fetes, give readings or otherwise appear in the public eye' - Graham nevertheless made many famous friends including Gregory Peck, Graham Sutherland, Charlie Chaplin and Prince and Princess Chula of Thailand.

He mingled with the stars at Venice film festivals. Dustin Hoffman wanted to appear in a Graham novel adaptation, but Marlon Brando was offered a million dollars instead to play the part. He didn't even bother to reply.

By now the family had relocated to Sussex where, fans will be surprised to discover, the later *Poldark* books were all written. Graham acquired a weakness for posh motors. An Alvis was replaced by a Jaguar saloon, then an Aston Martin in which he did an exhilarating 140mph on the Turin autostrada. Alfa Romeos became his second cars and he treated himself to a series of Alfa Spydors.

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of life with the Grahams is the disclosure that following two very severe strokes suffered by Jean in her early 50s, they continued their globetrotting. Between 1967 and 1992 they visited 33 countries, some several times - with the splendid Jean lame and suffering from dizziness, but still game. Despite her disabilities she rode an ostrich, was piggybacked up a mountain, tried surfing on Bondi Beach, took a two-day drive to see the sun rise over Annapurna, crossed a river on a wooden raft and took the dawn flight around Everest.

As Graham remarks: 'I confess, although it does me no credit, that only 10 per cent of our trips were undertaken to promote my books or to gather material for a future novel. All the rest were taken in pursuit of pleasure.'

Good on him, I say. To read his memoir is to meet a charming, decent, old-fashioned sort of character with an enormous capacity for friendship and a wonderful interest in other people. He fears that an autobiography in which 'I have not committed any of the fashionable sins such as murder, burglary, sodomy, child abuse, gang rape ... may be too conventional to appeal to today's gossip-hungry readers.' On the contrary. Every gentle page offers us a shining example of prolific creativity and a good life well lived. Graham ends his book with the moving disclosure that: 'I have had one wife, and I loved her and she loved me. I did not terrorise, browbeat or woefully neglect my

children. I do not get drunk and disorderly. All very dull.' Not true. Modest to the end, this much-loved author (who died earlier this year aged 95) has brought pleasure to millions and if snooty critics consider him lowbrow, so what? It's the book sales that count and on that score Graham is still on top.

Val Hennessy, *Daily Mail*, 17 Oct 2003

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The most famous unknown author in Britain

You've probably never heard of Winston Graham, but you may have heard of Poldark ...

Memoirs of a Private Man, by Winston Graham. Macmillan, £18.99

Winston Graham is best known as the author of the Poldark novels, which became a hugely popular television series round the world. In his long lifetime (he died earlier this year aged 93) he was also known as "the most famous unknown novelist in England."

For an "unknown" novelist, who wrote over 40 novels, amongst them *Marnie*, which Alfred Hitchcock made into a memorable film starring Tippi Hedren in the title role, he did very well.

True, Graham had been hoping for Grace Kelly to play Marnie, but the Prince of Monaco put his foot down when he discovered that his fairy tale Princess was supposed to play the part of a thief and a liar. But he still did very well. He died rich. Not many novelists can afford a large country house with servants in their 90s, but Graham could.

And yet, as this timely autobiography shows, he never lost his modesty. Most people, when they make it, like to forget their less successful moments. Not Winston Graham.

For example, how many rich and successful people would write about making a fool of themselves in a Paris brothel? Yet here he is, describing how, on seeing the array of girls on offer, he was overcome with a fit of giggles.

Graham tells how the Madame sized him up. "Monsieur," she said, "I think I have something more suitable for you." She guided him through corridors, opened a door - and Graham found himself amongst the dustbins in the back yard.

In truth, there are times when the modesty, genuine though it is, becomes a bit much. One moment, he is telling us that the reviews of his first published novel "were kind, perhaps too kind." The next, he is considering moving to France because of the huge tax bill on his burgeoning earnings.

But behind the modesty there was an edge of steel, and it shows in his description of his dealings with the people filming *Poldark* for the BBC.

At the start, he was treated like dirt. The producer even told him that, if he dared to show up on the shoot, he would be treated like an ordinary member of the public. By the end, they were leaping to attention when he turned up on set, and begging him to write a third series.

He especially warmed to the actors and actresses in *Poldark* - and they to him. In particular Angharad Rees, who played Demelza Poldark, took him under her elegant arm, visiting him in hospital as he grew increasingly frail, and charming both staff and patients during each of her many visits.



[WG with Angharad Rees](#)

When people live as long as Winston Graham did, names become a problem for many readers. He writes of evenings with the likes of Gilbert Harding and Sir Ralph Richardson, and of working with the likes of Gregory Peck, Jack Hawkins and Dennis Price, not to mention Valerie Hobson, Arlene Dahl and Samantha Eggar. Perhaps you have to be of a certain age to recognise most of these names.

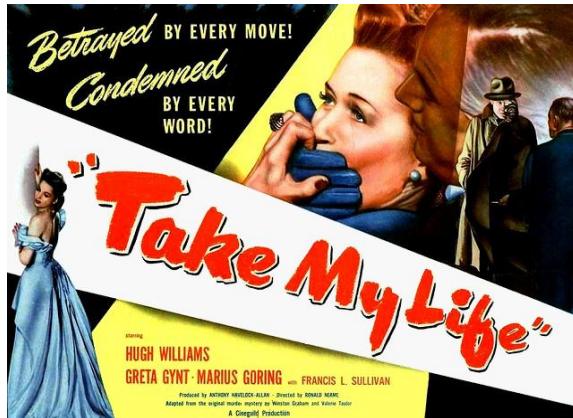
However, most readers will surely appreciate his contribution to modern films in giving the pre-007 Sean Connery a big boost to his early career by casting him to play against Tippi Hedren in *Marnie*. And what readers of all ages can appreciate, if they have any literary ambitions, is the fascinating chapter in which Winston Graham relents from his modesty and describes his awesomely professional approach to writing: one book at a time, never write two things at the same time. Write, rewrite, keep on rewriting, for however long it took until he was satisfied.

Yes, he could afford to take his time, but it is still impressive. For example, to learn about boxing when writing *Angell*, *Pearl* and *Little God*, he spent so much time in the Thomas à Becket pub in the East End that he was treated like a regular, and big fight promoters like Mike Barrett - and big boxers like Henry Cooper - treated him as a friend. Graham sums it up thus: "I have never been clever enough - or egotistical enough - to spend 300 pages dipping into the sludge of my own subconscious."

Of course not. He was much better than that, as this autobiography shows.

[\[Savile Club chairman\] Osman Streeter, *Camden New Journal*, 30 October 2003](#)

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TAKE MY LIFE (1948)

Screen play by Winston Graham and Valerie Taylor, with additional dialogue by Margaret Kennedy; directed by Ronald Neame; produced by Anthony Havelock-Allan; presented by J. Arthur Rank and released by Eagle-Lion Films.

British-made Murder Mystery

About 25 per cent less talk, and twice as much action as it now contains, would have turned the trick for "Take My Life," the British-made murder mystery which turned up yesterday at the Fifty-ninth Street Trans-Lux Theatre. Even good actors, people like Francis Sullivan, Hugh Williams and Greta Gynt, become a bit tiring on the screen when all they do is talk, talk, talk. Good melodrama doesn't need dialogue to arouse interest. Quite the contrary, in fact, for the camera itself is a powerful storyteller when it is used properly.

Winston Graham and Valerie Taylor have concocted a knotty enough series of circumstances to keep their screen play about a man who is falsely charged with murder bubbling with excitement. But they did not write with the camera in mind, and since Director Ronald Neame apparently was not able to break through the static barriers set up by the script "Take My Life" slowly succumbs to inertia.

The problem posed by the picture is simple enough. The husband of an opera singer meets an old flame backstage the night of his wife's Covent Garden debut. The wife shows her jealousy openly, they quarrel at home and she tosses a jar of cold cream which leaves an open wound on her husband's forehead. He goes out into the night. About this time a shadowy figure enters the shabby room of Elizabeth Rusman, strangles her and sneaks out. When Nicholas Talbot stops in a near-by hospital to have his head fixed the police pick him up and charge him with murdering his former girl friend.

Without going into more detail, and we have only skimmed the top of the plot in this synopsis, the film now settles down to a long drawn out account of how the wife attempts to prove her husband's innocence. A tough job, for only she and the husband know that he couldn't possibly have committed the crime at the particular time it happened. The authors develop their plot complications nicely and they have a sure

hold on the situation until toward the end when favorable coincidences just spring out of nowhere and mitigate whatever verisimilitude the drama has attained.



The performances, as mentioned previously, are sound and the picture has good production qualities. But it just doesn't move as a movie should and, as a result of all talk and no action, the excitement inherent in the story is not successfully translated into pictorial terms.

| | | |
|---------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Nicholas Talbot | ..... | Hugh Williams |
| Philippa Shelley | ..... | Greta Gynt |
| Sidney Flemming | ..... | Marius Goring |
| Prosecuting Counsel | ..... | Francis L. Sullivan |
| Inspector Archer | ..... | Henry Edwards |
| Elizabeth Rusman | ..... | Rosalie Crutchley |
| Mrs. Newcombe | ..... | Marjorie Mars |
| Deaf Man | ..... | Ronald Adam |
| Conductor | ..... | Leo Bieber |
| Mike Grieve | ..... | Herbert Walton |
| John Newcombe | ..... | Leo Britt |
| Defending Counsel | ..... | Maurice Denham |
| Judge | ..... | Henry Morrell |
| Leslie Newcombe | | David Wallbridge |

T.M.P., *The New York Times*, 19 January 1949

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First-rate British Noir Murder Drama

This is a superb example of a high-calibre British post-war murder mystery. It was the first film ever directed by Ronnie Neame, who is mostly famous for his classics 'Tunes of Glory' (1960) and 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' (1969). The cinematography by Guy Green (later a director) is inspired and intensely expressionist in the German manner. Neame really shows what a brilliant director he was, not only coaxing excellent performances out of his actors, but keeping the pace and the tension despite the fact that the identity of the murderer is revealed very early. Francis L. Sullivan is, as usual, hair-raising as the prosecuting counsel, although his role should have been more prominent if the film had not been so short at only 76 minutes. (One suspects things were cut out before release, as the build-up of Sullivan really does fizzle out without explanation.) The scenes towards the end of the film really do become incredibly menacing and powerful, as Marius Goring, who plays the murderer in an eerie and intense style, can be seen calculating what he must do next, and sets about it with the methodical determination of a man who now has nothing to lose. Hugh Williams is excellent as the rather formal husband of Greta Gynt, an equally formal wife who is an opera star. It is difficult for such people to cope with real situations of danger, as their behaviour is so mannered, even in their most private moments, that quick thinking and quick action are impossibilities for them, what with all the thawing out they have to do first, not to mention the necessity of changing for dinner, straightening the black tie, and making sure every hair is in place. Sometimes when your life is in danger, such formalities can be rather impeding! But that is part of the irony of this tale, of which a subliminal motif is: things like that don't happen to people like us. In this film, the doomed victim is Rosalie Crutchley, who really was a fascinating wench at that early age, in fact, someone to whom you can imagine almost anything could happen, and it does. 9 stars (of 10)

[IMDb user review, 14 October 2008](#)

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"B" Movie Magic!

This is a terrific "B" from 1947! Greta Gynt has never been better - it's worth buying the film just to see her performance. With her husband accused of murder and the police satisfied that they've got the right man in custody, she sets about tracking down the real killer ... The last 20 minutes or so are "B" movie magic! 5 stars (of 5)

[Amazon UK customer review, 2 September 2009](#)

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Ronald Neame's eye-catching directorial debut

As I scrolled down a list of Ronald Neame's movie credits prior to compiling this little review, I was struck again by the unbridled excellence of his filmography. Ebullient successes such as 'Major Barbara' and 'Blithe Spirit' were photographed by him, and he would go on to direct such involving and memorable movies as 'The Man Who Never Was' and 'Gambit'. Having honed his skills behind the camera while working with the

cream of British movie-making talent, Neame made the transition to the director's chair in 1947 with 'Take My Life'.

And what a brilliant first-up effort it proves to be! This fast-paced and deftly-directed thriller sees Greta Gynt travelling to Scotland in an attempt to clear her husband, Hugh Williams, of the murder of an old flame of his. With Neame directing and Guy Green photographing the movie, it is a real triumph pictorially. As a prestige production of GFD / Cineguild, one would expect the polished feel that is evident. The movie is further elevated, however, by a stylish and imaginative script and uniformly excellent performances. Gynt and Williams offer refreshing sparkle on-screen and imbue their characters with admirable depth. Marius Goring, as the killer, is brooding and calculated and he fills the screen with a sense of foreboding menace. Some of the later suspense-filled scenes in the school call to mind Neame's background in cinematography. Several wonderfully expressionistic scenes are realised as Gynt searches for evidence of the dead girl, and engages in a game of cat-and-mouse with Goring amongst the deserted corridors and rooms of the empty school and then on the train back to England. The sense of moody desperation evoked in the last reel deserves special praise.



This confident and consistently exciting thriller shows what a fantastic film-maker Ronald Neame was. He demonstrates a smooth narrative style and expertly ramps up a thrilling level of suspense, despite the fact that the murderer is known to the audience from an early stage. 'Take My Life' is a movie that I wholeheartedly recommend. 9 stars (of 10)

[IMDb user review, 2 August 2013](#)

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Thriller in which Hugh Williams is accused of bumping off violinist Rosalie Crutchley. Wife and opera singer Greta Gynt tries to prove his innocence by investigating the missing years in Crutchley's life. This was Ronald Neame's first attempt at directing and a very good job he made of it too.

[Unsigned, undated, britishpictures.com](#)

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Two weeks ago I had hard things to say about films which can find no better story subject than death or murder. I still insist there are better subjects, but *Take My Life*, in the scope of a murder thriller, tries to say something about life, about people rather than corpses, and so contrives to be endearing. An opera singer's husband is on trial - charged with murdering a former lover. The wife takes time off from opera to turn sleuth, searching for some way round the damning circumstantial evidence against her husband. She has nothing to go upon but the conviction that people's lives, when they do meet, become intertwined. Obviously the real killer had to do with the murdered girl; therefore there must be a connection; it must be possible to find it if one searches hard enough. The links in the chase are ingeniously contrived, while the locale of the drama is pleasantly British; a night-train journey takes us beyond the confines of stuffy London to Scotland. It is here in the North, at a small school, deserted for the holidays, that imagination is allowed free play in a novel setting.

Yet this film is unsatisfying, because it promises much. One expects of Ronald Neame, with a distinguished film photographer's career behind him, certainty of touch on the technical side; that we get. He knows just how to make his picture and sound - the raw technics of the art - tell a good story well. But he seems too often to rely on these mere instruments to mirror personality. At the oddest moments, within a setting which is perfectly feasible as a human situation, the people are allowed to "go wrong." Greta Gynt (the wife who turns detective) has to get a picture of a school group from the local photographic studio: place, Scotland; time, Sunday evening late. She knocks agitatedly at the door, and imperiously offers the dealer money for the photograph she wants. As anyone could have foretold, the little man invokes the sabbath, and it is patent that wild horses would not induce him to oblige her. He is the type who would have refused even the most winning of womanly wiles, yet one cannot see why this opera star sleuth, with her charmingly practical turn of mind, should not have been directed to do the natural thing and use her freely available charms on the little Scotsman. This typifies the faults of a very creditable film; the direction and acting go through weak patches, though the general inspiration is sound. Perhaps Greta Gynt's own performance is cryptically in tune with this; it seems often as if she has much more capacity for acting out of the deep stuff in a situation than she allows to show.

Geoffrey Bell, *The Spectator*, 29 May 1947

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NIGHT WITHOUT STARS (1951)

Screen play by Winston Graham; directed by Anthony Pelissier; produced by Hugh Stewart for Europa Film. A J. Arthur Rank Organization presentation.

Mystery on the Riviera

A quiet and forceful performance by the Englishman, David Farrar, who established himself in "Black Narcissus" several years ago, is the impulse which flows some mild attraction into the British film, "Night Without Stars," a little mystery-romance that opened at the Little Carnegie yesterday.

In this minor diversion, which has the further advantage, too, of being set on the French Riviera and breathing some of the air of that locale, Mr. Farrar plays a somber fellow, virtually blind from the late war, who falls in love with a vagrant French beauty whose ties are as mysterious as her moods. Pursuing this strange and fleeting creature, he finds himself rather dangerously aware of a project of surreptitious commerce in which his lady appears to be involved. And being possessed of such knowledge and a love for his lady, none the less, he goes on until he discovers the villain, et cetera.

It is not that the story is so potent or the drama so breathlessly intense. Winston Graham's little plot is only average and the telling breaks down toward the end. But there's something about the casual manner in which the picture initially unfolds that captivates moderate interest and excites a favorable respect. And then, as the romance develops, under the direction of Anthony Pelissier, and the force of Mr. Farrar emerges, the attraction gains stature and strength.

Credit not only Mr. Farrar. His acting of the solemn, almost sightless man is matched, in the build-up of the romance, by that of Nadia Gray, a very lovely and interesting creature who suggests intrigue and mystery. And some good solid minor performances are delivered by a bilingual cast, jabbering away in French and English, which includes Maurice Teynac, Gerard Landry and Ina de la Haye. The air of the Riviera is strangely enchanting, too, as it floats out from real French streets and bistros.

Put this down as a likely one to see.

| | | |
|------------|-------|----------------|
| Gordon | ..... | David Farrar |
| Alix | ..... | Nadia Gray |
| Malinay | ..... | Maurice Teynac |
| Policeman | ..... | Gilles Queant |
| Chaval | ..... | Gerard Landry |
| Claire | ..... | June Clyde |
| Walter | ..... | Robert Ayres |
| The Doctor | ..... | Clive Morton |
| Armand | | Eugene Deckers |
| Mere Roget | | Ina de la Haye |

[Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, 14 July 1953](#)

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Night Without Stars is directed by Anthony Pelissier and adapted to screenplay by Winston Graham from his own novel of the same name. It stars David Farrar, Nadia Gray, Maurice Teynac, Gerard Landry and June Clyde. Music is by William Alwyn and cinematography by Guy Green.

Story is set in post war France and finds Farrar as Giles Gordon, a British lawyer who has been left partially blinded by the war. Upon meeting shop assistant Alix Delaisse (Gray), he falls in love with her but soon finds she has ties to the resistance and that another suitor doesn't welcome his arrival on the scene. Soon enough Giles find himself amongst blackmailers, forgers and murderers, his life is in danger and Alix has disappeared.

The hook here is that Giles seeks out an operation to correct his sight issue and then sets about unravelling the mysteries, still pretending that he is nearly blind! The plot has a delicious slice of incredulity about it, and with the screenplay being quite literate, it rolls out as a match made in cinematic heaven. Pelissier (*The Rocking Horse Winner*) and Green (*Great Expectations* / *Oliver Twist*) deal firmly in chiaroscuro photography, bathing a good portion of the film in noirish visuals.

Atmosphere is a big thing in a story of this kind and *Night Without Stars* has it in abundance. Add in some sensuality and a quite brilliant performance by Farrar and you are good to go for a great winter's night in by the fire.

8 stars (of 10)

[IMDb user review, 29 November 2013](#)

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Winston Graham

Winston Graham, who died yesterday aged 93, was the best-selling author of some 40 books, notably the Poldark series of 12 romantic novels set in 18th- and early 19th-century Cornwall; these were adapted into two of the most popular BBC television series of the 1970s.

The story told of the adventures of the Poldark family and their long-standing feud with the banker and landowner Sir George Warleggan. The books sold millions of copies around the world.

The television series attracted 15 million viewers and its stars, Robin Ellis (Ross) and Angharad Rees (Demelza), became known as the sexiest couple on the small screen. In Cornwall, the series was so popular that churches had to reschedule their evening services on Sunday nights. The series spawned its own society, the Poldark Appreciation Society, and the feud between the Poldarks and Warleggans was even said to be the favourite preoccupation of viewers in Israel, Greece, Germany and Australia. On video, Poldark outsold every costume drama save *Pride and Prejudice*.

Graham published his first Poldark novel, *Ross Poldark: a novel of Cornwall 1783-1787*, in 1945 and the last, *Bella Poldark*, in 2002. The series made him a rich man, yet he remained something of an enigma, shunning publicity. He believed that "an author should be known for what he writes, not for whether he's crossed the Atlantic by 10-ton lugger", and was happy to be known as "the most successful unknown novelist in England".

Winston Mawdsley Graham was born in Manchester on June 30 1910, the son of a grocer and tea importer. A great uncle, James Mawdsley, had stood for Oldham as a Conservative alongside the young Winston Churchill. Both lost to the Liberals, but Churchill changed sides, and Mrs Graham, a passionate Liberal, insisted on calling her son Winston.

He was destined for Manchester Grammar School, but when he contracted pneumonia the doctor said he should travel no further than the local school. In the late 1920s the family moved to Perranporth, Cornwall.

Winston had always wanted to be a writer, and his mother agreed to support him until he became established. His first book, *The House with the Stained Glass Windows*, a murder mystery, was published when he was 23, but did badly, making him only £29. He continued to write, though without much success, and he would subsequently disown six of his early novels.

He struggled on until he struck gold with a film script, *Take My Life* (1947), which he sold to J Arthur Rank. Called to work in London, he was given a flat, a secretary, £150 a week and a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce. Yet he did not enjoy the film world and soon returned to Cornwall, determined to write a novel that no one would ever film. That book was his period novel, *Cordelia* (1949), which sold 560,000 copies in hardback.

The strength of Graham's writing lay in its tremendous narrative power. He had the thriller writer's ability to sustain tension to the full in a way that made any interruption tiresome: "Any novel that is good must have elements of suspense," he once explained. "I have never been clever enough or sufficiently self-concerned to spend 300 pages dipping experimental buckets into the sludge of my own subconscious."

Graham was a master of period detail and atmosphere and always researched his books meticulously. He once took a convicted safe-breaker out to lunch and, when writing about the world of boxing, visited seedy boxing clubs in the East End, disguising his worldly success by donning a dirty mackintosh.

For the Poldark series, he spent many hours in old archives, delving into parochial histories and accounts of smuggling and mining. Ross Poldark was followed by Demelza in 1946, Jeremy Poldark in 1950 and Warleggan in 1953.

Apart from the Poldark saga, Graham wrote 17 successful suspense novels. Six of his books were filmed for the big screen, the most notable being *Marnie* (1961), directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1963 and starring Tippi Hedren and Sean Connery.

Graham steadfastly refused to discuss the money he made out of his books, but they were remunerative enough to enable him to buy a large house in Sussex, complete with tennis court and swimming pool, and to take frequent foreign holidays. At one point he considered becoming a tax exile and moved to Cap Ferrat in France; but he returned to Britain within the year, deciding he would rather be taxed to death than bored to death.

Following the success of the first Poldark television series, in 1996 HTV made a new Poldark film, *Strangers from the Sea*. The film brought a storm of protest from admirers of the earlier television series because the original Ross and Demelza had been replaced by John Bowe and Mel Martin; 50 members of the Poldark Appreciation Society marched in full 18th-century rig to picket HTV's headquarters in Bristol. When Graham admitted preferring the new film to the original television series, he found himself cold-shouldered by the Society of which he was president.

Graham was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and served as chairman of the Society of Authors from 1967 to 1969. He was appointed OBE in 1983.

He married, in 1939, Jean Williamson, who died in 1992; he is survived by their son, Andrew Graham, who is Master of Balliol College, Oxford, and by a daughter.

The Daily Telegraph, 11 July 2003

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Winston Graham

The author of the Poldark series and Marnie, he kept his readership by always being ahead of his time.

When Alfred Hitchcock made his 1964 film of *Marnie*, the novel by Winston Graham, who has died aged 93, he was wary of the antihero who blackmails for sex a beautiful girl he knows is guilty of kleptomania. Hitchcock wheeled the dark, tall and handsome Sean Connery into the part, gaining glamour and losing some plausibility: would such a man have to resort to such manipulation?

Graham himself had made the twisted sexual blackmailer less attractive and more darkly believable, a piece of decidedly contemporary noir. With his elf's face and elfin eye for a slightly off-centre character - villain or hero - Winston Graham was a popular novelist who kept his readership because he was arguably, in terms of emotional flavour, always ahead of his time.

He wrote over 40 novels, which were translated into 17 languages. The television series made from his dozen Poldark historical novels were watched by 15 million people. In Cornwall, churches altered the times of their services to avoid clashing with Poldark.

On video, the stories were the most popular historical series ever, after Jane Austen's *Pride And Prejudice*. They made Graham a fortune, though even at the height of their popularity - they were first shown from 1975 to 1977 - he himself remained a strangely (by modern standards) unknown figure.

He rejoiced in being described as "the most successful unknown novelist in England", and gave few interviews. But this was a defensive professional ploy, and evidence of a conventional upper middle-class mistrust of self-hype, rather than a mark of reclusiveness: he did in fact enjoy being a member of several London clubs.

His creation of Ross Poldark, Cornish mine-owner and saturnine adventurer, is likely to be the factor which keeps him in the literary canon. Graham always maintained that he had never received a rejection slip, but his first novel, published when he was 23, *The House With The Stained Glass Windows* (a title typical of his flair for the off-centre) made him only £29, and his first 16 novels, written in longhand when he was still a very young man, were also not successful; he had to be subsidised by his widowed mother. But in 1945, *Ross Poldark: A Novel Of Cornwall 1783-1787*, was published, the first of the sequence, all bestsellers.

Ross Poldark was created as a hero with shades of Cornish barrenness and darkness, including an unpredictable wife of lower social class, Demelza. Graham had every reason to be aware of social class - his father was a tea importer, his mother was a member of the Mawdsley family, who ran a firm of grocery wholesalers, and his great uncle, James Mawdsley, contested the two-seat Oldham constituency for the Conservative party alongside Winston Churchill.

The Liberals won in each case; Churchill joined that party, and the author's mother, a keen Liberal, later insisted on calling her second son Winston. Though he did not go to public school himself, Graham sent his son, Andrew, to Charterhouse and saw him become, in 2001, Master of Balliol, which the author jokingly regarded as being "next door to being God".

But in his monetarily leaner youth it was the Cornish terrain that created the atmosphere and character of the Poldark saga; Graham experienced it at first hand through a family tragedy. Though the family came from Manchester, where Winston was born, and expected to go to Manchester grammar school, it moved to Cornwall when his father was disabled by a stroke at the age of 54. Graham was later to ask himself what he could possibly have written about if the family had moved instead to Southport.

As it was, his dark-tinged imagination had plenty of places to roam in Cornwall. For the 2002 Poldark novel, *Bella Poldark*, which he said was to be the last, he maintained his habits of always writing with a fountain pen and always doing hands-on research. Bella was an opera singer, and though Graham and his wife Jean used to go to Vienna for the opera every year, he knew his familiarity with the subject was superficial. So he persuaded English National Opera to let him watch a rehearsal of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, which was to feature in the novel.

This was typical of his preparation. For his boxing novel *Angell, Pearl And Little God* (1970), he went into a pub on the Old Kent Road, met the boxer Henry Cooper and the promoter Mike Barrett, heard managers talking about "purses" and sat in the front row of a boxing match at the Albert Hall. When he wanted to know about safebreakers, he took one to a smart restaurant.

His relations with the film industry were guarded. As a young author, his first whiff of serious money came from his film script of *Take My Life* (1947), a J Arthur Rank production. Rank provided £150 a week, a flat and a Rolls-Royce with chauffeur. He was delighted when Rank seemed to tire of him, and hastily returned to Cornwall, having, as he saw it, avoided the pitfall that claimed so many novelists who wrote for the films: writing future novels as if they were scripts. His next novel, in 1949, was the historical *Cordelia*, which gratifyingly sold 560,000 in hardback, but was deemed by him to be safely unfilmable.

His relations with high tax avoidance were similarly guarded. At one stage, through some arcane manoeuvre, he lived in France and paid tax in Switzerland, but came back home because, as he put it, he preferred to be taxed to death than bored to death.

He braved the public stage as chairman of the Society of Authors from 1967 to 1969 and was a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In 1983 he was appointed OBE.

But always he was a real writer of the old school, above all interested in the job itself, and steadily productive to the end - his autobiography is due to appear in September.

In 1939 he married Jean Williamson, who died in 1992. He is survived by their son and daughter.

Dennis Barker, *The Guardian*, 14 July 2003

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Winston Graham

Versatile writer whose books ranged from the Poldark novels to 'Marnie'

Winston Graham was fond of referring to himself as "the most successful unknown novelist in England", knowing it was at once an urbane self-putdown (something at which he was particularly adept), yet largely the truth.

Female viewers of a certain age still surely tremble at the memory of Robin Ellis in tight breeches (the Colin Firth *de son jour*) as Ross Poldark, the tough, passionate, conspiring 18th-century Cornish squire and tin-mine owner, fighting and swaggering his way through hour upon hour of the *Poldark* television series during the 1970s and 1980s; the veins at the temples of male viewers still doubtless throb at the thought of Angharad Rees as the feisty, wayward Demelza, Poldark's wife.

Yet, even though nearly 15 million viewers tuned in, week after week (rather more than for the new version of 1996), gripped by plot lines highlighting love, lust, revenge, mining, wrecking, smuggling, feuding, plunder and riot, all played out against some of the wildest, starkest scenic backdrops in all England, Graham kept the lowest of low profiles, preferring to get on with the business of writing. And not for him the word processor, or even the typewriter, electric or otherwise. He wrote in longhand - over 40 novels in a full-time writing career that stretched from 1934 to 2002, when his last book, *Bella Poldark*, was published.

The Poldark saga, in its original novel form, began life in 1945, when television was little more than a freakish technological gimmick. In *Ross Poldark*, the eponymous hero returns to Cornwall from the catastrophe of the American revolutionary wars, determined to make something of his rundown estate, and his life. *Demelza* (1946) continues the tale; *Jeremy Poldark* (1950) chronicles the birth of his son, *Warleggan* (1953) the near-triumph of his bitterest enemy. The entire sequence owed a good deal to John Galsworthy, as well as Hugh Walpole, whose chronicles of "Rogue" Herries and his tempestuous, swashbuckling Lakeland family and descendants stretched from the 1730s to the 1930s.

Every Poldark story - there are over a dozen books - has as its subtitle "A Novel of Cornwall", followed by two dates which circumscribe the action (Graham was always a precise plotter). The chronicle starts in 1783 and is unusual in the sub-literature of the "family saga" in that Graham's (and thus Poldark's) sympathies lie with the poor, the

starved, the dispossessed; the outcast who is forced by wretched circumstance and an unforgiving fate to become an outlaw.

There is more than just a tinge of incipient socialism in Poldark's views and actions, which are mirrored on a much larger, even heroic, scale across the English Channel, where revolution, which will directly affect the Cornish fisher-folk, is breaking out. All this chimed in perfectly with the recent coming to power of a reforming Labour government under Clement Attlee.

When the narrative finally reaches the 1820s, a vast familial octopus has been created, its tentacles curled round most of the major historical landmarks of the period, with a cast of characters - mainly the Poldarks and their deadly rivals the Warleggans, together with each family's hangers-on and minions - which runs into the hundreds. Even so, the saga was never sprawling or ill-disciplined; Graham always ran a tight ship.

Historical fiction was not the only arrow in Winston Graham's quiver. He was equally proficient at novels of adventure and intrigue, the psychological thriller, detective(ish) yarns (in which it was clear that mere clue-planting did not much appeal to the puppet-master). He was also one of the few male writers who could triumphantly carry off, even at an advanced age, the "Gothic Romance", with all its plot and characterisation singularities.

However, in the wider world he scored a far greater success even than with his Poldark novels, when his psychological suspense story *Marnie* (1961) was turned into an Oscar-winning 1964 movie by Alfred Hitchcock, with Tippi Hedren as the tragically mixed-up, kleptomaniacal heroine, and Sean Connery. The original screenplay had been by Evan Hunter ("Ed McBain"), who had worked with Hitchcock on the script of *The Birds* (1963), also with Hedren (one of Hitchcock's most put-upon leading ladies), but he and Hitchcock had fallen out and Jay Presson Allen, a prolific screenwriter responsible for the scripts for such classic movies as *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Cabaret* and Graham Greene's *Travels with My Aunt*, had taken over, to impressive effect.

Yet another writer (George Bluestone) took on the task of translating Graham's 1967 suspense novel *The Walking Stick*, which featured yet another psychologically, but also this time actually, scarred heroine Deborah (she's beautiful, but limps), into a film-script. This time the girl (played by Samantha Eggar) helps with a major jewel heist - in the novel, Graham turns the prelude to the robbery into a sequence of almost intolerable tension, and then, in a brilliant *coup de roman*, entirely upends the reader's expectations.

Winston Graham was born in Manchester in 1910, and seems to have been only very accidentally educated: a bout of pneumonia as a child caused his doctor to proclaim that he was "not long for this world" and that for his education he should travel no further than the local day school - his father, a comfortably-off tea merchant, had set his sights on Manchester Grammar.

When the family moved to Cornwall and his father died (after a crippling stroke) Graham was kept at home and supported financially by his mother, a passionate

believer in her youngest son's writing abilities. Graham paid her back by cracking the short-story market in the monthlies (such as the *Windsor Magazine*) and getting welcomed aboard one of the busiest library suppliers of the day, Ward Lock, whose mainly young writers churned out genre fiction by the yard for a pittance (sometimes as little as £30 per book, all rights).

Although his early novels made little or no impact, and even less money, Graham (like the tiro adventure-story writer Ralph Hammond Innes at around the same time, although for the publisher Herbert Jenkins) virtually taught himself how to write by turning "the product" out on a regular basis. His sales rose steadily: readers began to know what to expect when ordering "the new Winston Graham" at the library. If you liked E. Laurie Long, say, then your taste was for thrillers set on the Seven Seas; if "Mark Cross" (A.T. Pechey - father, oddly enough, of Fanny Cradock) light and by no means brain-racking detective yarns; if Winston Graham socially aware thrillers and vibrant, red-blooded tales of 16th-century Cornish life (in which the county itself almost becomes a character, so fiercely is its spirit limned).

In 1950 he transferred his talents to Hodder & Stoughton with a "break-out" thriller, *Night Without Stars*, which was bought by J. Arthur Rank, who then offered Graham £150 a week (an eye-popping sum in late-Austerity London) and a flat, to write his own screenplay. From then on Graham lived the writer's life, and "never [did] an honest day's work" again.

This was typically self-deprecatory; in any case not true. Graham, like many crime and historical writers, had a passion for research and put in a good deal of hard graft, especially on his backgrounds. Having no experience of the noble art of fisticuffs, he decided he needed a boxing setting for a new novel and hung around seedy pubs in London's East End watching the broken-nose and cauliflower-ear brigade. Henry Cooper and the promoter Mike Barrett helped him. At his first match in the Albert Hall he sat too close to the action and got spattered with blood. The result was the impressive thriller *Angell, Pearl and Little God* (1970).

For the robbery details in *The Walking Stick* he managed to elicit the services of Chubb's then managing director, R.J. Pilgrim, who fed him a good deal of useful information on safe-cracking - although obviously (Graham noted wryly later) not the most crucial information of all.

One of the distinguishing features of a Winston Graham novel was his attitude towards women which, certainly 50-odd years ago, was light years ahead of the times he wrote in. In the main the Graham heroine fights to live her life the way she - not anyone else; not even her lover - wants to live it. In the main she succeeds. Another Graham characteristic was his special re-creation of old Cornwall itself: his vivid images of the land and its struggling yet defiant people have rarely been bettered in British popular fiction.

A writer of many parts, Winston Graham was a success in as many fields. His *The Little Walls* won the very first Golden Dagger awarded by the Crime Writers' Association in 1955; his contemporary and Victorian-Gothic suspenseurs were snapped up for the movies; he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1968,

appointed OBE in 1983; and the old Wendren tin mine near Helston was renamed Poldark in his honour only last year. Before his death he had completed an autobiography, *Memoirs of a Private Man*, which is to be published in September.

Such was the success of his Cornish family saga - with its own flourishing appreciation society; most of the books still in print; a new audio version (read by the excellent Michael Maloney) recently released - that it cannot be long before someone has another shot at bringing it back to the small screen. Perhaps even - now that swash-buckling historical spectacles seem to be back in fashion - the very large screen.

Jack Adrian, *The Independent*, 11 July 2003

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Winston Graham

Modest author who made a mint from his Poldark novels but declined to become a tax exile

By the mid-1970s Winston Graham was already a bestselling author, several of whose novels had become book club choices on both sides of the Atlantic. A number of them, too - among them the psychological thriller, *Marnie* - had been adapted for the cinema screen, which had enhanced their and his reputation. But it suddenly seemed as if everything Graham had achieved to that point was to be eclipsed by the translation of his Poldark series of novels to the small screen by the BBC, to create one of the runaway television successes of the 1970s.

The nation simply could not get enough of the handsome Cornish mine-owner, Ross Poldark, as created by Robin Ellis, and his lovely but skittish wife, Demelza, incarnated in the comely person of Angharad Rees. On Sunday after Sunday, as this handsome duo confronted the machinations of the ruthless banker and landowner Sir George Warleggan, while at the same time trying to cope with the ups and downs in their marriage, the public was drawn irresistibly to its television sets, putting the very future of religious worship in grave peril. In an era long before the tightly-breeched Darcy of Colin Firth had set female hearts a-flutter, the pair became, simply, the nation's sex symbols, and 18th-century Cornwall the period and the place everyone wanted to be informed about.

It was a remarkable achievement that a county, apparently so thoroughly "done over" in fictional terms by the redoubtable Daphne du Maurier, of *Jamaica Inn* and *Frenchman's Creek* fame, could spare the room in its narrow acres for another novelist. Though he enjoyed the celebrity the Poldark television series conferred on him, Graham, who used to describe himself as "the most successful unknown novelist in England", never aspired to du Maurier's grand status. His talents, anyway, were of a different order. Whereas she was no stranger to the purple passage, not to say lashings of swooning melodrama, he had a simple, compelling style, a strong sense of plot and an ability to make his characters credible.

Yet until the BBC set about his oeuvre to such effect, Graham had always considered his Poldark works his least successful books. Indeed, when he finished the fourth,

Warleggan, in 1953, he had not intended to do any more. But Graham's success swept him, willy-nilly, along with it. Not only were the extant titles hastily republished as TV tie-ins, the covers attractively adorned by Robin Ellis and Angharad Rees, but further adventures were demanded by an insatiable public. *Warleggan* had ended in 1793. Further titles, beginning with *The Black Moon* (1973) were to take the Poldark story into the 19th century, keeping Graham busy for the best part of the next 30 years.

Winston Mawdsley Graham was born the son of a tea importer in Manchester. He owed his Christian name to a great uncle, James Mawdsley, who in 1899 had stood as a Conservative alongside the young Winston Churchill at a by-election at Oldham (then still a two-MP constituency). Both men lost to the Liberals, but when Churchill changed parties to become a Liberal himself, Graham's mother, herself passionate in the party's cause, named him Winston.

Graham's father suffered a stroke and that, combined with a bout of pneumonia that left Graham with a weak chest, prompted a move to Cornwall, where the family settled at Perranporth, not the most scenic part of the county but one enjoying copious blasts of wholesome air, straight off the Atlantic. Cornwall was to provide Graham for many years with a home and the background for many of his fictional projects.

He had been determined to be a writer from an early age and, apart from the war when he was in the coastguard service, he had no other vocation or occupation. His early literary efforts were unsuccessful and are now, to use his own words, "designedly out of print".

The first of his historical romances about the Poldark family in 18th-century Cornwall began to find a popular market towards the end of the war, but his first real success was *Cordelia* (1949), which sold half a million copies in America. This encouraged him to turn to other contemporary backgrounds and to the techniques of suspense for the stream of books which he was to produce at regular intervals over the next 50 years.

Graham was a good listener and a careful observer, and he went to considerable trouble to get his settings, and the language and behaviour of his characters, right. Several of his novels in the 1950s and 1960s, notably *The Little Walls* (1955), *Greek Fire* (1957) and *Marnie* (1961), were well acclaimed, even before the last-named's translation to the screen by Alfred Hitchcock brought its author a different kind of celebrity. Though not one of the master's major films, it remains a memorable one, with Sean Connery taking a break from his early Bond roles to turn in an interesting performance as a perplexed but ultimately sympathetic individual married to a kleptomaniac wife (well played by Tippi Hedren) whose nightmarish past has also made her sexually inhibited.

Graham's interest in Cornwall was again reflected in the publication in 1963 of *The Grove of Eagles*, an historical novel, based on careful research and some original material, about the Killigrews of Falmouth in Elizabethan times. Then, with *The Black Moon* in 1973, he returned to the Poldarks, thereafter producing "A Novel of Cornwall", as each volume in the series was styled, at regular intervals. Once again his first-hand experience of the coasts and countrysides of Cornwall, and a knowledge of its history that he continued to research for ever more detail, combined to continue the

success of a *roman fleuve* which, by the end had occupied him for more than half a century, from its beginnings with *Ross Poldark* in 1945 to *Bella Poldark* in 2002.

The success of the television serials was followed by the publication in 1983 of *Poldark's Cornwall*, in which, with the visual aid of Simon McBride's splendid photographs, Graham explained how the Poldark novels came to be written and how he himself became enmeshed in his long love affair with Cornwall and its singular people.

A Poldark Society jealously followed all television developments - many of its members deplored a 1996 version, *The Stranger from the Sea*, made by HTV, for its departure from the originals - while in Cornwall, the defunct Wendren tin mine near Helston found itself renamed the Poldark mine.

Eventually Graham's wife's asthma, and his desire for fresh inspiration, led him to move, first to France, where he contemplated becoming a tax exile, and then to Buxted in Sussex. "I would rather be taxed than bored to death," was his comment when asked about the move.

Graham was appointed OBE in 1983 and was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He served as chairman of the Society of Authors, 1967-69.

He married Jean Williamson in 1939 and they had a son and a daughter. His wife died in 1992 and he is survived by his son, Andrew Graham, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, since 2001, and by his daughter.

Winston Graham, OBE, author, was born on June 30, 1910. He died on July 10, 2003, aged 93.

[The Times, 12 July 2003. \[Two images omitted.\]](#)

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Robin Ellis writes: I feel fortunate to have known another side of Winston Graham to "the most successful unknown novelist in England" (obituary, July 12). The Winston I knew loved a party - he gave many in connection with *Poldark*. He enjoyed being at the centre of an event - often approached by admiring fans, especially women.

The popularity of the television series of *Poldark* gave him a different kind of celebrity; perhaps a just reward for all those hours spent alone in his study. He had an enviable talent for public speaking, able to keep an audience enthralled with his word-spinning and storytelling, his soft Mancunian tones tinged with a comic or ironic edge.

We didn't meet him and Jean, his wife, until the filming of the second series of *Poldark*. They were immediately adopted as family members. I have a photo of him at a makeshift lunch table outside the stables of a grand Cornish house - trilby rakishly pushed back on his head, surrounded by members of the cast and crew. It was because of him that we were all there and because of him that so many millions of people were going to enjoy the work in progress.

I shall miss him and I'm eternally grateful to him.

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Kimberley Jordan Reeman writes: As a novelist and the wife of a novelist, I would like to pay tribute to my dear friend Winston Graham (obituary, July 12). Compelling his style certainly is; simple it is not. He wrote with supreme elegance and compassion, and the finest insight into women's minds I have ever encountered; his dialogue is script-like and eminently readable; he heard the nuances and the silences; the inflections and the dialects, and recorded them with a master's ear. He had the rare gift of knowing when to end a scene, abruptly or with a brushstroke. At the height of his fame he was called by a perspicacious reviewer "the incomparable Winston Graham". It is an accolade he [richly] deserves.

From **Lives Remembered**, *The Times*, 14 July (RE) and 18 July (KJR) 2003

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Light on Poldark

Author Winston Graham, who was given what he called "semi-canonization" when his Poldark books were turned into two successful television series, has rarely said what he thought of them. But an audience at St Michael Penkivel Church, near Truro, Cornwall, has just been given some insight into his reaction.

"In the first series, which represented 800 minutes of viewing time, I recognized just nine lines of my own dialogue," he said. "After protests to the producers, the second series contained more of my own material and was more interesting. They even offered me a cameo role. A Scofield or a Guinness could not have done better. But when the episode came to be shown it was cut.

They tried again, and offered me the role of a drowning miner, which I turned down. They then gave me a role kissing the bride at a wedding. We had to do the scene so many times that after I had kissed her again and again, I said to the girl, one of the prettiest actresses in the cast: 'I'm getting more out of this than the bridegroom.' 'And more than he's likely to,' came the reply.

Peter Watson in **The Times Diary**, *The Times*, 20 October 1981

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With sincere thanks to all contributors. JRD 3 March 2014