

# Still Waters Run Deep

Stories of hidden depths

Gladys Hobson

All Rights Reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by photocopying or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage or retrieval systems, without permission in writing from both the copyright owner and the publisher of this book.

The right of Gladys Hobson to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Still Waters Run Deep  
Stories of hidden depths  
Gladys Hobson

Edited by Geoff Nelder

Illustrations by Gladys Hobson

Cover photograph by Ralph Hobson  
Production by Simon Hobson

Copyright © 2008 Magpies Nest Publishing  
ISBN 978-0-9548885-7-2  
First Published December 2008  
Magpies Nest Publishing

Further copies may be ordered from:  
Magpies Nest Publishing  
[info@magpiesnestpublishing.co.uk](mailto:info@magpiesnestpublishing.co.uk)  
[www.magpiesnestpublishing.co.uk](http://www.magpiesnestpublishing.co.uk)

Thanks to ...

Geoff Nelder for his editing and encouragement

Simon Hobson for his work of formatting

Friends who have supported and a hubby always  
ready with a cuppa!

## Contents

A Passion For Murder . . . . .	9
Beware Pedestrians . . . . .	17
Trixie Avenged . . . . .	23
White Van Man. . . . .	31
The Band Played On. . . . .	51
Still Waters . . . . .	57
Adam's Apple . . . . .	61
Summertime For Love. . . . .	69
Erotic Fantasy . . . . .	75
Thrilling Encounter . . . . .	81
The Yellow Rose . . . . .	87
A Perfect Day To Die. . . . .	91
The Bell . . . . .	95
The Party . . . . .	99
A Healing Of The Heart. . . . .	107
The Sacrifice . . . . .	113
Midnight Horror . . . . .	119
Fallen Angel . . . . .	123

## **A note from the author**

These stories are set in Cumbria, most of them within the Ulverston area. Even so, all the characters are imaginary, put together from human characteristics and foibles mentally garnered from a lifetime of observation wherever my life's journey has taken me. No character should be taken as factual for all are entirely fictional.

If you think you know one or two, then I have indeed succeeded at my craft!



## **A Passion For Murder.**

### **Introduction.**

This story was inspired by a building my husband and I saw at the side of the stream running by the Gill footpath in the small market town of Ulverston.

I recall the incident very well. We were living in Lindal-in-Furness at the time and were looking for a house in Ulverston. We parked the car in the Gill and noticed a footpath leading directly from the far end.

As we walked along, we were amazed that such a lovely walk existed so close to Ulverston's town centre. At that time, it was well kept with good seats, the grass trimmed, and trees, shrubs and paths in good order.

Walking along the top path we looked down through the trees to the stream below and noticed a rather curious building on the other side. It had a tiny ventilation tower and small fancy-topped windows. The building was connected to a house a little way back from the stream. The whole area was, and still is, overshadowed by deciduous trees; a glorious copper beech dominating the scene.

The unusual moss-covered building looked eerie in the shadows. 'Now wouldn't that make a setting for a murder mystery,' I said to my husband, little thinking that all these years later I would be doing that very thing!

After we settled in our new Ulverston home, I mentioned the old building by the stream to an old Ulverstonian. She told

me that it was once the laundry for one of Ulverston's well-off families.





## A Passion For Murder.

I knew the title of her book was to be *Murder at the Old Laundry*, but who would have thought it would make the headlines? I certainly didn't. Oh yes, I thought her a good writer deserving of recognition, but this is something else!

I recall us walking together along the Gill footpath. You know, the one that starts off the Cumbrian Way: high banks, tall trees, shrubs and a bubbling stream. A bit of a playground for adventurous kids, but also a shady area for shady deeds. She, that is my friend Beryl — in her supposed forties, blue-grey eyes, hair blond with grey roots, five feet two, size 16 squeezing into size 14 with the overflow bulging around her midriff and bouncing out of her wired bras — had recently moved into Ulverston, and I was showing her the beauty spots within easy walking distance of the town centre. We had already done the Hoad Monument paths. Well, everyone does those first because of the views you get over the town with its one mile canal that goes nowhere, and the GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceutical buildings, complete with enormous towers and chimneys, standing on a fifty acre site by Morecambe Bay. But more impressive to a townie is the breathtaking panorama of Morecambe Bay, and all points of the compass taking in the Lakeland mountains and Cumbrian fells. Quite impressive. It was here, in the shadow of the old monument, built like a lighthouse, that she told me of her dreams and plans. It seemed to me she had as much chance of fulfilling her

dreams as that inland monument had of steering ships up a use-  
less canal to safety!

You see, she was looking for a setting for her new book. She had a passion for writing murder mysteries. Her last one had gained credits from critics, even if they were ones that had little influence over sales. But she had this dream, like most authors I suppose, that one day her writing would reach the eyes of Richard and Judy, and wow! Woho! Need I say more? Of course, she knew she hadn't a cat's hope in hell, but I expect even a homeless pussy can dream of salmon and cream while eating the occasional thrown-away in the town's dark alleys. Perhaps I should point out here that Beryl had benefited by the successive deaths of two elderly husbands. One had somehow managed to poison himself by drinking his own homemade wine, and the other had reversed his car over a harbour's edge at high tide. So she was in a happy position of being able to claim she was a full-time author. No one need know that her magnificent royalties amounted to less than needed to feed Lucky, her black cat, one sardine a day. As far as Beryl was concerned she was a true artist and one day the glittering prizes of literary success would be hers. As for Lucky, he would receive a diamond-studded collar.

I told her that if she wanted a setting for murder wouldn't she be better off in nearby industrial Barrow? Oh I know it is prejudice on my part, but you have to admit the town presents more juicy venues for nefarious escapades. But Ulverston? Brass bands, jolly Morris dancers, festivals, country markets and all that? But why not? Passions run deep wherever you live.

To get back to our Gill footpath walk. We were on the upper path, by that house built on solid rock, looking down over stream and woods.

‘Look,’ she said, ‘see that odd-looking building by the stream? Now wouldn’t that make a fantastic setting for a murder mystery?’

She was pointing to what had once been a laundry belonging to one of the old Ulverston families, or at least, that is what I had been told some years ago. Whatever the truth concerning this semi-crumbling building with its ventilation tower, it certainly looked creepy with its surface green with damp, and the whole property heavily shaded by overhanging trees. Yes, I had to admit, this isolated spot was a good venue for her murder plot.

We walked along the path and saw boys playing in the stream down below.

‘Ah,’ she said. ‘That will be how the body will be discovered. Boys will find the corpse in the stream, caught on rocks just by that old building on the other side.’

‘Have you worked out the plot already?’

‘I have a good outline to work to. I have my methods.’

I wondered about the unusual circumstances of her husbands’ deaths. ‘Do you get your ideas from actual events?’

‘Usually. Jerry’s drowning triggered my harbour mystery, and Danny’s poisoning episode my *Murder Most Foul*. My last boyfriend, I fell out with him — didn’t like his sordid practices — managed to kill himself while trying to get a thrill with a plastic bag.’

‘I didn’t know that.’

‘Well, I preferred to keep quiet about it.’

‘Oh, that is where you got your idea for *The Plastic Wrapping Murder*.’

‘Quite right.’

I was flabbergasted. ‘Does that mean *The Silent Scream* was an actual event too?’

'It was indeed. A girl I knew at school, a dreadful bully actually, was found in an alley with a gaping wound to her throat. I never did like that girl, so I had no compunction about using the event for a damn good story.'

'One of your best,' I said, wondering at her lack of feeling. 'So what about this yarn; do you have someone in mind for the victim?'

'Sort of. I'll see how it goes. I promise, you will be the first to know. I don't want to give too much away at this stage.'

We walked a short distance farther. Beryl was beginning to complain her feet hurt. Well, if she would wear those silly high heels for walking the footpaths, what could she expect? I always wear sensible walking shoes. I keep myself slim and fit by gardening as well as hiking. Since accepting early retirement from teaching at the age of fifty, I have led a good active life. I have no need to colour my natural chestnut-brown hair, and my outdoor colouring requires no makeup. I am a nine stone, medium height healthy woman, and proud of the fact. Men seem to be attracted to me, but to be quite honest, I don't want casual sexual relationships and I have not met anyone yet that I want to give up my independence for. Too choosy I guess. Or is that I feel more attracted to females? That is something I have never explored. Just in case you're wondering, as far as I am concerned, Beryl has no sexual appeal whatsoever.

I did not see much of Beryl for the next few weeks. She told me she was busy researching for her story as well as making jottings. Then one night she rang and asked me if I could meet her for a drink at the Crown. I did have things to do. I had started a painting, something I had not engaged in for a while, and I wanted to get on with it. But she seemed to require an urgent chat and so I obliged.

Sitting by the log fire in the Crown's snug, sipping gin and tonics, she asked me if I was a lesbian.

'I don't have sexual relationships with women, if that's what you mean,' I said, somewhat surprised by the question.

'I don't believe you,' she said, bending towards me, glass in hand and boobs hanging over as if wanting a sip from her glass.

She was looking at me in a rather odd manner. What was she playing at? I asked myself.

She gave me a slight twist of a smile. 'I like that silk blouse you're wearing. It's the colour of blood. I rather fancy you, Nancy. How about it?'

'I'm sorry if I have ever given the impression that I fancy you, Beryl. But it's just not on.' I put down my glass. My hand was beginning to shake. The suggestion of intimacy was bad enough, but the mention of blood brought to mind her *Silent Scream* murder mystery. Her past relationships were not exactly a recommendation for exploring my preferences. 'Nothing personal, but...' I was stuck for words.

'Okay, but would you mind helping me with my book?'

'The book? How can I help you with that?'

'You'd be surprised.' Her eyes were now pleading. I knew how much this book meant to her. 'If you would come with me tonight along the Gill footpath, I could rehearse a scene just to see how it goes. You know, if it is possible in that setting. That sort of thing. The scene involves two lesbians. One is a murderer.'

A shiver ran down my spine.

'Please?'

And so I went with her along the footpath, this time, the lower one that ran by the stream. We could hear youths not far

away laughing and shouting. I wasn't sure who I was in most danger from. But I had come prepared.

As you know, the book was completed, ...

*Wondering about the ending ?*

*Now read the book to find out !*

