

## A RIDE IN THE COUNTRY

11:30pm, London, 1951

The smog swirls around her sobbing figure, blonde hair glistens in the dim lamp light. Mary stares through the darkness for a taxi, desperate to escape from Jack's cruel words, but nothing was moving.

A Bentley draws up silently beside her. Through a lowered window a cultured voice asks, "you seem distressed my dear? Perhaps I could give you a lift?"

"No ... no, I'm OK. Thank you. I'm sure a taxi will be along soon."

"You remind me of my daughter. I'd like to think that someone would help her if she was in the same situation."

"Oh dear ... well, if it's no trouble. Thank you." Mary slides into the sumptuous interior.

"I'm Gerald, I'm just off to my cottage in the country, and you're ... ?"

"Mary."

Gerald reaches across the young woman and unhooks the seat belt. "I had these fitted for safety." But instead of fastening it, he wraps it around Mary's wrists.

"What are you doing!" Mary screams. "Untie me!"

Gerald places a leather gloved hand over Mary's mouth, and with surprising force pushes her back as he reclines the seat. He slides his other hand under her petticoats and pulls her yellow silk panties down, tearing them from her.

Mary freezes, Gerald sighs and starts to unbutton his trousers.

The spell is broken by a tapping sound on the drivers window. A voice outside calls, "is everything alright ... are you lost."

Gerald panics, releases Mary, flicks open the door, pushes her out and roars off.

Mary rolls onto her back on the damp road and looks up into the concerned face of a constable. "Are you alright? Let me help you up. My this is a rum business, but I've got his registration."

There car eased into the smog. "Would you like to share your problem? I don't want to pry, but if I can help."

"I've just had a terrible row with my boyfriend. We'd come to London for his new job but I've just found out he's been seeing someone at his office. (*sob*) I have nowhere to go. Could you please take me to a Hotel."

"I'm afraid the Hotels aren't open this late. I'm just on my way back home, I have a small cottage in the country. You could stay there the night and then we can sort something out in the morning, ... if that would help." His voice was reassuring.

"I'm not sure. It's such an imposition."

"I'm afraid the other choice is unacceptable, wandering the streets all night on your own. I insist. Just settle back, we'll be there soon."