

The Judge's Cat

have exquisite manners. The girls were very taken with both father and son, and bombarded me with questions as to where I had been hiding them all these years. I had no explanation other than that Mr Villiers and I had an Unexpected Encounter at the Royal Academy last week – and that he had made my portrait for Papa 30 years ago.

Mr Villiers invited me to attend the opera on Thursday with one of the girls. I chose Winifred, who is the most musical, as I fancy I detected more than a passing interest in her from Constantine, who has a hint of the Bohemian about him. I dressed with more care than usual for the evening and was a trifle nervous. I must say I had a most enjoyable time. The opera was called *The Sleeping City* and we had a most elegant supper afterwards at Claridge's, where they are lodging.

Louis – as he asked me to call him – has become a celebrated portrait painter and art historian. He now lives in Vienna where he advises the Museums on the authenticity of their purchases. He has written three books and promised to send me copies.

He and Constantine speak several languages and travel widely. Constantine is leaving for Paris this weekend but Louis is staying on and asked if I will dine with him on Monday.

Again I felt an odd little hesitation – but I dismissed it and agreed that I would. I did not tell Constance when I wrote to her – and I am not quite certain why. I suspect it is because of all the Family she is the most devoted to Thomas's memory and would find it unthinkable that I might even look at another man. Am I looking at Louis? He is undeniably charming and he is *certainly* looking at me. Are we not too old for this sort of thing?

From the Journal of Emily Bradshaw

10 March

Dined with Louis at the Café Royal.

From the Journal of Emily Bradshaw

14 March

Drove in the Park in the afternoon with L and afterwards we dined at a French Restaurant in Soho where the food was exceptional. I prayed we would not meet anyone I know.

From the Journal of Emily Bradshaw

17 March

L is leaving for Italy in two days' time. We had supper and he offered me a bracelet of little diamond stars – quite exquisite! I refused to accept it – but I did allow him to kiss me and now I wish I hadn't as my feelings are all in a jumble. I lie awake looking at the full moon rising through the black silhouette of a tree and then I remember, no doubt as countless others before me, that it is not the moon that is moving but the earth that is turning. O, if I could but stop it for a moment and ask it to make sense of this little drama between L and me.

The white cat is awake too; it is a moonlight creature.