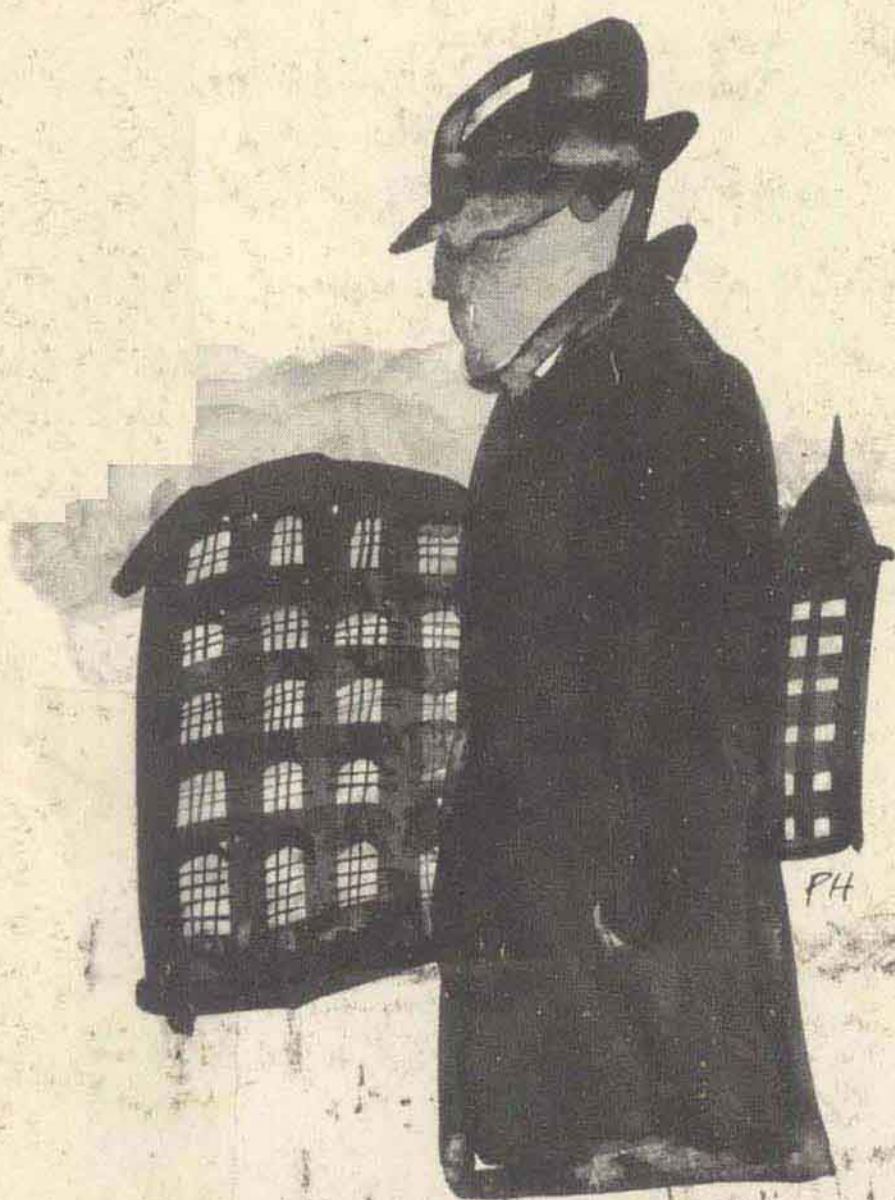


Graham  
Greene  
A Gun  
for Sale





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## GRAHAM GREENE IN PENGUINS

### *Loser Takes All*

Bertram, a 'conspicuously unsuccessful' assistant accountant of forty, is getting married for the second time. Quietly: St Luke's, Maida Hill, then two weeks in Bournemouth.

But Dreuther, a director of Bertram's firm, whimsically switches wedding and honeymoon to Monte Carlo. Inevitably Bertram visits the Casino. Inevitably, he loses. Then suddenly, his system starts working . . .

'This little tale is superbly well told. Mr Greene is one of the ablest writers of our time' – J. B. Priestley

### *The Man Within*

'A sense of overwhelming desolation swept over him, a wonder whether he would ever know peace from pursuit . . .'

Graham Greene's key themes of betrayal, pursuit, and the search for peace run through *The Man Within*, his first published novel; set in Sussex in the early nineteenth century.

Andrews has informed on his fellow smugglers. He takes refuge from his avengers in a girl's house. She persuades him to give evidence in court against his accomplices. This gives Andrews, a coward, his first glimmer of self-respect . . . but his mission proves fatal for them both.

Greene started writing *The Man Within* at twenty-one. A remarkable achievement, it still retains its grip, tension and freshness of impact.

## GRAHAM GREENE IN PENGUINS

### *It's a Battlefield*

Drover, a Communist bus-driver, has been sentenced to death for killing a policeman in a political riot because he thought the policeman was going to strike his wife.

A bitter irony hovers over the little battles fought to save the bus-driver. The new Assistant Commissioner, overworked and afraid of retirement, is badgered by a political hostess; hounded by Drover's brother, a paranoid Chief Clerk determined to justify his manhood.

On the edge of the battles are Conder, a pathetic journalist living off his fantasies; Surrogate, a Fabian economist, over-shadowed by his dead wife; Kay Rimmer, a factory girl, pretty and promiscuous . . .

First published in 1934, this early novel by Graham Greene reflects much of the unrest of the time: the unforgettable sense of menace of his seedy London settings tightens as each episode leads on to the final, deadly irony of the climax.

'An adventurous book without being bizarre, and intelligent without sacrificing sympathy' – V. S. Pritchett

## GRAHAM GREENE IN PENGUINS

### *Brighton Rock*

Set in the pre-war Brighton underworld, this is the story of a teenage gangster, Pinkie, and Ida, his personal Fury, who relentlessly brings him to justice.

### *The Power and the Glory*

This poignant story set during an anti-clerical purge in one of the southern states of Mexico 'starts in the reader an irresistible emotion of pity and love' – *The Times*

### *The Comedians*

In this novel, Graham Greene makes a graphic study of the committed and the uncommitted in the present-day tyranny of Haiti.

### *The Quiet American*

This novel makes a wry comment on European interference in Asia in its story of the Franco-Vietnam war in Vietnam.

### *The Heart of the Matter*

Scobie – a police officer in a West African colony – was a good man, but his struggle to maintain the happiness of two women destroyed him.

### *The End of the Affair*

This frank, intense account of a love-affair and its mystical aftermath takes place in a suburb of war-time London.

### *A Burnt-out Case*

Philip Toynbee described this novel, set in a leper colony in the Congo, as being 'perhaps the best that he has ever written'.

### *A Sense of Reality*

In these four stories, Graham Greene has allowed himself the liberty of fantasy, myth, legend and dream.

## GRAHAM GREENE IN PENGUINS

### *May We Borrow your Husband? and Other Comedies of the Sexual Life*

Affairs, obsessions, grand passions and tiny ardours . . . This collection of short stories holds some of Greene's saddest observations on the hilarity of sex.

### *Our Man in Havana*

Agent 59200/5 Wormold invented the stories he sent to the British Secret Service from Cuba . . . and the results surprised him most of all.

### *The Ministry of Fear*

In this his most phantasmagoric study, the story, largely set in the London 'blitz', passes 'through twilit corridors of horror' – *Observer*.

### *The Confidential Agent*

One of his pre-war thrillers, in which the agent of a government engaged in a civil war is on the run in England.

### *Stamboul Train*

Good writing, intense excitement, and excellent characterization mark this early story which takes place on the Orient Express.

### *In Search of a Character: Two African Journals*

'We see . . . how much the wry and proudly disillusioned character of this author is the recurring hero of his own books . . . There are brilliant little portraits, descriptions and reflections' – Philip Toynbee in the *Observer*.

*Collected Essays*     *The Third Man* and *The Fallen Idol*  
*The Lawless Roads*     *Travels With My Aunt*  
*Twenty-One Stories*

And (in Penguin Plays)

*The Complaisant Lover*  
*The Living Room*     *The Potting Shed*  
*Carving a Statue*

PENGUIN BOOKS

## A GUN FOR SALE

Graham Greene was born in 1904 and educated at Berkhamsted School, where his father was the headmaster. On coming down from Balliol College, Oxford, where he published a book of verse, he worked for four years as a sub-editor on *The Times*. He established his reputation with his fourth novel, *Stamboul Train*, which he classed as an entertainment in order to distinguish it from more serious work. In 1935 he made a journey across Liberia, described in *Journey Without Maps*, and on his return was appointed film critic of the *Spectator*. In 1926 he had been received into the Roman Catholic Church and was commissioned to visit Mexico in 1938 and report on the religious persecution there. As a result he wrote *The Lawless Roads* and, later, *The Power and the Glory*.

*Brighton Rock* was published in 1938 and in 1940 he became literary editor of the *Spectator*. The next year he undertook work for the Foreign Office and was sent out to Sierra Leone in 1941-3. One of his major post-war novels, *The Heart of the Matter*, is set in West Africa and is considered by many to be his finest book. This was followed by *The End of the Affair*, *The Quiet American*, a story set in Vietnam, *Our Man in Havana*, and *A Burnt-Out Case*. His novel, *The Comedians*, has been filmed, and in 1967 he published a collection of short stories under the title: *May We Borrow Your Husband?* His later publications are his autobiography *A Sort of Life* (1971), *The Honorary Consul* (1973), *Lord Rochester's Monkey*, a biography of the second Earl of Rochester (1974), *An Impossible Woman: The Memories of Dottoressa Moor of Capri* (edited, 1975) and *The Human Factor* (1978). In all Graham Greene has written some thirty novels, 'entertainments', plays, children's books, travel books and collections of essays and short stories. He was made a Companion of Honour in 1966.





GRAHAM GREENE

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A GUN FOR SALE

AN ENTERTAINMENT



PENGUIN BOOKS

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## Chapter 1

### 1

MURDER didn't mean much to Raven. It was just a new job. You had to be careful. You had to use your brains. It was not a question of hatred. He had only seen the Minister once: he had been pointed out to Raven as he walked down the new housing estate between the small lit Christmas trees, an old grubby man without friends, who was said to love humanity.

The cold wind cut Raven's face in the wide Continental street. It was a good excuse for turning the collar of his coat well above his mouth. A hare-lip was a serious handicap in his profession; it had been badly sewn in infancy, so that now the upper lip was twisted and scarred. When you carried about so easy an identification you couldn't help becoming ruthless in your methods. It had always, from the first, been necessary for Raven to eliminate a witness.

He carried an attaché case. He looked like any other youngish man going home after his work; his dark overcoat had a clerical air. He moved steadily up the street like hundreds of his kind. A tram went by, lit up in the early dusk: he didn't take it. An economical young man, you might have thought, saving money for his home. Perhaps even now he was on his way to meet his girl.

But Raven had never had a girl. The hare-lip prevented that. He had learnt, when he was very young, how repulsive it was. He turned into one of the tall grey houses and climbed the stairs, a sour bitter screwed-up figure.

Outside the top flat he put down his attaché case and put on gloves. He took a pair of clippers out of his pocket and cut through the telephone wire where it ran out from above the door to the lift shaft. Then he rang the bell.

He hoped to find the Minister alone. This little top-floor flat was the socialist's home; he lived in a poor bare solitary way and Raven had been told that his secretary always left him at half-past six; he was very considerate with his

employees. But Raven was a minute too early and the Minister half an hour too late. A woman opened the door, an elderly woman with pince-nez and several gold teeth. She had her hat on and her coat was over her arm. She had been on the point of leaving and she was furious at being caught. She didn't allow him to speak, but snapped at him in German, 'The Minister is engaged.'

He wanted to spare her, not because he minded a killing but because his employers would prefer him not to exceed his instructions. He held the letter of introduction out to her silently; as long as she didn't hear his foreign voice or see the hare-lip she was safe. She took the letter primly and held it up close to her pince-nez. Good, he thought, she's short-sighted. 'Stay where you are,' she said, and walked back up the passage. He could hear her disapproving governess voice, then she was back in the passage saying, 'The Minister will see you. Follow me, please.' He couldn't understand the foreign speech, but he knew what she meant from her behaviour.

His eyes, like little concealed cameras, photographed the room instantaneously: the desk, the easy chair, the map on the wall, the door to the bedroom behind, the wide window above the bright cold Christmas street. A small oil-stove was all the heating, and the Minister was having it used now to boil a saucepan. A kitchen alarm-clock on the desk marked seven o'clock. A voice said, 'Emma, put in another egg.' The Minister came out from the bedroom. He had tried to tidy himself, but he had forgotten the cigarette ash on his trousers, and his fingers were ink-stained. The secretary took an egg out of one of the drawers in the desk. 'And the salt. Don't forget the salt,' the Minister said. He explained in slow English, 'It prevents the shell cracking. Sit down, my friend. Make yourself at home. Emma, you can go.'

Raven sat down and fixed his eyes on the Minister's chest. He thought: I'll give her three minutes by the alarm-clock to get well away: he kept his eyes on the Minister's chest: just there I'll shoot. He let his coat collar fall and saw with bitter rage how the old man turned away from the sight of his hare-lip.



The Minister said, 'It's years since I heard from him. But I've never forgotten him, never. I can show you his photograph in the other room. It's good of him to think of an old friend. So rich and powerful too. You must ask him when you go back if he remembers the time - ' A bell began to ring furiously.

Raven thought: the telephone. I cut the wire. It shook his nerve. But it was only the alarm-clock drumming on the desk. The Minister turned it off. 'One egg's boiled,' he said and stooped for the saucepan. Raven opened his attaché case: in the lid he had fixed his automatic fitted with a silencer. The Minister said: 'I'm sorry the bell made you jump. You see I like my egg just four minutes.'

Feet ran along the passage. The door opened. Raven turned furiously in his seat, his hare-lip flushed and raw. It was the secretary. He thought: my God, what a household. They won't let a man do things tidily. He forgot his lip, he was angry, he had a grievance. She came in flashing her gold teeth, prim and ingratiating. She said, 'I was just going out when I heard the telephone,' then she winced slightly, looked the other way, showed a clumsy delicacy before his deformity which he couldn't help noticing. It condemned her. He snatched the automatic out of the case and shot the Minister twice in the back.

The Minister fell across the oil stove; the saucepan upset and the two eggs broke on the floor. Raven shot the Minister once more in the head, leaning across the desk to make quite certain, driving the bullet hard into the base of the skull, smashing it open like a china doll's. Then he turned on the secretary; she moaned at him; she hadn't any words; the old mouth couldn't hold its saliva. He supposed she was begging him for mercy. He pressed the trigger again; she staggered under it as if she had been kicked by an animal in the side. But he had miscalculated. Her unfashionable dress, the swathes of useless material in which she hid her body, had perhaps confused his aim. And she was tough, so tough he couldn't believe his eyes; she was through the door before he could fire again, slamming it behind her.

But she couldn't lock it; the key was on his side. He twisted the handle and pushed; the elderly woman had amazing strength; it only gave two inches. She began to scream some word at the top of her voice.

There was no time to waste. He stood away from the door and shot twice through the woodwork. He could hear the pince-nez fall on the floor and break. The voice screamed again and stopped; there was a sound outside as if she were sobbing. It was her breath going out through her wounds. Raven was satisfied. He turned back to the Minister.

There was a clue he had been ordered to leave; a clue he had to remove. The letter of introduction was on the desk. He put it in his pocket and between the Minister's stiffened fingers he inserted a scrap of paper. Raven had little curiosity; he had only glanced at the introduction and the nickname at its foot conveyed nothing to him; he was a man who could be depended on. Now he looked round the small bare room to see whether there was any clue he had overlooked. The suitcase and the automatic he was to leave behind. It was all very simple.

He opened the bedroom door; his eyes again photographed the scene, the single bed, the wooden chair, the dusty chest of drawers, a photograph of a young Jew with a small scar on his chin as if he had been struck there with a club, a pair of brown wooden hairbrushes initialled J.K., everywhere cigarette ash: the home of an old lonely untidy man; the home of the Minister for War.

A low voice whispered an appeal quite distinctly through the door. Raven picked up the automatic again; who would have imagined an old woman could be so tough? It touched his nerve a little just in the same way as the bell had done, as if a ghost were interfering with a man's job. He opened the study door; he had to push it against the weight of her body. She looked dead enough, but he made quite sure with the automatic almost touching her eyes.

It was time to be gone. He took the automatic with him.

They sat and shivered side by side as the dusk came down; they were borne in their bright small smoky cage above the streets; the bus rocked down to Hammersmith. The shop windows sparkled like ice and 'Look,' she said, 'it's snowing.' A few large flakes went drifting by as they crossed the bridge, falling like paper scraps into the dark Thames.

He said, 'I'm happy as long as this ride goes on.'

'We're seeing each other tomorrow – Jimmy.' She always hesitated before his name. It was a silly name for anyone of such bulk and gravity.

'It's the nights that bother me.'

She laughed, 'It's going to be wearing,' but immediately became serious, 'I'm happy too.' About happiness she was always serious; she preferred to laugh when she was miserable. She couldn't avoid being serious about things she cared for, and happiness made her grave at the thought of all the things which might destroy it. She said, 'It would be dreadful now if there was a war.'

'There won't be a war.'

'The last one started with a murder.'

'That was an Archduke. This is just an old politician.'

She said: 'Be careful. You'll break the record – Jimmy.'

'Damn the record.'

She began to hum the tune she'd bought: 'It's only Kew to you'; and the large flakes fell past the window, melted on the pavement: 'a snowflower a man brought from Greenland.'

He said, 'It's a silly song.'

She said, 'It's a lovely song – Jimmy. I simply can't call you Jimmy. You aren't Jimmy. You're outsize. Detective-sergeant Mather. You're the reason why people make jokes about policemen's boots.'

'What's wrong with "dear", anyway?'

'Dear, dear,' she tried it out on the tip of her tongue, between lips as vividly stained as a winter berry. 'Oh no,' she decided, 'I'll call you that when we've been married ten years.'

'Well – "darling"?'

‘Darling, darling. I don’t like it. It sounds as if I’d known you a long, long time.’ The bus went up the hill past the fish-and-chip shops: a brazier glowed and they could smell the roasting chestnuts. The ride was nearly over, there were only two more streets and a turn to the left by the church, which was already visible, the spire lifted like a long icicle above the houses. The nearer they got to home the more miserable she became, the nearer they got to home the more lightly she talked. She was keeping things off and out of mind: the peeling wallpaper, the long flights to her room, cold supper with Mrs Brewer and next day the walk to the agent’s, perhaps a job again in the provinces away from him.

Mather said heavily, ‘You don’t care for me like I care for you. It’s nearly twenty-four hours before I see you again.’

‘It’ll be more than that if I get a job.’

‘You don’t care. You simply don’t care.’

She clutched his arm. ‘Look. Look at that poster.’ But it was gone before he could see it through the steamy pane. ‘Europe Mobilizing’ lay like a weight on her heart.

‘What was it?’

‘Oh, just the same old murder again.’

‘You’ve got that murder on your mind. It’s a week old now. It’s got nothing to do with us.’

‘No, it hasn’t, has it?’

‘If it had happened here, we’d have caught him by now.’

‘I wonder why he did it.’

‘Politics. Patriotism.’

‘Well. Here we are. It might be a good thing to get off. Don’t look so miserable. I thought you said you were happy.’

‘That was five minutes ago.’

‘Oh,’ she said out of her light and heavy heart, ‘one lives quickly these days.’ They kissed under the lamp; she had to stretch to reach him; he was comforting like a large dog, even when he was sullen and stupid, but one didn’t have to send away a dog alone in the cold dark night.

‘Anne,’ he said, ‘we’ll be married, won’t we, after Christmas?’



‘We haven’t a penny,’ she said, ‘you know. Not a penny – Jimmy.’

‘I’ll get a rise.’

‘You’ll be late for duty.’

‘Damn it, you don’t care.’

She jeered at him, ‘Not a scrap – dear,’ and walked away from him up the street to No. 54, praying let me get some money quick, let *this* go on *this* time; she hadn’t any faith in herself. A man passed her going up the road; he looked cold and strung-up, as he passed in his black overcoat; he had a hare-lip. Poor devil, she thought, and forgot him, opening the door of 54, climbing the long flights to the top floor, the carpet stopped on the first. She put on the new record, hugging to her heart the silly senseless words, the slow sleepy tune:

‘It’s only Kew  
To you,  
But to me  
It’s Paradise.  
They are just blue  
Petunias to you,  
But to me  
They are your eyes.’

The man with the hare-lip came back down the street; fast walking hadn’t made him warm; like Kay in *The Snow Queen* he bore the cold within him as he walked. The flakes went on falling, melting into slush on the pavement, the words of a song dropped from the lit room on the third floor, the scrape of a used needle.

‘They say that’s a snowflower  
A man brought from Greenland.  
I say it’s the lightness, the coolness, the whiteness  
Of your hand.’

The man hardly paused; he went on down the street, walking fast; he felt no pain from the chip of ice in his breast.