

A London Tale

When my mud larking licence arrived from the Port of London Authority I was delighted, I had paid my annual subscription of £85 and I was now free to wander the shores of the Thames at low tide searching for lost objects, I was even entitled to dig down through silt and mud to the depth of 7.5 centimetres. So warmly dressed against the chill November weather and armed with a trowel I set out for the river. I found a spot near the Millennium Bridge and began to search. I was delighted to find some pieces of broken china and parts of clay pipes and the day soon passed. It was just as light was fading when I made my discovery, a rusty cigarette tin. With difficulty I opened it. Inside was an old-fashioned key, with a cardboard label attached. There was a pencilled address 15, Chudleigh Street E1.

Intrigued by my find and acting on a whim I decided to look up this address. It was not far away on the other side of the river, near to the Commercial Road. As I approached my destination the sun was setting, and a mist was rising from the river clothing the scene with an eerie pink glow. I turned into the street and beheld a row of Victorian cottages, I thought it odd that there were no streetlights. I found number 15, it seemed empty, I knocked the door, there was no answer and then compelled by an instinct which I cannot explain I put the key into the lock. It turned with great ease and the door opened. A dim light shone from the front room and a voice spoke.

“Home at last, I have been waiting for you”

I entered the room. Illuminated by the glow of the fire was the shadowy figure of a man, he turned to me and said

“You are very late, you must be chilled to the bone, come sit by the fire and drink this”

He held out a glass filled with an amber liquid. I felt compelled by a strange force to obey him and reached out my hand to take it. His eyes glowed strange and red and he smiled a wolfish smile...

“No, no I cannot” I shouted, and I turned and fled...

I did not stop running until I reached the station at Limehouse and the safety of the Docklands Light Railway.

Back at home I googled 15 Chudleigh Street and was astonished to find that there was no such number. A large block of flats occupied the entire north of the street.

Further research informed me that a German Bomb had struck the area in November 1940. All the houses had been levelled.

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