



From the MixCache.com library

SAMPLE COPY

Beneath the Silver Veil

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Shadows over the Close
- Chapter 2: The Lure of the Forgotten
- Chapter 3: In the Hypnotist's Chair
- Chapter 4: Distant Murmurs
- Chapter 5: Portraits of a Past Life
- Chapter 6: Threads in the Cobblestone
- Chapter 7: Beneath Old Stone
- Chapter 8: The Order in the Dark
- Chapter 9: Unquiet Spirits
- Chapter 10: Echoes at the Periphery
- Chapter 11: Paint and Perfume
- Chapter 12: The Art of Betrayal
- Chapter 13: Tangled Motives
- Chapter 14: The Gallery of Secrets
- Chapter 15: Breaking the Surface
- Chapter 16: Letters and Lies
- Chapter 17: Phantom Intrigue
- Chapter 18: Whispers from the Vault
- Chapter 19: A Trace of Guilt
- Chapter 20: Clocks and Crossroads
- Chapter 21: Behind the Silver Veil
- Chapter 22: The Last Hypnosis
- Chapter 23: Confrontation at Dusk
- Chapter 24: The Hidden Canvas
- Chapter 25: Dawn over Princes Street

Introduction

The ancient streets of Edinburgh hold secrets beneath their timeworn facades, a city where echoes of the past linger in the damp, lamp-lit closes and ghostly whispers ride the Highland mists. It is here—deep in the labyrinth of narrow wynds and silent gardens—that our story begins, beneath the watchful gaze of the castle and the silver sheen of the ever-present Scottish rain. In the shadow of Arthur's Seat, cobblestone alleys wind between history and myth, and every stone seems to remember a forgotten tale.

Amongst these winding streets lives Dr. Oliver Thorne, a man whose reputation as a pioneering hypnotist precedes him. Oliver's skills have offered solace and clarity to those who seek him, yet he is a figure as enigmatic and complex as the city itself—a man wrestling with his own unresolved histories and a constant yearning to unlock the mysteries of consciousness. His life is quietly ordered, measured by the rhythmic certainty of sessions and case notes, until the arrival of an unusual patient shatters his equilibrium.

Imogen Ashford, a young artist possessed of both fragile brilliance and determined tenacity, becomes Oliver's most confounding case. With each hypnotic session, Imogen drifts further into uncanny memories—a life she has never lived, filled with grandeur and heartbreak, lavish halls and whispered secrets. The simmering intensity of her recollections unsettles both patient and doctor, for these episodes bristle with details too vivid to be mere invention. At their center lies a shadowed crime: a missing painting, a betrayal, and a name lost to time.

As Oliver strives to disentangle fact from fantasy, he is lured into a web far beyond the realm of therapy. The boundary between past and present blurs; soon, whispers of Imogen's memories intersect with obscure records, unearthing long-buried scandals in Edinburgh's aristocratic circles. Fantastical as it first seemed, Imogen's visions become a map—one fraught with danger and the watchful eyes of those desperate to keep secrets buried.

The investigation draws Oliver and Imogen together, forging a fragile alliance built on trust, curiosity, and a mutual thirst for the truth. Their journey propels them through the haunted corridors of the city's history and their own hidden wounds. Each revelation brings them closer to exposing an age-old conspiracy and the truth lying beneath the city's silver veil—but with every step, they risk awakening forces eager to erase the past forever.

What if memories are more than illusions? What if the mind's labyrinth leads not only

backward but to truths powerful enough to change everything? In *Beneath the Silver Veil*, the quest for answers threatens to consume those willing to look too closely—because in a city like Edinburgh, nothing stays lost forever.

SAMPLE COPY

CHAPTER ONE: Shadows over the Close

The rain, an almost constant companion in Edinburgh, had settled into a persistent drizzle, polishing the ancient cobblestones of Fleshmarket Close to a treacherous sheen. Dr. Oliver Thorne pulled his tweed coat tighter, the scent of damp wool mixing with the earthy tang of the old city. His clinic, a discreet set of rooms in a Georgian townhouse overlooking Princes Street Gardens, felt a world away from the claustrophobic embrace of the Old Town, where he now found himself. He rarely ventured into these narrow, vertiginous closes after dark unless absolutely necessary. Tonight, necessity called in the form of Imogen Ashford.

Imogen had insisted on their first meeting taking place not in his pristine consulting room, but in her studio. "It's where my mind is most open," she'd explained in her initial email, her words carrying a note of artistic conviction that Oliver, ever the pragmatist, found both intriguing and slightly melodramatic. Still, a deviation from his usual routine sometimes offered an unvarnished glimpse into a patient's world, and Oliver was nothing if not thorough.

He found the address – a weathered door tucked between a medieval tavern and a dusty antique shop – and ascended the worn stone steps, each creak a lament from centuries past. The studio was on the third floor, its windows offering a skewed perspective of the Edinburgh skyline, dominated by the brooding castle. When he finally knocked, the sound echoed hollowly before the door swung inward.

Imogen Ashford was younger than Oliver had anticipated, perhaps in her late twenties. Her dark hair, artfully disheveled, framed a face that held a striking intensity, particularly in her wide, intelligent eyes. They were the color of deep moss, flecked with gold, and seemed to hold an unspoken story even before she'd uttered a word. She wore a paint-splattered denim smock over a simple dark dress, her hands still faintly stained with ochre and cerulean.

"Dr. Thorne," she said, her voice a low alto, tinged with a faint, almost imperceptible lilt that Oliver couldn't quite place. "Thank you for coming."

The studio was a glorious chaos of creativity. Canvases leaned against every available surface, some abstract explosions of color, others hauntingly realistic portraits that seemed to gaze back with unsettling sentience. Easels stood like sentinels, brushes bristled from old jam jars, and the air was thick with the rich, intoxicating scent of oil paint and turpentine. Oliver felt a flicker of admiration for her untamed energy, a stark contrast to his own meticulously organized existence.

"Ms. Ashford," Oliver replied, nodding politely as he stepped inside. "Please, call me Oliver. And thank you for inviting me to your space. It's... vibrant."

Imogen smiled, a quick, almost shy gesture that softened the intensity of her gaze. "Vibrant, or just messy? I often lose track. Would you like some tea? I have Earl Grey, if you're not opposed to clichés."

He accepted the tea, observing her as she moved about the small, cluttered kitchen area. There was a grace to her movements, a fluid quality that hinted at a deeper sensitivity. He had read her referral notes – persistent nightmares, a sense of disassociation, and a growing inability to distinguish between waking life and vivid, detailed "daydreams" that felt more like memories. His initial assessment leaned towards severe anxiety, perhaps even a nascent psychosis, but her general composure intrigued him.

"So, Imogen," Oliver began, settling into a surprisingly comfortable armchair amidst a pile of art books. "Tell me, in your own words, what brings you to seek hypnosis."

She handed him a steaming mug, its warmth seeping into his hands. "It's... difficult to explain, Oliver. For the past six months, it's been getting worse. These... visions. They aren't dreams, not really. They're too real, too detailed. I see things, feel things, hear conversations that couldn't possibly belong to me. A different life."

She walked over to a large canvas shrouded in a dust sheet. With a swift movement, she pulled it back, revealing a nearly completed portrait. It was a woman, perhaps in her early thirties, with aristocratic features, a proud tilt to her head, and eyes that held a profound sorrow. She wore a sweeping gown of deep emerald velvet, and a delicate silver locket rested at her throat. The likeness was uncanny, the brushstrokes confident and infused with emotion.

"Who is this?" Oliver asked, genuinely captivated by the painting's power.

"I don't know," Imogen confessed, her voice barely a whisper. "But I feel like I do. This woman... she's been appearing to me. In these... memories. I started painting her because it felt like the only way to anchor her, to understand her. But the more I paint, the more vivid the memories become."

She turned back to him, her eyes wide with a mixture of fear and fascination. "I remember a grand house, a ballroom, the scent of jasmine and beeswax. I remember a specific piece of music, a nocturne, played on a piano. I remember jewels, lavish clothes, a sense of being utterly adored, and then... a profound betrayal. A missing locket, like the one I've painted. And always, always, a chilling sense of dread, like something terrible is about to happen, or has already happened."

Oliver listened intently, his professional instincts kicking in. While disassociation and false memories could be symptoms of trauma or psychological distress, the sheer level of detail Imogen described was unusual. "And these memories, do they have a timeline? A historical setting?"

"Absolutely," she confirmed. "It feels like the late 19th century, maybe turn of the 20th. The fashion, the language... it's all very specific. I even have a name for her, though it feels more like *my* name in those moments: Lady Eleanor Beaumont."

He noted the name, the historical period, and the objects of significance: the locket, the missing artwork. These were tangible details, not fleeting impressions. "Have you tried to research any of these details, Imogen? Lady Eleanor Beaumont, perhaps?"

She sighed, running a hand through her hair. "Endlessly. I've spent weeks in the National Library, pouring over genealogical records, old newspaper archives, art catalogues. Nothing concrete. No Lady Eleanor Beaumont connected to a missing locket or a scandal in Edinburgh's aristocracy during that period. It's like she never existed, and yet... she exists so powerfully within me."

This was the crux of the mystery. If the memories were simply a manifestation of her subconscious, fueled by her artistic imagination, then why the conviction? Why the specific details that eluded external verification? Oliver's curiosity was piqued. His work as a hypnotist often involved delving into the subconscious, helping patients unlock suppressed memories or change ingrained patterns of thought. But this felt different. This felt like an intrusion from an entirely separate narrative.

"So, you hope hypnosis can help you understand these memories?" Oliver asked, already anticipating her answer. "To differentiate between fact and fiction, or perhaps to simply alleviate the distress they cause?"

"Both," Imogen said firmly. "I want to know *why* this is happening. And if these memories aren't mine, I want them gone. They're consuming me. I can't paint anything else, I can't focus, I can barely sleep without one of these... episodes dragging me back into that life. It feels real, Oliver. Too real to dismiss."

He considered her request. Oliver rarely took on cases that bordered on the fantastical, preferring the measurable outcomes of therapy for anxiety, phobias, or addiction. But Imogen's earnestness, combined with the unnerving detail of her experiences, presented a compelling challenge. There was an honesty in her distress that resonated with something Oliver recognized within himself - a longing for answers, a quiet battle with the unseen.

"Alright, Imogen," he finally said, setting down his empty mug. "I believe I can help

you explore these memories. We can use hypnosis to delve deeper, to see if we can find the origin of these impressions, or at least help you regain some control over your own consciousness. But I must caution you, the subconscious mind is a powerful and unpredictable landscape. We may uncover things that are unsettling, or that defy easy explanation."

A flicker of relief, mingled with apprehension, crossed her face. "I understand. I'm prepared for that. I just... I need to know."

Oliver nodded. "Good. Then let's schedule our first session at my clinic. It provides a more controlled environment, free from the distractions here." He glanced around the studio, at the vibrant colors and the silent, watching eyes of the painted Lady Eleanor. "Bring your painting, if you wish. Sometimes, visual anchors can be helpful."

As he prepared to leave, the rain had intensified, drumming a steady rhythm against the skylight of her studio. He paused at the door, turning back to Imogen. "One more question, Imogen. When these memories come, what is the strongest emotion you feel?"

She hesitated, her gaze drifting back to the portrait of Lady Eleanor. "Loss," she whispered, her voice thick with an emotion that seemed too profound for a remembered fantasy. "An immense, aching loss. And... a terrible sense of being wronged. Of a truth that desperately needs to be told."

Oliver left Fleshmarket Close and headed back towards his clinic, the shadowy alleys and ancient stones of Edinburgh feeling heavier, more imbued with hidden stories than ever before. Imogen Ashford was not just a patient; she was a puzzle, a living canvas onto which a forgotten past was bleeding through. He had a feeling that Lady Eleanor Beaumont, whoever she was, was about to become a significant presence in his meticulously ordered life. And the unsettling sense of intrigue, though professionally stimulating, also carried a faint, almost imperceptible tremor of unease. He knew, deep down, that sometimes in Edinburgh, the past wasn't just recalled; it was resurrected. And sometimes, it wanted justice.

This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.

Visit MixCache.com to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY