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# GOOD FRIDAY

Lynda  
La  
Plante

Exclusive sample extract from GOOD FRIDAY –  
the new Jane Tennison novel from Lynda la Plante

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# A note from Lynda La Plante

Dear Reader

During 1974 and 1975 London was subjected to a terrifying bombing campaign carried out by Active Service Units (ASU) of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Over 40 bombs exploded, 35 people were killed and many were seriously injured. In one day alone the IRA planted seven bombs at locations across central London. Some were defused; some were not.

On 6 December 1975, four armed members of the ASU took two elderly Balcombe Street residents hostage after a botched machine-gun attack on a Mayfair restaurant. A tense stand-off with the Metropolitan Police Bomb Squad ensued, but after six days the siege ended when the IRA men surrendered and released the hostages.

After several days of intense interrogation, the 'Balcombe Street Gang' were charged and remanded in custody to stand trial for multiple bombings and murders. The press portrayed the arrests as a major victory for the Met's Bomb Squad.

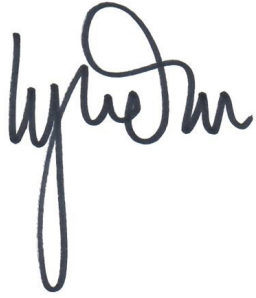
It was the lull before the storm. The bomb squad received information that another ASU had come to London. Both police and public lived in fear: where and when would the IRA strike, and could they be stopped in time?

My new book, *Good Friday*, opens in March 1976. Jane Tennison has successfully completed her ten-week CID course at Hendon and is now a fully-fledged detective constable. Her request to be transferred to the Flying Squad is dismissed out of hand, but she is offered an attachment to the 'Dip Squad' instead, a sub-division of the Flying Squad dealing with professional pickpockets.

In this extract, Jane is on her way to court the morning after a

successful raid on a pickpocket gang. The day does not quite proceed in the way she has planned...

I hope you enjoy this exclusive sample from *Good Friday*, which will be published in September – and, as ever, thank you very much for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynda La Plante'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the top and a long, thin tail extending downwards.

*Lynda La Plante*

# Extract from GOOD FRIDAY

by

Lynda La Plante

Jane ate breakfast in her dressing gown, and then put on a suit and a clean pressed shirt. She coiled her hair into a pleat and, on looking in the mirror, was satisfied that she was smart enough for her court appearance. It wasn't even 7am yet, so she thought she would contact the Dip Squad at Vine Street to find out if they had a more accurate time schedule for her to be at the court. She dialled the number for the station, but the phone rang without anyone answering. She wasn't sure whether she should go to Vine Street or straight to Bow Street court, so decided to wait and then try calling again. Whilst she was waiting she put together an advert for a flatmate, writing it out neatly on two cards – one for the newsagents and, remembering Edith's advice, one to pin up at one of the nearest colleges.

It was almost 7.45am when she called the station again. This time the phone was answered by a gruff voice, which she recognized as Stanley's. Jane asked him if there had been an allocated time for her court appearance.

'Christ! I dunno, Tennison.' Stanley sounded groggy. 'They don't

sit until after 10am, so just make your way over there. It could be hours before you get called so you'll just have to wait it out.'

Jane had a strong suspicion that Stanley had spent the night in the office sleeping off a hangover. She thought he had a nerve talking about Spencer Gibbs' drinking when it was obvious he had been hitting the bottle himself.

Jane went into the newsagents and paid fifty pence for her advertisement card to be displayed in the window for one week. As she walked to Baker Street tube, she decided that, as the Magistrate's court was close to Bow Street station, she would pop in and maybe have breakfast with Edith in the canteen.

Jane took the Circle Line from Baker Street and changed at King's Cross St Pancras to take the Piccadilly Line to Covent Garden. From there it was just a short walk to the Bow Street Station.

It was 8.30 am when Jane arrived at Covent Garden station, right at the peak of the early morning rush hour. There were groans from the other passengers when they saw that the lift wasn't working, but Jane didn't mind as she wasn't in any great hurry. She followed the throng of people walking up the 193 steps of the spiral staircase, trying her best not to bump into the people heading down the stairs in the opposite direction. Behind her was a woman with a push- chair and a baby in her arms.

'Can I help you?' Jane asked.

'Oh, yes please, thank you, love. These lifts here are always out of order.'

Jane carried the pushchair and as there were so many people up ahead of her, they moved very slowly. On reaching the top stair she unfolded the pushchair so the woman could put her baby in the seat. Jane paused at the ticket barriers to search her handbag for her warrant card. The area surrounding the faulty lift was heaving

with people moving in both directions, and a guard was on duty checking and taking tickets. Behind Jane were queues of passengers waiting impatiently to show their tickets so they could leave the station, and she found herself being pushed forward.

The guard shouted, ‘Please do NOT push! We apologise for the lifts being out of order and ask for your patience. Please proceed in an orderly manner through the ticket barriers!’

Jane made her way through the ticket barrier and out into the packed foyer.

‘Excuse me, sir, you forgot your bag.’

Jane turned to see an elderly woman pointing to a rucksack that had been left on the floor next to the ticket box.

‘Hey, you left your bag!’ the woman repeated. Jane followed her gaze and caught sight of a man wearing a hooded winter coat walking away with his head down. Instead of turning to acknowledge the old lady he pushed people out of his way as he hurried towards the Long Lane exit.

‘I just saw him put it down!’ the woman said loudly.

Jane hesitated. Was it just a mistake? Had the man simply not heard the woman calling out to him? She hurried after him, in the hope of stopping him and reuniting him with his bag.

‘Excuse me, sir! I’m a police officer and . . .’

He kept on moving quickly through the throng of people and Jane picked up her pace as she called out for him to stop. Just as he reached the exit Jane managed to grab hold of his sleeve. He half turned towards her and she had a momentary glimpse of his profile, but he twisted out of her grasp, batting her away. He pushed people aside as he ran out of the station. Jane stumbled backwards, and then turned to look for the abandoned rucksack.

She could feel the panic rising as she realised it had gone, but then calmed down. The old lady must have been mistaken and the real owner had picked it up.

Jane turned around in a circle, searching for anyone carrying the rucksack. Then she saw the ticket barrier guard holding it against his chest, heading towards the guards' office. She immediately sensed that something was very wrong. For a second she was paralysed with fear, but then she started pushing people aside and screamed at the guard to put the rucksack down, shouting for everyone to evacuate the area. Some people began to run. But it was too late.

The sound of the explosion was horrific. A ball of flame mixed with shattered glass and metal filled the air, followed by dense smoke which consumed the lift and ticket area.

A huge man blocked Jane and unintentionally shielded her from the blast and flying debris, his weight pushing her to the ground. Jane was completely dazed, and her ears throbbed with a high-pitched whine. A thick cloud of black smoke filled the air, making it hard to breathe. There were screams of terror from people trying to escape, and the pitiful cries of those who had been injured seemed to come from a terrible nightmare.

Choking, Jane staggered to her feet, pulling a handkerchief from her pocket to cover her mouth. The ticket guard's body had been blown apart, and amongst the mass of gasping, terrified people Jane could make out the body of the old lady lying on the ground. She was badly injured, her leg virtually severed below the knee. Jane stumbled towards her, but stopped as she spotted the overturned pushchair that she had carried up the stairs. The woman lay face down in a pool of blood with what looked like a severe head injury. Jane looked around frantically for the baby. She turned the pushchair over, but it was empty. She looked around anxiously and suddenly heard muffled cries from near the woman's body. She



had to push her way past people who were still desperately trying to get out of the station. Jane bent down and turned the woman over. The baby was beneath her, covered in its mother's blood. Jane felt for the woman's pulse – she was still alive. She eased the infant out from underneath its mother's body and held it in her arms. There were no obvious injuries.

It wasn't long before uniformed officers were at the scene and herding terrified people out of the station. Jane shouted to them that she was a police officer. She put the baby into the pushchair and took one of the baby's blankets, folding it to place beneath the mother's head. A man bent down to assist her as more officers entered the station, and in the background she heard the sound of ambulances and fire engines approaching.

Now she was sure that the baby was safe and that the mother was being looked after, Jane made her way towards the old lady. She was bleeding profusely from her injured leg. There was too much blood. Jane took off her belt and used it as a tourniquet, wrapping it tightly around the old lady's thigh. She was conscious but in great pain.

'What's your name?' Jane asked.

'Daphne. I'll be all right, love,' the old lady murmured. 'You go and help the woman with the baby.'

Jane looked back and saw two ambulance attendants lifting the young woman onto a stretcher. She called out to let them know that it was the mother of the child in the pushchair. One of the attendants nodded and rushed over to lift the baby into the ambulance with the mother. Jane turned back to Daphne and using all her strength, tightened the belt some more around the old woman's thigh.

'Did you see the man who left that rucksack?' she asked.

‘Yes, I called out to him . . . I saw him,’ Daphne whispered.

‘Would you be able to recognize him again?’

‘Yes . . .’ she gasped, and her head fell forwards as she passed out.

‘Over here!’ Jane shouted to an ambulance man who came over and knelt beside the victim. ‘I made a tourniquet the best I could to try and stem the blood flow.’ As they lifted Daphne on to a stretcher, she added, ‘I’ll come with you.’

Jane climbed into the ambulance next to her as she was being given CPR. Daphne’s eyes flickered open and she reached for Jane’s hand.

‘Don’t leave me. Please don’t leave me . . . I have no one . . .’

Jane was unable to question her further. The ambulance man placed a mask over Daphne’s face and instructed Jane to sit further away so they could monitor the old lady’s breathing.

They arrived at St Thomas’ Hospital on the south side of Westminster Bridge in Lambeth. Jane waited in the A&E department as they began working on the old lady’s injuries. It was mayhem. More and more injured people were being brought in and doctors were being called down from all the other wards to assist. The area was filled with the sound of pained cries and weeping, Nurses and doctors rushed between the cubicles, and gurneys were hurriedly wheeled up to the operating theatres. Jane watched helplessly as the devastating aftermath of the bombing swamped the hospital.

A young woman doctor swished back the curtain surrounding the cubicle Daphne had been wheeled into. Jane jumped up and made her way towards her.

‘I am DC Jane Tennison. Could you give me an update on Daphne’s progress?’

‘We need to amputate her leg. It’ll be touch and go if she survives...’

‘Did you get her surname?’

‘No. She’s been unconscious ever since she came in . . . Excuse me, I’m needed in the cubicle next door.’

Jane watched as the gurney was wheeled out to go up to the operating theatre. Daphne seemed so tiny and vulnerable lying beneath her blanket. As Jane turned to leave, the young doctor pulled aside the curtain from the cubicle next door. A nurse came out carrying the baby Jane had placed in the pushchair after the explosion. The child was screaming, wrapped in a blood-stained sheet.

‘She’s fine, Doctor . . . but I’m afraid the mother . . .’

The doctor leaned over the bed and slowly drew up the blood-soaked sheet to cover the young mother’s face. Jane put her hands over her ears; sounds were becoming distorted. The baby crying, the screams and shouts . . . It was a while before she could move away from the panic-stricken scene surrounding her. Hospital staff attempted to identify the incoming injured as yet more victims kept on arriving. The nurses and doctors moved with a weary efficiency; this was not the first bomb they had had to deal with and they were used to managing the aftermath. Jane knew there was nothing she could do at the hospital. She would only be in the way if she stayed.

The traffic outside the A&E department was chaotic with ambulances. The road leading to the hospital was almost at a standstill and Jane had no option but to walk to Bow Street. Her mind was frozen, and she kept stopping to take deep breaths to calm herself down. It was impossible to make sense of such terrible violence, of the murder of innocent people who had been going about their everyday lives.

Jane knew that the man who had unintentionally shielded her must have suffered serious injuries, or most likely had been killed. She could still hear the cries of the baby in her head like a tormented echo, and tried to understand what it would mean to the young woman's husband and her family. She had to force herself to keep on walking, unaware that her clothes were covered in thick, filthy plaster dust. One sleeve of her jacket was torn, and her face and hair were covered with blood and dirt.

'I should get to court . . .' Jane muttered. She kept on walking, in an almost zombie-like manner, until she reached Bow Street magistrates' court. By now it was midday. She entered the court foyer in the hope of seeing someone from the Dip Squad, but the area was empty. She went to the door leading to the police officers' side of the court, and when the sliding hatch opened she showed her warrant card.

On seeing the state that she was in the court sergeant opened the door.

'Dear God! Are you all right, love?'

'Yes . . . I'm sorry I'm late but I got caught up in the explosion at Covent Garden and then I had to go to the hospital with some of the injured—'

'Well, the court cases have all been put off for the day.'

'I'm here for the bail objection to—'

'Come with me, love. Come on, now.' The sergeant led her into a police waiting room and explained that because of the bomb incident her two prisoners were still at Vine Street Police station. Jane sat in a daze as he brought her a cup of tea and then produced a small hip flask of brandy. He poured a nip of it into Jane's mug and a larger one into his own.

‘Did anyone from the Dip Squad turn up for the hearing?’ Jane asked.

‘No.’ The sergeant seemed to sense that Jane couldn’t process the morning’s events. ‘Tell me, are you new to that team?’

‘Yes, it was my first day yesterday.’

‘So, you nicked those two pick-pockets, did you?’

Jane turned away from him. It was difficult for her to even contemplate what had occurred on her first day. It was a lot more than the arrest of two pickpockets. It made her think about Regina and the unpleasant discovery of what the young girl had been subjected to. On top of the shocking events she had just been through, she felt nauseous as she recalled the sight of Regina stripped naked and sexually abused.

The sergeant saw she was having difficulty talking, so he wagged his finger and said, ‘I’ll bet that Dip Squad bunch were all out on the piss last night to celebrate.’

She nodded. She’d left them in the bar drinking, celebrating not so much the arrests, but the news that they’d be able to hand over the paperwork to the Vice Squad.

Jane took a long sip of the tea and felt the brandy warming her, although her hand was still shaking badly.

The court sergeant was white haired and overweight, with a long service history and experience. There was nothing he didn’t know about the various squads, but he had no notion about what had happened the previous night.

‘When that lot make an arrest, they act as though they’ve clobbered the old-time villains like the Krays. Arresting the dirt bags who are nicking stuff is hardly worth the aggro, but you’ve got to do what you’ve got to do to try and protect the public from them. I

was nicking dippers while most of the squad were still at school. Those squad lads are all too big for their boots . . . they usually draw straws for who's going to remain sober to be in court the following morning. I'd say, as you were on your first day, they gave you the short straw. This morning they'll all have hangovers, and the magistrate is a teetotaler who gets nasty if he smells a whiff of alcohol.'

Jane smiled wanly as she drained her mug and handed it to him. 'Thank you for your time . . . and I appreciate that nip of brandy.'

The sergeant tapped his bulbous nose. 'It's between you and me, love . . . and if you want some advice, you call in UC – uncertified sick – and get home now. You've obviously had one hell of a morning and you may think you've got it all sorted, but it comes back and hits you like a sledgehammer. Go home.'

Jane was escorted out of the court, but she had no intention of going home. She hailed a taxi to take her to Vine Street and sat back trying to compose herself. At least she had stopped shaking.

*To be continued...*