

THE BLUE JOURNAL

THE BLUE JOURNAL

A DETECTIVE ANTHONY WALKER NOVEL

L. T. GRAHAM



SEVENTH STREET BOOKS®

AN IMPRINT OF PROMETHEUS BOOKS

59 JOHN GLENN DRIVE • AMHERST, NY 14228

www.seventhstreetbooks.com

Published 2015 by Seventh Street Books[®], an imprint of Prometheus Books

The Blue Journal. Copyright © 2015 by L. T. Graham. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, digital, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or conveyed via the Internet or a website without prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Cover image © Bigstock

Cover design by Grace M. Conti-Zilsberger

This is a work of fiction. Characters, organizations, products, locales, and events portrayed in this novel either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

Inquiries should be addressed to

Seventh Street Books

59 John Glenn Drive

Amherst, New York 14228

VOICE: 716-691-0133

FAX: 716-691-0137

WWW.SEVENTHSTREETBOOKS.COM

19 18 17 16 15 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Graham, L. T., 1950-

The blue journal : a Detective Anthony Walker novel / L.T. Graham.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-63388-060-3 (paperback) — ISBN 978-1-63388-061-0 (ebook)

1. Psychotherapy patients—Crimes against—Fiction. 2. Diaries—Fiction.
 3. Women—Sexual behavior—Fiction. 4. Murder—Investigation—Fiction.
- I. Title.

PS3619.T47676B58 2015

813'6—dc23

2014027005

Printed in the United States of America

To Bob Diforio, with thanks

CHAPTER 1

There was no reason for Elizabeth Knoebel to suspect that this was going to be the last day of her life.

It was a radiant autumn afternoon. The trees and plantings that surrounded her spacious home were awash in sunlight. Inside all was quiet. She was alone in her comfortable den, holding a glass of wine, working on the memoir that had come to consume her over the past several months.

She stopped typing and stared at the screen. Odd, it occurred to her, that she was more at ease contemplating her personal history this way, rather than sharing secrets with a confidant, a friend, or even one of her lovers. Odder still was the perverse satisfaction she felt from knowing that someday she would reveal all of this to her husband—and that she would revel in the pain it would cause him.

That last idea filled her with a strange mix of amusement and loathing, driving her back to the keyboard. She leaned forward, placed her wine glass on the desk and prepared to add something to the scene she had begun yesterday. She typed:

The next time we met he arranged for a luxurious suite in a downtown hotel. When we arrived, he poured us each a drink from the bar, led me into the bedroom, then took me in his arms and kissed me, our mouths wet and sweet.

As he began to undress me I offered no resistance. He said very little, nor did I. He lifted my dress above my head and draped it over the back of an arm-

chair. Then he turned and took my hands in his. I stood there in my high heels, bra, and panties.

"You are so beautiful," he said and kissed me on the neck. Then he led me to the bed where we sat on the edge and embraced, engaging in another moist, hot kiss.

He felt the soft shape of my breasts, then took his time removing my bra. When he tossed it to the floor I kicked off my shoes and laid back, stretching across the soft duvet cover. He unbuttoned his shirt and pulled it off, then kneeled beside me, reaching down, now taking hold of my breasts with both hands. He massaged me with great tenderness, then leaned forward and began gently sucking my nipples. I moaned appreciatively in response.

I reached out to unbuckle his belt and pull down his fly, urging him to finish undressing, then felt inside for him. He was already hard.

He finished undressing and we lay on our sides, facing each other. I still had on my panties. He was naked. We kissed again, then he took my ass in both hands and pulled me to him. His tongue meandered its way up and down my neck and tickled my ear, then entered my eager mouth as our bodies pressed together. He slid my panties off, then turned so that his head was between my

legs. He covered me with his mouth, his tongue flicking at my moist pussy, his hand pressing down on my pubis. I took hold of him, gently stroking his shaft with one hand, exploring beneath it with the other.

I was already wet, and I groaned with pleasure as he licked me, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. His fingers began searching inside me, and from behind as well. He stopped for an instant to tell me that I was delicious and, when his tongue resumed its path up and down my damp opening, my entire body tensed and I cried out. Then I grabbed for him, urging him to climb atop me, and he did.

Even as he had prepared me for the moment, he penetrated me slowly. Even with the lubrication of my own juices, he was careful and attentive. Then, in a final push, he was inside and I forced a gasp of delight. I moved with him, rocked with him as his thrusts grew faster and faster, then uttered a throaty shriek, my back arched, and he exploded inside me and we found ourselves side by side again, still in each other's arms.



In the end, the greatest aphrodisiac for a man is the pleasure he thinks he

has given his partner. This is the way to own him, to invade his thoughts and control his desire—simply convince him that he is your greatest lover. To be sure, there are other factors in every relationship. But in the rites of sex, you must make him believe that you have never, and will never, achieve ecstasy the way you can with him. You must persuade him that you live for the pleasure only he is able to give you.

His ego will be nurtured, his sense of self-importance fulfilled, and his craving for sexual dominance will be tied to you and the way he makes you feel.

And then, ironically, he will be yours.

Elizabeth pushed away from the laptop, rose from her chair, and picked up her glass. A full-length mirror, framed in polished brass, stood in the corner of the room. She turned away from the computer and slowly scanned her reflection. She studied her fine features, intense eyes, dark complexion, rich full lips and thick auburn hair. She looked herself over as if searching for something familiar that had once been there but could no longer be found. Her face was still young, although informed by a bitterness she refused to see. She was approaching forty, and it seemed all that she valued in herself was what remained of her physical beauty.

She placed her wine glass on a side table. Dressed only in a blue satin robe, she held it open, then shrugged slightly, encouraging the sleek fabric to slide from her shoulders and float slowly to the floor. A gust of cool air wafted in through an open window, caressing her skin as she studied her naked figure, admired the fullness of her bosom, the curves of her womanly hips, the dark texture of the narrow line of manicured hair that gave musky focus to the smooth flesh between her legs.

She held her breasts in her hands, then ran her palms roughly across her nipples until they hardened. She was pleased as she watched herself in the looking glass, but this wasn't enough.

She suddenly uttered a hollow, mirthless laugh that resonated beyond the confines of the small room, carrying through the open window and piercing the quiet outside.

Her murderer, standing beside a large oak at the near edge of her property, flinched at the familiar sound.

Elizabeth's home was set amidst proud old maples and stately oaks, a large stone Tudor with leaded glass windows and an imposing slate roof. It was not actually *her* home, as Stanley would be quick to remind her—he had bought and paid for it, just as he had paid for all of the other extravagances she enjoyed as his wife. Elizabeth would never voice a response when he launched into these tirades about possessions and entitlements and rights. After all, Stanley did not give her everything she wanted, but he certainly provided her comfort. And comfort was important to Elizabeth.

Stanley was working at the hospital in New York today, as he was on most weekdays, performing surgery. He told her that he would be staying overnight in their New York City apartment, leaving Elizabeth to amuse herself.

Amusing herself was Elizabeth's favorite pastime.

This afternoon she would indulge in the ultimate humiliation of her cold and disapproving husband. In an act even more degrading to him than merely giving herself to someone else, Elizabeth would have one of her lovers in her home. *Stanley's* home.

She thought of how she might taunt her husband with the details of this latest infidelity. The thought amused her, excited her, but did not make her happy.

She picked up her robe and headed upstairs.

In the bedroom, Elizabeth sat at the dressing table facing another mirror. She was fond of mirrors. This time she regarded herself with

the vacant stare of a stranger. Noticing the scratch marks on her neck, she absently touched them, then picked up a brush and began running it slowly through her thick hair.

When she heard the front door open and then close downstairs, it only vaguely occurred to her that he had arrived early. She listened as the footsteps faintly echoed through the quiet, as if real life were suddenly intruding upon her fantasies. She had told him he should let himself in, that she would be alone, but she wondered for a moment why he had not called out her name. She did not trouble herself about it. Instead, she placed the brush on the table, rose from the cushioned bench, and walked to her bed.

Champagne was chilling in an ice-filled bucket on her nightstand. She twirled the bottle once, then fluffed up the pillows against the mahogany headboard and climbed between the sheets, pulling the comforter over her naked legs. She waited, listening to the sound of muted footsteps as they made their way up the carpeted stairs.

When the door to her bedroom slowly swung open she did not conceal her surprise. "What are you doing here?" Elizabeth demanded.

At first no answer was given, then, "Under the circumstances, don't you think I should be the one asking the questions?"

"Don't be a fool," she replied. "I want you to leave right now."

The murderer strode slowly into the room without speaking.

"What are you doing here?" Elizabeth asked a second time.

Again, there was no response.

"Don't be tiresome," Elizabeth said with growing anger. "I want you out of here. Right now!"

"You've done so much damage, Elizabeth. Far too much. It's time to put an end to all this."

She forced a laugh. "What damage have I done?"

"You asked me not to be tiresome. Please don't play the fool, it doesn't become you."

"What do you want?"

"I told you, I'm going to end all this."

Elizabeth responded with a disgusted look. "Get out," she said.

Only then did the murderer raise the gun for her to see.

Shock turned to fear, then almost at once to defiance. "Put that away," Elizabeth said.

There was a momentary hesitation followed by a grim smile. "I can't," the murderer replied.

"Is that the best you can do? 'You can't'?"

The murderer moved closer, staring down at Elizabeth, not speaking.

"You want to frighten me, is that it?"

"No. I already know that frightening you won't be enough. By tomorrow you'll be back to the same games, the same destructive behavior. No, I've come here to kill you."

"Don't be absurd," Elizabeth said, doing her best not to sound scared. "Put that gun away."

"I told you, I can't. I can't allow this to go on."

"Allow what to go on?"

"You."

It seemed there should be something else to say, but for a moment neither of them spoke. Then Elizabeth raised her hand as if to wave all of this away as some nonsensical raving. "You take everything too seriously. I've told you that before. Put that away so we can talk."

"Talking is done." With that said, the murderer moved to the edge of the bed and yanked back the sheets to expose Elizabeth's naked form. "This is all it's about for you, isn't it?" the murderer said, then raised the gun and pointed it at the side of Elizabeth's head.

"You're so pathetic," Elizabeth replied.

Then it was over.