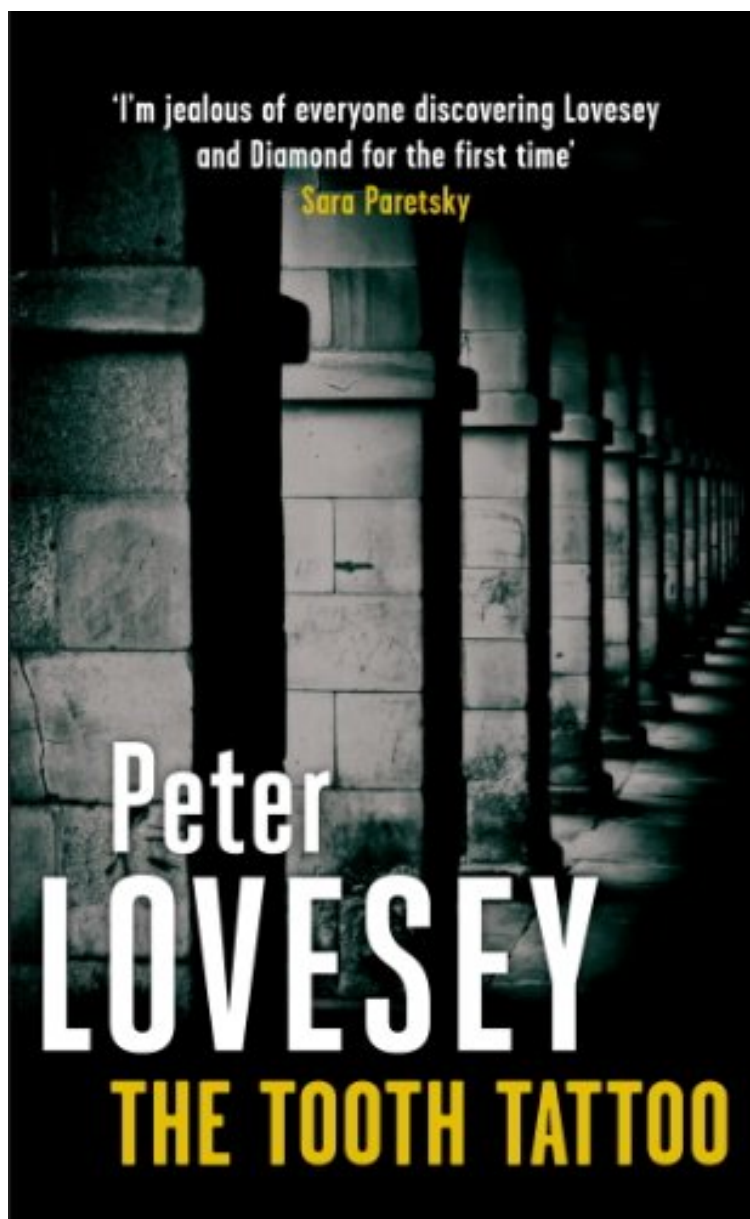


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## The Tooth Tattoo: 13



*Par Peter Lovesey*  
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### Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurPeter Diamond, head of Bath CID, takes a city break in Vienna, where his favourite film, The Third Man, was set, but everything goes wrong and his companion, Paloma, calls a halt to their relationship.Meanwhile, strange things are happening to jobbing musician Mel Farran, who finds himself scouted by methods closer to the spy world than the concert platform. The chance of joining a once-famous string quartet in a residency at Bath Spa University is too tempting for Mel to refuse. Then a body is found in the city canal, and the only clue to the dead woman's identity is the tattoo of a musical note on one of her teeth. For Diamond, who wouldn't know a Stradivarius from a French horn, the investigation is his most

demanding ever. Three mysterious deaths need to be probed while his own personal life is in free fall...Peter Lovesey has been hailed by the critics as 'superlative', 'a master of the genre', 'never puts a foot wrong' and the Peter Diamond series as 'one of the most enjoyable police series around'. This new case for the greatly

loved detective will bring new praise and much satisfaction for his legions of fans.ExtraitChapter 1SOUTHBANK, LONDON, 2005Eleven-thirty at night, sweaty in his evening suit and shattered after a heavy night playing Rachmaninov, Mel Farran plodded out of the artists' exit on the south side of the Royal Festival Hall. Good thing his legs didn't need telling the way to Waterloo station and the tube. He'd done it a thousand times. Rachmaninov was said to be the ultimate romanticmiserable old git. The six foot scowl, as Stravinsky called him, had been a pianist through and through. He worked the string section like galley slaves to show off the joanna man, and Mel Farran was a viola-player, so thank you, Sergei. The moon was up, spreading the shadow of Hungerford Bridge across the paved square called Beacon Market Place. He was forced to stop. A young woman was blocking his path, one of those situations where each takes a sideways step the same way. It happened twice and they were still face to face. She said, 'Do you mind?' Mel took it as a statement of annoyance. He was annoyed, too, wanting to move on, but what's to be gained from complaining? Then she surprised him by saying, 'Please.' How dense am I, he thought, not realising she always intended to stop me. Something glossy and flimsy was being waved under his nose. The concert programme. She was holding a pen in the other hand. Mel forced himself out of his stupor. She wants my autograph, for God's sake. She can't have confused me with the pianist, else why does she think I'm carrying an instrument case? Quick impression: she was the typical music student, bright-eyed, intense, dark hair in a bunch tied with red velvet. It wasn't all that long since Mel had gone through college himself, passionate about all things musical. He'd queued through the night for the proms, cut back on cigarettes to buy the latest Nigel Kennedy, busked in Covent Garden to pay for a trip to Bayreuth. But he'd never understood the point of collecting autographs, still less the autographs of mere orchestra members. She pleaded with her eyes. Almond eyes. Nothing remarkable in that. Every college has a large quota of students from the Far East. He succumbed. 'Are you sure it's me you want?' 'Absolutely.' 'I'm only one of the orchestra.' 'Principal viola. You were wonderful.' 'Get away.' 'Truly.' 'Well. Maybe I was, he told himself, and his self-esteem got a lift. I'm good at what I do and some people appreciate my playing, even when ninety-nine per cent are there to hear the pianist. This well-informed young lady knows who I am, so I'd better sign and be on my way. He tucked the fiddle under his arm to free his hands. 'Where are you from?' 'Tokyo. Have you been there?' He shook his head. 'One day, maybe. Just my signature?' 'Whatever you want to write.' That was a facer. At the end of a long concert he couldn't think of two words together. 'May I make it personal and put your name?' Instead of the gasp of pleasure he was expecting, she curled her lip. He was thrown. Had he said something wrong? She gave a laugh - a throaty, mocking laugh, meant to hurt - and took a step back. 'You don't know who I am, dumbo.' At the same time Mel felt a sharp, strong tug from behind. He flexed his arm. Too late. His viola had been snatched. He swung round in time to see a young guy on a bike in baseball cap, T-shirt and jeans pedalling away across the square. He was riding one-handed with Mel's instrument case in his free hand. It was a set-up. He must have sneaked up behind while Melshit-for-brainswas being soft-soaped by the girl. He'd been mugged. Life was unthinkable without that viola. It wasn't a Strad. It was not particularly valuable, not even old in instrument-making terms, but it was Mel's voice, his art, his constant companion, his living. You'd need to be a professional musician to understand how he felt. Hell, he decided, I won't allow this. He was no athlete, but he started running. Later he realised he should have chased the girl, who was clearly the accomplice. She would have been easier to catch than a bloke on a bike. Instead all of Mel's focus was on his viola and the thief himself, fast escaping along the side of the Festival Hall. The concert audience had long since dispersed. At that time of night people were keen to get away. The great palaces of culture along the South Bank are locked, impenetrable, but all aroundfor those who knoware places of refuge, arches, stairwells and underpasses. The whole area becomes a haven for dossers and derelicts. Mel doubted that the thief was a down-and-out. For one thing, he'd grabbed the fiddle, not his wallet. For another, he was working with the girl, who looked and sounded Royal College of Music. And he was on an expensive-looking bike. Spurred by a degree of anger he didn't know he possessed, Mel kept up the chase. The thief was faster, but one thing was in Mel's favour: they'd turned left towards the Thames and he couldn't cycle across. No use shouting. There wasn't anyone else in sight. Taking increasingly shallow gasps, Mel sprinted the length of the building as well as he could, resolved to get the thief in sight again. He turned the corner by the main entrance, already in darkness. The guy was there, up ahead. Mel's legs were heavier with each stride and a band of pain was tightening across his chest. He was slowing, for all his strength of

will. The buildings were a blur when he started. Now he could see them clearly. But the thief would have a problem. The riverside walkway was at a higher level and a set of about a dozen steps formed a barrier ahead of him. He'd need to dismount. It wouldn't be easy carrying both bike and viola up there. Mel urged himself into another spurt. He was running in the space between the front of the Festival Hall and the side of the Queen Elizabeth Hall. No one was around to help. It's me and him, Mel thought. If I keep going I may catch up before he gets up those steps. The guy's head turned, checking, Mel guessed, whether he was still in pursuit. Then he surprised Mel by veering to the right just before the steps, straight towards the QEH. What was he doing? Mel had been assuming the high wall was solid concrete like the rest of the building. He appeared to cycle straight through and vanish. Disbelieving, in despair, at the limit of his strength, Mel staggered along the remaining stretch and discovered how it had been done. There was a hidden ramp just before the steps, obviously meant for wheelchair access. The thief must have skimmed up there without breaking sweat. Suddenly he was back in view on the walkway, pedalling across Mel's line of vision as if to mock him. But he stopped just to the right of the gated entrance to the Festival Pier, still astride the bike, with his feet on the ground. He was up against the railing by the water's edge. He swung the viola case back to get momentum. Jesus Christ, Mel thought, he's about to throw it over. 'No!' he yelled. 'For God's sake, no.' He was powerless to stop it. The thief couldn't hear him this far off. There was a freeze-frame moment as if he was having second thoughts. Then Mel's precious fiddle was hurled over the edge. Water is the worst enemy. No stringed instrument will survive immersion. The canvas case wasn't waterproof. It would fill with filthy water. Whether it floated or got dragged down was immaterial. To Mel, what had just happened was akin to murder. Anyone who has listened to music, who has heard a violin or a viola sing, must know it has life. It's a unique individual with the power to speak directly to the soul, to calm, heal, inspire, uplift the spirit in ways beyond man's capability. Mel would defy anyone not to respond to the purity of legato bowing, the eloquence of the flowing tone. Each instrument has its own voice. He'd stopped running. His muscles were refusing to function, his brain spinning between disbelief and panic. Why? What malice drives anyone to such an act? 'Bastard!' Already the cyclist was moving off left. And now Mel saw he'd get clean away, under the bridge and past the London Eye. All day there is a queue outside the huge observation wheel. But the place closed at nine-thirty. Nobody would be there to stop him at this hour. In reality his attention wasn't on the thief any longer. He could go. Mel wasn't thinking about justice or revenge. He wanted the impossible: to put the last five minutes into reverse and undo what had happened. Real life isn't like that. He'd got the shakes now. The shock was consuming him. He knew he should mount the steps and look over the edge. It was too late to leap over and recover the poor, damaged thing. The only reason for jumping would be suicide. He was almost of a mind to do it. He forced himself upwards, stiff-legged, still shaking, right up to the railing, and peered over. It was too far down and too dark to spot anything floating there. All the filth of the river spreads to the banks like scum in a sink. The black water caught some ripples of reflected light from the ornate globe lamp-stand and that was all. Out in the middle there were lights. A small vessel was chugging past the pier towards Waterloo Bridge. A police launch? No such luck. It was more like a powerboat moving sedately because of the conditions. Too far out to hail. He heard water slurping against the embankment wall below him. The boat's backwash had reached there. He stared down and saw nothing. Hours later, in his flat, he drank coffee and replayed the scene in his mind. He'd recalled it already for the police, given them such descriptions as he could - the Japanese girl with the red scrunch, the guy on the bike, and his poor, benighted instrument. The constable taking the statement hadn't understood his desolation. He hadn't even promised to pursue the thieves. 'Look at it from our point of view,' he'd said. 'Where would we start? I don't suppose they'll try it with anyone else.' Obviously they had conspired to rob Mel and it wasn't an opportunist crime. There had been planning behind it. But what was the reason? Surely not malice alone? They don't know Mel, so why should they hate him? There was no profit in it. A good, much valued instrument was lost and his livelihood put at risk. They couldn't know if he had other violas. Senseless. Or was it? His memory retrieved an image, the powerboat he'd noticed out in the middle of the river. Could it have come close enough for someone aboard to catch the viola as it was slung over the railing? This would provide a cruel logic to what had happened, a well organised plan to rob him. Now that the finality of his loss had come home to him, he was discovering dark places in his psyche that he didn't know existed. He believed he could kill those two if he met them again. Would he recognise the girl? He thought so. The light hadn't been good, but he'd seen her up close. He could remember the eyes wide in appeal when they'd first met, catching the light of the streetlamps, yet shot with scorn when she was sure he'd been suckered. He had a clear, raw memory of how her mouth had opened to mock him and most of all

he could hear the cruel glissando of her laughter. Was he right in thinking she had been a music student? If so, the mugging was even harder to understand. Of her partner in crime he could recall only the clothes. He hadn't seen his face. Did it matter any more? Did he want to hunt them down? He could search the common rooms of all the music colleges in London and maybe find them, but he wouldn't get his viola back. Anger didn't begin to describe his state of mind.

Chapter 2 VIENNA, 2012 'How much longer does it last?' Paloma Kean asked Peter Diamond. 'Aren't you enjoying it?' 'I'm trying not to breathe.' Diamond felt in his pocket and produced a tube of peppermints. 'The man who thinks of everything.' 'Thanks, but an oxygen mask would be better.' There are days when the Vienna sewer tour is more odorous than others. Wise tourists take note of the humidity before booking. Diamond and Paloma, on their weekend city break, had no choice, Saturday afternoon or nothing. It happened that this Saturday in July was warm, with a thunderstorm threatening. Even Diamond had noticed that the smell was not Chanel No. 5. 'After this, you'll appreciate the Ferris wheel,' he told her. She was silent. She'd brought this on herself when reminding him that his favourite film, *The Third Man*, was set in Vienna. At the time, she'd congratulated herself for thinking of it. Otherwise they wouldn't have been here. The adventure had begun back in April with a scratch-card she had found on the floor of his car. Diamond hadn't bothered to check it. He'd said they were giving them away at the petrol station. She'd revealed three matching symbols and told him he was a winner. 'Everyone is.' She had insisted on phoning the number on the back of the card. Deeply sceptical, Diamond had told her, 'That's how they make their money.' But it had turned out that he really had won a weekend break for two in a city of his choice: Paris, Amsterdam or Vienna. True to form, he'd dismissed Europe's historic capitals with a dogmatic, 'I don't do abroad.' 'Come on,' Paloma had said. 'Lighten up, Peter. This could be so romantic.' 'I'm too busy at work.' Work for Diamond was heading the CID section at Bath police station. There were always matters to be investigated. Then Paloma had remembered *The Third Man* and whistled the Harry Lime Theme. 'What did you say those cities were?' he'd said, looking up. And here they were trudging through a reeking sewer with a bunch of elderly tourists carrying flashlights. At intervals everyone stopped to be shown a clip of the film projected on to the brick wall opposite. Paloma could see Diamond's lips move silently in sync with the soundtrack. 'It's the main sewer. Runs into the blue Danube.' So obviously was he relishing the experience that it would have been churlish to complain. The day had started agreeably enough in the Cafe Mozart, another of the film locations. The coffee and Sachertorte were expensive, even for a couple used to Bath prices, but Diamond had basked in the ambience and said the experience was worth every Euro and talked about Graham Greene being a regular there in 1947 when he was researching the story. From there they'd moved on to a side street off the Naschmarkt and he'd stressed how fortunate they were to be here on a Saturday, the only day of the week the *Third Man* Museum opened. Displayed along with countless stills and posters was the actual zither Anton Karas had used to play the haunting theme. You could select from four hundred cover versions of the tune. Paloma had left the place with a headache that Diamond said was surely something to do with the weather. A short walk had brought them to Esperanto park and the brick-built spiral staircase down to the oldest part of Vienna's sewer system. Proceedings underground had begun with a film explaining how the cholera epidemic of 1830 had made a better sanitation system necessary. Then, after warnings to watch their footing, the guide had led them into the glistening brick-lined drains. Atmospheric? Paloma couldn't argue with that. She just wished every film clip wasn't punctuated with another head-numbing burst of the zither music. 'Are you enjoying this?' she asked Diamond in the faint hope that he'd had enough. 'Brilliant.' There was no opting out. This was not the best place to get lost if she tried returning to the stairs. 'How's your head now?' Diamond asked. 'About the same.' 'I think I should warn you that at the end of the tour a man dressed as Harry Lime steps out and fires a gun at us.' 'I can't wait.' That evening at the Prater they rode the Riesenrad, the giant Ferris wheel that had featured in the film. The worst of the clouds had rolled away to the south and Paloma's headache had departed with them. She was actually enjoying the ride in the rickety old cabin. They were definitely cabins and not pods or capsules. Each was a little room like a railway compartment with a curved roof and windows. They shared theirs with an elderly man in a brown Tyrolean hat with a feather trim who was at the far end surveying the view with a benign smile. Below, ribbons of light stretched to infinity. The wheel itself periodically flashed silver and gold. 'I don't really mind hearing it again,' she told Diamond with a smile. 'What's that?' 'The Harry Lime speech about Switzerland, five hundred years of brotherly love, democracy and peace producing the cuckoo clock.' 'I was going to spare you that. It wasn't in the original script, you know.' 'You tell me that each time.' 'Orson Welles - ' 'That, too.' He placed a hand over hers. 'You've shown the patience of a saint all day.' 'If I'm honest, I haven't been feeling that way,' she said. 'But I can see how

much it means to you, reliving the film.' 'The old black and white movies have got it for me.' 'I know. Giant shadows, sudden shafts of light.' He took a deep, appreciative breath. 'Like the night scene when Lime appears in the doorway.' 'With a blast of zither music just in case anyone in the cinema isn't paying attention.' 'Er, yes. Well, it is called the Harry Lime Theme.' 'And you grew up with it.' He baulked at that. 'The film was released before I was born. Orson Welles was old enough to have been my grandfather.' 'Sorry.' 'But that scene gets to me every time.' 'Strange.' He frowned. 'Why do you say that?' 'Harry Lime was the villain, selling adulterated penicillin. You're supposed to be on the opposite side. You should identify with the Joseph Cotten character.' 'But Welles had all the charisma. The film is clever, playing with your loyalties.' She tried to see it from his point of view. 'I suppose as a policeman you have to get inside the minds of bad people.' 'Sometimes - but you aren't supposed to admire them. Each time I see it, I really want him to stay at liberty. And today we walked in his footsteps.' 'With great care, watching where we trod,' Paloma said. There was a movement at the far end of the cabin. The elderly man turned from the window and raised his hat. He may even have clicked his heels. 'Excuse me. I heard what you said. You were talking about the sewers, am I right?' 'You are,' Paloma said. 'We did the tour this afternoon.' 'It wasn't Orson Welles.' There was an awkward silence. 'Believe me, it was,' Diamond told him. 'I've seen that film more times than I care to count.' 'Mr Welles took one look and refused to work in such a place,' the old man said. Diamond was speechless, shaking his head. 'Most of the scenes featuring him were filmed with a double, or in Shepperton studio in England.' The old man seemed to know what he was talking about. Paloma laughed. 'Do you mean we traipsed through all those dreadful-smelling tunnels for no reason at all?' 'I wouldn't say that,' the old man said. 'They did hours of filming down there, but little, if any, with Orson Welles.' 'Why not?' 'He was being difficult at the time, playing what is the expression? hard to get. He had an agreement with Mr Korda, the producer, to star in three films, but nothing much had come of it and he was annoyed. This was only a cameo role. He is on screen for less than ten minutes of the entire film. I believe he was taken down to the sewer once to see a place where water cascaded from one of the ducts. Harry Lime was supposed to run underneath and get drips running down his face. Welles absolutely refused.' 'You seem to know a lot about it.' 'I'm a Viennese. It's part of our city history.' 'So they built a studio mock-up of the sewer?' Paloma said, and she seemed to be leading him on. 'That is my understanding.' Determined not to have his day spoilt, Diamond rubbed his hands and said with conviction, 'Well, at least Orson Welles did what we're doing now - rode the Ferris wheel.' The old man turned and looked out of the window again. 'Have you heard of back projection? Look carefully next time you watch the film.' 'Back in their hotel room, Paloma saw how deflated Diamond was and said, 'We've only got his word for it.' 'He seemed to know what he was talking about. I did read once that they shot parts of the film at Shepperton.' 'Bits, I expect. It was the way they worked. It's still a classic.' 'You're right about that.' 'Silly old man. I bet he rides the damn Ferris wheel for hours on end lying in wait for fans like us.' 'Do you think so?' 'Destroying people's illusions - that's his game. Don't let him ruin our day, Peter. We did the tour. We visited the right places. You'll spot them next time you see the film.' He was grateful for her words. Paloma was a terrific support. She knew how his pleasure in the day had been undermined. And the weekend hadn't offered much for her to enjoy. He'd been planning to fit in a visit to another of the film locations - the cemetery - next morning and now he changed his mind. 'I'm going to suggest we do something different tomorrow. Our flight home isn't until the evening. Let's make it your day. How would you like to spend it?' She took off her shoes and flopped back on the bed, hands clasped behind her head. 'That's a lovely suggestion. Let me give it serious thought.' 'There's some wine left. I'll pour you a drink while you decide.' 'Now you're talking.' But when he returned from the bathroom with the two glasses, Paloma's eyes were closed and she was breathing evenly. It had been an exhausting day. Over coffee next morning in a small shop near the hotel with a display of irresistible fruit tarts, they debated how to spend their last hours in Vienna. 'Knowing you,' she said, 'and I don't mean to sound offensive, you may not be too thrilled about this. So many great musicians lived and composed their masterpieces here. Could we find Beethoven's house?' 'Why not?' he said, doing his best to sound enthusiastic. 'Where is it?' They opened their map and asked the waitress, but she didn't seem to understand. 'We need a phrasebook,' Diamond muttered. From behind them a voice said, 'If it's Beethoven's house you want, you have about forty to choose from in Vienna. He was constantly on the move.' 'Excuse me?' Diamond turned in his chair, peeved that somebody had been eavesdropping. The speaker wasn't the old man from the Ferris wheel, but he could have been his brother. He had the same gnomish look and a voice like a scraper stripping wallpaper. Probably a Tyrolean hat was tucked under the table on one of the other chairs. 'There are two of any note,' the man went on. 'The first is the Beethoven Memorial House, but you are too

late for that. It is closed this month. The other is the Pasqualati House where he composed his fourth, fifth and sixth symphonies and the opera Fidelio.' 'That'll do us,' Diamond said. 'Is it open?' 'I believe so.' 'Where exactly is it?' 'Before you dash off, I think I should inform you that Beethoven didn't actually live there.' 'I thought you said he did.' 'The rooms open to visitors are furnished to look as if Beethoven was the tenant, but in reality his home was in the adjacent flat - which is privately owned and not open to the public.' It was like being told Orson Welles hadn't run through the sewers. 'I give up,' Diamond said. 'Where do we go to see something authentic in this city?' 'Some of the exhibits are authentic. The salt and pepper pots unquestionably belonged to Beethoven.' 'Big deal,' Diamond murmured to Paloma. 'You asked where it is,' the old man said. 'You'll find it west of Freyung. This is an old part of the city. You go up a cobbled lane called Schreyvogelgasse to the Molker Bastei and the Pasqualati House is there. I'll show you.' 'Is it worth it?' Diamond asked Paloma, but she had already passed their map across. 'Here.' A bony finger pinned down the map. 'At the western margin of the Innere Stadt.' 'Some way off, then,' Diamond said. 'Maybe we should choose another composer's house.' 'This is Schreyvogelgasse. As you pass along, you may wish to glance at number eight. The doorway is famous. It's where Harry Lime first appears in that film, *The Third Man*.' Diamond's eyes widened. 'It looks as if we'll be going there after all,' Paloma said. In the taxi, Diamond said, 'I'm beginning to understand. They post little old men all over the city to bring innocent tourists down to earth with a bump.' 'He was trying to be helpful.' 'So was the guy on the Ferris wheel. There are some things I'd rather not be helped with.' 'That's rich - from a professional detective.' 'A secret romantic.' Her eyebrows popped up. In the cobbled street she told him to stand in the doorway of number eight for a photo. 'I can't. It's so cheesy.' 'But you want to.' He didn't need any more persuading. He took up the pose, even giving his straw hat a rakish tilt. The Beethoven house pleased Paloma. There was a good atmosphere and enough genuine relics to make the old man's criticisms unimportant. 'To think Fidelio was created here,' she said. 'Next door.' 'It doesn't seem to matter any more. Are you impressed? I'm sure I can feel his presence.' 'It's not my strongest suit, classical music,' he admitted. 'What is, apart from the Harry Lime Theme?' 'Queen's greatest hits, I suppose.' 'I can see I'll have to work on you.' 'You can try. It's still your day. How shall we spend our last couple of hours here?' 'Let's take a look at the Danube. Is it really blue? We haven't seen it by daylight.' The nearest bridge wasn't far from their hotel. They packed, cleared their room, left the cases in a storeroom and strolled down Schwedenplatz. 'You're not going to believe this,' Diamond said, studying the map. 'It isn't actually the Danube.' 'Get away.' 'It's the Danube canal. The river is way off to the north-east.' 'Second best as usual, then.' Blue the water was, under a clear sky. They walked to the centre of the bridge and watched the shipping gliding underneath. A breeze ruffled Paloma's hair. 'This has been a treat,' she said, linking her arm with his. 'All of it?' 'Every minute, now I look back. We got you out of the CID room for a whole weekend. Go on, admit it, you needed the break.' 'It's done me good,' he said. 'And all because of that scratch-card. Next time we shouldn't rely on a piece of luck. I'll try persuading you to look at a travel brochure.' 'Don't push it.' With more time in hand they bought ice creams and took a walk along the embankment. 'Look, someone's dropped some flowers,' Paloma said as they approached a point where some steps led down to a mooring. A bunch of pinkish-white flowers wrapped in paper was lying on the pavement. When they got closer, they saw more flowers pressed into the lattice mouldings in the wall. Most were dead carnations. 'It must have fallen out.' She stooped to lodge the fresh flowers back into a space in the stonework. They were star-shaped with long, yellow-tipped stamens. 'The scent is powerful. Must be some type of lily. The place has been made into a little shrine. Do you think someone drowned here?' 'Hard to say,' he said, wanting to lighten the mood. 'Where are the little old men of Vienna when we need one?' 'There's a card with one of these dead bunches, some kind of message. But it isn't in German. I think it's Japanese.' 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memorable and informative."Richmond Times-Dispatch Lovesey is the real deal .... [The Diamond novels] are deftly plotted, with strong characters and a good dollop of dry humor, especially the (generally) good-natured sniping among the members of his team. The Seattle Times "The old master does not disappoint. The Tooth Tattoos a bravura performance." ing the Evidence I won't string you along. I won't be Haydn my feelings about the book, which I did enjoy very much. So just fugue-et about them and appreciate another entertaining Peter Diamond novel. Ted Hertel, Deadly Pleasures Praise for the Peter Diamond series "Lovesey is a master." Sara Paretsky "Witty.... A perfectly realized murder mystery." The Wall Street Journal "Extremely stylish ... utterly surprising." Newsweek "A bravura performance from a veteran showman." The New York Times Book "Thickly textured, amusing, unpredictably mixing puzzle and procedural.... One of the best." Los Angeles Times