



The Third Woman: The Secret Passion That Inspired "The End of the Affair"

William Cash

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This is the enthralling true story of the novelist Graham Greene and the woman who splintered his heart in one of the twentieth century's epic romances. In December 1946, on a snow-covered airfield in East Anglia, the English novelist Graham Greene fell in love with Catherine Walston, the beautiful American wife of an immensely rich gentleman farmer. Their affair lasted nearly fifteen years, until 1961, but remained hidden from the public until after Greene's death three decades later. The Third Woman, however, is more than the story of an affair fraught with blind love, tortured religiosity, thwarted passion, heart-wrenched confessions, and secret vows. It is also an investigation into the facts that Greene wove into his classic 1951 novel *End of the Affair*, as well as an inquiry into the creative debt that literature owes to adultery, for this was the period, too, of masterpieces like *The Heart of the Matter*. Out of interviews with Greene's intimates, including his wife and mistress, and with access to the 1200 love letters he wrote to Catherine as well as his correspondence with friends like Evelyn Waugh, Noel Coward, Diana Cooper, Margot Fonteyn, and Alexander Korda, the book retraces the emotional and spiritual progress of an affair played out at Catherine's remote cottage on Ireland's Achill Island, at Greene's villa in Capri, and in their adjoining flats on London's St. James Street. "A remarkable achievement.... Not only has Cash succeeded in piecing together an extraordinary story, but he has painted a vivid portrait of these two complex and fascinating people." - *The Spectator*; "Compelling reading." - *Financial Times*.

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