

A girl is dying. A girl who wears bespoke perfume. She wants you to inhale her deliciousness; to know that she is untouched by the dirt, the smog, the filth of your London. Pathetic men rub their underdeveloped legs against her arse as they commute to their piteous 'careers' on the hamster-cage tube. She wants other women to covet her manicure as she types an 'empowering' Instagram post about her 'inner glow'. People follow her. A be-leggined messiah to the inflexible, undesirable, slovenly masses. She drinks spirulina, kombucha and matcha, but she doesn't eat wheat or dairy. She's faking an allergy to mask her disordered eating, which she won't seek help for because it feels so very normal nowadays. It's a shame, she used to like eating bread. She waxes everything. Everything. She is filthy. Filthy. Used to do anything, absolutely anything, if it meant he'd stay with her.

A girl is dying. She is savvy. Astute. Commercially minded. Clever. She's clever. She knows that all she really has to sell is the idea of her beauty, her youth, her long rolling vowels, and she does. In the old stories Pygmalion made Galatea, but this new Galatea made herself and streamed it live. She put it on a T-shirt, on a tote bag. Got paid for sharing a link to organic date and cashew nut energy balls (£6.50 for four, not including postage). She believes in self-improvement. She practises her poses and reads her prose. She believes in love and practises that too. She has put so many hours into practising, hours and hours, tears and tears, and yet . . . She can be droll. She'd buy you a

drink if you made her laugh. More than once had she bought a *Big Issue*. She'd gone to charity fundraising galas, because it would get her into the society pages of *Tatler*, but still she went and clapped loudly and exclaimed 'how brave' at the survivors of whatever hideous disease the whole thing was in honour of and handed over a cheque. She is vain, and angry, and sad, so very sad. Of course she is sad. Miserable. Wretched. Plain old unhappy. How could she not be? The poor thing.

A girl is dead. A girl who was flawed. No, not the pores on the nose, those were perfect. Resolutely perfect. Her head had spun but the world hadn't noticed; it callously carried on spinning as she suffocated on her own bile, writhing there amongst rotting leaves, her hair infused with the stench of mulch and stomach acid. She deserved better than to die there. To die because of him.

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The new novel from Charlotte Vassell

## **A DEADLY INHERITANCE**

*A stylish and addictive new mystery,  
featuring everyone's favourite detective,  
Caius Beauchamp.*

*Two bodies. One will. A family full of secrets.*

Detective Caius Beauchamp is dispatched to a double murder in a South London townhouse. It looks like a simple botched burglary, until Caius gets a tip-off about the well-heeled family's nefarious past. Which is worse: the body on the floor or the skeletons in the closet?

Caius's own family circumstances have changed recently: some complicated inheritance tetris means he is now in line to inherit a country estate. He's still getting used to his new life in the upper echelons of society. And when he realises that he recognises the victims from a recent luxury train ride, it all starts feeling a little close for comfort.