

Sometimes you have to lose everything  
to find where you belong.

# Under a Greek Sky



Francesca  
Catlow



# Under a Greek Sky

## OTHER TITLES BY FRANCESCA CATLOW

### Little Blue Door Series:

*The Little Blue Door*

*Behind The Olive Trees*

*Chasing Greek Dreams*

*Found in Corfu*

### Other Fiction:

*The Last Christmas Promise*

*Another Greek Summer*

*Greek Secret*

# Under a Greek Sky

Francesca  
Catlow

LAKE UNION  
PUBLISHING



This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, organizations, places, events, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Otherwise, any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Text copyright © 2025 by Francesca Catlow  
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher.

Published by Lake Union Publishing, Seattle  
[www.apub.com](http://www.apub.com)

Amazon, the Amazon logo, and Lake Union Publishing are trademarks of [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), Inc., or its affiliates.

EU Product Safety contact:  
Amazon Publishing, Amazon Media EU S.à r.l.  
38, avenue John F. Kennedy, L-1855 Luxembourg  
[amazonpublishing-gpsr@amazon.com](mailto:amazonpublishing-gpsr@amazon.com)

ISBN-13: 9781662526299  
eISBN: 9781662526282

Cover design by Emma Rogers  
Cover image: © f9photos / Alamy Stock Photo; © freedomnaruk © vovan © Kriengsuk Prasroetsun © nunawwoofy © Zigres © Anneleven Stock © Svetlana Ryajentseva © ForestDigital © Nature Peaceful / Shutterstock



*I dedicate this book to anyone who has ever rated or reviewed one of my books. Good or bad, you've been a bigger part of my journey than you could ever understand. Thank you for changing my life for the better.*



# CONTENTS

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

[Chapter Nineteen](#)

[Chapter Twenty](#)

[Chapter Twenty-One](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Two](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Three](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Four](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Five](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Six](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Seven](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Eight](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Nine](#)

[Chapter Thirty](#)

[Chapter Thirty-One](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Two](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Three](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Four](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Five](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Six](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Seven](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Eight](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Nine](#)

[Chapter Forty](#)

[Chapter Forty-One](#)

[Chapter Forty-Two](#)

[Chapter Forty-Three](#)

[Chapter Forty-Four](#)

[Chapter Forty-Five](#)

[Chapter Forty-Six](#)

[Chapter Forty-Seven](#)

[Chapter Forty-Eight](#)

[Chapter Forty-Nine](#)

[Chapter Fifty](#)

[Chapter Fifty-One](#)

[Chapter Fifty-Two](#)

[Chapter Fifty-Three](#)

[Chapter Fifty-Four](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS](#)

[ABOUT THE AUTHOR](#)

[Follow the Author on Amazon](#)

# Prologue

I feel like a used-up butterfly, with tatty edges.

If I had wings, they would be battered beyond repair, with frayed tips leaving dust on everything they touched, but at least I'd be able to fly away.

As it is, I don't have wings, I have family problems.

I guess I really thought, for a moment there, that I *did* have wings. I really believed I *could* fly and that I *could* have it all.

What goes up must come down. After today, I feel like I've crashed down and hit my head on concrete. My eyes burn and the skin underneath them feels raw.

My heart feels scorched with the pain only a child can feel, even though I'm fully grown. It's as though I've lost my footing on a ledge. I was momentarily suspended before suddenly dropping, falling, making my stomach lurch and churn.

Nothing makes sense now.

My grounding has gone, and my belief system has run away. I wonder if this is how other people feel when they find out their parents aren't together anymore. Or is it reserved for those of us who truly believed their parents were perfect, right up until the point we were told they're not?

Maybe some people feel relief, maybe even joy. There's part of me that's felt paralysed with shock since this morning.

My key slides in our door and all I want is to curl up next to Jonah and for him to tell me he loves me, and that my parents love me, and that I'm not losing anyone. His hand on my knee or his arm around my shoulders. That will be enough to keep the tears from starting up again.

What I really need is for him to tell me that they'll both be at our wedding and that they won't fight or cause a scene.

If Dad wants to bring this woman he's off with, I have no idea what I'll do. I can't even handle the idea of him being with someone other than Mum,

let alone him bringing someone else to our wedding.

Would she be in all the photos? What does she even look like?

I don't want her there, whoever she is, and if he can't handle that, then I don't want him at the wedding either.

The house is dark as I slip in through the barely open door. A muddle of shapes and shadows. I quickly close it behind me, the way I always do.

'I'm home,' I call into the abyss.

It's never normally this dark. Normally there's a lamp, the TV, something.

I slide my hand over the smooth surface of the wall, searching for the light switch.

The only message I've had from Jonah today was a quick *I love you, be safe xx* and nothing more. I didn't want to tell him about my dreadful day via text. A day that should've been spent looking at dresses, instead spent finding out that one of my parents is out of the country with someone else and the other wants to leave England for good.

I stand in the dark for a moment to catch my breath. Thoughts drag their heels around my mind. How can any of this be real?

I hit the switch, making the bulb burst into life with a click, leaving me squinting.

A gasp fills the hall.

My gasp.

My shock.

Everything's been turned over.

I dash about calling for Jonah, with no answer. I trip over a broken vase that's shattered over the floor.

It doesn't slow me down. When he isn't in the living room, I skid along and up the stairs to our bedroom. Fear explodes in my chest like TNT.

Everything of value is gone.

The TV, my laptop . . . Jonah.

The bed looks much the same as when I left. The same crumpled mess, but he isn't there, filling it. His messy hair isn't peeping above the sheets.



But it's not empty.

An envelope rests there on my pillow, with *Lorena* written on the front.

# Chapter One

‘We can’t stay here. No way.’ Serena spins to gawp at us. Her mouth wide and her eyes bulging, exaggerated by the thick layers of mascara.

‘Don’t be a princess, Serena.’ Mum moves around the space as though it’s full of furniture instead of echoing with every step.

I want to agree with Mum. I want to tell my sister she’s exaggerating, and that she really *is* being a princess, as usual . . . but I can’t. Not that I’ll side with Serena either, Mum doesn’t need that right now, but I don’t think she’s being a princess. Not this time.

This house isn’t what I expected when Mum invited us to live in Corfu, where she grew up. Even when she said we could fix up an old beach house her parents left her in their will years ago, this isn’t how I thought it would be.

In my imagination, we would be jetting off to something from a postcard. Those ones where all the buildings are crisp white with bright-blue doors, and pretty pink flowers line them, or olive trees sprout up here and there. That’s what the beach house would look like, but maybe a little overgrown, waiting for us to turn up and show it some affection. That maybe some shutters would need screwing in a little tighter and weeds would need to be pulled up and then we would be living in luxury by the sea.

It was meant to be sunsets and fresh fish for dinner, lying back and healing in the sun.

This is nothing like how I thought it would be. The beach house is half finished and falling apart from being left for so long. The door into the kitchen is sagging and the floor is so filthy it looks as though half the beach has been dragged in.

It has a roof. A structure. Walls. That’s an advantage over the places that have the rebar sticking out at all angles. That’s something to be positive about, I suppose.

But then, if it was all perfect here, surely Mum would have brought us to Corfu years ago. With her parents gone, she always made out like there was nothing here for us. Until now, that is. Now she needs change.

‘Seriously, Mum, you said we would have this place liveable in no time. If this is where you were living when you were last here, no wonder you never came back . . .’ Serena’s voice trails off as she slowly spins in the centre of the expanse.

‘This is not where I lived.’

‘Where then?’ Serena stops spinning to address my mum again, her arms crossing over her chest. ‘I still can’t get over you inheriting a place by the beach and never mentioning it before.’

‘It didn’t matter before—’

‘And now it does?’ I cut in.

‘*Now* is the right time. We needed a place to stay, and here it is.’

It’s tempting to point out that we could’ve stayed at home in England, but I can understand why she’s decided to run away instead, rather than face Dad. Mum continues, ‘It’ll be fine. We will find people to help. I know it. Tomorrow, I will take you to meet some people.’ Mum takes a few steps and runs her finger through a thick layer of grime on a windowsill, then adds under her breath, ‘I’m sure they will help us.’

Mum lets out a deep breath and mumbles as she rubs away the dirt between her fingers.

Mum and Serena have discarded their bags and suitcases, their eyes flicking from one empty corner to the next, leaving me gripping the handle of my cases by the door. I’m not sure I’m able to move yet. Even though there’s nothing here, it’s all too much to take in.

The entrance must also be the living room, as there’s a chimney breast to the left of the room and it’s a reasonably good size too.

No one’s even bothered to shut the front door. Outside, our front garden is made up of wiry grasses that look like lightning strikes where they’ve been scorched by the sun. The grass looks how I feel. Dried up in its prime.

It's not just my soul that feels that way; my lips feel dry from the plane. My skin feels tight, like it's trying to shrink and squish me down. It felt that way before the plane. It's felt that way for days.

I need to move again, standing still is the worst. It leaves me feeling open to my own thoughts.

'Where shall I put my cases? Upstairs?' I tip my head towards the wooden steps trailing up the right-hand wall.

'Yes, Lorena *mou*. The bedrooms are upstairs, let's hope it's better up there.' Mum shoots me a smile, but it doesn't carry up to her eyes.

The wheels of my cases rattle along the worn wooden floor and the grit of sand and dirt. I struggle for a moment, trying to take both cases up the stairs simultaneously as my mum and sister move into the next room, away from the expanse of the open entrance.

Everything I own now fits into four large suitcases.

Two are here with me, and two I left in England, stuffed with childhood things and some photos that I don't want to look at.

That's all I could bear to hold on to from my old life. The life that took years to build and moments to pull apart.

With Jonah in the wind, everything we had purchased together, or anything that remotely reminded me of him, or anything he had even touched, I didn't want to see again. So I did a car boot sale to cleanse myself of our life together.

Not that he left anything of value when he disappeared.

I managed to scrape back two hundred pounds of the thousands he took from our joint account. It wasn't even enough to cover the taxi to the airport or the flight out here.

I leave one case behind and heave the other one beside me, grinding and banging on each step as I go. As soon as I get to the landing, my heart plummets all over again.

Up here is no better than downstairs. Nothing's been finished. The landing's filled with unpainted doors and plasterboard walls and the floor is more sand than wood.

I swing open the first door. Behind it there's a room with a loo and a sink. That'll be fun to tell Mum and Serena, there's not even a shower or a bath yet.

A toolbox with tools scattered about decorates the floor. It reminds me of Pompeii, where everyone stopped what they were doing and ran away from the clouds of ash. Someone was working here, then everything stopped. It all ended.

My grandfather, I guess. It must be his old toolbox that was left here. It must have been him hard at work, only to leave and pass away before he got to finish what he was doing. All Mum told me was that he died peacefully.

It feels odd to step into the world of someone I've never met and see a dusty snapshot of their past. It's like seeing a ghost but without feeling afraid, only a little resentful that they won't talk back.

Abandoning my own case, I twist the tap. The piping moans but, to my relief, water coughs out.

I turn it back off with a squeak before briefly touching the tools, feeling the weight of a spanner in my hand.

My grandfather held this in his hand. It's the closest I've ever been to him.

I wish I could've met him. At least it's nice to be in the place where he spent his life. I've always assumed it was too painful for Mum to come to Corfu with no one left here for her, no parents to greet her on arrival. It's the one thing I could understand. But now, with Dad off with someone else, I can understand wanting to come home to start all over again.

I place the spanner back in the toolbox, along with the other items that have been accumulating dust for the past few decades. I don't want them to upset Mum further when she's doing so well to hold her head up.

In my whole life she's barely ever spoken of her parents. I've never tried too hard to push the matter and I've only ever seen one photograph of them. One where they're both laughing, arms wrapped around each other. Mum told me it was from Easter when she was a young girl.

Leaving the room slightly neater than it was when I found it, I investigate the first of the three bedrooms, the one next to the bathroom. There's no bed, but it's cleaner than the hall and it looks more finished too, with all the walls already plastered.

It's stuffy though, with the shutters open but the window shut. I lean in to peer out towards the road and over to a sweeping villa that looks ready for a romantic getaway. It's all white, with pink flowers. Just the sort of place I was hoping Jonah and me would go to on our honeymoon.

I push the thought of what was meant to be to the back of my mind and close the door to the room behind me.

The air in there is so hot it feels like it's burning my nostrils with every inhale, making my lungs want to collapse. To step back on to the landing is a relief by comparison.

The room opposite is bigger and has space for an en suite but not even a sink inside yet. The shutters are closed, making it cooler than the first room. I slip out and make my way to the last room, back towards the staircase.

I walk in, and I see it, what I've longed to see.

There in the third room, I feel like Goldilocks: this is my *just right*.

It's not as big as the second bedroom, or as finished as the first, but none of this is what matters or what catches the breath in my chest.

A view out across the rolling white-gold sand and the glittering azure. It's the first thing to really lift me in days.

A few weeks ago I was filled to the brim with excitement, saying goodbye to all my lovely colleagues to start my own company, only to have it all snatched away by the one person I trusted the most.

Everything has been grey from that moment to this.

Somehow, this view manages to remind me the world is a big open expanse and I'm only a small part of it. I'm just a grain of sand rubbing shoulders with everyone else.

I have to have this view.

'Shotgun,' I holler over my shoulder.