

My War: Book II. Mad Harry

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Chapter 4: The Bombing

On the 28th of June, 1940, many of the Guernsey farmers, the ones that had remained behind after the mass exodus two weeks earlier, were driving lorries filled with tomatoes down to the harbor to be shipped to England, hopefully to yield a handsome profit there. Three German bombers swept in, bombed the line of carts and killed 29 Guernseyites, farmers and townsmen.

Some say today the Germans made a mistake, misinterpreted the line of carts as preparations for a resistance, others that the Germans just wanted to insure that when they did invade a mere two days later all resistance would be broken.

Either way the bombs served to trigger the resurgence of my memories and when Angelique came running down to the harbor a few moments later to see if she could help with the wounded, it was Flying Officer Freygood who replied to her.

"I'm sorry," she said as she passed by. "About my mother, I mean. If you come by later, I'll see you get fed."

"Thanks awfully," I said, though I'd no idea at all what she was talking about. She was an attractive girl though, close to one's physical ideal, brownish-blond hair, small but evident breasts, a very pretty face. Feminine.

"You speak English," she said.

"Always have."

"But aren't . . .? What's your name?"

"Peter. Flying Officer Peter Freygood. Shouldn't we go down and help?"

She took my hand unselfconsciously and we walked together down to the harbor, she gripping my hand tighter and tighter as the sheer numbers of dead and dying, and the smell of those incinerated became more evident.

A tall blond man with a horse-like lined face was hard at work, lifting aside cases of tomatoes, and directing the work of others. He reminded me of the ill-fated over-bred Throckmorton-Higgins. "Tell Harry, we can use his help," he said to Angelique.

"He speaks English, and his real name is . . ." she began when I stopped her. I'd suddenly realized I was not wearing my uniform. I remembered now crash landing in the water, but nothing else. "Don't tell him," I said in French, and then in English to the blond man, "I help."

I helped for the balance of the morning. Partially incinerated corpses had to be dragged from the wreckage and set aside for later burial. Others lay half in their trucks and half on the ground, blood and intestines mixed with the juice of the tomatoes. But there were bodies that could be mended if given a good stiff drink before pulling a dislocated shoulder back into place. And there were bodies, barely alive and bleeding copiously, that died even as we were pulling them free.