

*[Included in this document are three scenes. The first two are flashbacks. They were fun to write, but didn't move the plot forward and I needed to make the book shorter, so they had to go. This first flashback was originally between chapters seventeen and eighteen, and takes place in 1943.]*

Getting engaged to Annie had been an accident. She'd been a secretary for one of Bastien's OSS trainers, and it had been impossible to ignore her flirting. She was beautiful, bright, and obviously interested, so Bastien had taken her on a few dates. He lived far enough from home that he couldn't visit his family, except on the weekends, and he hadn't formed friendships with anyone else in his classes. He blamed that on the first day of training—after five comments within an hour about how German he sounded, he'd decided to open his mouth only when absolutely necessary. That had led to other comments as people assumed he was arrogant or unfriendly, but Annie had taken his silence as a challenge. She'd never made fun of his accent, and he'd thought her exuberance a good balance for his more solemn nature.

One Friday night, shortly before his training was complete, he took her to the movies, then walked her back to her apartment. He kissed her goodnight, and she kissed him back, harder than usual.

“Do you want to hear a secret, Bastien?” Annie played with his tie, loosening it as she spoke. “My roommate's out of town. She won't be back until Monday.”

“Oh?”

She grinned at him, then kissed him again. “Why don't you stay the weekend?” Her fingers trailed down his chest.

“I . . . I don't think that's a good idea.” Bastien took a step back.

Annie's red lips pulled into a pout as she took a step forward and reached up to stroke his cheek. "Why not?"

With her fingers on his face and her lips brushing along his jaw, Bastien had a hard time concentrating on his words. "We're not . . . we're not married."

"Oh, Bastien, that's the old world talking. Or your preacher. I think it's sweet that you save up your gasoline rations so you can take your mother to church a few times a month, but you shouldn't take what they say so seriously. There's a war on, don't you know? That changes things." She wrapped her hand around the back of his neck and brought his face down so she could kiss him fully on the mouth.

He pulled away. "War changes a lot of things, but it doesn't make marriage obsolete."

She ran her fingers along his shoulders. "So you want to get married? Before you spend the weekend with someone?"

Bastien nodded.

"I accept." She was smiling again, instead of pouting, but Bastien was confused.

"You accept what?"

She stood on her tiptoes to plant a kiss on his chin. "You said you want to get married, and I accept."

Bastien replayed their conversation, trying to figure out when he'd proposed. He liked Annie, but he was going overseas soon, and they'd only been on seven dates together. Annie was trying to kiss him again, so he stepped away.

"Aren't you going to kiss your new fiancée?"

"Annie, your kisses aren't very conducive to keeping a clear head."

“You spend too much time thinking and being responsible. Maybe you should loosen up for a change. Have some fun.” Her dark curls bobbed up and down as she laughed. “Stay the weekend, please, Bastien. When we see a chance for happiness, we’ve got to seize it while we can, especially with the war on. You do want to stay, don’t you?”

“Goodnight, Annie.” Bastien turned to leave.

“Bastien!”

He glanced over his shoulder, now a few feet away from her.

She had her hands on her hips and a playful smile on her lips. “If you change your mind, I’ll be here all weekend.”

Annie was gorgeous, so Bastien was tempted to stay, but he kept walking.

She called him the next day and convinced him to take her ring shopping. Part of him wanted to call the whole thing off, but part of him liked the idea of having a pretty face back home waiting for him. He’d spent most of his adult life trying to take care of his mom and siblings. Doing something crazy and irresponsible, like marrying Annie, was strangely appealing. And she was beautiful. So he went along with it, they found the perfect ring, and he spend the day telling himself that marrying Annie would be fun.

On Sunday, as planned, he rode his motorcycle down to Fairfax to see his family. In a change of plans, he took Annie with him. The warning signs started at church. She made little effort to hide her boredom, and spent more time looking at the new diamond on her left ring finger than at the speakers.

Dinner with his family reinforced his doubts.

“This is delicious,” Annie said, pointing to his mother’s chicken. “I guess I expected sausage and sauerkraut or something.” She laughed at her own joke.

“When are you planning to marry?” Bastien’s mom asked in heavily-accented English. Normally they spoke German at home, but she was making an effort to use only English while Annie was around.

“I’m supposed to leave in a few weeks, so I guess when I get back. Will you pass the rolls, Lukas?” Bastien asked his little brother.

Annie smiled. “I was thinking we could get married this week sometime, at the courthouse.”

Bastien nearly choked on his chicken. “This week?”

She was seated next to him at the table. She put her hand on his shoulder and squeezed. “I want it to happen before you leave.”

“Do you know where you’re going, Bastien?” his sister Stefanie asked.

“Scotland. More training.”

Stefanie fiddled with the end of the tablecloth. “And after that?”

Bastien shrugged.

“You could be gone for years, Bastien. That’s why we should get married now,” Annie said.

“And what if you end up a widow?”

His mother and his sister flinched. Annie seemed to take the possibility in stride. “You could get a life insurance policy. Then I’d be taken care of, if something happened to you.”

Bastien already had a life insurance policy, but his mother was the beneficiary, and he didn’t want to switch it to Annie, which was probably an indication that he wasn’t ready to marry her.

“Can I have your motorcycle when you leave?” Lukas asked.

“No.”

“What about when I turn seventeen?”

“That’s in two months. No.”

Lukas frowned, but wasn’t ready to give up yet. “What if you die? Can I have it then?”

“Lukas!” Their mother’s face showed pure horror.

“It’s not like I want him to die, Mom. But if he does, I don’t want you selling off the Beeza.”

Bastien smiled, grateful to talk about his motorcycle instead of his wedding plans. He’d fallen in love with the second-hand 1937 BSA M-20 two years ago, and been lucky to get it. The previous owner had been rough with it, so the price had been low enough for Bastien to make the purchase without feeling guilty. Lukas had spent hours watching Bastien work on it, and probably loved it as much as he did. “When you get the telegram from the War Department, it’s yours. Not before then.”

“*If, not when,*” Annie said.

“Don’t you want someone to ride it while you’re gone? You know, run the engine so it doesn’t rust up?” Lukas shoved most of a roll into his mouth, but he kept talking. “The war could go on for decades.”

“I’ve been praying it will end before Bastien leaves,” Stefanie said. For someone who’d grown up in Nazi Germany, it was a particularly naive statement.

Annie snorted. “That’s not likely. Germany isn’t going to just crumble. I mean I never used to believe any of that Nazi propaganda about the German race being a bunch of supermen, not until I met Bastien. If they all look like him, the Nazis will be hard to beat.” She ended with a flirtatious smile.

Bastien caught Stefanie's raised eyebrow as she pushed her green beans around her plate.

"Have you heard from Hannah?" Bastien asked. Their other sister had gotten married six months ago, then followed her new husband, a Marine, to his training base.

"She's good," Stefanie said. "Deliriously in love still."

"Didn't you say you have two sisters and two brothers? Where's your other brother?" Annie asked.

Bastien looked at his scarred hands. "He died. A few decades ago."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

Bastien did his best to change the subject. "Annie, do you remember that strudel we had a few weeks ago?"

"Mm. Yes." She tilted her head back and smiled at the memory. "It was like a bite of heaven."

"My mother's is better."

"Really?"

"Yes, really, and I saw some in the kitchen. But there are a few rules at our house. The mess from dinner has to be cleaned up before we get dessert, and anyone who doesn't help cook has to help clean. That means Lukas and I have dish duty. Guests are exempt."

Stefanie stood. "I think we have a few pictures from when Bastien was a boy, if you'd like to see them. Might give you an idea of what your children will look like." Stefanie gave Bastien a pointed look.

Annie pushed back from the table with a giggle. "Just because we're getting married doesn't mean we'll have children."

Bastien saw his mother's mouth drop open, then clamp shut. In the awkward silence that followed, Lukas began clearing the table, and Bastien quickly joined him. When they were in the kitchen, Lukas began his questions.

“So, she doesn't normally go to our church?”

“No.”

“Does she go to any church?”

Bastien handed Lukas a pile of dirty plates. “I don't know. She mentioned being baptized, but I think most Sundays she goes on picnics or something.”

“She doesn't even know why your hands are scarred, does she?”

“No.”

Lukas shook his head. “Julie knew.”

“That was different. Julie and I knew each other for almost a year.”

“I liked Julie better.”

“So did I,” Bastien said, but quickly realized that was the wrong thing to say. He looked over his shoulder, making sure Annie wasn't within earshot, but the women all seemed to be looking at the family's photo album, and the brothers were speaking in German.

“I thought you wanted to have kids.”

“Someday, yes. Right now I've got a war to fight.”

Lukas started scrubbing the roasting pan. “If you want kids, you know your wife will have to be involved in that, right?”

“Maybe she'll change her mind.”

“Maybe you should change your mind about marrying her.”

“I don’t want to talk about it anymore.” Bastien didn’t want to defend Annie or his engagement, and he’d been just as surprised as everyone else when she’d hinted that she didn’t want children.

“Don’t marry her, Bastien, please.”

“We’ll leave it until after the war. She may have changed her mind by then.” As he said it, Bastien realized he hoped she would change her mind—not about having children, but about getting married in the first place.

If he tried to cancel their engagement now, she’d think it was his family, not him, that had made the decision, and with her talent for twisting his words . . . how hard would it be to get out of marrying her? Maybe he’d just write her a letter. Or wait for her to get bored—maybe she’d call it off if the war lasted long enough. Besides, he was training to be a spy. He might not come home anyway.

After dessert, as Bastien and Annie were getting ready to leave, Stefanie pulled him aside.

“Bastien, you’re the best brother a girl could have, but you’ve got a horrible taste in women,” she whispered in German.

“That’s not nice.”

Stefanie crossed her arms and glanced over her shoulder to where Annie stood in front of the hallway mirror, tying her scarf over her head for the ride north. “No, but it’s true.”

“I thought you liked Julie.”

Stefanie rolled her eyes. “Yes, I loved Julie. But you didn’t pick her out, Hannah did. I know you avoided romance for years after Dad died so you could take care of us, but just

because you haven't dated very many girls doesn't mean you have to settle for the first one who shows interest."

"Annie's not the first one who's been interested."

"Second then. Bastien, you can do better."

Bastien pulled his jacket on. "I suppose I should just let my younger sisters pick all my dates for me?"

"Why not? Hannah did a good job. Give me a week, and I'll bet I can find someone better than her." Stefanie motioned toward Annie with her head.

"Hannah's choice still hurts most days."

"So you're lonely, and jumping at the first thing that comes along?"

Their mother walked to them and placed a hand on Stefanie's shoulder. "Bastien, if you love her, I'm sure the rest of us will learn to love her too." Her words were meant to offer support, but the disappointment in her eyes told a different story.

As he drove north that night on his BSA motorcycle, Annie's arms wrapped around his waist, her body snuggled next to his, Bastien realized why his mother's words had pierced him so completely. "If you love her . . ." she'd said. That was the problem. Annie was beautiful and she was fun to be with, but he didn't love her.

*[This scene was originally part of the second scene in chapter forty. Instead of having the flashback, I summarized what happened, so some of the following might sound familiar. The scene begins in 1936, when Bastien was 23 years old.]*

Bastien woke to a persistent pounding. Lukas was still asleep in his bed across the room. He was nine, and could sleep through anything except the smell of their mother's cooking. Bastien went into the hallway and walked past his sisters' room. Both their eyes were peering through the cracked-open door. His mother stood in the hallway tying her robe, and Bastien's father was about to answer the door. Bastien took a step toward the entry, intending to follow his father, but his mom put her hand on his arm, making him pause. Her face was white and she trembled with fear.

Bastien felt a knot form in his stomach, then tighten when his father opened the door to reveal two men in long black coats. They pushed past Bastien's father and shut the door behind them.

"Friedrich Ley?" one of the men asked.

"Yes?"

"You will come with us."

"Why?"

Bastien's mother moved toward her husband. "Friedrich, what's going on?"

The Gestapo man opened a courier bag, removed a newspaper and tapped his finger on an article. "We are seeking information about the writer of this article."

Bastien walked to the guard and took the paper from his hand. It was a Swiss paper, and the Gestapo guard pointed out an editorial criticizing the Hitler regime. It was signed, but not with a name Bastien recognized.

“You may take a few minutes to dress yourself, Mr. Ley.” The Gestapo guard took the newspaper back and put it away.

“Can’t it wait until tomorrow?” Bastien’s mother asked. “Surely my husband hasn’t done anything wrong.”

“This matter is most urgent.”

Bastien’s parents went into their bedroom, followed by the junior policeman. The senior man strode into the living room, sat on the couch, pulled a low table over, and propped his dusty boots up on its polished surface. He took out a cigarette and lit it, then looked around. “No ash tray?”

Bastien walked into his father’s study. There weren’t any ash trays, because no one in his family smoked. He pulled open the bottom drawer of his father’s desk and shifted a few papers until he found the thick knife Bastien’s father had carried with him into the trenches of the Great War. He hid the knife behind his back and grabbed a trashcan for the policeman’s ash.

The guard huffed in annoyance when Bastien placed the trashcan on the floor next to him. Bastien wrinkled his nose at the smell and thought he had the better reason for being annoyed. He looked toward the bedrooms, wondering if he should stab the arrogant Gestapo man smoking on their couch, but the other man emerged from his parents’ bedroom, followed by his mom and dad, so the chance was lost. Besides, Bastien didn’t know how to kill anyone, and surely this was all a mistake. His father was a good man. He couldn’t have done anything to merit arrest. He’d be back in a few hours, wouldn’t he?

His father motioned to his sisters and they crept from their room. He embraced them, whispered in their ears, and kissed their foreheads. “Go back to bed now.”

Hannah and Stefani nodded soberly and obeyed.

“What about Lukas?” Bastien’s mom asked.

His father slipped into the brothers’ room and reappeared soon after, with what looked like a tear streaming down his face. He embraced his wife and kissed her briefly before the guard shoved him toward the door.

“Come on. We don’t have all night.”

Bastien’s father paused in front of him, reaching a hand out to grip the arm Bastien used to hold knife. He looked at Bastien’s hand and shook his head. “Keep your nose clean, Bastien. I need you to take care of the family now.”

“But you’ll be back soon.”

His father’s hold on his arm tightened. “I hope so.” His father gave him a hug. “I love you, son, and I’m proud of you. You’ve grown into a good man.”

As his father was led out the door, Bastien wanted to say something, but his voice was too choked with emotion. When his mother saw the knife he’d been hiding, her tears turned to sobs.

The next year had been a melancholy limbo. When he wasn’t at school or sleeping, Lukas would sit across from the apartment’s entrance and stare into space, as if waiting for his father to walk through the door, returning to the family. Bastien’s two sisters had always filled the house with laughter and music, but the Ley household turned quiet, except sometimes, when he couldn’t sleep, and Bastien would hear his mother crying.

Bastien and his mother spent countless hours waiting in lines to see government officials, asking about the fate of Friedrich Ley. No one would give them details. It was only after twelve months had passed that one of Friedrich’s business partners, Herr Schaefermeyer, learned the truth.

Herr Schaefermeyer came to visit the family at the smaller apartment they'd moved to six months after Friedrich's arrest, then invited Bastien outside for a walk. "I'm sorry, Bastien. Your father is dead."

Bastien stopped walking, feeling as though he'd been physically struck. "Are you sure?"

Herr Schaefermeyer nodded. "Yes. He was writing editorials for a German-language Swiss newspaper under a pseudonym. They were less than flattering toward Hitler's government, and somehow they found out who was writing them. I traced your father to a camp for political dissidents. He got sick and never recovered."

"When did he die?"

"About a month ago. I'm sorry. I've been looking for him almost as long as you have, but by the time I traced him to Sachsenhausen, he'd already succumbed to typhus."

The two men began walking again. Bastien fought back emotion as he thought of his father dying all alone. It wasn't right. Friedrich Ley was loved by his family and his friends—dozens of people would have helped him, if they'd had the chance.

"Will your family be all right, Bastien? You'll have enough to eat?"

"We get by with what my construction job pays, even if it doesn't leave much extra. But I got my notice a few days ago. I'm supposed to report to the army in two weeks."

They walked half a block in silence.

"My father told me to look after the family, but I'm not sure how I can do that when I'm stationed who knows where. The pay will be less, too, I think. It's hard enough to keep Lukas in clothes that fit, and the girls will have to give up music lessons."

Herr Schaefermeyer put a hand on Bastien's shoulder. "Your father always said you were a good son. Responsible. You've done a good job taking care of your family."

Bastien looked at the scars on his right hand and shook his head. “No, I’m being conscripted and I’m about to betray his trust again.”

“Accidents happen. You haven’t betrayed your father’s trust, not now, not when you were younger.”

Bastien folded his arms. “Why did he do it? Writing those article—were they worth his life?”

“I guess he thought the truth was important. It needed to be shared.”

“Well he was right about the Nazis. I don’t like what they’re doing to Germany.” Bastien shook his head. “I shouldn’t say that out loud. My family will really be in trouble if I get arrested too.”

Herr Schaefermeyer slowed his pace. Bastien worried he’d been too vocal. Schaefermeyer was his father’s friend and business partner, but that didn’t mean they shared political beliefs. “If you could, would you leave Germany?”

Bastien thought for a few moments. He loved his country, or at least he’d always thought he did. But the Nazis had imprisoned his father without a trial simply for expressing a different viewpoint. That was wrong, and so was the way they were treating the Jews and trying to brainwash children in the Hitler Youth program. “Yes, I’d leave.”

Herr Schaefermeyer was quiet for a while. “I think I can help. I know a few people who could smuggle you beyond the borders. And I know someone who works in the American embassy. He might be able to give you somewhere to go. Are you interested?”

Bastien nodded.

“It will take money. More than I have. Are your father’s savings intact?”

“Mostly.”

“Good,” Herr Schaefermeyer said. “Leave it where it is for now, but start packing what you’ll need. Just a bag or two per person. Sell what you can—furniture, books, china. Hang on to small valuables like jewelry—could come in handy if you need to barter. But don’t let people know you’re planning to leave. The trick will be getting everything ready before you report to the army. Do you think your mother will agree?”

Bastien’s mother had been a shell of her former self, and that was before she’d received confirmation that her husband was dead. Bastien dreaded telling her the truth, but he would, that night. She’d depended on him since Friedrich disappeared, letting him make most of the decisions. Leaving Germany would be a bigger decision than any of the others he’d made, but he thought she’d agree. There wasn’t much left for them in Germany—just a collection of bad memories, and a pack of Nazis looking to arrest them if they stepped out of line.

*[This scene was originally before the final chapter. It was cut to make the book—especially the conclusion—shorter, and most of the important things were covered in the final chapter. Plus, I wanted the reader to experience revelations about Bastien’s injuries as Gracie experienced them.]*

The first time Bastien woke, it was dark. He could tell he was in a hospital, could see the men lying next to him in a long row of beds. But between the dim lighting and the blankets covering everything but their heads, he couldn’t tell if the men were German or American, so he kept his mouth shut. It wasn’t until the fourth time he remembered waking that light shone through the canvas tent walls and he could see farther than three beds in either direction.

A nurse came over to him. “Good morning.” She used English, so Bastien knew he was finally safe. But as she explained his injuries, his relief vanished. “You’re stable enough that we’ll transfer you to a station hospital later today. You’ll see a few specialists there and rest up for your trip home. Your war is over, Captain Ley.”

“I was with someone, when I was injured. Is she all right?” He’d half-expected Gracie to be sitting next to him when he woke, just as she had been when he’d been shot in the prison. Did her absence mean something was wrong?

The nurse looked at his chart. “You were originally admitted to a battalion aid station just south of Velletri. Now you’re in a field hospital near Anzio. I’ll see if anyone knows what happened to her, but I’ve got a lot of patients, so no promises.”

He waited for her answer, worrying about Gracie, worrying about his future. The nurse had told him his war was over, but he wasn’t so sure. He might be done fighting the Nazis, but thinking about his injuries, it seemed he still had a few battles ahead of him.

Several orderlies came to transfer him before the nurse returned, so when the transfer was complete, he still didn't know what had happened to Gracie. He hadn't been in his new room long when Colonel Ambrose came to visit. It wasn't Bastien's first choice for a visitor, and Captain Vaughn-Harris, lingering in the doorway, was among his last choices, but maybe Ambrose would have information.

"What happened to Gracie?" he asked. When Ambrose seemed confused by the question, Bastien clarified. "Agent Begni. Is she all right?"

The colonel nodded. "Yes. Fine. She made sure your last report went to the right people and filled us in on what happened in Rome. Not a bad bit of work, Captain Ley, not a bad bit of work."

Ambrose asked question after question about the assignment, and Bastien answered him, but in the back of his mind he kept wondering why he hadn't seen Gracie yet. If she wasn't in a hospital with damaged lungs or recovering from something that had happened after he lost consciousness, where was she?

Eventually a nurse looked into Bastien's private room. "I think you'd better come back another time," she said to the colonel. "The captain needs his rest."

"He's fine," Ambrose said. "I'm almost finished."

Ambrose was only on April, and Bastien was exhausted. He hoped the nurse could tell. She motioned the colonel out into the hallway and Bastien couldn't pick out the words of their muted argument, just its tone.

Vaughn-Harris walked over to the bed. "Bad luck, what happened. But I guess now I can stop worrying about Annie falling back in love with you. I doubt any woman would be interested in you now."

Vaughn-Harris left, and eventually Ambrose did too. Ambrose came back the next day, and the day after, but the colonel and the hospital staff were the only people Bastien saw. He tried to ignore the words Vaughn-Harris had spoken. Gracie had loved him, hadn't she? And surely she still would. But as days went by with no sign of her, Bastien was forced to think of other possibilities. Maybe Vaughn-Harris was right. Or maybe Gracie never had loved him. She'd been dependent on him, when they'd arrived in Rome, but that wasn't the same thing. The longer they'd worked together, the closer they'd become, but maybe he'd been mistaken—all her devotion had been for the mission, not for him.

One melancholy morning a nurse gave him a pep talk. She told him he'd still be able to finish college, still be able to have a family, that he'd be able to walk again as soon as his shoulders healed enough that he could use crutches. The future would be different, but not necessarily dismal. In the daylight, he could make himself believe it.

In the dark, it was a little harder. The nurses woke him every three hours for penicillin shots, and he rarely went right back to sleep. After he'd been shot in the Rome prison, he'd had similar feelings of panic, but back then, Gracie had been sitting in the chair next to him, and things had always seemed less bleak with her by his side.

At first, he longed to see her again. But as a full week went by, he began to think that maybe it was for the best that she hadn't come. Vaughn-Harris was right. Even if Gracie had felt something for him before, she wouldn't want him now. Better for her to get on with her life than to be burdened by him. And better for him if he didn't have to see the pity or disgust on her face when she came to see him.

He was afraid of the future, and afraid to face it alone.