

WAGOLL - Alfie's Journal Entry

12th May 1915,

Well, today has been the most unusual and frightening day of my life. Even now, as I sit perched on the edge of my bed writing by candlelight, I can't fully comprehend what has happened. I certainly can't predict what the future holds for myself, my family or Lucy.

To begin with, the day was going as expected. I had successfully missed the school boat and waited patiently for my dad by the shoreline. From there, we had made our way out to sea, determined to catch plenty of fish to bring home for supper.

It was then that everything changed and, even though it's early days, I feel like our lives might have changed forever.

Our fishing excursion had taken us close to Foreman's Island and, as we drifted closer, I began to hear an unmistakable sound: crying. I could see from the trepidation in my dad's eyes that he had heard the noise too, but his fear of the island was clear. He liked to make out that the place didn't bother him but I had always known how he really felt - there was an uncharacteristic urgency about him whenever the boat got too close.

At that moment, despite my own fear, I discovered a bravery I didn't know I had. I urged my dad to investigate and in no time at all we had reached the sandy beach of the island's only landing point.

I feel arrogant saying otherwise, but I honestly didn't feel afraid. Even with the wind howling around us and the ever-watchful glare of the gulls, I didn't hesitate. I set one foot forward and the next one followed suit. It was only when I reached the peak of the nearby dunes that a chill descended and I felt the hairs on the back of my neck stand up - was I being warned of some impending doom?

At this point, I also noticed that my dad hadn't joined me. For the first time in my life, I doubted my dad; I thought that he might turn back, maybe even jump in the boat and row his own way home. But he came through: a few moments later, he was stood by my side. He was breathing heavily but he was there.

Both calling out, we fought our way through the brambles towards the Pest House. What we found inside will stay with me for

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ever and the image of the pale face that greeted us is seared, always, into my mind.

We found a girl, hidden at first but then she sprang outwards like an animal - wounded, desperate, terrified. She tripped on her way out of the Pest House and it was then that I saw the hero that my dad truly was. As he turned her over and spotted the severity of her wounds, his expression changed from one of fear to one of resilience and perseverance. Without saying a word, he threw the casualty into his arms and beat a path towards the beach with an athleticism someone half his age would have struggled to muster. I followed helplessly.

Once in the boat, he lay her carefully onto the decking, gripped the oars in his weather-beaten hands and thundered out to sea with a strength I hadn't seen in him before. Frequently, his eyes darted to the girl, checking desperately for signs of life. I know he considered asking me to check her pulse, and I thought of doing the same as well, but I think he was cautious - he didn't want to frighten me more than I already was.

Almost miraculously, we arrived back to Bryher and were greeted instantly by hoards of passers-by and the local medic, Dr Crow.

The rest of the day seemed to pass me by in a blur but, in summary, the girl's name turned out to be Lucy and, against all the odds, she was alive on our return.

Lucy is now in the room next door, and I can't get her out of my head. From the evidence we've been able to find, she seems to be German, which is information we need to strictly keep to ourselves - Germany is our enemy in this war and the people of the islands are not going to appreciate a German mouth to feed.

I am worried for Lucy. I fear for what her future may hold if anyone finds out the truth. I know that it is my duty, and my family's, to keep her safe. Anyway, my eyelids are drooping now and my pencil is feeling heavy.

'Til tomorrow.

Alfie