

*Broken
Heart*

By

Gary Whitmore

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Chapter 1

It's a beautiful sunny Thursday morning over the countryside west of Pine Cove, Florida. It's June 1978.

Today was a perfect day for flying with scattered puffy clouds at six thousand and two hundred feet, and the winds were around eight knots from the northeast.

A white with red Piper Warrior Cadet airplane, with the tail number of N986ZT, flew straight and level at three thousand five hundred feet just west of Lake Downing.

Inside the Warrior Cadet was Jason Jenkins, a fifty- seven-year-old certified flight instructor, and owner of the plane. Jason was distinguished looking with a three-inch-long scar above his left eye and had salt and pepper hair. He is still a looker as lots of women agreed.

Jason was the owner of the High Flying Adventures aviation services company located in the north area of the Sandbar Island Airport. Jason's business was small, and only had two employees. He has a female office manager and a part-time mechanic.

Jason had dreams of expanding his business with more instructors and more planes, which included a Piper J-3 Cub seaplane. He submitted a request from the airport authority to build a small restaurant, with docks, just north of runway 29 by the Indian River. Besides, he went to the bank to secure a loan.

In the pilot seat of the Warrior Cadet was a student pilot named Kimberly Brookes. She's thirty-five years old and a beautiful chubby blonde with blue eyes and spoke with an English accent.

Jason kept a watchful eye on while Kimberly made a shallow turn to the right with the Warrior. "You're doing great Kimberly," he praised.

She flashed a proud smile while glancing over at him.

"Now, let's perform a power-off stall," he stated.

Kimberly's proud smile quickly vanished, and suddenly looked nervous and hesitated.

Jason noticed her hesitation in performing this required maneuver. "You can't be a private pilot by being afraid."

Kimberly took a deep breath for courage and decided to be brave.

She performed a clearing turn to the right in the Warrior.

She performed a clearing turn to the left in the Warrior.

"Excellent, Kimberly. I'm impressed you remembered the clearing turns this time."

She flew the plane straight ahead then she took many deep breaths.

She pulled back on the throttle to the idle position.

She cringed while she pulled back on the control yoke.

The nose of the Warrior rose upward.

She continued to pull back on the control yoke.

The nose of the Warrior rose higher.

The stall alarm soon blared from the console indicating the wings of the Warrior were stalling. The sound of that alarm scared Kimberly, and she shut her eyes. "Ahhh!" she lightly screamed out and let go of the control yoke the second the plane dropped.

The second Jason saw her hands let go of the controls, he quickly sprung into action, and he grabbed his control yoke. Jason resumed control of the plane and recovered from the stall.

"Okay, we'll have to do more work on these stalls," he calmly stated while he flew the plane straight and level.

"I'm never going to get the hang of performing that maneuver," she replied feeling ashamed with her recent performance.

He looked over at her and gave her a warm smile. "Don't worry, you'll be mastering them after some more practice. And there's one thing you have to remember, this Warrior Cadet is a very stable airplane. Watch this," he told her.

Jason made a right clearing turn, and then he made a left clearing turn in the Warrior.

He pulled back on the throttle to idle and pulled back on the control yoke. The nose of the Warrior rose higher. The stall alarm blared. He let go of the yoke.

Kimberly's eyes widened with fright thinking they were going to crash to the ground. But she watched while the plane eventually settled into a straight and level configuration all by itself.

"See, I told you that this plane is very stable," Jason said while he grabbed his control yoke and pushed in the throttle to the proper setting.

"I see what you mean," she replied and looked surprised at the performance of the plane.

The plane was soon flying straight and level at three thousand and four hundred feet.

"Okay Kimberly, she's your plane and let's call it a day. Take us back to the airport," he told her.

Kimberly felt better while she grabbed the yoke and took control of the plane.

Five minutes later, Kimberly descended and flew the plane at one thousand feet and was five miles southwest of the Sandbar Island airport.

"Okay, Kimberly, make your calls," he told her.

"Sandbar Island traffic, this is Warrior nine eight six Zulu Tango, five miles southwest of the airport. Inbound for a forty-five degree downwind entry for runway two niner, Sandbar Island," she said into the radio.

Jason looked satisfied with her radio call and watched while she flew into a forty-five-degree entry into the downwind leg for runway 29.

"Sandbar Island traffic, Warrior nine eight six Zulu Tango making a forty-five degree downwind entry for runway two niner, Sandbar Island," Kimberly said into the radio after she made the forty-five-degree entry into the downwind leg of runway 29.

A few seconds later, Kimberly configured the power and flap setting when she was abeam the numbers for runway 29.

“Sandbar Island traffic, Warrior nine eight six Zulu Tango turning left base for runway two niner, Sandbar Island,” she said into the radio when she turned onto the base leg of the pattern over the Indian River.

She configured the flaps while she was on the base leg of the pattern.

“Sandbar Island traffic, Warrior nine eight six Zulu tango turning final for runway two niner, full stop, Sandbar Island,” she said into the radio when she turned onto the final leg of the pattern.

Kimberly configured the plane and power was at idle when she knew the plane could make the runway.

While the Warrior glided down over the Indian River to runway 29, Jason looked out the front window and glance at the spot where he wanted to build his restaurant. “It’s going be nice!” he thought to himself while looking at the area by the river and runway 29.

Kimberly leveled out the Warrior once she was in the ground effect over the runway.

“Fly me down to the end of the runway,” Jason told her.

She pitched up the nose of the plane, and it floated a little, but eventually, the plane landed after a few bounces.

“Good landing, Kimberly,” Jason praised her.

She taxied the plane off to the right at the nearest taxiway.

Kimberly parked the Warrior next to Jason’s other airplane, which was a light brown Cessna 172.

After the Warrior was parked and secured, Kimberly and Jason, with small flight bags in hand, walked to his small office that was next to his small hangar. He also had a clipboard and the keys to the plane in his other hand.

Jason’s High Flying Adventures building was small and consisted of a counter, his office, bathrooms, and a pilot’s lounge.

Behind the counter, was Mandy Jepson, a twenty- seven-year-old female where she greeted the pilots, issued the keys to the planes, and processed all the required paperwork. She has worked for Jason since the first day he opened up his business

three years ago. She sang along to Rod Stewart's The First Cut Is The Deepest song that played on the radio while she completed filing some maintenance paperwork.

She heard the bell ring indicating someone entered the building. She stopped singing when she noticed Kimberly and Jason enter the lobby. Mandy smiled at Jason while he walked up to the counter and dropped off the clipboard and keys to the Warrior.

He walked Kimberly to the small pilot's lounge to the left of the counter.

The pilot's lounge consisted of a small cubbyhole with a snack vending machine, couch, two chairs, a table, and magazine rack with current and old issues of Plane and Pilot and Flying magazines.

Kimberly removed her logbook from her flight bag and handed it to Jason.

He opened up her logbook and annotated today's one-hour lesson.

"Okay Kimberly, next time, I really want to concentrate on those power-off stalls. I know you can handle them, so don't be afraid. The Warrior won't crash," he said with a comforting tone and a warm smile.

"I know Jason. I'll get the hang of them soon," she replied, as Jason always made her feel at ease when her flying wasn't going smooth.

He handed her back her logbook, and she placed it inside her flight bag.

Kimberly and Jason stood up from the couch. She glanced at him, and her eyes indicated there was something personal she wanted to ask him. She hesitated for a few seconds while she debated in her mind. After flip-flopping for a few seconds, she decided to go ahead and ask him. "Jason, I've meant to ask you something," she said.

"Ask away," he replied.

Kimberly fidgeted for a second while she wondered if she was making a mistake. "Ah, my mother's a private pilot and owns a couple of planes, and I would love it if you would meet

her. She lives about eighty-five miles southwest of here down in West Haven,” she finally blurted out with hopeful eyes.

Jason cringed a little while he looked at Kimberly’s hopeful eyes and hesitated on answering.

“She’s beautiful, and I have a picture,” Kimberly replied while she reached inside her flight bag and pulled out her wallet.

Jason placed a hand on her hand and stopped her from opening her wallet. “Thanks for the offer, Kimberly, but I’ll pass. I really don’t care to date right now since my business keeps me extremely busy,” he stated.

“I understand,” Kimberly replied while she hid her disappointment behind her fake smile then placed her wallet back into her flight bag.

Jason walked her to the counter where Mandy had her bill ready.

Kimberly paid for her lesson by personal check. “I’ll see you on Tuesday,” she said while she dropped her checkbook into her flight bag.

“Next Tuesday it is,” Jason replied then escorted her to the door to show her he wasn’t upset with her offer to date her mother.

Jason opened the door and watched while she stepped outside.

He closed the door then walked over to the counter.

“Has she shown any improvement?” Mandy asked while she got up and walked to the coffee pot on a credenza behind the counter.

“Mandy, let’s say I felt safer when the Germans were shooting at me when she first started. But she’s slowly showing signs of improvement,” he told her while she poured him a cup of coffee.

Mandy chuckled while she walked back and handed him his coffee.

“But I remember my niece being the same type of challenge,” he said then sipped his coffee.

Mandy smiled then she reached down by her paperwork.

She set an invitation to her wedding on the counter in front of Jason. “Speaking of a challenge, I really wish you would reconsider coming to my wedding, Jason,” she said with a warm smile.

Jason frowned while he looked down at the invitation. “No offense, but I don’t do weddings. But I would like to give you a little fatherly advice about your present. Stay single!” he said then winked at her, grabbed his coffee cup, and walked over to his office, located to the right of the counter.

Mandy was hurt while she removed her wedding invitation off the counter. She set it down by her paperwork then saw two letters that came in today’s mail.

She grabbed the letters and walked away from the counter.

Jason sat behind his desk in his small office and stared out his small office window while sipping his coffee. His mind wondered while he thought about his future then his mind wandered off in another direction, and he thought about his past.

“I forgot these letters came for you today,” Mandy said while entered his office.

She walked up to his desk and dropped off the two letters. “Your next lesson is in twenty minutes with Doctor Elroy. You have a cross-country trip with him,” she reminded him while she walked out of his office.

Jason looked at the letters, and his eyes widened with anticipation of good news.

He opened up the first letter from Sun Bank and read it.

“Dear Mister Jenkins, we’re sorry to inform you that your loan request for expanding your aviation business at the Sandbar Island has been disapproved,” he read from the letter signed by Bobby Wilson, Loan Manager.

He looked disappointed then quickly opened up the other letter from the local airport authority.

“Dear Mister Jenson, we’re sorry to inform you that your request on the building of a restaurant on Sandbar Island airport property has been denied,” he read from the letter from Kent Guise of the local airport authority.

Jason was disappointed while he crumpled up the two letters then tossed them into his trash can.

He heard the bell ring when someone entered the building. “Good afternoon, Doctor Elroy,” Mandy called out from behind the counter.

Jason got up from behind his desk and walked out of his office.

Jason walked up to Dr. Elroy, who waited at the counter by Mandy. “Hey doc, are you ready for our little cross-country trip?” he asked Dr. Elroy.

“I’m ready,” Dr. Elroy replied with a look of confidence.

“Great, go out there, and preflight the one seventy-two and I’ll be out shortly,” Jason responded.

Mandy handed Dr. Elroy the clipboard and keys for the Cessna 172.

Dr. Elroy took the clipboard and keys and headed to the front door.

While Dr. Elroy went outside to preflight the Cessna 172, Jason went off to the bathroom.

Twenty minutes later, Dr. Elroy and Jason took off from runway 29 and made a left crosswind departure to the south and headed to Vero Beach.

Later that day, Dr. Elroy performed a touch-and-go at the Vero Beach airport then they headed northwest to West Haven.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Elroy made his final approach to runway 5 of the West Haven Gillis Field airport and flew over Lake Jess.

“Keep an eye for seaplanes taking off or landing with the lake down below. They shouldn’t be a threat since they maintain a five hundred foot traffic pattern,” Jason warned Dr. Elroy since there was Jack Brown’s seaplane training base there at the north end of the lake.

“Dr. Elroy saw a seaplane on the lake, but it wasn’t a threat to their approach to the runway.

Dr. Elroy made a smooth landing and taxied over to the FBO and parked.

After they refueled the plane, they took a bathroom break, bought some cookies and candy bars from a vending machine.

They sat down in the small lounge and ate their snacks while they relaxed.

After ten minutes had passed, Dr. Elroy performed a quick preflight on the Cessna 172.

While this was being done, Jason looked around the airfield. He thought this would be a good location for a business. In fact, he felt the one end of the airport property by Lake Hartridge would be a perfect location for his restaurant.

Jason then looked over at another area of the airport near Highway 292 and saw a large hangar and a smaller hangar that was a new aviation museum. He thought nothing of it and while he walked over to Dr. Elroy and the Cessna 172.

A little while later, and Dr. Elroy took off from runway 5 and headed back northeast to Sandbar Island.

After his workday of instructing was done, Jason went home.

He went into the kitchen, where he made a pot of coffee.

He walked over to the phone and saw he had a message from his answering machine. He played back the recorded message from the machine.

“Jason, it’s me, Katie. I haven’t heard from you since our date in two weeks, and I was wondering if you wanted to go out tomorrow night. Maybe dinner and a movie? Call me,” Katie’s message stated from the tape.

Jason erased her message.

While the coffee was brewing, Jason walked over to the refrigerator and opened up the freezer. He removed a frozen dinner and walked over to the oven.

It was later that evening, and Jason relaxed in his den while he drank some more coffee.

The walls of his den were decorated with numerous pictures from his thirty-year Air Force career, as a pilot. He retired in 1973, as a Colonel and used the money he saved for years to start up his aviation business.

While he sipped on his coffee, he looked over at his blueprints for his restaurant he called High Flying Eatery. The main building had twenty tables, and he wanted to decorate the walls with numerous pieces of airplanes.

There was an outside wooden deck with tables where some people could eat outside and enjoy the view of the Indian River or watch the airplanes take off or land on the runway.

He looked disappointed while got up and folded up his blueprints.

He walked them over to the closet. He opened the doors and placed the prints on the top shelf for good.

His phone rang in the kitchen, so he walked out of the den.

He walked into his kitchen and picked up the phone.

“Jason Jenkins residence,” he answered the call.

“Hey, Uncle Jason, it’s me, Robyn,” his niece answered the call.

“Hey baby,” he replied with a smile.

“I should be landing tomorrow morning at around ten in the morning. I’m so looking forward to spending the weekend with you,” she said.

“Me too and I’ll see you tomorrow at the airport,” he replied with a warm smile then he hung up the phone.

Jason left the kitchen and retired to the living room to watch TV for the evening.

Chapter 2

It's Friday morning.

Jason woke up bright and early at six for the start of another day of flying. But this time it would be for pleasure and not for business.

After he took a shower, he made scrambled eggs and drank his morning cups of coffee to get things started.

Jason closed down his business today and for the weekend so he could spend time with Robyn. Mandy loved having these days off with pay, as it gave her additional time to work on her wedding plans.

After breakfast, Jason drove to his office to take care of some paperwork while he waited for Robyn.

A few hours later, and it was now nine fifty-two that morning.

Jason was finishing his third cup of coffee while he reviewed some paperwork at his desk. He had on the radio so he could listen to the radio calls made by the pilots.

"Sandbar Island traffic, this is Piper Arrow eight seventy-four Alpha Hotel, five miles to the southeast of the airport. Heading for a forty-five-degree entry for downwind on runway two niner, Sandbar Island," Robyn called out from the radio.

Jason smiled after hearing her radio call, and he got up from his desk with his coffee cup and walked out of his office.

He walked to the door and stepped outside, keeping the door open while he looked to the south of the airport.

"Sandbar Island traffic, Arrow eight seventy-four Alpha Hotel entering downwind around mid-field for runway two niner, Sandbar Island," Robyn called out from the radio.

After a few minutes of scanning the blue sky from his office window, he saw a Piper Arrow heading downwind for runway 29. He smiled, watching the Piper fly down the downwind leg of the pattern.

Jake watched while Robyn turned her Arrow on the base leg of the pattern after making her call on the radio.

He watched while she turned her Arrow on final approach for runway 29 after making her call on the radio.

He watched while Robyn landed the Arrow on the runway.

A few minutes later, Robyn parked her Arrow in a spot next to Jason's Warrior Cadet.

After she shut off the engine, Jason walked over to her airplane.

"Robyn!" he called out when she stepped out of the airplane and walked down the wing.

Robyn White was a beautiful twenty-eight-year-old brunette with soft brown eyes.

She rushed over and immediately gave Jason a hug and kiss on his cheek. "It's so good to see you, Uncle Jason," she said.

She went over and opened the baggage door and removed a small overnight bag and set it down on the tarmac.

Jason tied down her plane while she went inside her plane and finished securing the cockpit.

Fifteen minutes later, Jason drove Robyn to his house, in Waterway Heights, which was located off Courtney Parkway.

Meanwhile, back at the West Haven Gillis Airport, the Spencer's Aviation Museum was about ninety-eight percent ready for its grand opening tomorrow. It was located on the airport property situated on the main entrance from Highway 292.

The museum contained numerous vintage aircraft in the main room of the twenty-eight thousand square foot hangar. Located along the side walls were multiple smaller rooms that housed various pieces of aircraft and other World War I and II military items and uniforms.

In the Bombers Room, there were various pieces of the insides of different bombers in this five thousand square foot room. There were consoles, seats, radios, bombardier equipment, etc., salvaged from World War II bombers that crashed. Each display had a display board that provided information about the particular item and the bomber.

The various items were laid out in a maze in the room.

Cindy Grant Spencer was fifty-three years old and still a beautiful blonde with blue eyes and spoke with an English accent. She kept in shape by jogging and spending time at the gym.

Kimberly Brookes was Cindy's daughter, and she drove down here to spend the day with her mother.

Cindy and Kimberly walked around the maze of items while she looked at her clipboard double-checking that the items were in their proper place.

"You'll have to keep working at it. Power-off stalls aren't that difficult, Kimberly," Cindy told her while she checked off some of the items on her checklist.

"I know, and having a patient instructor is helping," Kimberly replied.

"He sounds really nice," Cindy said while she checked off some more items on her checklist.

Kimberly took this as her opportunity. "Jason's great and about your age and his only defect is a scar above his eye. I asked him if he wanted to meet you. I think you two would get along great."

"Kimberly, please don't try to fix me up," Cindy said with a frown.

"But there's something about him. It's like I've known him all my life. Plus he was a pilot in the Air Force. Retired as a Colonel," Kimberly responded, hoping that would change her mother's mind.

"Honey, I really don't want a relationship right now. What I really want is a grandchild to keep me busy," Cindy said to throw that out as a hint. Again.

"I know. Rob and I will work on that after I get my pilot's license."

"Do it before I'm put in an old folks home and forget who I am," Cindy jokingly replied.

"I know," Kimberly said while she chuckled.

They walked over to a huge wooden crate with "Sweet Bird" stenciled on it located in the center of the maze.

Cindy got a little nervous seeing that crate and worried it wouldn't be ready by tomorrow.

Kimberly saw at the crate. "You got a new piece. Where did it come from?"

"Germany," Cindy replied while she looked around the room. She felt relieved when she saw Lenny and Henry, two museum workers, walk over with some crowbars in their hand.

Lenny and Henry walked over to the Sweet Bird crate and started prying it open with the crowbars.

"Let's put some fresh flowers on dad's grave," Cindy told Kimberly while the workers continued to tear apart the wooden crate.

Cindy and Kimberly turned around and walked toward the exit.

Back over in Sandbar Island, Jason and Robyn jogged south down the sidewalk along Courtney Parkway.

"I wish Jerry and Patty could have come along."

"He couldn't get away from work since he has this court case on Monday and Patty had a birthday party to attend on Saturday. But they both wanted to wish you a happy birthday," Robyn replied.

"That's too bad he had to work," he said.

"How's the business going?"

"Great. My female student yesterday freaked out and took her hands off the controls during a power-off stall," he told her.

"I remember getting us into some pretty scary moments when you taught me," Robyn added.

"Well, the real scary moment came when she asked me to meet her mother."

Robyn's eyes lit up after hearing about him, potentially meeting another woman. "Are you going to take her out for a date?"

"I politely declined, my dear."

Robyn looked disappointed. "I don't understand you."

"Strange thing is that I have this weird feeling I've known Kimberly all my life, and I don't know why."

"You know, I've never seen you in a relationship with a woman. I've seen you date lots of women, but you soon dumped them when it got serious," she said then paused. "Are you secretly hiding the fact you're gay?" she jokingly said.

Jason playfully stuck his tongue out at her. "I was too busy raising you to bother with women!"

"You did a fine job, Uncle Jason. And I can imagine that mom and dad agree up in heaven," she said while she looked up at the sky up at heaven. "But now you have all the time in the world for a nice relationship," she added.

"How're the plans on expanding your business?"

"I got turned down for another business loan, and the airport authority denied my restaurant proposal," he sadly replied.

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"I'm afraid my dreams of expanding my business is spinning to the ground," he added looking depressed.

Robyn looked like she was scheming something. "Come on, Uncle Jason, don't give up now. Maybe you can move to another airport and expand your business."

"Naw," he said while they turned around on the sidewalk and jogged back in the direction of his home.

Over in Plant City, Cindy, with a potted plant in hand, and Kimberly walked through a Cemetery.

They stopped and looked down at a headstone.

"Peter Spencer. Born May 20, 1921. Died November 2, 1970," the headstone stated.

Cindy knelt down and placed the potted plant by the headstone.

There was something that Kimberly always wanted to ask her mom. "I'm curious, was dad your first and only love?" she asked while she looked down at the headstone.

Cindy fiddled with the potted plant while she debated in her mind on how to answer that question. "I lost my first love during the war," she explained while she stood up.

Kimberly got surprised by Cindy's response.

"I was devastated by the loss of him. But I've been thinking about him during the past couple of years," Cindy told Kimberly with sadness in her eyes.

"What about dad? Did he know?"

"Your father knew about him but never met him." "This is exciting, as I never knew of your first love.

What's his name?"

Cindy fidgeted, as she really wanted to put that part of her life out of her mind.

"His name is not important. But why don't you come back to the museum before you drive back to Sandbar Island? I'll show you a picture," Cindy replied.

"I would love that," Kimberly curiously replied.

Cindy and Kimberly walked arm in arm and headed back to the parking lot.

Back in Sandbar Island, Robyn and Jason got cleaned up from their jog then headed out for an early dinner down at a Mexican restaurant south of the town of Stoneway.

Back at West Haven, Cindy and Kimberly went back into her museum.

As soon as they got inside, Cindy walked Kimberly over to the Bombers Room.

Cindy and Kimberly walked through the bomber room and got to the display for the Sweet Bird, which was half of the smashed nose section of a B-17 Flying Fortress.

Kimberly looked the nose section over.

She noticed the faded and scratched nose art of a sexy female blonde cartoon under the "Sweet Bird" words.

"Cindy, we're ready to finish with the display board. Do you have that picture ready?" Lenny one of her workers asked.

"I'll bring it down in a second, Lenny," Cindy told him.

Lenny walked away to the Sweet Bird display.

Cindy and Kimberly walked away and headed out of the Bombers Room.

A few minutes later, Cindy walked Kimberly into her office and walked up to her desk. Cindy sat down and opened the

middle drawer and removed an old black and white photo taken during World War II in England.

"Here's Jay Jay," Cindy told her while she got up from her desk, walked over and handed Kimberly the photo.

Kimberly looked at the old photo that showed Jay Jay, in his Army uniform with his arm around Cindy, who was in her late teens.

They stood under the nose of the brand new Sweet Bird B-17, with that nose art of a sexy blonde, at an Army Air Corp field in England.

"His name was Jay Jay?" Kimberly curiously asked.

"Jason 'Jay Jay' Jenkins," Cindy replied while her eyes looked sad with the memory of her love.

Kimberly's eyes widened, as this sounded all too familiar. "My flight instructor is named Jason Jenkins," she told Cindy.

"That's nice. I can imagine there are thousands of Jason Jenkins in America. My Jay Jay died while in a German Stalag. The Nazis captured him after his B seventeen was shot down. This is part of the remains of his plane," Cindy told her while her eyes watered. She wiped away some tears that flowed down her cheek.

"You could be right. I've never heard my instructor being called Jay Jay and don't know if he was in the Second World War," Kimberly replied, then handed the picture back to Cindy. She glanced at her watch. "I better hit the road," she said then leaned over and gave Cindy a kiss on her cheek.

Cindy walked Kimberly out of her office.

Cindy then walked Kimberly to the front door of the museum where they gave each other kisses on the cheek.

Kimberly went out of the museum while Cindy walked to the Bombers Room with that old photo in her hand.

Later that night, Jason and Robyn relaxed in his house while she prepared for a short cross-country flight tomorrow morning.

Cindy relaxed in her home while she double-checked her checklist to ensure everything was ready for tomorrow's grand opening.

Chapter 3

It was Saturday morning and the start of another beautiful sunny day across Florida.

Jason and Robyn got up early.

She made his breakfast to start off his birthday. “Happy birthday Uncle Jason,” she said while she placed a plate of her famous French toast in front of Jason then she kissed his cheek.

“Thank you, baby,” he said, then took a bite of his French toast.

After breakfast, Jason drove Robyn to the Sandbar Island Airport.

Jason helped her pre-flight her Piper Arrow, and they were soon inside ready for a short trip.

Robyn started up the Arrow and taxied over to runway.

After her ground check was completed, Robyn taxied her plane to the hold-short line.

“Sandbar Island traffic, Piper Arrow eight seventy-four Alpha Hotel departing runway one one, Sandbar Island,” she said into the radio then taxied her plane onto the runway and lined up with the centerline.

After a quick glance at the console gauges, Robyn gave it full throttle, and she rolled her Arrow down the runway.

She was soon airborne and then made a right crosswind departure out of the traffic pattern.

Robyn banked her Arrow and headed southwest.

In West Haven, Cindy woke up and after her breakfast, she left her lovely house on Lake Hartridge and headed to the airport.

Up in the sky inside Robyn’s Arrow, she was straight and level at two thousand feet.

Jason glanced over at her and looked the console. “You haven’t forgotten what I taught you.”

“How could I, with your nagging voice seared in my brain. They chuckled.

“Where are you taking me for my birthday?” he asked while he looked at the compass heading and the ground down below.

“It’s a surprise,” she said while she scanned her console gauges.

Jason looked curious as to his birthday surprise while he glanced out the window and enjoyed the scenery.

In West Haven, Cindy arrived at her museum and conducted a short meeting with all her employees and volunteers. They all indicated they were ready to work the grand opening that was about to start in thirty minutes.

Back up in the sky at two thousand feet, Robyn started her descent to the West Haven Gillis Field.

The clouds were starting to build up, and she could see a thunderstorm off about ten miles to the southeast.

Jason saw the airport up head, and he knew where she was landing. “Why are you taking me to West Haven?” he curiously asked.

“I wanted to take you this new aviation museum that’s having their grand opening today,” she told him while she monitored her descent, which was now at eighteen hundred feet.

“Robyn, I really don’t want to see some aviation museum. Can’t we go to Disney instead?”

“I thought you would love this place since they have some World War two planes and other items,” she replied.

“I don’t know, Robyn,” he said and didn’t look thrilled with seeing old World War two stuff.

“When I saw the ad in the Flying magazine, I had this good feeling about this place,” she replied with a gleam in her eye.

“Turn us around, and we’ll go grab my car and drive down to Disney,” he replied.

“Gillis Field traffic, Piper Arrow eight seventy-four Alpha Hotel, five miles to the southeast of the airport. Heading for a forty-five-degree entry for downwind on runway five, Gillis field,” she talked into the radio.

Robyn flew her Arrow at a thousand feet and entered the downwind traffic pattern for West Haven Gillis Field. "I'm the pilot in command, so you just settle back and trust me for once," she replied with a tone of authority. "Besides, there's a storm to the southeast so we might as well wait it out in the museum," she added.

Jason watched while she flew her Arrow in the downwind leg for runway 5. He decided to go ahead and go to the museum since Robyn had her heart on taking him there for his birthday.

A few minutes later, Robyn taxied her Arrow over to the area for airplanes visiting the museum. She shut down the engine then secured the cockpit.

After they tied the Arrow down, Jason and Robyn walked over to the museum. The sound of thunder of the approaching storm was heard.

Jason held open the museum door for Robyn then he entered.

The grand opening was a success so far, as there were approximately one hundred folks inside the large building.

Big band music entertained the guests from the numerous speakers located throughout the building. At the moment, Glenn Miller's In the Mood song played from the speakers.

Robyn walked over and paid the five dollar entrance fee for the museum for Jason.

After they got their tickets, they looked the area over and saw numerous vintage airplanes on display in the center of the room.

On the other walls were entrances to other rooms with different displays.

One room included a souvenir shop where you could tell by hats, tee-shirts and numerous aviation books.

"Are those planes bringing back old memories?" she asked him.

"A few," he replied while he looked at some of the nearby planes.

“Great. Maybe I’ll finally hear about your experiences over in England,” she responded then placed her arm around his arm.

“Like I’ve told you before, I flew, the Germans shot at me, then I came home. The end,” he told her.

“There has to be more to it than that, Uncle Jason,” she replied disappointed.

“That pretty much sums it up,” Jason replied while he looked over at the airplanes.

Robyn looked determined while she placed her arm and walked Jason over to the first airplane, which was a PT- 17 Stearman Kaydet.

“I love the Stearman,” Robyn said while they walked around and admired the plane that was painted to its 1941 Navy color scheme.

“I learned how to fly in a Stearman during my Army flight training,” Jason said while he peeked into the rear cockpit. “I would sit in the back with the instructor in the front. He would talk to me using a rubber tube, called a Gosport, connected to my helmet’s earflap. But that wasn’t a good way to communicate, so our instructors would use hand signals,” he said while he walked around the plane. “There’s nothing like flying in an open cockpit,” he smiled remembering those early Army Air Corp days.

Robyn smiled over him telling that bit of information.

“There, that didn’t hurt, did it? I had no idea you flew in a Stearman during your training.”

They walked around and admired the Stearman a few more times then Robyn walked Jason over to a P47 Thunderbolt.

Jason smiled while he walked around and admired the P47.

“The P forty-sevens would escort our B seventeen bombers to Germany. They saved my butt numerous times from the German Messerschmitt’s,” he told her while he looked at the engine of the P47.

Robyn kissed Jason’s cheek. “You’re on a good roll,” she said with a warm smile.

“That’s about all there is, except for all the destruction our bombs did. But that’s nothing to brag about.”

Robyn walked Jason over to an Army L-4 Piper Cub.

They walked around and admired the olive green drab painted Cub.

“These were also called Grasshoppers and were used for observations or transporting supplies. And as you can tell, it’s just like the civilian Piper J three Cub,” he told Robyn while they peeked inside the cockpit.

Robyn looked elated Jason was finally opening up about World War two items.

Then her eyes scanned the room when she saw the Bombers Room sign on the wall nearby. A curious feeling overcame Robyn when he glanced at the Bombers Room sign. “Let’s check out that Bombers Room,” she told Jason and grabbed his arm and walked him away from the L-4 plane.

Jason looked disinterested while Robyn escorted him over to the Bombers Room.

Robyn and Jason entered the Bombers Room and saw it was filled with various pieces of the insides of different bombers.

There were consoles, seats, radios, bombardier equipment, etc., salvaged from World War II bombers.

Duke Ellington’s Take The A Train song started to play from the loudspeakers.

Jason listened to that song, and it brought back some happier memories of his time in World War II. So he loved but hated that song.

Robyn and Jason walked around and saw a display of ten Norden bombsights salvaged from some B-17, B-24, and B-25 bombers.

They read the display board that provided information on which airplane the bombsights were installed, the names of the Bombardier’s, and when the plane crashed.

He walked Robyn, and they walked over to a part of a vertical stabilizer for a B-24 bomber called Hitler’s Worst Nightmare.

They walked down the maze and saw pieces of B-25 wings, B-17 landing gears, B-25 pilot and co-pilot's seats, the console to a B-24 and numero machines guns.

Robyn walked to the center of the maze where part of the Sweet Bird nose section was on display.

Robyn saw the faded and scratched nose art of a sexy female blonde cartoon under the "Sweet Bird" words.

"Sweet Bird, that's a cute name, she said while Jason was nearby looking at some machines guns from a B-17.

Jason's ears perked up when he heard Robyn.

"What did you say?" he curiously asked while walking over to Robyn.

"I said, Sweet Bird is a cute name for a B seventeen," she replied.

Jason looked, and his jaw dropped in shock the second he saw the Sweet Bird display. "I don't believe it! How can this be possible?" he said in disbelief while he hurriedly rushed around the piece of the nose section of the Sweet Bird.

Robyn looked a little puzzled with Jason's behavior, so she ran after him.

She followed Jason then he suddenly stopped at the display board where she slammed into his backside.

He looked stunned while he stared at the display board.

"What's the matter?" she asked and looked concerned with his stunned look.

She looked at the display board and saw information about the B-17 called the Sweet Bird.

Her eyes widened in shock when she saw "1st Lt. Jason "Jay Jay" Jenkins listed as the Commander of the Sweet Bird.

"It's you!" she cried out in excitement when she reread his name.

Jason stared at the display board then started to get upset.

Robyn saw him staring at another section of the board, and she looked, and her eyes widened when she saw the black and white photo of Jason and Cindy under the nose section of the Sweet Bird.

Robyn's eyes lit up with joy at the sight of that picture. "Oh, my God! It's about you, Uncle Jason!" she cried out. Then she looked at the Sweet Bird display. "And that's part of your B seventeen!" she added.

Jason shook his head in agreement while he glanced at the piece of the Sweet Bird.

Robyn touched his scar above his eye. "Did you get that scar from the crash?"

"That happened somewhere else," he replied and started to get more and more upset.

While Jason stared at the nose section of the Sweet Bird, a few people nearby inched closer, hoping to hear a real-life war experience.

"I'm ready to go," Jason said then he walked away upset.

Robyn stopped Jason by a bench close to the Sweet Bird display.

"What's wrong?" Robyn asked with concern in her eyes.

"I only wanted to forget about that part of my life forever."

While Robyn looked back at the old photo, more people inched closer in hopes of hearing a story.

"Damn it!" Jason said a little loud.

"Who's the girl?" Robyn curiously asked.

Jason hesitated for a few seconds. "Someone I wanted to spend the rest of my life with. Then, someone, I've blocked out of my mind!"

"You were in love? I don't believe it!"

"I've seen enough! Let's go home," he said. Robyn pulled on his arm and sat him down on the bench.

"I had my heart broken once, then I met Jerry. You would have found another love," she replied.

"Not after what this woman did," he responded and looked madder.

On the overhead speakers, the Take The A Train song finished. Then Glenn Miller's Moonlight Serenade song started.

That song caught Jason's attention, and he stared back at the nose section of the Sweet Bird.

“Tell me what happened, please!” Robyn pleaded with Jason.

He looked back at the picture then back at Robyn’s pleading eyes.

Loud thunder was heard outside the museum while the storm approached the airfield.

“It’s thundering outside, so we’ll have to wait out the storm anyway,” Robyn told Jason.

Six people inched closer to Robyn and Jason hoping he would tell his story.

Jason looked back at Robyn’s pleading eyes and nodded in agreement. “It all started back in October nineteen forty-two. After I graduated from college, I decided to serve my country. So I enlisted in the Army Air Corp in hopes of becoming a pilot,” Jason began his story.

There were now eight people that gathered near Robyn and Jason to listen to his story.

Chapter 4

Jason told his story about his World War II experience.

It was 1942, and Jason was a handsome twenty-two old and didn't have his scar above his left eye.

He lived in Glen Burnie, Maryland with his parents Wilma, fifty-four years old, Hank, fifty-nine years old and sister Wendy, sixteen years old in a row home.

He just recently graduated from the University of Maryland in the spring of 1942 with a business degree.

Jason's girlfriend was Peggy Moore, also twenty-two years old, and they had been dating since they were in tenth grade in high school.

They were inseparable during the summer of 1942 and spent numerous weekends at the shore at Ocean City, Maryland. They even started talking about plans on getting married the next year.

Peggy even got Jason a job at her father's plant called Moore's Industries during the summer. This was the same plant that Jason's father, Hank, had worked for the past twenty-five years, and she wanted Jason to spend his career at the same plant.

Moore's Industries assembled refrigerator and some other kitchen appliances, but there were rumors the plant might be assembling military equipment for the war effort.

But after the summer months passed, Jason was restless and bored and wanted some adventure. So Jason went down to the Army recruiting office and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He had dreams of becoming a pilot, and the Army offered him that opportunity. Plus he wanted to serve his country and fight in the war.

Of course, Peggy hated the idea of him joining the service and going to war but realized it was his civic duty.

Jason's mom, Wilma, was upset, but Hank was proud his son serving his country.

Wendy was upset but also proud of Jason for joining the Army.

Then in September 1942, Hank, Wilma, Wendy, and Peggy took Jason to the Mount Royal train station in Baltimore.

After Hank, Wilma and Wendy said their good-byes to Jason, they walked away so Peggy and Jason could spend a few minutes alone.

Peggy's eyes welled up while she placed her arm around Jason's arm. "I'm going to miss you terribly," she said while she wiped away some tears that ran down her cheek.

"I know, but this war will be over soon, and then we can move on with our lives," Jason replied while he wiped away her tears.

"All aboard!" the conductor yelled from the train.

Peggy hugged Jason so tight that he wondered if he was going to have to take her with him.

"I have to go," he said, then pulled away from her grip.

She planted one last kiss on his lips then watched while Jason boarded on the train.

Inside the train, Jason sat by a window and watched while Wilma, Hank, Wendy, and Peggy waved while the train pulled away from the station.

Jason completed his classification training and made it as a pilot.

He then went on to his pre-flight training at Maxwell Field in Alabama. This training taught him aeronautics, deflection shooting, and how to think in three dimensions.

His next step was primary pilot training where he was taught basic flight in a PT-17 Stearman Kaydet.

After that, he went onto basic pilot training where Jason was taught how to fly in formation, flying by instruments, aerial navigation, flying at night then flying for long distances.

Jason's next step was advanced pilot training where he received multi-engine training in the Cessna AT-17 Bobcat.

After completion of his advanced pilot training, Jason attended transition training for the B-17 bomber in Sebring, Florida.

Meanwhile, Peggy went off to Nursing School in Baltimore while Jason was off playing Army.

Jason was now a 2nd Lieutenant, also humorously known as butter bars, in the Army Air Corps and was a changed man.

During all this training, he got a taste of the party life and loved his time away from Glen Burnie. He even earned the nickname Jay Jay, as what his Army buddies called him.

During the thirty-eight weeks of training, Peggy wrote at least four letters a week where Jason initially wrote one a week then it drifted off to a letter once every two weeks.

It was now the middle of May 1943 and Jason took the train back to the Mount Royal station in Baltimore for some leave at home before heading off to England.

Wilma and Wendy watched while the train pulled into the station that morning.

Jason stepped off the train in his Army Air Corp tunic uniform and duffel bag in hand.

He saw his mom, and sister on the platform and waved at them.

Wendy ran over to Jason and immediately hugged him. "I missed my big brother," she said while she hugged him tight then kissed his cheek.

Wilma walked up to Jason.

Wilma's eyes welled so happy to see her son again. "Welcome home son," she said then hugged him. "Peggy's back from nursing school and is going crazy waiting to see you. She'll be over later this afternoon," she added.

Jason looked disinterested at the thought of seeing Peggy again while they walk away from the train.

Wendy noticed and looked concerned while they walked out of the station and headed to the parking lot.

The Jenkins home was a charming row home but in dire need of a coat of paint.

The living room window was open, and the radio played the Big Band song On The Sunny Side Of The Street. Wendy sat on the couch and did her homework while listening to the music.

On the front porch, Peggy cuddled with Jason, still in his uniform, on the porch swing. They listened to the radio. Jason sipped a bottle of Arrow beer while Peggy rested her head on his shoulder.

“But Jason, my darling, I’ve been waiting for our wedding since I was sixteen years old. After all, you proposed and I remembered how your mom had tears of joy,” she said with sadness in her eyes.

From inside the living room, Wendy looked up from her homework. She leaned closer to the window, as their conversation was far more interesting than geometry.

Jason felt a little bad while they swung on the porch. “I know Peggy, but since I’ll be in combat, I thought we should wait,” he replied but deep down inside, he had serious second thoughts.

Jason took a swig of beer while Peggy pouted with her arms crossed.

“Why would anybody want to fly an airplane? And your aviation business idea is also stupid,” she said with pouty lips.

From inside the living room, Wendy rolled her eyes, as she really didn’t care very much for Peggy.

“Are you kidding? There’s nothing like soaring in the sky like a bird,” he replied and sipped on his beer.

“Okay, but no more flying after we’re married,” she said with serious eyes.

Jason felt trapped while he took another swig of beer.

Peggy snatched the beer out of his hand and placed it down on the porch. “I don’t want you becoming a drunk like Uncle Harvey.”

Jason looked irritated with Peggy controlling his life.

“Anyway, I have good news. Dad wants me to be the plant nurse, but I’ve decided that while you’re flapping your wings in England, I’m going to be in Army Nurses Corps.”

Jason looked surprised with her news, then he smiled. “I think it’s great you’re serving our country.”

Peggy got a smirk, as she had something up her sleeve. Hank Jenkins walked up to the walkway with his lunch pale in

hand. He was dressed in dirty work coveralls and looked exhausted from a grueling day's work at the plant.

He walked down to the bus stop every morning and took the bus to work since he couldn't afford a car.

Hank walked up on the porch, and his eyes lit up with joy the second he saw Jason on the porch swing. He immediately snapped to attention and saluted Jason to show he was proud. "Welcome home, son!"

Jason got off the swing, walked over to Hank, and they hugged.

Hank saw Peggy on the swing. "How's my future daughter-in-law?" he beamed.

"Fine, Mister Jenkins. How was work at the plant?" she replied while she got up off the swing.

"We're busy making more engine parts for the airplanes that our brave pilots will fly," he responded while he patted Jason on his shoulder.

Peggy walked over to them. "I better get home."

Peggy gave Jason a kiss on his cheek. "I love you," she said to him.

Peggy and Hank waited for a response.

"I love you," he replied with a little reluctance. Peggy smiled then she walked off the porch.

Hank and Jason watched while Peggy walked down their walkway and headed to the sidewalk.

Hank cringed in pain and placed a hand on his back for support.

Jason noticed and looked concerned. "Get some rest, dad."

"I can't. I'm working the graveyard shift," he replied.

"Slow down. You're killing yourself," Jason responded getting concerned.

"I can't. I still have to pay back that loan for your college tuition," he responded.

Jason looked guilty for his dad working so hard for his college. He placed an arm around his shoulder and walked him to the front screen door.

“Besides, mom wants to eat out at a restaurant to celebrate you coming home,” Hank responded while he opened the screen door.

Jason felt even guiltier while they went inside the living room.

Later that night, Jason walked arm in arm with Wendy while Hank and Wilma walked behind them.

They walked down a sidewalk and headed home from a nice dinner at the local diner.

“Dad, you didn’t have to spend your hard-earned money at the diner on my account,” Jason said.

“Don’t worry about it. I saved some of the money you’ve been sending us. So in reality, dinner’s on you,” Hank replied with a warm smile.

They walked by a lovely Victorian home with a wrap-around porch. A “For Sale” sign was out front, and Jason’s mom eyes lit up when she saw it. “The Whitson home is for sale,” Wilma said while she drooled over the thought of owning that home.

“Oh, before I forget Jason, Mister Moore wants to see you tomorrow,” Hank told Jason while they walked down the sidewalk.

Jason frowned at that thought of seeing Peggy’s father, and Wendy noticed.

They walked farther down the sidewalk with Wilma taking an occasional glance back at the Victorian home.

It was later that night, and Jason’s neighborhood was quiet.

Jason sat on the front porch swing, and he was in deep thought while he sipped on his a beer.

Hank was in bed, getting a few hours of sleep before he started the graveyard shift. Wilma was in the kitchen, making chocolate chip cookies for Jason’s coming home.

The front screen door opened and closed. Wendy walked over on the porch and sat down on the swing next to Jason. He placed his arm around Wendy.

“It’s hard to believe you’re graduating high school in three weeks,” Jason told her.

“I know, I’ve been waiting for this day for a long time,” she replied.

“What are your plans?”

“I’m an average student, so college is out of the question. I’ll probably go to typing school then get a job as a secretary,” she replied.

She looked at Jason and noticed he looked troubled while he sipped his beer.

“What’s wrong, big brother?”

Jason hesitated, but he and Wendy were tight and always confided in each other. “I can’t marry her, Wendy. I don’t love her anymore.”

“I was starting to sense that earlier,” she replied with a little smile.

“I don’t know what to do. Mom and dad are dreaming of the day I marry Peggy.”

Wendy thought of a response for a few seconds. “You have to go with your heart. And I have to be honest. I was never fond of Peggy. She’s too spoiled and too bossy.”

Jason kissed the top of Wendy’s head. “I love you, sis.”

Wendy cuddled next to Jason. “I’m always here for you.”

They cuddled while they swung on the porch swing enjoying the quiet evening.

It was the next morning, and Kenny Moore, sixty years old, worked on reviewing some progress reports at his desk. His office door opened and Peggy glowed while she entered with Jason, who wore his Army uniform.

Kenny saw them and looked proud. He got up from behind his desk and walked over to Peggy and Jason. “Welcome home, Jason,” Kenny greeted Jason and stuck out his hand

“Thank you, sir,” Jason replied while he shook Kenny’s hand.

Peggy smiled and straightened out Jason’s tie, which irritated him. Peggy smiled at Kenny, who winked back.

“Listen, I’m going to get to the point, Jason. I’m an old college buddy with General Winston. Therefore, I can arrange for you to be transferred closer to home,” he said while he

placed an arm around Peggy, who looked happy. “You can be stationed with Peggy after she gets her first nursing assignment. Maybe you can get married right away,” he added.

Jason looked at Peggy’s hopeful eyes. “I appreciate the offer, sir, but I have to go overseas. I can’t leave my buddies behind. It wouldn’t be right,” Jason replied.

Peggy crossed her arms, pouted and lightly stomped her feet.

“I can respect that. I remember never wanting to let my buddies down during World War one,” Kenny replied while he noticed that his little girl pouted. “There’s something else. I’m going to promote your father to a vice president’s job with a sweet raise. It was all Peggy’s idea,” he added then gave Jason a serious stare. “But if you don’t marry her, I’ll fire him in a heartbeat.”

Jason got worried, and Kenny noticed. Then he chuckled and smacked Jason on his shoulder.

“I’m just messing with you, son. I know that’ll never happen,” Kenny replied.

Jason faked a chuckle.

“Jason has a harebrained idea of having his own flying business. But after we’re married, he stays safe and sound on the ground,” Peggy told Kenny.

Jason felt trapped and hated this feeling.

“I can make him production manager when he comes home from the war,” Kenny responded and patted Jason on his shoulder.

“Well, I have tons of work, so take care Jason, and dodge those bullets,” Kenny said then stuck out his hand.

“Yes sir,” Jason replied while he shook his hand.

While Kenny walked back to his desk, Peggy walked Jason out of his office.

A little while later, Peggy and Jason walked to her 1939 Ford convertible in the parking lot of her father’s plant.

Jason got behind the wheel, and Peggy scooted over and sat by his side. She kissed Jason’s cheek while she unbuttoned

his uniform shirt. She stuck her hand inside his shirt and started to rub his chest.

“We could sneak into old man Adam’s barn just like we did for our first kiss. We could make something else our first,” she said in a romantic tone.

He pulled her hand out of his shirt. “I’m not in the mood right now,” he told her.

Peggy got upset. “What the hell do you mean you’re not in the mood? How can our marriage survive with an attitude like that?” she said in a raised voice.

“I promised dad I would paint the house before I left for England,” he replied, then started up her car.

Peggy scooted across the seat to the passenger door and pouted with her arms crossed while Jason drove out of the plant parking lot.

Four days passed and after some tearful good-byes at the Mount Royal train station, Jason was on his way to England.

An hour later, Jason stood in his uniform with his duffel bag, on the rear platform of the last passenger car. He watched the countryside go by, then he removed and looked at a black and white photo taken two years ago of Jason and Peggy.

Rick Sanders, a twenty-five-year-old Captain, entered the platform from the passenger car. He stood next to Jason and fired up a cigarette then offered one to Jason.

“No thanks, Rick,” he said while he stared at his photo.

Rick looked over at Jason’s photo. “Girlfriend, Jay Jay?”
“Fiancé.”

“She’s beautiful, buddy. Why didn’t you marry her before leaving for England?”

“I fell out of love,” Jason replied while he stared at the photo.

Rick looked baffled while he glanced at the picture. “Fell out of love with a beautiful girl? Are you nuts?”

“Maybe. But she’s spoiled, too controlling and wants me to stop flying after we’re married,” Jason replied while he ran a hand through his frustrated with his life. “I’m in a pickle. Dad works for Peggy’s father, who gave him a loan to pay for my

college. Dad will get promoted, and if I back out of the marriage, he might get fired. And he's so in debt."

"Sounds like you don't have a choice. Marry Peggy," Rick replied while smoked his cigarette.

Jason looked at his photo, and he let it slip out of his fingers, and they watched it fly away.

"Or not," said Rick while he watched the photo fly away.

Jason and Rick went back inside the passenger car. The photo landed in the grass.

Chapter 5

Jason's story about his World War II experience continued.

The months had passed, and it was now early August 1943 over in England.

Jason was assigned to the 990th Bomber Group where Colonel Franklin was the Commander.

His group operated out of Chipley Springs airfield, just outside the quaint town of Chipley Springs. The town was located about fifty miles northeast of London and thirty miles from the coast.

Chipley Springs airfield consisted of a two-story building with a balcony so the incoming B-17s could be counted after coming back from a mission.

There was a two-story building for the hospital, another Quonset hut for the briefing and debriefing of the pilots.

There was a large hangar for repair work on the B-17, an Administration building, a smaller building for the Group Commander, and smaller Quonset huts for barracks, chow hall, latrine, and other necessities.

Jason was on a mission over Germany with the B-17 called the Nazi Crusher, and they flew in formation with other B-17s in the high squadron. The nose art for the Nazi Crusher was a goofy cartoon character of frightened Hitler with a bomb penetrating his chest.

Inside the Nazi Crusher, it was a bouncy flight while flak exploded all around the bombers.

His buddy Rick Sanders was the Air Commander of the Nazi Crusher, and Jason was his copilot.

Their B-17 continued to shake while flak exploded all around them.

"Okay bombardier, we're approaching the target," Rick said into the radio net.

"In work," Greg Cooper, the twenty-two year old 2nd

Lieutenant Bombardier replied from the radio net. Jason and Rick looked out their side windows and watched for a few minutes.

“Kaboom, Mister Hitler!” Rick said into the radio net.

Their bombs exploded a plant that assembled bombs. Jason and Rick congratulated each other.

“Okay Nazi Crushers, the beer’s on me, tonight,” Rick said into the radio net.

The cheers from his crew members were heard coming from the radio net inside the plane.

More flak exploded outside their plane, and it violently shook.

“The Vivacious Vicky got hit!” Lester Paul, an eighteen-year-old Sergeant who was one of the Waist Gunners called out from the radio net.

From Jason’s cockpit windows, he saw the Vivacious Vicky nose dive with three of its engines on fire. Then it exploded into a fireball, instantly killing all the crew members.

Jason and Rick looked fearful at each other, thinking they could go at any second.

It’s quiet on the radio net inside the Nazi Crusher while all the crew members were saddened about their friends on the Vivacious Vicky.

Back to present day in 1978 at Spencer’s museum.

More people gathered around and were captivated with Jason’s World War II story.

Robyn and Jason noticed the crowd that gathered. “You have an audience, Uncle Jason,” Robyn told him. Jason got embarrassed when he noticed about fifteen people standing by him. “We should move on,” he said then grabbed Robyn’s hand.

The thunder got louder, and lightning was also heard cracking a few miles away.

“Please continue, sir. After all, we have a storm to wait out,” a man in the crowd called out.

In the crowd, a young girl around seven years old looked up at her mom and dad. “This is better than daddy’s bedtime stories,” she confessed to her parents.

Everybody in the crowd chuckled at the girl's comment. Her father gave Jason a bow to the master storyteller.

Jason looked at everybody's hopeful eyes that he would continue his story. "Well, that night, we all did our usual way to relax from the war, and we all headed to the dance hall located on the airfield," Jason said while he looked at everybody. "And buying his crew a beer was a tradition of Captain Rick Sanders. But on that night, I met my soul mate.

Robyn's eyes widened with curiosity, as did all the other eyes of the women that listened.

Jason's story about his World War II experience continued.

At the Chipley Springs airfield, the Let's Boogie Down dance hall was packed that night. A band was comprised of soldiers where they had a trumpet player, clarinet player, stand-up bass, saxophone player and a set of drums. These instruments were purchased from the local English community and paid for by the soldiers on the airfield contributing.

The band was playing their version of Duke Ellington's Take The A Train song.

Army soldiers often danced with female soldiers, and some guys danced with the local English women on the dance floor.

Other guys and gals sat at tables while they drank and chatted while they listened to the music.

Cindy Grant, a nineteen-year-old, chubby beautiful blonde English girl entered the dance hall with her friend

Amy Goodrich, a nineteen-year-old English girl with brunette hair.

At the bar, Rick and Jason waited while the bartender, Russell Knowles, a twenty-eight-year-old Staff Sergeant that was a mechanic on one of the B-17s, brought them ten bottles of beer.

Amy headed to an available table while Cindy headed to a bar.

Jason saw TSgt Robert "Rocky" Romano, a thirty-year-old mechanic who sat at his nightly spot at the bar.

"Hey, Rocky," Jason said.

Rocky nodded Jason's greeting while he sipped his beer.

Cindy walked up behind Jason and waited her turn at the bar.

Rick paid the bartender for the beers then he and Jason each grabbed five bottles.

Jason turned around, and his beer bottles clanged while he almost bumped into Cindy. They gazed into each other's eyes for a brief moment. The sight of this young and beautiful blonde English girl immediately smote Jason.

"Hi," he said to Cindy.

Cindy gave Jason a bashful smile, and she stepped aside so he could head to his table.

Jason and Rick walked away from the bar.

They headed to their table located about in the center of the dance hall.

The Nazi Crushers crew members anxiously waited at the bar for their brew. The Crusher crew members consisted of, Greg Cooper, 1st Lieutenant Raymond Adams the Navigator, SSgt Billy Donner the Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner, TSgt Charlie Hampton the Radio Operator, Sgt Willy Bright the Ball Turret Gunner, SSgt Steve Maryande the Tail Gunner, Lester Paul, and Sgt Ernie Toole the other Waist Gunner.

Crushers quickly snatched their beers the second Rick and Jason placed them on the table.

Rick and Jason sat down at the crowded table. Jason suddenly became captivated the second he spotted Cindy while she walked back to Amy's table with two soda bottles in her hands.

The band ended their song and started up their version of Duke Ellington's Mood Indigo song.

Couples started slow dancing on the dance floor.

Rick noticed Jason while he looked interested with Cindy, and he leaned over. "She's fat, which means she's really desperate," Rick quietly said in Jason's ear.

Jason frowned at Rick's crude comment. "That's not nice."

"Go for it, Jay Jay. Our lives may not last long over here," Raymond said then he eyed another potential girl to pick up for the evening.

Jason stood up to go to Cindy, but he sat back down, disappointed. "Someone beat me to her."

Everybody at the table looked and saw TSgt Gus Sampson stand at the table by Cindy and Amy.

Amy got up from the table and walked with Gus to the dance floor.

"Your opportunity still waits," Charlie said while they saw Cindy sitting alone.

Jason smiled while he stood up then he walked over to Cindy's table.

He walked past by a table of rowdy enlisted men and one of them stretched his left leg out.

Jason accidentally tripped over the man's leg, and he fell toward Cindy.

Jason's head plopped in Cindy's crotch the second she went to take a drink of her soda.

"Ahhhh!" she screamed out at the sight of Jason's head in her crotch and poured her soda down her cleavage, her dress and the back of Jason's head.

She jumped out of the chair, and Jason landed on the floor on his back.

Jason immediately sprang up startled and saw the soda on her dress and cleavage. He quickly removed his handkerchief and soaked up some soda near her cleavage. Cindy freaked out when she saw his hand by her breasts, and she slapped him across his cheek.

Jason rushed away embarrassed while everybody nearby laughed.

Jason rushed back to his table where some Crushers taunted and mocked him.

Ernie rubbed the back of Jason's wet head and chuckled.

The band stopped playing their song and placed their instruments down indicating they were taking a fifteen break.

They wanted some much-needed beer.

Jason watched while Gus escorted Amy back to her table.

He watched while Gus walked away from the girl's table.

He watched while Amy looked down at the wet spot on Amy's dress. Then he watched while Cindy pointed at Jason and that made him even more embarrassed. "I better go," Jason told everybody at the table.

All the Nazi Crushers watched while Jason rushed out of the dance hall.

Later that night, Jason paced outside the dance hall and watched while soldiers exited the building. Most of them were drunk, and they were arm in arm while they sang out some of the songs the band played while they staggered away.

After a few more minutes of pacing, Cindy and Amy finally exited the dance hall.

Jason rushed over to Cindy the second he spotted her. "I'm so sorry. Someone tripped me and caused me to land in your lap."

"That's okay," Cindy replied while she walked away with Amy.

"I wasn't trying to feel your breasts. I was trying to be a gentleman and wipe up the soda," Jason said while he followed her.

"That's okay."

"I would love to pay to have your dress cleaned," Jason offered.

"You don't have to do that," Cindy replied while she continued to walk away with Amy.

"Please let me make it up to you. May I have the honor of taking you out for dinner or go dancing?" Jason asked.

"That won't be necessary," Cindy replied and looked away from Jason.

Jason realized he was fighting a losing battle, so he turned around and moped back to the barracks.

Cindy and Amy walked away into the darkness.

"He's cute, Cindy," Amy said while she glanced back at Jason.

"And sweet, Amy, but he's probably just lonely and will soon disappear after a one night stand," Cindy replied then glanced back at Jason a little interested, while they walked away.

Later that night in Jason's barracks, he lay in his bunk in deep thought with a pad of paper on his chest.

There were a few other officers in their bunks that slept or wrote letters home.

Rick, Raymond, and Greg entered the barracks drunk, and they staggered down the aisle.

"Jay Jay!" Rick yelled out the second he saw Jason in his bunk.

Rick plopped down at the bunk next to Jason. He snatched the pad of paper off Jason's chest and saw that he only wrote "Dear Peggy" on the letter.

Rick noticed that Jason was in deep thought.

"A penny for your thoughts," Rick slurred out to Jason. "I can't get that girl at the dance hall out of my mind."

"You're loony. Peggy's beautiful," Rick slurred out then he closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep. His hand relaxed, and the pad of paper fell to the floor and landed under Jason's bunk.

Jason just stared at the ceiling while he thought about Cindy.

It was the next day, and everybody had time off since there weren't any missions being flown.

Jason got in his tee-shirt and sweat pants, and he jogged out of the barracks.

A little while later, Jason jogged through the quaint town of Chipley Springs.

Jason huffed and puffed while he jogged down one of the streets of Chipley Springs.

Jason jogged then turned down another smaller street.

Cindy suddenly rode her bike out of a side street and smacked into Jason.

He tumbled down the street and landed face down.

Cindy screeched to a stop, jumped off her bike, and ran to Jason. "I'm so sorry!" she cried out the second she arrived at Jason.

Jason rolled over in pain, and the second he saw Cindy, his pain vanished. "I guess this is payback for last night?"

Cindy looked clueless for a few seconds then she remembered and chuckled.

“I’m Jason Jenkins, but everybody calls me Jay Jay. And again, I’m extremely sorry,” he said while he sat up.

“I’m Cindy Grant and last night is forgotten, and please forgive me for hitting you with my bicycle,” she said then noticed his knees were bloody from scrapping on the road when he tumbled. “You’re hurt.

Jason looked down at his knees. “Oh, it’s nothing.”

She helped Jason up to his feet. She looked down the street with an idea then back at Jason. She hesitated for a second wondering if her idea was a good one, then she smiled. “We better take care of that before it gets infected. I live just down the street,” she said.

“Okay,” Jason replied with a smile, then he walked over and picked up Cindy’s bike.

He pushed her bike with a limp while Cindy walked by his side.

“Why were you running down the street? Were you late for something?” she curiously asked.

“I was on the cross-country team during college, and running helps keeps me alert. I’m a pilot,” he replied.

“A pilot, I’m impressed,” she responded then glanced at her chubby body. “I guess I should run down the street myself,” she added with a bit of frown.

“I don’t think you’ll need to run that far,” he replied as a compliment.

Cindy smiled and blushed deeply while they walked closer to her two-story apartment building.

Later that day, Jason sat in the small living room of Cindy’s one-bedroom apartment on the second floor of the building.

He had a bandage on his knees while he sat on the couch with Cindy. They drank hot tea.

“Where do you work?” he asked Cindy.

“I’m a typist at the Administration building. My father’s an Air Commodore in the Royal Air Force and got me the job. I

work for Sergeant Wilson. He's shady and does favors for money," she replied.

"After the war, I want to own a couple of planes and start my own aviation company," Jason said.

"I would love to learn how to fly and perhaps own an airplane. When my work allows, I watch your B seventeens take off and land," Cindy said with a gleam in her eye.

"A woman that loves flying. I'm impressed. Maybe I'll take you up sometime. I can give you some lessons."

"But there's a war's going on?"

"Wars don't last forever," he replied.

Cindy smiled at his offer. "It's a date!" She noticed his teacup was empty. "Would you like more tea?"

"I'd love some more," he replied, wanting to stay longer with her.

Cindy grabbed his teacup and stood up.

Jason watched with love in his eyes while Cindy walked over to her small kitchen.

It was later that night, and it was quiet in Jason's barracks except for the occasional snore while men sleep in their bunks.

Jason entered the barracks and whistled a happy tune while he strutted down the aisle.

He got to his bunk where he noticed that the mail arrived. He picked up a letter off his bunk and noticed it was from Peggy.

Rick woke up and squinted his eyes at Jason. "Where did you run to? Scotland?"

"I was with her," Jason replied while he looked at Peggy's letter.

"With who? Betty?" Rick responded perking up on his bunk.

"No. I was with Cindy."

"Who?"

"The girl from the dance hall that I accidentally tripped then slammed my face into her lap."

Rick looked at Jason's bandaged knees. "Did she beat you?"

“She hit me with her bike.”

“She sure sounds like a sweet girl,” Rick replied with a yawn.

“I think she’s the one,” Jason said with a warm smile. “I thought you were engaged?”

Jason looked at Peggy’s letter in his hand and frowned. “I know, but, when I’m with Cindy, I feel so alive. I feel like we belong together.”

Rick yawned again. “Yeah, whatever,” he replied, then went back to sleep.

Jason got in his bed and opened up Peggy’s letter. “My love, my nursing training is complete, and I’ll be getting my first assignment soon. When I get home for leave, my mom and your mom will discuss our wedding plans,” Peggy’s letter stated.

Jason crumpled up her letter and tossed it on the floor. He lay on his back and stared at the ceiling and smiled when he thought about Cindy then frowned when he thought about Peggy.

Chapter 6

Jason's story about his World War II experience with Cindy continued.

For the past two days, Jason spent his free time with Cindy in the town of Chipley Springs or out in the countryside. He was in heaven and loved the war so far.

It was nighttime, and the Chipley Springs airfield was quiet with a sky full of stars and a full Moon.

Cindy and Jason held hands while they walked around the B-17s that were parked in the field.

"Dinner was great. Where did you learn how to cook?" he asked her while they walked under the nose of a B-17.

"I learned from helping mum do her magic in the kitchen."

"My mom's a great cook," Jason replied while he smiled thinking about his mother.

Cindy looked a little nervous, and there was something that bugged her for the past two days. "Do you have a girlfriend back home?"

Jason squirmed a bit when he heard her question. "No," he lied through his teeth.

Cindy looked sad. "I only had one serious boyfriend. It was great until I caught him kissing another girl."

Jason looked a little guilty. "I'll never break your heart."

Cindy looked at the Nazi Crusher while they walked up to the plane. "It must be scary up there."

Jason looked up at the Nazi Crusher, then back at Cindy. "Only when they start shooting, and you wonder if you're next. Wonder if you'll never see that special someone again."

Cindy gave his cheek a lovingly touch, and he loved the feeling. "Let's have some fun, as our lives could be cut short," he said then they walked away and headed to the dance hall.

Later that night, Jason and Cindy slow danced in the Let's Boogie Down dance hall while the band played Glenn Miller's Moonlight Serenade song.

They gazed into each other eyes, then kissed while they danced across the dance floor.

Rick was in the dance hall, and he walked up to a beautiful English woman. He whispered in her ear, then nibbled on her ear lobe. She got mad and slapped Rick's face then stormed off.

Rick moped away with his standard of being rejected.

The next day came, and Jason and Cindy took a walk in the English countryside outside Chipley Springs.

Cindy and Jason held hands while they walked upon a field of beautiful white wildflowers. Jason quickly picked a bouquet of wildflowers and handed it to Cindy. She sniffed them and smiled while they walked away.

Later that night, Jason sat in his bunk and read Peggy's letter that arrived earlier that day.

"My Darling, I'm thinking of you every day. Why won't you let daddy arrange to get you sent back to the states? That way, we can get married right away," Peggy's letter stated.

Jason placed the letter down on his bunk and looked worried.

The next day, Cindy and Jason slowly jogged down the streets of Chipley Springs. He had Cindy on his mind with every step.

Later that evening, Cindy and Jason ate dinner by romantic candlelight.

After dinner, Cindy and Jason sat in the cockpit of the Nazi Crusher. Cindy sat in Rick's seat with her hands on the yoke. Jason spent the last twenty minutes and explained the fundamentals of flying an airplane.

It was the next day, and Cindy and Jason had a romantic picnic by a small creek outside Chipley Springs.

Later that night at the Let's Boogie Down dance hall, Cindy and Jason slow danced while the band played the Moonlight Serenade song again, per Jason's request.

While they danced, Rick walked up to another beautiful English woman while she drank a soda at a table. He whispered

into her ear then kissed her neck. She got furious and slapped his face.

Rick walked away, feeling rejected again.

Later that night, Jason was in his bunk and wrote a letter. "Dear Peggy, the war is keeping me busy, so I'm sorry if my letters are short and infrequent. And I should stay here with my buddies, so I can't be transferred back to the states," he wrote in his letter.

The next day arrived, and the B-17s returned from a mission over Germany.

The Nazi Crusher B-17 landed and soon parked.

After the engines shut down, the doors opened, and the Crushers all got out of their plane.

Rick, Jason, and the rest of the Nazi Crusher's walked away from their plane happy they survived another mission.

Then the Tantalizing Tina B-17 was on final approach for the runway with three engines on fire and landing gear up.

The Tantalizing Tina turned away from the runway and landed belly up in a field.

Then its nose furrowed into the ground and the plane exploded. All crew members were killed.

Everybody on the ground ran to avoid being hit by the flying debris.

Over by the Administration Building, Cindy took a break and stood by one of the corners of the building to watch the B-17 land.

Cindy saw the billowing black from the crash of the Tantalizing Tina bomber. She looked scared to death, and her eyes welled up, thinking it could be the Nazi Crusher.

She looked relieved the second she saw Jason walking toward the briefing building with the other Nazi Crushers.

She went back into the building and returned to her desk.

It was the next day, and the sun was out, and the birds sang out a beautiful song.

All the B-17s were parked in the field, and all the crew members lounged by their planes.

Some of the guys read letters, some guys napped, some threw a football while some milled and chatted.

Rick, Jason, and the Nazi Crushers lounged by their B- 17.

Jason leaned against one of the landing wheels while he read a letter.

Rick lay in the grass and looked up at the sky while he smoked a cigarette.

“Cindy sounds like a wonderful girl, and I can’t wait to meet her. How are you going to break up with Peggy? Mom and Dad will be furious, but I’m behind you all the way. I love you,” Wendy’s letter stated.

Jason shoved Wendy’s letter into his shirt pocket with a smile. He opened up another letter then frowned.

“My Love. Your letters are still too short and infrequent. I’m worried about you. But I do have good news, I bought a wedding dress and father can have General Winston arrange some R&R for you here in the states and then we can get married,” Peggy’s letter stated.

Jason banged his head in frustration against the wheel while he looked at her letter. “Let me see your smoke,” he asked Rick.

Rick handed Jason his cigarette. Jason lit his letter on fire with the cigarette then he dropped the burning paper into the grass. He watched it fade away to ashes. He handed Rick his cigarette.

“What’s wrong?” Rick asked while he took a drag on his cigarette.

“Peggy bought a wedding dress, and her father can have a General friend arrange some R&R if I marry her now.”

“Are you going for it?”

Jason opened his mouth to respond but Albert Yount, an eighteen year old pimply faced Private, drove up in a Jeep and stopped by their B-17.

“It doesn’t look like the weather will clear up over Germany, so today’s mission has been scrubbed. And Lieutenant Jenkins, Colonel Franklin needs to see you. Something about your own plane,” Albert spilled the beans.

Jason looked proud while he got up.

Rick jumped up and gave Jason a congratulations pat on the back while Jason headed to the Jeep.

Jason got in the Jeep, and Albert drove off.

Five minutes later, Albert dropped Jason off at Colonel Franklin's building.

Jason jumped out of the Jeep and went inside the building.

Jason walked through a small area where Sgt Joe Burroughs worked as Colonel Franklin's administrative assistant.

"Colonel Franklin wanted to see me. I'm Lieutenant Jenkins," Jason told Sgt Burroughs.

"He's waiting for you in his office," Sgt Burroughs replied.

Jason knocked on the Colonel's door then stepped inside his office.

Jason walked up to Colonel Franklin's desk and stood at attention. "Lieutenant Jenkins reporting as ordered," he said while he saluted.

Colonel Franklin returned a salute. "At ease, Lieutenant," he replied.

"Jenkins, we're getting in some replacement B-17s, and I want you to be the Air Commander of one of them,"

Colonel Franklin said while he stood up from behind his desk.

Jason looked proud he would be the Air Commander of his own plane with his own crew.

"I had some glowing comments from Captain Sanders on his recommendation for you taking command of your own bird," Colonel Franklin said while he walked over to Jason.

"Thank you, sir," Jason replied with a huge grin.

"And of course, this comes with a promotion," Colonel Franklin stated while he removed two 1st Lieutenant bars from his shirt pocket. He removed Jason's existing butter bars from his uniform and replaced them with the shiny silver 1st Lieutenant bars.

"Your plane arrives in two days."

"Yes sir," Jason replied with a salute.

Colonel Franklin returned a salute then walked back to his desk while Jason headed to the door with a spring in his step.

That night, Cindy and Jason celebrated his promotion and getting command of a B-17 by dancing at the Let's Boogie Down dance hall.

For the next two days, Jason had light duty while he waited for his plane to arrive.

Then that special morning arrived.

Jason watched from the tower building while two other pilots landed his B-17 on the airfield's runway.

While his plane taxied to the parking area, Jason thought about what he should call his plane. Then his eyes widened with a great idea the second he thought of Cindy.

He rushed away from the tower building.

Later that day, Jason brought Cindy out to show off his B-17 bomber.

While he walked her around the plane, Carl Morgan, a nineteen-year-old mechanic with fantastic drawing ability, walked up to the B-17 with a wooden case, and a step ladder.

"Sir, you wanted some nose art for your bird," Carl asked while he walked up to Jason.

"You bet," Jason replied.

"What are you going to name her?" Carl asked.

Jason looked at the B-17, then looked at Cindy. "I'll call her Sweet Bird after this beautiful girl," he said while placing an arm around Cindy's shoulder.

"Do you want a sexy lady under those words?" Carl asked while he looked up at the nose of the B-17.

"You bet, and she'll pose for it," Jason answered with a smile while he looked at Cindy.

Carl looked doubtful of Cindy being the model for the cartoon.

Cindy suddenly got nervous when she heard Jason's suggestion. "What do you mean, I'll pose?"

"I'll use you to draw a cartoon of a sexy blonde under the Sweet Bird words," Carl replied.

"This will be great, because every time I fly her on a mission, I'll be thinking of you," Jason told Cindy then kissed her cheek.

Cindy pondered Jason's suggestion for a second while she looked at the nose of the B-17. "Okay, it would be my pleasure."

Cindy stood there with her hands by her side.

Carl rolled his eyes at the sight of her pose. "I need something sexier."

Cindy looked shy with doubts on posing, and Jason noticed.

"It's all right honey. Think of me when you pose and forget Carl's here," Jason replied.

Cindy looked at Jason then she mustered up some courage, and she got into a sexy pose.

"I guess this is the best I can work with," Carl said while he opened up his wooden case, which contained various paints and brushes.

Carl climbed up the ladder and started on the nose art for the Sweet Bird.

Cindy stayed in her pose while Carl started drawing the nose art.

A couple of hours passed and Carl finished the nose art for the Sweet Bird and Jason slipped him twenty dollars for his time.

Carl walked away with his ladder and wooden case.

Jason admired his Sweet Bird nose art with his arm around Cindy.

Jason and Cindy walked away holding hands.

An hour later, Jason, with a camera in hand, and Cindy walked back to his Sweet Bird with Raymond, the navigator of the Nazi Crusher.

"She's a beautiful bird," Raymond told Jason while he walked around and looked at the Sweet Bird.

Jason handed Raymond the camera.

Jason walked Cindy under the nose of the plane, and he placed her arm around her shoulder.

Raymond stepped back and snapped the picture that would later end up on the display board at the museum in 1978.

"Thanks, buddy," Jason told Raymond.

“I’ll leave you two love birds alone and get the pictures developed,” Raymond said.

“Make me two copies. One for me and one for Cindy,” Jason responded to Raymond.

“You got it,” Raymond replied then he walked away. “I’ll take that picture with me on every mission,” he said while he gazed into Cindy’s eyes.

Cindy looked a little worried when she glanced up at the Sweet Bird. “My stomach’s always a mess when you’re up there,” she said then her eyes welled up.

Jason wiped away her tears then gave her a kiss on the lips.

Sidney Carter, a thirty-year-old Captain who was one of the three airfield’s doctors, rode up on a bicycle. He glanced up at the Sweet Bird. “She’s a beautiful plane, Jay Jay. How about taking me up on a short flight sometime? I want to fly so bad,” Sidney asked.

“Sorry Sidney, but the Army will have my butt if I take unauthorized personnel up in the Sweet Bird.”

“I won’t tell,” Sidney replied.

“I know, but it’s too risky. Besides, isn’t being the supervisor of those nurses enough of an adventure?”

Sidney frowned with disappointment. “Ah man,” he said, then rode his bicycle away.

Albert drove a Jeep up to the Sweet Bird with nine guys shoved inside and sitting on the hood.

Albert stopped the Jeep. “Here’s your crew, Lieutenant Jenkins,” he said then everybody got out of the Jeep.

Albert drove the Jeep away.

Andy Watkins, a twenty-two-year-old 2nd Lieutenant, walked up to Jason. “I’m Andy Watkins, your copilot,” he said while he stuck out his hand.

Jason shook Andy’s hand then looked at his other crew members.

“I better get back to work before Sergeant Wilson fires me,” Cindy said then kissed Jason on lips.

Jason’s new crew members watched while Cindy walked off and headed toward the Administration Building.

After ten minutes of introductions, he met 2nd Lieutenant Frank Kirby, a twenty-three year old Navigator who was fluent in German, 2nd Lieutenant Gerard Barrett, a twenty-three year old Bombardier, Sgt Jerome Sampson, a twenty-two year old Tail Gunner, Sgt Don Adamson, a twenty-one year old waist gunner, Sgt Mark Woodbury, a nineteen year old Waist Gunner, Sgt Warren Stevens, an nineteen year old Ball Turret Gunner, TSgt Robbie Noone, a twenty-eight year old Radio Operator, and SSgt Mike Dawson, a twenty-five year old Flight Engineer and Top Turret Gunner.

After more discussions, Jason learned they were all experienced and were reassigned for various reasons. Rick walked up to the Sweet Bird and checked her out. "She's a nice bird," he said then walked up to Jason. "Guys, this is Rick Sanders, commander of the Nazi Crusher," Jason introduced his friend.

Jason's crew members all shook hands with Rick then they all walked away toward the buildings of the airfield. "I'm curious, have you dumped Peggy yet?" Rick asked

Jason while he eyed the nose art while they walked away. "Not yet."

"I wonder how Cindy will feel at the end of the war when you go home without her?" Rick asked.

"I'm not going to do that," Jason replied and looked serious.

"Then you're going to break up with Peggy?"

"I will. When the time is right."

"And when is that?" Rick curiously asked.

"After dad gets out of debt with Mister Moore."

Rick looked jealous of Jason. "You know, every dame I ask out refuses. And here's you with two drooling all over you."

"Maybe if you quit treating them like a piece of meat, then one might date you," Jason replied with a scolding tone.

Rick thought about Jason's comment for a second. "Okay, that's fair."

He patted Jason on his shoulder. "See you up in the air, my friend."

Rick rushed off toward the briefing hut.

Jason and his new crew members walked toward the briefing hut.

The next day, Jason flew the Sweet Bird on his first mission with his new crew members.

They flew in close formation over Germany with eleven other B-17s in the low squadron.

A formation of P47 Thunderbolts flew with the B-17s for protection.

Inside the Sweet Bird, Jason sat in the commander's seat while Andy sat in the copilot's seat.

Jason looked and saw some Messerschmitt's heading in their direction. "Get ready guys, the sky has now become extremely dangerous," he said into the radio net.

The P47s all broke formation and headed after the Messerschmitt's.

The sound of machine guns firing was heard from the rear of the Sweet Bird, while they shot at the Messerschmitt's.

Flak exploded in front of the Sweet Bird, and the plane shook.

Jason looked out his window and saw the Nazi Crusher flying close by.

More flak exploded, and the Sweet Bird shook.

"Hey Jay Jay, I have two more missions, and I'm going home, buddy. When I get back, want me to marry Peggy? I won't treat her like a piece of meat. I promise," Rick said from the radio net.

"She's all yours, my friend," Jason replied then he waved at the Nazi Crusher from his window.

Jason watched while a Messerschmitt raced after the Nazi Crusher and fired its machine guns.

While Jason's crew members fired their machine guns at the Messerschmitt's, Jason watched while a P47 raced after the Messerschmitt coming after the Nazi Crusher.

"I got one of those krauts!" Mark called out in joy from the radio net.

Jason watched while the P47 fired its machine guns at the Messerschmitt.

The Messerschmitt smoked, dived, and then it clipped the right-wing of the Nazi Crusher. The wing of the Nazi Crusher broke off from the fuselage.

Jason watched in horror while the Nazi Crusher spiraled down to the ground with only one wing attached.

“Please, God! I don’t want to die!” Rick pleaded from the radio net.

The crew members of the Sweet Bird and the crew members of all the other B-17s listened while all the crew members of the Nazi Crushers screamed from the radio net.

There was an eerie silence on the radio net.

Jason looked straight ahead, and his eyes well up, knowing his good friend was spiraling down to his death. After the mission was completed, three other B-17s were shot down, but the remaining bombers hit the target, which was a factory that made German tanks.

Over by the Administration Building, Cindy paced by one side of the building while she eyed the airfield.

She watched with fingers crossed while the B-17s took turns landing on the runways.

Her eyes lit up with joy the second she spotted the Sweet Bird land on the runway.

A little while later, the Sweet Bird was parked, and the crew members walked away and headed to the briefing hut.

Jason walked away from his crew members when he saw Cindy by the side of the Administration Building.

Cindy saw his grim look while he approached. “What’s the matter?”

Jason looked at her, his eyes welled up, and his lips quivered. “Rick, ah Rick, didn’t make it, he died!” he painfully told her. Then he stared deep into her eyes. “I don’t want to die!” he said while his eyes welled up.

Cindy hugged him tightly, as she didn’t want him to die since she wanted to spend the rest of her life with Jason.

Chapter 7

Back to present day in 1978 at Spencer's museum.

Jason wiped away tears from his eyes while talking about that day stirred up some emotions. "The hardest part of that war was watching your friends die before your eyes. The other was lying to your soul mate," he told his crowd.

"Why lie to her?" a woman in the crowd asked him.

"I lied because I was scared of losing her if she knew the truth. And still scared of what would happen to my parents if I dumped Peggy," he replied.

"That's still no excuse for being dishonest," another woman in the crowd said.

Robyn and a couple of women near that woman nodded their heads in agreement.

Jason looked ashamed. "That's fair."

Meanwhile, up in Cindy's office, she worked on some paperwork at her desk satisfied that her grand opening day was a success.

The phone on her desk rang, and she picked up the receiver. "Spencer's Aviation Museum, how may I help you?" she answered the call.

"It's me, mom, what time do you want me to come down to the museum?" Kimberly replied from the phone.

"Oh, I have a meeting with a woman that's interested in renting an office and hangar space, so meet me outside the bomber room in three hours."

"Okay. I'll be there," Kimberly replied, then disconnected her end of the call.

Cindy hung up her receiver then went back to her paperwork.

Back in the Bomber Room, the crowd's eyes were still captivated on Jason's story.

"So there I was, falling deeper in love with Cindy, while still engaged to Peggy. And I was terrified my next mission would

be my last day in this world. But then it got even more dangerous, and I don't mean in the air over the German countryside."

Robyn and everybody looked curious about Jason's last comment.

Jason's story about his World War II experience with Cindy continued.

It was four days since the Nazi Crushers perished to their deaths in the German countryside. Jason read the official report that all crew members died after the B-17 slammed into the middle of a field.

Jason and all the other eleven B-17s just returned from another mission, and today nobody lost their life.

After Jason parked the plane and shut down the engines of his bomber, he and his crew members all got out of the Sweet Bird.

Andy and Jason, with hat and tie crooked, walked away from his plane while his crew members trailed behind them all exhausted.

"First we'll need a hangar and a long field," Jason told Andy, as they've been talking about his dream of starting up an aviation company.

"I have an uncle with an old crop-duster. I'm sure he'll give it to us, but it might need repairs," Andy replied, as he was interested in becoming partners with Jason.

"Rocky said he would work as our mechanic."

Andy nodded in agreement then looked curious. "Are you still stringing this other broad along?"

Jason hesitated, then he looked brave. "I'm about to write Peggy and break it off. Dad will be out from under Mister Moore's debt soon. And I can cover him until he gets a new job."

"Did she get her first assignment yet?"

"I guess. I haven't heard from her in a while," Jason replied with a smile.

Jason, Andy and his crew members headed to toward the briefing hut.

Jason eyed the Administration Building and saw Cindy wasn't waiting by the sidewall. "Where is she?" he asked himself a little disappointed, as she was always there before.

"Jason, my darling!" Peggy's voice called from behind Jason and his crew members.

Jason's ears perked up, and he stopped, unsure, as that voice sounded so familiar.

Andy stopped and curiously turned around and looked at Jason.

"What's wrong?" Andy asked while the other crew members stopped and looked at Jason.

"I heard a familiar unpleasant voice," Jason said then shrugged it off, and started to walk away.

"Over here, Jason!" Peggy yelled out again.

Jason, Andy, and the other crew members all looked in the direction of her voice.

Jason's mouth dropped open in shock the second he saw Peggy, in an Army uniform with 2nd Lieutenant bars standing twenty feet away. She waved at Jason with a huge loving smile.

"Please shoot me," Jason leaned over and quietly asked Andy.

Andy and the other crew members watched curiously while Peggy rushed over to Jason.

"What the hell is she doing here?"

"Who is she?" Andy asked.

"Peggy!"

"She's beautiful, and you want to dump her?" Warren said while he drooled at the sight of Peggy.

Peggy glowed with an ear to ear grin when she stopped at Jason. "Surprise!"

"Ah, Peggy, ah, what are you doing here?" Jason said while he pulled Peggy away, then discreetly looked over at the Administration Building for Cindy. He noticed she still wasn't at the side wall. He was relieved yet also nervous.

Andy and the other crew members watched this awkward moment for Jason.

"Since you wouldn't come to the states, I've made daddy have General Winston pull some strings, and got stationed here with you," she said so proudly.

Peggy gave Jason a hug then a long kiss on the lips.

Jason pulled away, scared of what Cindy would think if she saw them kissing.

"You're a nurse at the hospital? This airfield's hospital?"

"Yes, but you'll always be my number one patient," she cooed, then placed her arm around Jason's arm.

He squirmed out from under her embrace. But it didn't work, as she gripped tighter.

"Could you guys please show Peggy the Sweet Bird while I go to the debriefing?" he asked his crew members with pleading eyes then he looked back at Peggy. "Sorry Peggy, we always get debriefed after a mission."

Jason discreetly begged at Andy to help him get Peggy off his hands.

"Sure, we'll give you the nickel tour of our beautiful machine," Mark said while he placed his arm under Peggy's arm.

Mark and the guys walked Peggy away from Jason, and he was relieved.

Peggy pulled her arm out from under Mark's grip and rushed over to Jason.

She removed a letter from her uniform pocket and handed it to Jason. "Here's a letter from your mom, hand delivered with love," she said then gave Jason another kiss on his lips.

Jerome quickly placed his arm around Peggy's right arm.

Mark quickly placed his arm around Peggy's left arm.

Jerome, Mark and the other enlisted turned Peggy around.

"Let's show you our beautiful B seventeen called the Sweet Bird," Jerome told Peggy while all the enlisted guys walked her away from Jason.

Jason opened up his letter and read it while he walked away.

"Son, I'm so happy Peggy will be there to watch over you. She's going to make a wonderful daughter, in-law. Before she left for England, we reminisced, and she told me how awkward

you were during your first kiss. 'Too cute! More good news, dad and I will,' Jason's letter from Wilma stated.

Jason stopped dead in his tracks and looked upset while he read the rest of his letter.

He continued to walk to the Administration Building after Andy, Raymond and Greg joined him.

While Jason, Andy, Raymond, and Greg walked near the Administration Building, he saw Cindy rush out of the building's side door. He glanced over his shoulder and saw the guys take Peggy inside the Sweet Bird from the rear door.

Her eyes lit up happy that Jason survived another mission.

Jason shoved his letter in his pants pocket. "I'll meet you in the briefing hut in a few minutes," Jason told Andy.

"Okay," Andy replied, then he walked away with Raymond and Greg.

"I'm happy that my love made it back from another mission," Cindy said then she placed her arms around Jason's neck and kissed his lips.

While he kissed her, Jason peeked over with one eye at the Sweet Bird and noticed that the guys just still had Peggy inside the plane. He felt relieved Peggy didn't see him with Cindy.

"Listen, I need to run and take care of some important business right after our debriefing. I'll come by your place later tonight," he said when he pulled away from her arms.

"What kind of business?"

Jason hesitated and fidgeted while he thought of a good response.

"Ah, hospital business."

"Oh, okay. I'll be waiting at my apartment," she said. He gave her a quick kiss on her lips then he sprinted off to the debriefing hut.

Cindy looked a little suspicious while she watched him sprint away.

After the debriefing, Jason rushed over to the hospital building.

He rushed inside and ran down the main hallway while he looked for someone.

He stopped and peeked inside a room and saw it was empty.

He ran down another hallway and ran down to the nurses' station where Sidney chatted with a nurse.

Jason stopped by Sidney. "Doctor Carter, may I have a word with you in private?" he said in a rush. "We'll discuss this later," Sidney told the nurse who then walked away.

Jason pulled Sidney into a nearby examination room. "Do you still want to fly?" Jason quickly asked. Sidney's eyes lit up with joy. "You bet!"

"Good, but I need a huge favor in return."

"Name it," Sidney replied.

"You have a new nurse named Peggy Moore. It's a matter of life and death that you keep her on the night shift," Jason pleaded with Sidney.

Sidney thought about his request for a second, and then it dawned on him. "Is Peggy an old flame?"

Jason nodded in agreement.

"Ah, so you would rather have the Army on your butt than her?"

Jason nodded in agreement with pleading eyes.

"We have a deal," Sidney replied, then stuck out his hand.

Jason smiled while he shook Sidney's hand.

He left the room and smiled while he walked down the hallway, figuring out this would buy him some more time.

It was later that evening, and Jason managed to avoid seeing Peggy by staying in Chipley Springs.

He sat in Cindy's kitchen, and they had a nice romantic dinner, but his mind started to drift into a trance.

"I was thinking, maybe you could get a weekend pass, and we could visit my parents?" she said.

Jason didn't respond, and Cindy noticed then she got concerned. "You don't want to meet my parents?"

Jason snapped out of his trance. "Oh, ah, sure, I would love to meet them."

"Then what's the matter?"

Jason pondered an excuse, as he couldn't tell her about his dilemma. "Today's flight exhausted me. That's all."

Cindy looked worried while she picked at her food with her fork. "Are you upset with me about something?"

Jason looked at Cindy's worried eyes. He got up, walked over, and offered his hand, and helped her up. He hugged her. "No. I could never be upset with you. You're my ray of hope during this war. I'm just scared I'm going to lose you. You're everything to me," he told her.

"I'll always be here waiting for you," she replied, then hugged him hard.

Later that night, Jason walked back to the base.

Jason got within twenty feet from his barracks when his eyes glanced over, and he spotted Peggy.

She paced back and forth by the barracks door waiting for his return. He cringed at the sight of her but knew he had to face her sooner or later.

Peggy saw Jason, and she rushed over to him. "What the hell is wrong with you?"

Jason stopped in his tracks. "What do you mean?" he answered, as he's heard that tone in her voice before and knew it was trouble.

"My first day here and you shrug me off the minute I see you. Where have you been all night?" she snapped at him while placing her hands on her hips.

Jason hesitated for a few seconds while he pondered an excuse. "Ah, I was working with my mechanic, Rocky, about some issues with my plane. After all, I'm the commander of my B seventeen," he lied.

Peggy looked suspicious. "You expect me to believe that story when your uniform isn't greasy, and I searched every inch of this base for you," Peggy replied in a raised tone then she crossed her arms and glared at him.

Jason fidgeted while he pondered an excuse. "We, ah, we were inside the cockpit, and I was consulting on how my plane reacted during our mission."

Peggy glared into Jason's eyes.

He sweated, wondering if she bought his story. She thought about his alibi for a few seconds. She smiled, then hugged Jason. "I missed you, my darling. My first day here and we didn't have a minute alone," she said then gave Jason a kiss.

He didn't pucker, and she pulled away.

"Why the cold kiss?" she asked and looked a little upset.

"I'm sorry, I'm not in a romantic mood with this war going on."

"Not in a romantic mood? What the hell do you mean, you're not in a romantic mood? I'm your fiancé, so you should always be in a romantic mood with me!" she yelled.

Jason glanced around to make sure nobody heard her while she glared at him. "It's hard with the continuous threat of not knowing if I'm going to survive a mission," he responded.

Peggy pouted. "I also found out I'm on the night shift. How can we spend time alone if you're flying during the day and I'm working at night?" she said and pouted.

"Sorry, but sacrifices have to be made during war times. But don't worry, we'll find the time," he said then kissed her cheek. "It's late, and I have a busy day tomorrow ."

"Come by the hospital tomorrow night and see me," she said.

"Okay," Jason replied then faked a yawn then he headed to the barracks door. He stopped, turned around, and watched while Peggy moped away, disappointed.

He stepped inside his barracks.

A few minutes later, the barracks door creaked open and Jason's head poked outside.

He stepped out of the barracks, and when he saw that the coast was clear of Peggy, he ran off in another direction.

A few minutes later and Jason rushed into the Let's Boogie Down dance hall.

The place was quiet tonight, where only a few soldiers drank at the bar and tables.

Jason rushed inside and looked around the dance hall.

He soon saw Rocky at his usual nightly spot at the bar, and he rushed up to him.

Jason patted Rocky on his back. "Rocky."

Rocky looked up at Jason. "Hey there, Lieutenant Jay Jay," he said then sipped his beer.

Jason reached in his pants pocket and showed Rocky ten dollars.

Rocky looked curiously at the money.

"In case anybody asks, we were in the Sweet Bird's cockpit discussing mechanical things all night," Jason told him.

"Sure thing boss," Rocky replied, then snatched up the ten dollars out of Jason's hand.

Jason walked away and smiled, knowing his story would stick if Peggy started asking questions.

He walked out of the dance hall.

"Two more beers," Rocky told Russell the bartender and slapped the ten dollars on the bar.

A while later, Jason walked down the aisle in his barracks, walked up, and sat down on his bunk.

Andy's bunk was next to Jason's, and he saw Jason run his hands through his hair in frustration. "I'm going to hell!"

"So I take it you didn't break up with Peggy?"

"I can't. Mom wrote to me. They bought a bigger house, and Peggy's dad bought our old house, and it'll be our wedding present."

"What are you going to do?" Andy asked, concerned about Jason.

"I have to keep them apart until I figure out a way to break it off with Peggy, without dad getting fired."

"That could be more dangerous than bombing the Germans," Andy replied.

Jason stood up and paced back and forth by his bunk while he pondered a way out of his predicament. Then his eyes widened with a solution, and he looked at Andy. "That's why I need your help. You can keep her away from me to buy me some more time until I can come up with a plan," he said and sat back down on his bunk.

Andy looked leery of his statement. "My help?"

"Oh yeah. You're my copilot, and I need you to cover for me."

"I don't know."

Jason pleaded with his eyes, and Andy looked doubtful. Jason got on his knees like he was proposing. "Please!"

Andy eyed the other men in the barracks who glanced over at them, and he got embarrassed. "Okay, just get off your knees. You're embarrassing me."

Jason sat back down on his bunk and smiled, thinking Andy could help him buy him some more time.

Chapter 8

Jason's story about his World War II experiences with Cindy and Peggy continued.

The next day, Jason's Sweet Bird landed from their mission.

He slipped away from the base and spent the evening with Cindy inside her apartment.

After dinner, they had a sweet, quiet romantic moment where they cuddled and listened to the BBC on the radio. Later that night, Jason rushed over to the hospital to see Peggy.

She rushed him into an examination room where she immediately jumped his bones, and passionately kissed him.

Jason accepted it for a few seconds then squirmed out of her tight embrace.

He faked a yawn. "I'm tired and need some rest for tomorrow's mission," Jason said with another fake yawn. "I'll see you tomorrow night," he said then gave her a light kiss on her lips.

She looked mad while he walked out of the room.

The next day, the Sweet Bird flew in formation with eleven other B-17s in the low squadron over England on their way to Germany.

After the mission was completed and the Sweet Bird safely landed back at the Chipley Springs airfield, he met Cindy at the side of the Administration Building for a quick kiss.

She went back inside the building to return to work and Jason headed to the briefing hut.

When Jason arrived at the debriefing hut, he saw Peggy, in her nurses uniform, while she paced by the door.

She ran up to Jason and hugged him. "I'm so happy you survived this mission," she said then kissed his lips.

"Me too," he replied, then pulled her away. "I have to attend my debriefing," he told her.

Peggy pouted and crossed her arms. "I want to spend the evening with you!" she said.

“I know, but we have to do what the Army tells us.” “Why can’t I watch your plane land?” she asked. Jason thought for a few seconds for an excuse. “Well darling, I don’t want you to be there in case we crash because our plane was shot up,” he lied, but that could be a real possibility.

She thought about his response for a few seconds. “Okay,” she replied with a tone of reluctance. Jason gave her a quick kiss on her cheek and went inside the briefing hut.

Peggy walked away and pouted while she headed to the hospital.

Later that night, Peggy paced outside Jason’s barracks in her nurses uniform. She just got off duty and wanted to see Jason for a romantic moment.

Andy peeked outside the barracks door and saw Peggy while she paced close to the door.

He stepped outside and walked up to her. “Hi, Peggy.” “Where’s Jason?” she immediately asked and could care less about talking with Andy.

Andy thought for a few seconds for an excuse. “Oh, he’s talking with Colonel Franklin about an upcoming mission. He won’t be back until a couple of hours.”

Peggy walked away, disappointed, and headed over to her barracks.

Andy went inside the barracks relieved that she bought his story.

Jason had the next off since no missions were planned. He managed to slip off the base without Peggy’s watchful eyes catching him.

So Jason and Cindy had a picnic near a creek in the countryside. They cuddled while they enjoyed the peace and quiet from the war. Jason’s mind didn’t think about Peggy for one second while he was with Cindy. He was back in heaven.

Later that day, Jason and Cindy jogged down the streets of Chipley Springs.

Later that night, Peggy paced outside Jason’s barracks and looked upset.

Andy walked up to the barracks after some dancing and drinking at the Let's Boogie Down dance hall.

"Where's Jason?" Peggy immediately asked the second she laid eyes on Andy.

"Ah," Andy stammered for a response. "Ah, I, ah, don't know? I saw him this morning, but haven't seen him since. Maybe he's preparing for tomorrow's mission?" Andy lied.

Peggy stomped her feet and threw a little temper tantrum. "I can't believe him! The one day we can be alone, and he's off doing stupid Army crap!" she yelled out then she turned around and stormed away occasionally stomping her feet.

The next day, the Sweet Bird was on another bombing mission to blow up a German military complex.

Inside the Sweet Bird, Jason and Andy were looking out their windows when all of a sudden, a Messerschmitt flew into view. That German plane almost clipped them, and Jason made an evasive maneuver to avoid a collision. He straightened out the plane and heard the machine guns fire from his plane while his crew members shot at the Messerschmitt.

"I got the bastard!" Jerome called out from the radio net.

Jason removed the picture of Cindy and him under the nose of the Sweet Bird from his pocket. He kissed the picture then shoved it back in his pocket.

They flew the Sweet Bird with the other B-17s to their German military-industrial target.

The Sweet Bird landed, and the group only lost one B-17 during this mission.

After they parked and secured the Sweet Bird, Jason made a dash over to the Administration Building.

After Jason gave Cindy a few kisses, he made a mad dash to the briefing hut.

Peggy greeted him outside the briefing hut.

"I want to meet you tonight," Peggy said and looked determined. "I have a special birthday present," she said with a smile.

"Ah, sure," replied Jason without thinking.

Peggy's eyes widened with joy and immediately planted a kiss on Jason's lips.

"I have to get inside for my debriefing," he told her then rushed off to the door.

Peggy walked off toward the hospital with a spring in her step.

Later that night, Jason rushed into Chipley Springs where Cindy baked him a small birthday cake.

They had a romantic evening eating cake, kissing, and cuddling while they listened to the BBC radio.

Later that night, Peggy looked pissed while she paced back and forth by Jason's barracks with a small birthday cake in her hand.

Jason walked up to his barracks. He had a smile on his face while he thought about his time spent with Cindy. Then his eyes widened in a little fear when he saw Peggy, and he cringed, as he forgot about their meeting. Peggy looked pissed the second she saw Jason. She rushed up to him and smashed the small birthday cake hard into his face.

Peggy stormed away, furious!

Other officers walked by the barracks. They chuckled at the sight of Jason with cake all over his face.

After Jason went to the latrine hut to clean up his face, he retired to his bunk for the night.

A little while later, he read a letter from his mom while he relaxed in his bunk.

"Dear Son, Peggy wrote to me, and she's upset with your behavior with her. That concerns dad and me," Wilma wrote in her letter.

Jason lowered the letter and stared at the ceiling, wondering how he was going to get out of marrying Peggy.

The next day, Jason told Cindy that he had business to attend with Rocky, his mechanic. He also paid Rocky ten to back up his story and hated doing this but didn't have a choice.

This allowed him to take Peggy out for a picnic in the country to calm her down a little.

While they were relaxing by another small creek outside the airfield, Peggy got amorous and started kissing Jason's neck.

She then unbuttoned her blouse while kissing Jason's lips.

She took his hand and shoved it inside her opened blouse and rubbed it on her bra, covering her left breast.

Jason could feel her erect nipple. He looked at his watch, and he stood up. "I have another meeting Rocky about some engine misfiring," he said while he removed his hand out of Peggy's blouse.

"What?" Peggy yelled a little pissed.

"Sorry honey, but we have a mission tomorrow, and I have to make sure my plane is in tip-top shape," Jason replied.

Peggy was pissed while Jason gathered up their belonging.

The next day arrived, and the Sweet Bird was in formation with eleven other B-17s in the low squadron, while they were on another mission to Germany. The target for this mission was a factory that produced Panzerkampfwagen I tanks.

Inside the Sweet Bird, Jason and Andy watched while flak exploded in front of their plane.

Then they spotted a Messerschmitt racing after a B-17 the Courageous Cougar to their left. The German plane fired its machine guns, and two engines on the left-wing of the Courageous Cougar exploded into flames.

They watched while the Courageous Cougar tumbled down to the ground.

Everybody on the Sweet Bird fought hard to ignore the screams of the crew members of the Courageous Cougar while it tumbled down to their death. This became an all too familiar sound on the radio.

Jason and Andy heard the machine guns from the rear of the Sweet Bird while his crew members tried to get revenge with that Messerschmitt.

"We got the bastard!" Don cried out from the radio net.

The rest of the bombers continued their flight to the targets.

The mission was a success, and the remaining B-17s turned around and headed back to the airfield.

Later that night, while Jason and Cindy took a stroll through the streets of Chipley Springs, Peggy followed Andy at the airfield to the Let's Boogie Down dance hall.

A little while later, Andy chatted with an English woman at a table while they drank some beers inside the dance hall.

While he laughed at something she said, his eyes drifted over at the door, and he saw Peggy storm inside the dance hall. Peggy saw Andy, and she stormed after him.

Andy saw Peggy coming at him, so he quickly kissed the woman on her cheek, and he bolted to the rear of the dance hall.

Peggy ran around tables in the dance hall in pursuit of Andy. "Where's Jason?" she asked while she ran between some tables and almost tripped over a chair.

Andy ran to the back door of the dance hall and ran outside.

Peggy looked the area over once she got outside the dance hall, but Andy bolted into the darkness and wasn't visible.

She ran off into the darkness in the direction she suspected Andy ran.

Jason was able to sneak into the barracks without being seen by Peggy. He looked frazzled while he sat on his bed and ran a hand through his hair.

Andy bolted into the barracks and ran over to Jason's bunk. "She's heading into the barracks!" Andy called out to Jason.

Jason jumped up and looked for a place to hide. He looked at this bunk then got down then slide on his stomach and hid under his bunk.

Peggy stormed inside the barracks and was furious. She looked around the place for Jason.

Andy quickly reacted, and he unbuckled then unzipped his pants. He dropped his trousers to his ankles then looked at Peggy. "Excuse me, but you don't belong in here," he said, standing there in his shirt, boxer shorts and his trousers around his ankles.

Peggy glared at Andy then she turned around and stormed out of the barracks.

“She’s gone,” Andy told Jason then he pulled up his trousers.

Jason got out from under his bed. “Thanks,” he said, then sat back down on his bunk.

Andy looked disgusted with Jason while he started to get ready for the night.

It was the next day, and the Chipley Springs airfield was busy getting for another bombing mission.

Jason and Andy walked around the Sweet Bird and performed their preflight inspection.

“Listen, I can’t cover for you anymore. You have to decide if you want Peggy or Cindy. And I have to be honest, Peggy’s scarier than the Nazis,” Andy told Jason while they looked under the left aileron for any apparent damage.

“I know. This is killing me too.”

“What are you going to do?”

Jason thought for a second then looked brave while they walked around and inspected the tail section of the Sweet Bird.

“I’m going to,” he said but stopped when Peggy suddenly appeared.

“Going to do what?” she curiously asked while she walked up to Jason and Andy.

“Ah, finish my preflight,” Jason quickly replied.

Andy tip toed away, as he didn’t want to get involved with their discussion.

“Whatever, darling, I just love you,” she responded then she kissed and hugged Jason.

He squirmed out of her embrace. “Ah Peggy, I have an airplane to get ready for a dangerous mission,” he said.

Jason looked past Peggy and saw Cindy while she stood by her bike at the corner of the tower building.

Cindy got on her bike and rode away and was upset.

Jason’s eyes widened with fear knowing Cindy saw Peggy kiss him.

“Crap, I forgot that Colonel Franklin wants to see me for sharing some coordinates information about the mission,”

Jason bolted off to the tower building.

Peggy watched Jason then looked at Andy who pretended to check out a landing wheel, so he marched over to him.

“What’s going on with Jason?” she snapped at Andy

Andy looked at Jason while he sprinted to the tower building where he saw Cindy ride her bike.

“Ah, I don’t know. The Colonel probably wants to talk about the mission. He does that with the Air Commanders,” Andy responded with his best cover story.

Peggy glared at Andy who gives her a nervous fake smile.

She eyed Jason while he sprinted after Cindy, and she got suspicious. “Who is that girl?” she asked Andy while she pointed at Cindy.

Andy looked at where Peggy was pointing. “That girl?”

“Yes, that blonde girl!”

“Ah, she works in the Administration Building. Maybe she has paperwork for Jason that the Colonel needs signing,” Andy responded with another cover story.

Peggy still looked suspicious of Jason while he chased after Cindy.

Cindy raced her bike with teary eyes away to the rear of the Administration Building that was out of view of the planes.

Jason sprinted up behind her. “Cindy! I can explain!”

“Get away from me!” Cindy cried out while she peddled away from the building.

Jason sprinted faster and got in front of her bike.

Cindy couldn’t stop her bike in time, and she ran into him, and she fell off her bike.

They both tumbled on the ground.

Jason jumped up and rushed over to her.

Cindy sat up and wiped away a couple of tears. “Do you always kiss other girls before a mission? Beautiful girls thinner than me!”

Jason helped Cindy up to her feet, and he looked nervous while he looked into her eyes. He took a deep breath. “There’s something I’ve should have told you. But first, I want you to know that you’re my whole life, and I love you with all my heart,” he said then kissed her lips.

“Jason, why are you kissing this woman?” yelled out Peggy from behind him.

Jason cringed. He pulled Cindy away from him.

He turned around in fear of hearing Peggy’s voice. He saw Peggy five feet away with her arms cross, and she was furious.

Cindy looked suspicious of Peggy. “Who is she, Jason?”

Peggy marched over with fire in her eyes.

She pushed Jason away and got in Cindy’s face nose to nose. “Who am I? Why I’m Peggy Moore. Jason’s fiancé! Who the hell are you?” Peggy barked while staring square into Cindy’s eyes.

Cindy got intimidated then it dawned on her and backed away from Peggy. “Fiancé?” she asked Jason while she looked a little confused. “You said you didn’t have a girlfriend,” she said while her eyes welled up.

Jason sweated, as he prayed this moment would never happen. “I, I, was so scared of telling you about Peggy. I was scared to death of losing you,” he said with a sincere voice.

Cindy got furious, and she slapped Jason’s cheek hard, leaving a red hand imprint. She sobbed while she stormed off, leaving her bike behind in the grass.

Peggy eyed Cindy then glared at Jason with fire in her eyes. “You bastard! Wait until daddy finds out what you did!” she yelled at Jason then slapped him hard across his other cheek, leaving a red hand imprint.

Peggy sobbed while stormed away back to her barracks. Jason stood there in shock while he rubbed his cheeks.

“There you are, we have a mission to complete,” Andy said seeing the whole episode.

Jason looked and saw Andy, who waited with no remorse for Jason.

Later that day, the Sweet Bird flew in formation in the low squadron with eleven other B-17s on their way to Germany.

In the cockpit of the Sweet Bird, Jason piloted with a blank, emotionless stare. His mind was on Cindy and the thought of losing her forever.

Andy glanced over at Jason. “What did you expect? Hugs and kisses from both women?”

Jason continued to fly his B-17 with his emotionless blank stare.

Unbeknownst to Jason and Andy, the Sweet Bird dangerously drifted close to another B-17 in the formation.

“Jay Jay, are you trying to take us out!” Wendell Browning, the Air Commander from the Boogie Bomber, yelled out from the radio net.

Andy looked at Jason’s cockpit window and saw they were dangerously close to the Boogie Bomber. He quickly banked the Sweet Bird to the right while Jason sat there with his emotionless stare.

“Jay Jay! Snap out of it!” Andy yelled.

“What’s going on up there? Are you trying to get us killed?” Kirby yelled from the radio net.

“It’s under control,” Andy replied into the radio net.

“Good, I’m not ready to meet my maker today,” Raymond responded from the radio net.

Jason looked at Andy, and his eyes welled up.

“It’s my airplane,” Andy said then he took over the controls.

Jason removed his picture of Cindy and him under the Sweet Bird, from his jacket pocket. He stared at it while flak exploded all around them, shaking the plane.

Chapter 9

Jason's story about his World War II experiences with Cindy and Peggy hating his guts continued.

That night after that mission, Jason quickly changed his clothes and ran to Chipley Springs.

He ran down the streets and up to Cindy's apartment building.

Jason entered her building and bolted down the hallway. He slid to a stop and immediately knocked on Cindy's door.

There were a few moments of nervous silence while Jason waited.

Her door opened, and Cindy appeared with red, teary eyes from crying for the past two hours.

"Please let me explain!"

"There's nothing to explain. You just wanted some free fun. And I fell for it," Cindy replied while her eyes welled up while slamming the door shut.

Jason knocked on her door again. "No, Cindy! I'm not like that!"

"I never want to see you again!" Cindy yelled from inside her apartment.

Jason knocked a few more times on her door. He stopped when he heard Cindy sob from inside her apartment.

Jason moped down the hallway extremely depressed. Jason moped back to the airfield and almost got shot by the guard when he failed to show his identification card. Jason moped back to his barracks and headed to the door.

"Jason," Peggy called out the second he placed his hand on the doorknob.

He turned around and saw Peggy behind him with eyes full of tears.

"Peggy, I don't know what to say."

"How about, you cheated on me with that English bitch," she said then repeatedly slapped Jason's head.

He cowered for cover from her beating.
She stopped beating him. "I'm going to tell daddy!" she yelled, then turned around and stormed off.

Two other officers walked past Jason with interest, as they saw the whole episode.

"I knew this would catch up with him one day," the one officer told the other officer, as most of the folks on the airfield heard about Jason's predicament.

Jason sat down in the grass and got even more depressed while he thought about his situation.

Jason sat in the grass for thirty minutes before moping into the barracks.

It was the next day, and the Sweet Bird was again in formation with eleven other B-17 in the low squadron while they headed to Germany to bomb another military target. Today they were going to destroy a factory that was suspected of making weapons.

Inside the Sweet Bird, flack exploded in all-around their windows and shook the plane.

Jason stared at his picture of Cindy and himself while Andy flew the plane.

Flak continued to explode and shook the Sweet Bird. Jason almost dropped his picture.

A Messerschmitt zoomed past Jason's windows with a P-47 hot on its tail.

Jason could care less while he just stared at his picture of Cindy.

Andy was getting pissed with Jason's behavior.

Later that night, Jason survived another mission, and he immediately rushed off to Cindy's apartment.

He looked nervous while he paced by Cindy's door with a box of chocolates in hand. He knew she hadn't come home from work yet and figured waiting by her door would be the only way she would see him.

After nine minutes of pacing by her door, Cindy walked down the hallway. She saw Jason and looked away while she walked to her door.

"Please talk to me!" he pleaded while he handed her the box of chocolates.

She took the box then threw it down the hallway where it smashed into a wall, and pieces of chocolate flew everywhere.

Cindy opened up her apartment door, went inside, and slammed her door shut.

Jason stared at her closed door for a second, then moped away depressed down the hallway.

Down the other end of the hallway, Albert Webb, a seventy-five-year-old lonely man, opened up his apartment door and peeked out curious with the commotion he heard.

He saw Jason while he moped down the hallway then he spotted the pieces of chocolate candy scattered all over the floor.

Albert rushed out of his apartment.

He ran up and down the hallway and picked up all the pieces of chocolate. This was a special treat for him today.

He rushed back inside his apartment with his prize.

Cindy's door opened, and she peeked out with eyes filled with tears while she glanced down the empty hallway. She closed her apartment door and wept inside.

Jason spent the rest of the day moping around the airfield.

That night, he visited the Let's Boogie Down dance hall, and his prayers were answered when he saw Cindy inside with Amy.

He rushed over to Amy and Cindy's table. Cindy saw Jason and immediately looked away.

"I was going to break up with Peggy, but it's a delicate situation."

"Come, Amy, this delicate air suddenly stinks." Cindy stood up and walked away.

Amy got up and gave Jason a dirty look and followed Cindy while she headed to the door.

Jason moped depressed over to the bar.

It was later that night, and most of the patrons left the dance hall.

Jason, with his hair and uniform a mess, sat at the bar in a depressed stupor.

Peggy, in a nurses uniform, entered the dance hall and walked up to Jason. "We need to talk," she told him.

Jason gulped down his beer and ignored her.

"I still love and forgive you," she replied while she stroked Jason's arm.

Jason got pissed.

"We still have a wedding in the future. I'll call daddy back and tell him everything's been worked out," she said while she straightened out his hair and uniform.

Jason shooed her hand away from his arm and ignored her comment.

Peggy suddenly got a smirk. "Let's find a private place to talk this over."

Jason looked over at Peggy. His eyes crossed, and he passed out and slammed his head on the bar.

The bartender rushed over to Jason while Peggy stormed out of the dance hall, furious.

Two days passed, and Jason didn't have any contact with Cindy or Peggy. He spent his all of his free time drinking his sorrows away at the dance hall.

The next day, Jason performed the take-off roll down the runway with the Sweet Bird.

Andy monitored the instruments on the console and didn't pay attention to Jason.

Jason continued the take-off roll with the Sweet Bird and was nearing the end of the runway where some tall trees were nearby.

The Sweet Bird finally lifted off near the end of the runway.

Andy looked out the front cockpit windows, and he leaned back in his seat while watching the tops of the trees approaching fast.

"Watch it!" Andy yelled at Jason.

The sound of the treetops scraping against the bottom of the Sweet Bird was heard throughout the fuselage.

"What the hell was that?" Robert yelled from the radio net.

"I think I have a tree branch stuck up my ass!" Warren, the Ball Turret Gunner, yelled from the radio net.

"What the fuck is your problem?" Andy yelled while he glared at Jason.

"Are you guys up there trying to kill us?" Kirby yelled out from the radio net.

"Get your damn hands off the controls!" Andy yelled at Jason.

Jason removed his hands from the controls, and Andy took command. "Sorry guys," he said into the radio net.

"You pilots are scaring me," Gerard said from the radio net.

Jason stared out his window and tried to get his mind on the mission, but the thought of losing Cindy forever consumed his thoughts.

The mission was over, and the Sweet Bird survived another mission despite Jason's behavior.

Late that night, Jason was able to purchase a bottle of whiskey from Russell at the dance hall.

He climbed inside the Sweet Bird and sat in his seat. He opened the whiskey bottle and took a gulp while he stared at the stars from his cockpit windows.

After ten minutes of drinking whiskey, the sound of someone entering the Sweet Bird was heard behind Jason.

Andy appeared and sat down in his copilot's seat. He watched while Jason took a swig of whiskey. "Will, that solve your problem?" Andy asked in a fatherly tone.

"It sure makes it easier to swallow," Jason slurred out his response.

"You're scaring me with the way you've been flying lately. Do you want the Germans to knock us out of the sky?" Andy scolded.

"Cindy doesn't love me anymore!"

"You got yourself in this situation, so go fix it."

"I tried. She hates me!" he slurred out his reply. Jason took a swig of whiskey, and Andy leaned over, yanked the bottle out of Jason's hand, and some whiskey poured down Jason's shirt.

"I'm going to talk with Colonel Franklin and recommend you be grounded. You're endangering the crew and me," Andy scolded Jason then he left with the whiskey bottle.

Later that night, Jason staggered by the dance hall and heard the band play Billy Holiday's The Very Thought Of You song inside.

He stopped and listened to the song for a few minutes. His eyes light up with an idea, and he ran off.

He got twenty feet from the dance hall, and he tripped over his feet.

He got back up and ran away into the darkness.

A little later that night, Cindy was sound asleep in her bed when from outside her window, Jason sang out loud.

Jason sang out in a key that doesn't exist to some of the lyrics to The Very Thought Of You song.

Cindy woke up and got out of bed when it dawned on her that someone was singing out her window.

Jason sang out some more lyrics from outside while Cindy walked to her bedroom window.

She looked out her bedroom window and saw Jason down on one knee on the sidewalk.

Jason sang out more lyrics while she looked out her window .

"Stop! You'll wake up the whole town," she called out from her window.

From her window, she watched while Jason stopped singing and stood up.

"I love you, and I'll never love another woman!" Jason pleaded from outside.

"But you lied about Peggy."

Jason had a guilty look. "I know. But I was terrified dad would be fired if I broke up with her. I was trying to figure out a way to break up with her. I swear! Then she showed up here,

and I didn't know what to do. I was so scared of losing you," he cried out from the sidewalk.

A Jeep with two Military Police (MP) screeched to a stop near Jason.

The MPs, Jack and Wally, jumped out and rushed over to Jason and were pissed.

"You're disturbing the peace," Wally yelled at Jason.

Wally and Jack each grabbed one of Jason's arms and dragged him over to the Jeep. They tossed him in the backseat then Wally sat behind the wheel, and Jack sat in the passenger seat.

From her bedroom window, Cindy saw Jason in the back of the Jeep.

Jason turned around and looked up at Cindy. "I love you!" Jason yelled out from the back of the Jeep.

Cindy watched while Jack turned around and whacked the back of Jason's head with his nightstick. Her eyes welled up when she saw him buckle over in pain.

A little while later, Jack and Wally got Jason out of the Jeep and walked him into the MP building.

They walked Jason over to one of the two jail cells in the hut, and tossed him onto the floor of the cell.

Jack slammed the cell door shut then he walked away with Wally.

Jason sat up off the floor then his eyes widened, and he vomited all over his pants.

Chapter 10

Jason's story about his World War II experiences with Cindy and Peggy continued.

It was the next morning and quiet at the Chipley Springs airfield.

Jason exited the MP hut, depressed with a bump on the back of his head and his clothes were all rumpled up.

He moped away.

"Jay Jay," Cindy's voice called out from behind Jason. He turned around and saw Cindy riding her bike up to him. "Do you love me and only me?" she asked when she was close to Jason.

Jason's eyes welled up with tears. "Forever!"

"But you'll go back to the states after the war," she replied while she stopped her bike by Jason.

"I'm not going back there without you. I promise!"

"What about Peggy?" she curiously asked.

"We were through as a couple before I met you," he replied with sincerity in his eyes.

Cindy thought for a few seconds while she looked into Jason's eyes.

She jumped off her bike, and they embraced in a kiss.

Albert drove up in a Jeep and stopped by Jason.

"Lieutenant Jenkins, Colonel Franklin needs to see you ASAP!" he said.

Jason gave Cindy another quick kiss. "I'll come to your apartment later tonight," he said while he rushed over to the Jeep and he knew this would be about last night.

Cindy looked concerned while she watched Albert drive the Jeep away.

She got on her bike and rode off in another direction.

Later that morning, Andy waited by Albert's Jeep outside Colonel Franklin's building.

Jason exited Franklin's building and looked worried.

“I could hear the Colonel yell from out here. Did fire come out of his ears?” Andy asked the second he saw Jason.

“Humongous flames,” Jason replied then he looked back at his rear end. “I hope Cindy doesn’t mind me having a flat ass, because the Colonel chewed off both cheeks to the bone.”

“What did he do to you?”

“A strong warning, that the next time, I’ll lose command of the Sweet Bird and will be demoted.”

“You got off lucky,” Andy replied.

Jason nodded in agreement while he removed his wallet and looked inside. “Do you have some dough you can lend me?”

“What for?” Andy curiously asked.

“My future,” Jason replied with a huge grin.

“Tell me about it on the way back to the barracks,”

Andy replied while they walked away.

Later that day, Jason rushed into Chipley Springs and found a small jewelry store.

Andy waited outside the store by the street in a Jeep. Jason rushed out of the store with a small ring box in hand.

He shoved the box into his pants pocket while he jumped inside the Jeep with a huge grin.

Andy drove the Jeep away and headed back to the airfield.

A little while later, Andy drove the Jeep back to the barracks where Jason saw Peggy pacing by the door.

“What does she want now?” Jason said with a frown at the sight of Peggy.

Andy stopped the Jeep by the barracks, and Peggy rushed over to them.

“Good luck buddy,” Andy said while he jumped out of the Jeep and rushed over to the barracks door.

“It’s time we talk,” Peggy said with hopeful eyes. Jason took a deep breath and looked brave. “This is going to be hard but needs to be said. I can’t marry you, because I don’t love you anymore. I’m sorry and please don’t take it out on my family.”

Peggy looked stunned while Jason walked to the barracks and went inside.

Inside the barracks, a few officers milled around in their boxer shorts while Jason walked to his bunk.

He sat down on his bunk and thought about his meeting with Cindy later tonight.

The barracks door slammed open, Peggy barged inside and was so furious her face was red.

The men in their underwear dove for cover while Peggy stormed down the aisle.

She stormed over to Jason's bunk and hovered over him. "Break up with me? I don't think so! Just you wait and see!" she yelled at him then she walked away from his bunk.

Jason and all the men watched while she stormed out of the barracks and slammed the door shut.

Jason wasn't worried about her threats while he went back to thinking about Cindy.

It was later that night, and Jason was with Cindy in her apartment.

Candles were all over her small living room and created a romantic atmosphere.

Jason and Cindy stood by her bed and gazed into each other's eyes; then, they engaged in a passionate kiss.

On the small table by her bed was her copy of their photo under the Sweet Bird.

Jason suddenly dropped down on one knee and took Cindy's hand. "I love you so very much and want to spend the rest of my life with you," he said while he reached in his pants pocket and removed the small ring box. "Cindy Grant, will you marry me and make me the happiest man in the world?" he added while he opened up the box revealing a small but beautiful diamond engagement ring.

Cindy's eyes well up at the sight of the ring, and she nodded that she would marry Jason while tears ran down her cheek.

Jason placed the ring on her finger then he stood up, and they engaged in a passionate kiss.

After a few seconds of kissing, Cindy removed Jason's shirt and tee-shirt.

Jason removed Cindy's blouse and bra.

He removed his pants while she removed her skirt. They both removed their underwear and stood before each other naked.

They engaged in a passionate kiss and fell on top of the bed.

Later that night, after an hour of lovemaking, Jason got out of Cindy's bed, as he had to head back to the airfield. "I can't wait to for us to have a life back in the states," he said while he put on his shirt.

"You'll need someone to handle the paperwork and payroll of your aviation business," she said while she put on her bra.

Jason smiled at her suggestion. "You'll make a beautiful secretary. And I can chase you around my desk! But keep that a secret from my wife," he replied with a light chuckle.

Cindy chuckled then looked concerned while she slipped on her blouse. "What about Peggy?"

"I told her it's officially over between us," he said while he finished buttoning up his shirt. "And I'm still worried she'll have my dad fired," he added while he slipped on his pants.

"Is she that evil?"

"You better believe it," Jason responded while he slipped on his shoes.

Jason walked up to Cindy after she slipped on her skirt. Jason engaged in a passionate kiss for a few minutes.

The sun started to peek above the horizon in England.

Jason strutted back into the barracks after taking a shower in the latrine hut.

He had a huge satisfying grin on his face while he strutted up to his bunk.

Andy woke up from his bunk and saw Jason while he sat down on his bunk.

Andy eyed Jason and saw his huge grin.

"Well, I can assume that that grin on your face means she accepted?" Andy asked while he sat upon his bunk.

"You better believe it, and my life will be wonderful," Jason replied.

“I’m so happy for you, but what about Peggy?”

“I broke it off for good,” he replied but still looked a little worried about her. “I now have the chance for a beautiful life with Cindy and this war could take all that away in a heartbeat,” he added then looked worried.

“I know, buddy. I know,” Andy replied then he relaxed in his bunk.

Jason relaxed on his bunk and stared at the ceiling in deep thought about his future.

Albert entered the barracks and rushed over to Jason’s bunk.

“Lieutenant Jenkins, Sergeant Wilson needs to see you before your mission,” Albert said then he turned around and rushed out of the barracks.

Jason looked concerned while he got off his bunk and headed to the door.

Jason walked into the Administration Building and saw Cindy typing at her desk.

She glanced up at Jason and looked a little worried.

Jason winked at while he walked over to Master Sergeant (MSgt) Wally Wilson’s desk located over at the other end of the room.

“You wanted to see me, Sarge? I’m Lieutenant Jenkins?” Jason asked.

“Yes sir,” MSgt Wilson replied then he looked at Jason then thumbed through some pieces of papers. “I’ve never seen orders get here so quick. Someone in high places must really love you,” MSgt Wilson told Jason while he handed him some orders.

Jason looked curious while he read his orders.

Cindy glanced up from her typewriter and still looked worried while she watched Jason.

“Transferred to Camp Springs Army Air Base in Maryland? How can this be?” Jason asked MSgt Wilson.

“Don’t ask me, Lieutenant, I just shuffle the papers.”

It dawned on Jason who could have been behind these orders. “Damn her!” he cursed then the remembered

something, and he looked back at MSgt Wilson. “I heard you’re a man who will do favors?”

Wilson looked around to make sure the coast was clear, and he leaned toward Jason. “What do you need?”

Jason handed his orders back and leaned on the desk and got closer to Wilson’s face. “Burn this and swear you never saw it. And burn any more that come in this office for the next two months,” he said then discreetly reached in his pants pocket and discreetly slipped twenty dollars to MSgt Wilson.

Wilson discreetly slipped the cash into his pocket. Then his eyes lit up, and he quickly looked through another pile of papers. He pulled out some other orders and showed them to Jason. “What about these orders?” he asked.

Jason glanced at the orders and saw they were for Peggy with the same assignment as Jason’s back in Maryland. “Twenty dollars and she leaves,” Jason replied with a smirk.

MSgt Wilson nodded in agreement with Jason’s offer. He had also heard about Jason’s predicament.

Jason reached in his pocket and discreetly gave MSgt Wilson him another twenty dollars.

MSgt Wilson discreetly slipped the cash into his pants pocket.

Jason looked happy while he glanced over at Cindy at her desk and winked at her.

He walked out of the building.

Jason paced outside the side of the Administration Building.

Cindy walked out of the building and rushed over to

Jason in a panic. “I saw your orders. I can’t believe that you’re going to be transferred back to the states. What are we going to do?”

“I know this was Peggy’s doing. I think I can slow down this transfer, but Peggy will be persistent, so we need to get married right away.”

“I know of a priest who might marry us,” Cindy said, happy to be marrying Jason sooner than expected.

Jason kissed Cindy. “Good, let’s work on getting married within a few days. I’m not going to let Peggy or this war stop me from having a beautiful life with you,” he said and looked determined.

Cindy hugged Jason, and her eyes welled up so happy to soon be Mrs. Jason Jenkins.

“I’ll talk with Colonel Franklin about our marriage after this mission,” Jason said then gave her a quick kiss and dashed off to his barracks to dress in his flight suit.

A little while later, Jason sat in the briefing hut with Andy and the other officers while they listened to Colonel Franklin talk about their mission.

Jason had a hard time concentrating on Colonel Franklin since thoughts of marrying Cindy filled his mind.

The briefing was completed, and the officers all headed to their planes to start the dangerous mission.

Later that day, the Sweet Bird flew in formation along with eleven other B-17s in the low squadron over the German countryside while they headed to a munitions factory near Frankfurt.

Jason sat in his cockpit and was on cloud nine while he thought about the strong possibility of marrying Cindy in a few days.

“You’re a changed man now that you got your life back on track with Cindy,” Andy said.

“It’s going to be beautiful with her as my wife and you as my business partner,” Jason replied.

Flak started exploding all around them and rattled their teeth while it shook the Sweet Bird.

Andy’s eyes widened with concern when he saw two Messerschmitt’s racing toward the Sweet Bird.

“Two Messerschmitt’s at two o’clock,” Andy called in the radio net.

Jason looked out the windows and saw two other Messerschmitt’s racing at them from his windows.

“We have two additional Messerschmitt’s coming at us at ten o’clock,” Jason added into the radio net.

The machine guns were heard while the Sweet Bird gunners fired at these German threats.

The unwanted sound of bullets penetrating the Sweet Bird was then heard.

The machines were heard while the Sweet Bird gunners returned fire at the German planes.

The sound of more Messerschmitt bullets penetrating the Sweet Bird was heard.

“I’m hit!” Mark, one of the Waist Gunners, yelled out from the radio net.

The machines were heard while the Sweet Bird gunners returned fire at the German planes.

“I got one of the bastards!” Robert, the Tail Gunner, yelled out from the radio net.

Fifteen more Messerschmitt’s raced after the formation of B-17s.

The machines were heard while the Sweet Bird gunners returned fire at the German planes.

The sound of more Messerschmitt bullets penetrating the Sweet Bird was heard.

Andy glanced out his engine just in time to see a Messerschmitt fire at the wing on his side of the plane.

The Messerschmitt fired its machine guns at the wing, and engine one exploded into flames.

“Engine one is on fire,” Andy yelled out into the radio net.

Jason immediately shut down engine number one then noticed he was losing fuel on the right-wing.

Then Jason saw something out of the corner of his eye, and he saw another Messerschmitt coming at his wing.

The Messerschmitt fired its machine guns at the wing, and engine four busted into flames.

“We lost engine number four, and we’re also losing fuel,” Jason said into the radio net. Jason looked out his windows at the countryside below. “We’ll have to ditch. Get ready guys,” he said into the radio net.

Andy shut off engine number four while Jason started their descent to the German countryside.

Jason quickly removed his photo of Cindy and him under the Sweet Bird from his jacket pocket and kissed it. He shoved his photo back into his jacket pocket and continued with his descent to the German countryside.

It was quiet inside the Sweet Bird while everybody thought about their potential fate while they rapidly descended down to the German countryside.

Chapter 11

Jason's story with life after being shot down in Germany continued.

It was peaceful in the German countryside except for the sounds of the Messerschmitt's attacking the formations of B-17 bombers a few miles away.

In a large field of a small farm that contained numerous huge boulders, ten cows grazed.

The Sweet Bird glided down to the field, with two engines out, landing gear down.

It headed toward the trees at the other end of the field.

The Cows continued to graze in place, unaware of the big airplane that was headed in their direction.

The Sweet Bird scrapped the tops of the trees while it descended to the field.

The wheels of the Sweet Bird touched down in the field.

The Cows finally scatter out of the way.

The Sweet Bird rolled down the field then the right landing gear smacked into a rock, and it snapped off. The right-wing scrapped the ground.

The nose of the Sweet Bird plowed into the field.

The nose smashed into another large rock, and the nose section cracked open while the Sweet Bird flipped over landing in the field with a loud bang.

The dust soon settled, and the field got quiet again.

There were a small farmhouse and barn at the other end of the field.

Lucas, a forty-five-year-old German farmer, rushed out of his barn after he heard the sounds of the Sweet Bird crashing in his field.

He looked in the direction of his field.

He got furious at the sight of an American bomber that crashed on his land. He got even more enraged when he couldn't see his cows in the field believing they ran away.

He rushed back inside his barn.

At the Sweet Bird, Jason, Kirby, and Andy dragged Gerard out of the wreckage.

They dragged him fifty feet away from the wreckage and lay him on the ground.

Jason knelt by Gerard and felt for a pulse on his neck. He looked devastated while he looked back at Andy and Kirby.

“He’s gone.”

From the Sweet Bird, Don and Jerome dragged Mark out of the wreckage.

They dragged him over to Jason, Andy, and Kirby.

They placed Mark next to Gerard. “He’s dead,” Don told Jason.

Jason and Andy looked back at the Sweet Bird and saw Robert and Warren drag Mike out of the fuselage.

They dragged Mike over to the other crew members then place Mike next to Mark.

“He’s gone,” Robert told Jason.

Jason, Andy, Kirby, Robert, Warren, Jerome, and Don all looked down at their three dead crewmates. They all took a few minutes to grieve over the loss of their fellow friends.

“Let’s bury them and leave before the Krauts show up,” Jason told everybody.

Lucas suddenly appeared with a pitchfork in his hand, and he was furious. “You stinking Americans!” he cursed out in German behind their backs.

Jason, Andy, Kirby, Robert, Warren, Jerome, and Don all turned around and saw Lucas with the pitchfork in his hand. They knew this German was pissed.

Lucas quickly stabbed his pitchfork deep into Andy’s chest.

Andy’s eyes widened in shock, never expecting to be stabbed with a pitchfork during the war, and he collapsed to the ground.

Jason, Kirby, Robert, Warren, Jerome, and Don all whipped out their pistols and aimed them at Lucas.

By the time Lucas realized he had made a mistake by stabbing Andy, it was too late. Jason fired off a shot, and the

bullet hit Lucas in his forehead. Lucas flew backward and landed on the ground dead.

Jason and everybody rushed over to Andy.

Andy looked up at Jason, and he wheezed, and blood oozed out of his mouth.

Jason held Andy's hand, as he could sense he wouldn't pull through.

Andy wheezed and coughed up more blood.

Kirby, Robert, Don, Jerome, and Warren watched over the field for any other German civilians that might want to kill them.

"I, I, I don't know if I can be your partner now," Andy strained to tell Jason.

"I'm so sorry for the way I acted when I thought I lost Cindy," Jason said with a remorseful tone about his behavior.

"That's okay," Andy replied then wheezed and coughed up more blood.

"I'm cold. Really cold," Andy said then he wheezed. "I know," Jason replied.

Andy's body trembled a little then he exhaled his last breath, and there was a blank stare in his eyes.

Andy's hand went limp in Jason's grip.

Jason's eyes well up at the sight of his dead friend in front of him.

Kirby, Warren, and Robert continued to scan the field over for any more threats.

"There's a storm coming," Warren said when he notices black clouds heading in their direction.

"There's a farmhouse over there. We can hide out there for the night," Kirby added when he spotted the house.

Jason stood up and looked at the approaching storm and farmhouse.

"Okay, let's stay at the house and wait out the storm," Jason told everybody. He looked at Warren and Robert. "Go back to the plane, destroy the bombsight and get the maps," Jason ordered.

"You got it," Warren replied.

Warren and Robert dashed off to the Sweet Bird.

After Warren and Robert came back from the Sweet Bird with the maps and confirmation that they destroyed the bombsight, they all headed over to the farmhouse.

Jason, Kirby, Jerome, Robert, Warren, Don all cautiously walked to the front door of the farmhouse. They had their pistols ready for any encountered trouble.

“Ready?” Jason quietly whispered to everybody who nodded in agreement.

Jason slowly opened the front door, and they all quietly entered the house with pistols ready.

Jason and everybody quietly stepped into the living room where nobody was visible.

They cautiously walked through the room and entered the kitchen where nobody was visible.

“Do you think that farmer lived alone?” Jerome quietly whispered to everybody.

“That’s possible,” Don whispered back.

“Let’s check the bedrooms,” Jason whispered to his men.

They all quietly walked out of the kitchen and headed down the hallway where it was also quiet.

They peeked into a bedroom where nobody was visible. It was a bedroom for a girl, so they figured someone was hiding in the house.

“Check out that room,” Jason whispered to Robert and Warren.

Robert and Warren quietly entered the bedroom and checked the closed and under the bed.

They walked back into the hallway.

“Nothing,” Robert whispered to Jason.

They all quietly walked farther down the hallway. They peeked into another bedroom that looked like a boy’s room.

Jason motioned to Jerome and Don to check out the room.

Jerome and Don quietly entered the bedroom and checked under the bed and the closet.

They walked back to the hallway.

“Nothing,” Don whispered to Jason.

They peeked into another bedroom that looked like an adults room where nobody was visible.

“I don’t think anybody’s home,” Warren whispered out to everybody.

They turned around to walk back down the hallway when a whimper was heard coming from that bedroom. nJason motioned for everybody to be quiet while they went to investigate the bedroom.

They walked around the bed and didn’t see anybody. Jason peeked under the bed with his pistol and saw Ingrid, the forty-five-year-old wife of Lucas and Carla, the ten-year-old daughter shivering in fear.

Jason stood up and looked at Kirby. “Tell them to get out from under the bed,” Jason told Kirby.

“Get out from under the bed,” Kirby said in German.

Ingrid and Carla slowly crawled out from under the bed, scared to death and were on the verge of crying.

“Tell them they won’t be harmed. I promise,” Jason told Kirby.

“We promise we won’t harm you,” Kirby told Ingrid and Carla in German.

Ingrid’s eyes welled up, and she held Carla tight against her body, as they both were still scared to death of the American soldiers.

“Ask them where her other child is?” Jason told Kirby.

“Where’ the other child?” Kirby asked Ingrid in German.

Ingrid looked scared while she glanced at Kirby. “Wilhelm is at his grandmother’s home,” Ingrid lied to Kirby in German.

“She said he’s at the grandmother’s,” Kirby told Jason.

“Scour this house for another child. Check the basement if they have one and then check the attic,” Jason ordered Robert, Warren, Don, and Jerome.

“In work,” Warren replied.

Robert, Warren, Don, and Jerome rushed out of the bedroom and started their search of the house for another child.

“Tell her we’re hungry and ask if she could please get us some food,” Jason told Kirby.

“We’re hungry, so could you please get us some food?” Kirby asked Ingrid in German.

“Yah,” Ingrid replied while wiping away tears.

Jason and Kirby escorted Ingrid and Carla out of their bedroom.

Jason and Kirby escorted Ingrid and Carla into the kitchen.

While Robert, Jerome, Warren, and Don searched the entire house for another child, Ingrid started making a meal for the Americans.

Thirty minutes later, Ingrid and Carla were quiet and scared while they made a big bowl of Eintopf, a bean soup, for Jason and the other guys.

Robert, Jerome, Don, and Warren searched every nook and cranny of the house and didn’t find another child. Jason believed Ingrid’s story was correct, and the child was at the grandmother’s house.

Ingrid and Carla sat cowered in one corner of her kitchen while they watched the American’s eat the soup. “Are they going to kill us?” Carla whispered to Ingrid, as she was scared to death.

Ingrid looked at the Americans, and she feared the worse. “I don’t believe they will,” Ingrid whispered back to Carla.

Ingrid and Carla continued to stay cowered in the corner of the kitchen while Jason and his crew finished the soup.

After Kirby ate his soup, he searched the house for any weapons that Lucas might have owned. He found a shotgun with shells, and Jason recommended that they take it with them.

An hour had passed, the storm was over, and Jason and his crew rested after their meal.

Jason walked to Ingrid’s bedroom window and peeked out the curtains. From the windows, it appeared to be quiet out in the field by the Sweet Bird.

He walked out of the bedroom and headed back to the kitchen.

“Warren, Robert, Jerome, and Don, go find some shovels and bury those guys out there including the farmer,” Jason told them.

Warren, Robert, Jerome, and Don walked out the kitchen door and headed to the barn.

Jason and Kirby escorted Ingrid and Carla into her bedroom.

Kirby, with Lucas' shotgun, kept an eye on Ingrid and Carla while Jason peeked out the bedroom window.

From the bedroom window, Jason saw Robert, Jerome, Don, and Warren walk to his dead crewmembers with shovels in their hands.

Jason moved away from the window and glanced over at Ingrid and Carla who sat on the bed, still scared to death. He felt so bad about forcing his way into their home. But a war going on and they needed to survive.

Kirby watched Ingrid and Carla while Jason studied his maps to determine their escape plans.

The rest of the Sweet Bird crew members were still outside digging graves.

Thirty minutes later, Jason stood outside the farmhouse and looked at the sun while it dropped below the horizon.

Jason went back inside the house and back into the bedroom.

Twenty minutes later, Warren entered the bedroom and saw Jason while he leaned against the wall with an eye on Ingrid and Carla, who were still on the bed.

"We got them all buried including that farmer," Warren told Jason.

"Thanks," Jason replied, then looked at Ingrid and Carla. "Take Robert, Don, and Jerome and get some food out of the kitchen. Don't take it all, just enough for a few days," Jason said.

"Got it," Warren said then walked out of the bedroom and headed down the hallway.

Jason and Kirby stayed in the bedroom with Ingrid and Carla.

Ten minutes later, Warren walked back into the bedroom. "We have enough food and supplies. We're ready to leave," Warren told Jason.

"Good, we'll meet you in the living room," Jason replied.

Warren looked at Ingrid and Carla. "Should we kill them?"

"No way!" Jason replied while he looked at Ingrid and Carla. "Go find some rope," he told Warren.

"Okay," Warren replied, then rushed out of the bedroom.

"What are you going to do," Kirby asked Jason.

"Tie them up but not too tight so they can get out of the rope after we're gone," Jason replied.

"Sounds like a good idea. I don't believe they're a threat," Kirby replied.

Warren returned to the bedroom with some rope. "Here you go Jay Jay," Warren said while he handed Jason the rope.

Ingrid and Carla looked scared of the rope, and Ingrid's eyes welled up, thinking the Americans were going to kill them.

"Kirby, tell them that I'm not going to hurt them. I'm only going to tie them up," Jason said.

"We're not going to hurt you. We're going to tie you up," Kirby told Ingrid and Carla in German.

Ingrid and Carla still looked scared while they huddled together on the bed.

Jason walked over to the bed with the rope. He loosely tied Ingrid and Carla's hands behind their back.

"Tell them we're leaving and I'm sorry about the death of her husband. He didn't leave me any other option since he killed my friend," Jason told Kirby.

"We're leaving and sorry about your husband. He shouldn't have killed our friend," Kirby told Ingrid in German.

Ingrid and Carla sobbed over being reminded that Lucas was dead.

Jason and Kirby, with Lucas' shotgun, walked out of the bedroom while Ingrid and Carla still continued sob.

Jason and Kirby walked into the living room where Warren, Robert, Jerome, and Don waited with the supplies they raided from the kitchen.

"Where we going, Jay Jay?" Robert asked.

"I think we should head west to Belgium and hopefully we can find some of their resistance fighters who can help get us back to England," Jason replied to his men.

“Sounds like a good plan,” Jerome replied.

“Let’s move out,” Jason told his men.

They all walked to the front door and stepped outside.

Jason and his men stood by the side of the farmhouse. “Let’s head west and hopefully find Belgium,” Jason told his men while he pointed in the direction where he saw the sunset.

Jason and everybody walked toward some nearby woods.

“Halt!” a German male voice yelled out from the front of the house.

Jason and his men froze in their tracks ten feet from the woods, and they suddenly realized they were caught.

Jason and his men turned around and saw fifteen German Infantry soldiers with rifles aimed at them.

“Drop your weapons,” the German officer yelled at Jason and everybody in English.

Jason and everybody else dropped their pistols on the ground. Kirby also dropped Lucas’ shotgun down on the ground.

The other fifteen German soldiers rushed over and circled Jason and his crew.

“Come!” the German officer yelled at Jason and his men and motioned with his Luger pistol.

The German soldiers marched Jason and his crew over to a waiting truck that was located one hundred feet away by the road.

While Jason and his crew members were marched to the truck, he saw Wilhelm, a thirteen-year-old blonde German boy standing with Rudolph, a fifty-six-year-old farmer, while they stood by a car. He realized that Wilhelm was Lucas’ son and Ingrid sent him over to Rudolph’s house so he can contact the German Infantry at the nearby base.

Jason figured the Germans would take them out into the woods and shot them. All he could think about was not marrying Cindy and having a long life with her while they were marched away from the farmhouse.

Chapter 12

Jason's story about being captured by the Germans continued.

A few days had passed.

Jason and his men were sent to a German Durchgangslager, which was a transit camp where they were processed and interrogated. But Jason and his men were tough, and only gave their names, ranks and serial numbers.

After the transit camp, Jason was sent on a train to head out to another camp. He was jammed into a boxcar with numerous American and British POWs.

It was a long train ride to their next destination with frequent stops so the prisoners could relieve themselves along the tracks.

It was an overcast day when the train made its final stop, and all the POWs were ordered out of the boxcars.

Jason got out of the boxcar with fifteen other POWs, and they were greeted with forty German soldiers with rifles.

"Get in formation!" the German officer in charge yelled at the POWs in English

Jason and the other POWs got in formation, and he was on the outside.

"Move it!" the German officer yelled at the POWs.

The formation of prisoners marched in the direction the other German soldiers headed.

After thirty minutes of marching, the POWs finally reached their new home, a German camp called Luft Stalag XXG.

The POWs were marched through the barb-wired front gate of the Stalag.

The POWs were marched further into the Stalag.

They were stopped in the middle of the dirt area, which was the center of the camp.

German soldiers quickly closed and locked the front gate.

Berndt Dunstan, a thirty-five-year-old German Sergeant, walked up to the formation and he waited without saying a word.

The POWs glanced around their new home away from home and saw a perimeter barbed-wire fence around the whole camp.

Periodically positioned around the fence were wooden guard towers, where German soldiers had machines ready to shoot any POW that attempted to escape.

They also saw many one-story wood barracks with crawl spaces and other numerous wooden buildings.

The whole Stalag was built on land with yellow sandy subsoil.

The German soldiers stood guard over the POWs, and they stayed in formation for twenty minutes.

Jason glanced over to his right and saw the large building that had the Nazi flag hanging outside.

He saw Otto Bruker, a forty-five-year-old German Colonel with a smirk while he stared at the formation from the glass windows of the door. Colonel Bruker loved making the new prisoners stand in formation for an extended period after they arrived in his Stalag.

Colonel Bruker had a rough complexion and a constant severe deadpan glare and rarely smiled unless he harassed one of the prisoners.

Hans Wolfe was an eighteen-year-old baby faced Private that stood next to Colonel Bruker. Otto was the administrative clerk for the Colonel and was happy he got this duty instead of being on the front line.

“Let’s go, Private Wolfe,” Colonel Bruker barked out his order.

Hans snapped up to attention from behind his desk and grabbed his hat.

Hans opened the door for Colonel Bruker. Colonel Bruker put on his hat and stepped outside. Colonel Bruker walked down the small steps of his building with Hans tagging behind him like an obedient servant.

Colonel Bruker marched over to the formation of POWs. He stopped at the front of the formation and glared at the POWs.

Hans stopped by the side of the formation where Jason stood.

Colonel Bruker paced back and forth in front of the formation with his dangerous glare to intimidate the soldiers.

“My name is Colonel Otto Bruker. I’m in charge of your home away from home,” Colonel Bruker said in English while he walked around the formation.

He walked over to the front of the formation. “Therefore, if any of you are thinking of running away,” he said. He stopped at the front of the formation and glared at the POWs. “You’ll be shot!” he promised.

He walked up to one of the POWs and kneed the man in his groin.

The man dropped to his knees and clutched his crotch in pain.

Colonel Bruker strutted around to the side of the formation proud of himself for kneeing the POW. “For security reasons, I will be reading your outgoing and incoming letters. You are only authorized to write to your family. No friends. No lovers. Just family,” he told the POWs in a threatening tone.

Jason frowned while Colonel Bruker walked past him. Colonel Bruker noticed, he got pissed, and he rushed back over to Jason. He grabbed Jason out of line and immediately kneed Jason in his crotch.

Jason dropped to his knees in pain.

“This is my Stalag, and you will obey my orders! “Now, those two displays are a friendly reminder that I won’t tolerate any misbehavior or attempts to escape my Stalag. I will be offended that you want to leave this place that the Third Reich built for your comfort,” Colonel Bruker addressed the POWs.

He reached down, grabbed Jason by his hair, and painfully pulled him upright.

Hans frowned at the sight of Colonel Bruker, as he disapproved of his rough treatment with the prisoners.

Colonel Bruker walked around with another smirk to the front of the formation.

“Get these prisoners to their barracks,” Colonel Bruker ordered Sergeant Dunstan.

“Yes, sir!” Sergeant Dunstan snapped to attention and saluted.

Colonel Bruker marched away to his building, and Hans followed.

“Move out!” Sergeant Dunstan yelled at the POWs and led the way to the barracks.

Ten minutes later, Jason was in his barracks that consisted of wooden bunk beds stacked three high and a charcoal burning stove in the middle of the room.

Jason looked around the room. He noticed most of the POWs that have been here for a while are thinner. He looked worried about his future while he looked for an empty bunk.

Jason rushed over, grabbed a bottom bunk, and quickly got on his back. He stared at the bottom of the bunk above him. All he could think about was Cindy, and what was she doing at this exact moment in Chipley Springs.

After they found empty bunks, Sergeant Dunstan entered the barracks and summoned all the new POWs over to another building.

In this building, the new POWs pictures were taken for their Luft Stalag identification card.

Thirty minutes later, the barracks was quiet and grim while the POWs lay in their bunks.

Jason removed his photo of Cindy and himself from the inside of his pants. He was able to keep this picture since he was captured because he hid them in his underwear.

His eyes welled up while he look at Cindy and prayed he would be together with her soon.

The barracks door opened, and Hans entered with mail in hand for the older POWs.

A few of the POWs smiled at Hans while he dropped off their mail on their bunks.

Jason saw Hans, and he quickly shoved his photo back in his shirt pocket, but one of the corners stuck out.

Hans continued to deliver the mail around the barracks.

He dropped off the last letter and was near Jason's bunk.

He walked over and smiled at Jason. "Hello, my name is Hans Wolfe," he said then extended out his hand.

Jason looked a little apprehensive, but his gut told him that Hans was not a threat, so he shook Hans' hand.

"I'm Jason, Jay Jay, Jenkins."

Hans sat down on Jason's bunk. "I'm sorry about Colonel Bruker. He thinks he's God. I hope he didn't hurt you."

"I'm okay."

"I hope my English is good."

"It's perfect."

Hans smiled over Jason's compliment.

Sal walked over and patted Hans on his back. "How's Hans today?"

"Good," Hans replied to Sal.

Sal walked away and headed to his bunk.

The sight of Sal and Hans made Jason feel he could trust this young German.

"I'm from Kaiserslautern, where are you from?" Hans curiously asked Jason.

"Glen Burnie, Maryland," Jason replied.

"Are you near the ocean? I've always wanted to go to a beach," Hans said while he looked like he was dreaming of visiting paradise.

"No, but I have visited the beach in Ocean City, Maryland," Jason replied.

"I see. So, are you a pilot?" Hans asked with a warm smile.

"Yes, I am," Jason replied, leery on providing any additional information.

"I want to be a pilot. It's my true love. Maybe after the war, I will learn how to fly," Hans replied with a gleam in his eyes. Then Hans' eyes caught the part of Jason's picture while

he protruded from his shirt pocket. Hans quickly grabbed the photo from Jason's shirt pocket.

Jason cringed thinking his photo was gone forever and Colonel Bruker would be beating the crap out of him.

"Is she your wife?" Hans asked while he stared at the picture.

"She's my fiancé," Jason replied a little worried.

"She's beautiful," Hans said while he continued to stare at the photo.

"Thank you."

"I take it you fly B seventeens?" Hans asked.

Jason knew he couldn't ignore the question since Hans had proof in his hand. "Yes."

Hans placed the photo back in Jason's shirt pocket. He then opened up his shirt pocket and removed a photo. He showed Jason his photo of a pretty nineteen-year-old German girl. "My girlfriend, Emilie."

"She's pretty," Jason replied while he looked at the photo.

"Thank you," Hans said while he shoved his photo back in his shirt pocket.

"Make sure Colonel Bruker doesn't see your picture. He'll take it away, and you'll never see it again."

"Thanks, Hans," Jason replied.

Hans smiled while got up from Jason's bunk.

He walked away and headed to the door.

Captain Ralph Whiteberry, a thirty-five-year-old P-47 fighter pilot, walked over and sat on Jason's bunk.

"Ralph Whiteberry," he said then stuck out his hand.

"Jason, Jay Jay, Jenson," he replied, then shook Ralph's hand.

"So, what's with that German kid that delivered the mail?" Jason asked,

"Hans is harmless. In fact, he's the only German that's friendly toward us. The rest of them are waiting for an excuse to fill us up with lead."

"How long have you been here?" Jason curiously asked.

“Three months, and it’s boring, and the food is lousy,” Ralph replied.

“Well, I guess it beats being killed,” Jason said while he thought about his dead crew members.

“It does,” Ralph replied.

Jason yawned.

“I’ll let you get some rest,” Ralph said then got off Jason’s bunk and headed back to his bunk.

Jason closed his eyes and was soon fast asleep since the long trip to this camp was exhausting.

Jason had a dream while he slept in his Stalag bunk.

In his dream, he walked with Ralph and some four POWs around the Stalag during their daily walk.

They walked to the rear of the Stalag and saw a huge section of the perimeter fence was missing.

They looked around, and all the towers were void of guards.

Jason, Ralph and the four other POWs smiled at each other at the sight of the missing fence section. Jason, Ralph, and the four other POWs slipped through the missing section of fence. They had huge grins while they bolted to the nearby woods free as birds.

A few minutes later, Jason, Ralph and the four POWs ran through the woods and came upon a large field.

They saw a C-47 Skytrain Army cargo plane that waited with its engines running at the end of the field.

When they got to the middle of the field, Jason saw Cindy step into view of the C-47 cargo door. She waved at him with a huge smile then blew him kissed

Jason waved back and was happy that Cindy came to rescue him from the Germans.

Jason ran faster to Cindy, but she and the C-47 suddenly taxied away.

Jason ran faster to Cindy, but she and the C-47 taxied away faster.

The faster Jason ran to Cindy, the farther she and the C47 moved taxied away.

Then Cindy and the C-47 disappeared.

“Halt!” a German soldier yelled from the woods. Jason stopped and saw that Ralph and the other four POWs were gone.

Then all of a sudden, fifty German soldiers rushed out of the woods and aimed their rifles at Jason.

They all fired their rifles at Jason.

Jason woke up from his dream in a panic, and for a split second, he thought he was shot.

He sat up in his bunk and looked a little dazed and confused.

After a few seconds, he realized he was still alive in the German Stalag. It was a bad dream.

Ralph walked over and stood by Jason. “It’s time for our fine German cuisine,” he jokingly told Jason.

Jason got out of his bunk and followed Ralph and the other guys out of the barracks.

Jason, Ralph, and the other guys walked over to the wooden chow hall.

A little while later in the chow hall, Jason sat down with Ralph and looked at his bowl of thin soup and slice of black bread.

“Is this all we get?” Jason asked Ralph.

“Yea. If you want something nice, you better hope your family sends you some food through the Red Cross,” Ralph replied, then ate some of his soup.

Jason looked around and could easily spot the POWs who have been in this Stalag for a long time, as they were really skinny.

Jason looked down at the soup and wondered how skinny he will become. He ate this tasteless watered down chicken soup.

After their German cuisine, Jason walked around the area of the Stalag provided to the POWs for exercise.

Jason started a slow jog to make sure he would stay in the best of health possible while he was in prison.

Later that evening, Jason relaxed in his bunk and stared at this photo of Cindy and him by the Sweet Bird.

The barracks door opened and Sergeant Dunstan entered with some postcards in hand.

Jason saw the Sergeant and immediately shoved the photo in his shirt pocket.

“New prisoners up here!” Sergeant Dunstan yelled out.

Jason and five other POWs all got up from their bunks and walked over to Sergeant Dunstan.

“You will write to your mommies and daddies, and you will only tell them that the Third Reich is taking good care of their babies,” he told them while he held up some postcards and pens.

Sergeant Dunstan handed out the postcards and pens to the new POWs. “Private Wolfe will pick these up in one hour,” he said then he turned around and headed to the door.

Jason and the other POWs all walked back to their bunks with the postcards.

Jason sat up in his bunk and started writing on his postcard.

“Dear Cindy, I’m alive and well in a German Stalag. I love you, and we’ll be married as soon as the war is over,” Jason wrote on his postcard.

An hour later, Jason lay in his bunk while some of the other POWs played some poker or slept.

The door opened, and Hans entered the barracks.

He walked around and collected the postcards from the other POWs.

Hans walked up to Jason’s bunk. “Hi Jay Jay,” Hans said then looked concerned. “I’m sorry, can I call you Jay Jay?” he said.

“Sure, Hans,” he said while he handed Hans his postcard.

Hans didn’t look at the postcard while he shoved it at the bottom of the other cards.

“How long were you a pilot?” Hans curiously asked Jason.

“Over a year,” Jason replied.

“I hope you don’t mind me asking about flying. I won’t tell Colonel Bruker,” Hans stated with sincerity in his eyes. “No problem, as long as it’s about planes in general,” Jason replied.

“Ya,” Hans responded, then he looked a little concerned. “I better go back. Colonel Bruker will be mad if I spend too much time here in the barracks,” he said then rushed away.

“Hey Jay Jay, want to play some poker?” Ralph asked three bunks over where three guys were playing on a bunk.

“Sure,” Jason replied, and he was looking forward to playing some poker. He learned the game during his pilot training days and loved it.

Chapter 13

The story of Jason's life in the Stalag continued.

After their breakfast of thin chicken soup and black bread, Colonel Bruker had the POWs in formation so he could walk around them for his daily dose of intimidation.

Jason and the POWs stood in formation.

Bruker strutted through the formation and inspected them.

He stopped at a POW, glared at him square in his eyes, and punched the POW in the stomach.

The POW bent over in pain.

Colonel Bruker moved down the formation proud of himself.

"You will have an assignment. You will be building a new barracks for my men starting tomorrow," Colonel Bruker told the POWs while he walked through the formation row.

Hans stood by the formation and frowned at the sight of Colonel Bruker's behavior.

"Which one of you is Jay Jay?" Colonel Bruker asked while he walked through the formation row.

All the POWs remained quiet and didn't respond to the Colonel's question.

"Come now, if this Jay Jay doesn't come forward, I'll punish everybody," Colonel Bruker said while he continued to walk through a formation row.

Jason didn't want everybody to get in trouble, but he couldn't understand why the Colonel wanted to see him. "I'm Jay Jay," Jason called out then raised his hand up in the air.

Colonel Bruker pushed his way through the formation and headed over to Jason.

He glared at Jason for a few seconds. "What did I do?" Jason thought to himself while he looked at Colonel Bruker's cold grey eyes.

Colonel Bruker opened up a coat pocket and removed a postcard. He looked at the postcard then repeatedly smacked Jason's cheek with the card.

Jason cringed, as he knew he was in trouble when Colonel Bruker looked back at the card.

"Cindy, I love you, and we'll be married as soon as the war is over," he read from Jason's card. "How romantic," he replied, then clutched his heart pretending to be in love.

Colonel Bruker looked pissed while he tore up Jason's postcard into tiny pieces and let it raid down to the sandy soil. "You'll be denied incoming and outgoing mail for six months!" Colonel Bruker yelled at Jason then he noticed his shirt pocket was unbuttoned and the corner of a photo poked out. He got curious and reached over and snagged the photo out of Jason's pocket.

Jason got pissed with the Colonel but remained unruffled.

Colonel Bruker looked at the photo. "Is this Cindy?" Jason nodded in agreement with his question.

"Too bad she'll never see you again," Colonel Bruker replied with an evil smirk then he shoved Jason's photo into his pants pocket.

Jason wanted to lunge at the Colonel but refrained thinking they would shoot him on the spot.

Colonel Bruker removed his Luger and beat Jason across his forehead.

Jason dropped to the ground in pain. He had a bloody gash above his left eye where blood flowed down in his eyes and down his cheek.

Colonel Bruker had a proud smirk with his accomplishment with Jason while he stared at him, couched down in the dirt.

Hans felt sorry for Jason while he watched him stand up, and blood flowed down from his forehead.

Bruker walked away from the formation. "Dismissed and get that man some medical attention. I don't want him bleeding all over my Stalag," Colonel Bruker yelled out while he strutted over to his building.

Hans followed Colonel Bruker while he went into his building.

The POWs broke formation and milled around the area.

Ralph and another POW rushed over to Jason and walked him over toward the medical building.

An hour later, Hans worked at his desk on some paperwork.

"Private Wolfe," Colonel Bruker yelled out from his office.

Hans jumped up from his desk and rushed into the Colonel's office.

Hans rushed into his office and snapped to attention and saluted. "Yes, sir."

Colonel Bruker gave a return salute. "Put my trash in the incinerator," he ordered then returned to his paperwork.

Hans walked over and picked up the trash can.

Colonel Bruker had a smirk while he watched Hans leave his office with his trash can.

Hans walked out of the building with the trash can in hand.

He walked through the Stalag to the incinerator located on the other side of the compound.

He opened up the incinerator door and emptied the contents of the can inside the fire.

His eyes flashed open when he something of interest. He quickly reached inside and removed Jason's photo saving it from a nearby flame.

He discreetly shoved the photo in his pants pocket. He closed the incinerator door and walked away with the trash can. Hans walked the trash can back to Colonel Bruker's building.

Later that night in the barracks, some POWs played poker, some paced bored around the room, some slept in their bunks.

Jason was in his bunk and stared at the bottom of the bunk above him. He got depressed with a bandage over his left eye.

The barracks door opened and Hans entered with mail in hand.

Hans walked by all the bunks and gave the POWs their mail.

Hans walked to Jason's bunk, with a hand behind his back.

Jason stared at the bottom of the bunk above his bunk.

"I know, no mail," Jason said to Hans.

Hans smiled while he whipped his hand from behind his back and dropped Jason's photo on his chest.

Jason's eyes lit up when he saw his photo of Cindy on his chest. "Thanks, Hans!" he said while he grabbed his photo and looked at Cindy.

Jason shoved the photo back in his pocket and made sure it wasn't visible.

"I felt bad for Bruker tearing up your postcard," Hans replied then he looked around to make sure no other POW was watching. The coast was clear, so he unbuttoned a button from his shirt, and he removed two postcards and a pen. He discreetly handed them to Jason. "One for your girlfriend and one for your family," he said.

Jason couldn't believe his eyes over that act of kindness by a so-called enemy. "I don't know what to say. I wish there were something I could do for you," Jason said while he quickly wrote to Cindy on one of the postcards.

"Can you teach me about being a pilot? About how to fly an airplane?" Hans asked with a gleam in his eyes.

"It would be my pleasure," Jason replied while he started on the postcard to his parents.

Hans waited while Jason wrote a postcard to his parents.

Jason was finished and handed the postcards back to Hans.

Hans shoved them inside his shirt and buttoned it up. "I'll make sure the Colonel doesn't see these, and I'll get them out in the mail. And I'll try to sneak in any letters that might arrive before the Colonel throws them away," Hans told Jason.

"When can I learn about flying?" Hans curiously asked.

"How can we talk without Colonel Bruker finding out?" Jason asked.

Hans thought for a few seconds. "We can meet at night at nine here in your barracks. The Colonel is asleep by then," he told Jason.

"It's a deal," Jason said then he stuck out his hand. Jason and Hans shook hands to seal the deal.

Hans walked away with a smile and headed to the door of the barracks.

Jason removed his photo of Cindy and him under the Sweet Bird and recalled all the beautiful times they had together.

After dinner of more thin chicken soup and black bread, Jason walked around the allowed area of the Stalag for some exercise.

Later that night, Hans slipped into Jason's barracks at nine.

Hans walked over and sat on Jason's bunk. He unbuttoned his shirt and discreetly removed something wrapped in a napkin.

He discreetly handed it to Jason.

Jason unwrapped the napkin and saw it was a bratwurst from the German soldiers' dinner.

"What about some for the other guys?" Jason whispered to Hans while he discreetly munched on his bratwurst.

"I will get some for them when I can," Hans replied.

Jason discreetly munched on his bratwurst while Hans watched.

After he ate, Jason spent twenty minutes and explained the principles of how an airplane can fly.

Hans left Jason's barracks excited about learning something about flying an airplane.

During the next three weeks, Jason moped around the barracks and the Stalag. All he could think about was what was Cindy doing at this exact moment in England.

He also spent time teaching Hans about aerodynamics by using a paper airplane.

Because of the poor diet provided by the Germans, Jason dropped fifteen pounds in weight.

Two weeks later, Jason lay in his bunk with thoughts about Cindy.

Hans entered the barracks with for his daily mail duties.

He finally arrived at Jason's bunk and smiled when he sat down. He discreetly unbuttoned his shirt and reached inside, removed a letter, and he handed it over to Jason.

"Thank Hans," Jason replied with a smile while he opened up the letter.

"I'll see you later tonight for another lesson?" Hans asked.

"Okay," Jason replied while he unfolded the letter.

Hans got up off the bunk and headed to the barracks door.

Jason read his letter.

"Dear Son, I'm so afraid the Germans will harm you while you're held, prisoner. I do have some good news to tell you. We just heard that Peggy will return home soon. She also wrote to us about that English girl you were dating while in England. You hurt her feeling deeply, and your father and I are ashamed of what you did to her," Wilma wrote in her letter.

Jason set his letter down and looked worried that his parents are now upset with him for falling in love with Cindy.

Later that night, Hans and Jason had another lesson where Jason explained taking off in an airplane.

Two more boring weeks had passed in the Stalag, and Jason couldn't stop thinking about Cindy. It was the thought of her that was giving him the strength to survive this POW camp.

Jason received a package from home that the Red Cross delivered to the Stalag. He opened it up to find some of his mom's chocolate chip cookies, some toothpaste, a toothbrush, and brownies Peggy made. The cookies and brownies were a little stale from the long journey across the ocean, but it still tasted better than the food in the Stalag.

Three more weeks had passed, and the weather was freezing with snow, and the POWs finished building the new barracks for the German soldiers.

Jason dropped a little more weight, and his daily jogs around the allotted area were getting shorter and shorter. He was also depressed because he wanted to receive letters from Cindy. All he got were letters from his mom, stating Peggy was still in love with him.

Colonel Bruker also continued with his regular routine of formation inspections where he would harass the POWs, and everybody eventually got punched sooner or later.

Jason continued to teach Hans about flying an airplane during the nights. They sometimes discussed aviation in his barracks or sat outside in the cold night up against a barracks wall.

When they sat outside, they would have to duck into the crawl space of the barracks to avoid the searchlight illuminating their bodies.

More months had passed, and it was early January 1944, and the POWs were even more depressed.

Some POWs play cards, some lay in their bunks, and some paced. But they all had one thought in common, and that was a better life outside this Stalag.

Hans entered the barracks with some mail to deliver.

After he dropped off all the letters, he stopped by Jason's bunk.

"Hi Jay Jay," he said and sat down on Jason's bunk.

Jason thought for a few seconds. "Can I trust you, Hans?"

"Sure, we're friends," Hans replied then leaned closer to Jason. "But don't tell Colonel Bruker," he added with a chuckle.

"Will you sneak out letters to Cindy?" Jason quietly asked.

Hans thought about his offer for a few seconds, then he looked nervous. "I would love to, but I can't. Colonel Bruker would shoot me if he found out. I'm sorry, Jay Jay," Hans replied and felt terrible about not helping him.

Jason looked depressed, and Hans felt terrible.

"I wish we had a record player. I'm missing music something fierce," Kent one of the card players said.

Jimmy paced up and down by some bunks, and then his eyes lit up. "Yeah, Glenn Miller's In The Mood," he called out to the other POWs.

All the POWs smiled in agreement when they remembered dancing to that song.

Then William used his hands to simulate a sax and sang out the introduction to In The Mood.

Bobby jumped up on cue and simulated a trumpet and sand out the trumpet introduction to In The Mood.

Then Sal, Tony, Steve, and Roger all jumped up and simulated the other instruments and sang out the rest of the introduction to In The Mood.

The pretend band got in front of the barracks and sang out the song while they pretended to be playing instruments.

The rest of the POWs got up from their bunks and danced with each other.

Jason got off his bunk and danced with his photo of Cindy in his hand.

Tom grabbed Hans and danced with him.

It was a party atmosphere while they sang and danced around the barracks.

The barracks door slammed opened, and Colonel Bruker stormed inside with his Luger in hand.

He saw the party and fired a bullet into the ceiling. The POWs all stopped dead in their tracks.

Tom hid Hans behind them and then Hans snuck under a bunk. A few other POWs stood by that bunk shielding him from the Colonel's view.

Colonel Bruker walked around and glared at all the POWs. "Enough! Any more of this, and I'll have you all shot on sight!" he barked while walking around the POWs glaring at them.

Bruker walked by the POWs that shielded Hans from under the bed. He stopped and glared at them, and they just avoided eye contact.

Colonel Bruker walked away from those POWs.

"Lights out!" Colonel Bruker said while he walked to the door.

Colonel Bruker turned out the lights then left the barracks.

The POWs helped Hans get out from under the bunk.

Hans looked relieved while Jason walked back over to him in the dark.

"I'll do it," Hans told Jason.

"Do what?"

"I'll sneak out your letters," Hans replied.

Jason smiled then looked concerned. "But what about Colonel Bruker?"

"I'm tired of that old bully."

Jason patted Hans on his shoulder. "Thanks."

"You better wait a few minutes to make sure Colonel Bruker is back in his building," Tom said.

Roger and Tony peeked out the window and saw the light in Colonel Bruker's bedroom from his office building turn out.

"It's safe, Hans," Tony said while he continued to look out the window.

Hans walked to the door and left the barracks.

Jason, Tony, Tom, Roger, and Bobby looked out their windows and watched while Hans snuck across the Stalag to his barracks.

After they were satisfied, Hans made it back safely back to his barracks, they all got in their bunks.

While Jason lay in his bunk, all he could think about was writing a letter to Cindy.

It was the next morning, Hans snuck into Jason's barracks and gave him some paper, an envelope, and a pen.

Jason immediately lay in his bunk and wrote Cindy.

"Dear Cindy, I'm doing fine here in the German Stalag. I think about you every day and knowing that one day we'll be married keeps me strong in this prison. I love you," Jason wrote in his letter.

He stuck the letter in the envelope and got it ready to be mailed.

An hour later, Hans entered Jason's barracks and rushed over to his bunk.

Jason handed him his letter, and Hans shoved it into his shirt.

Hans rushed out of the barracks.

Jason lay in his bunk and couldn't wait to get a letter from Cindy.

An hour later, Colonel Bruker was finished looking at the outgoing letters from the POWs. He handed them to Hans for further processing out of the Stalag.

When Colonel Bruker walked back into his office, Hans reached inside his shirt and removed Jason's letter to Cindy. Hans shoved it in the middle of the other POWs letters.

The POWs letters went out later that afternoon.

That night, Jason had another dream, and in his dream, he was at in a church in England. He was dressed in his best suit, and Cindy wore a white wedding gown.

"Do you Jay Jay take Cindy Grant to be your wife?" the Preacher asked Jason.

"I do," Jason quickly replied with a smile.

"So do you Cindy Grant take Jay Jay to be your husband?" the Preacher asked Cindy.

"I do," Cindy replied.

"You may kiss your bride," the Preacher told Jason. Jason and Cindy kissed.

"I now pronounce you Mister and Misses Jason Jenkins," the Preacher said.

Jason and Cindy turned around, and there was only a handful of attended his wedding.

In the front row were his mother and father and Wendy. Also in the church were six of the POWs from his barracks, including Ralph.

His POWs buddies clapped and cheered.

His mother and Wendy wiped tears out of their eyes. Jason and Cindy walked down the aisle.

Jason woke up from his dream and looked around the barracks with a huge smile. That smile soon dissipated when he realized he was back in the Stalag.

It snowed that night, and when the POWs woke up the next morning, it was freezing outside.

Colonel Bruker had the POWs of Jason's barracks outside so his goons could check their barracks for any contraband.

Jason walked around the Stalag in the fifteen-degree weather with the other POWs.

Jason thought he was going to get frostbite walking around, and then noticed Richard who looked weak and could barely

walk. He kept an eye on Richard because he's been so sickly and weighed a little over 100 lbs.

Richard dropped to the frozen ground and lay motionless.

Jason rushed over to Richard and felt his neck for a pulse.

"He's dead," he told another POW that ran over to assist.

Jason and the other POW stood up when three German soldiers ran over with their rifles aimed at them. Two other soldiers ran over, and they grabbed Richard's boots.

They dragged Richard's dead body across the frozen ground to the medical building.

Jason walked around, and all he could think about was being back in Cindy's arms.

Chapter 14

The story of Jason's life in the Stalag continued. Two months passed, and it was now April 1944.

To this day, Jason never received a letter from Cindy even though he wrote her ten letters. Since he didn't receive any letters from Cindy that made him even more depressed, and made it even more challenging to maintain a positive outlook on life.

So he would spend his days moping around the Stalag and even quit jogging. Hans would try to cheer him up but couldn't shake Jason out of his depression.

Then on one late April day, Hans entered Jason's barracks with the mail.

Hans walked by Jason's bunk and dropped off his letter. "I'll come back later," Hans said then walked away.

Jason looked hopeful but got disappointed when the only mail he got was another letter from his mom.

He opened up the envelope and removed the letter. "Dear Son, I hope you're well in that German prisoner of war camp. Peggy's been home for months and finally got discharged from the Army. But I'm still saddened that you wanted to marry that English girl. Hopefully, since you've been away from her, you'll come to your senses. I can imagine all she wants is a free ride to America. We're just so lucky that Mister Moore didn't fire your father from his job. We'll talk more about getting back on track to marrying Peggy when you return home. Take care of yourself in that prison camp, Love Mom," Wilma wrote in her letter.

Jason put the letter down and stared at the bottom bunk over him. His eyes welled up, as he missed Cindy terribly, and there was no way he would ever marry Peggy.

Ten more months passed, and it was now the end of February 1945, and Jason weighed one hundred and twenty pounds. He looked sicker, more depressed, and about to give up on life.

There were rumors, thanks to Hans, going around the POWs that they were going to move the Stalag and they were going to start their march in a few days.

It was a Tuesday, and the weather was clear blue skies and a little chilly.

The guards in the towers kept a vigil eye on the POWs while they moped around the Stalag. It was their morning exercise.

While Jason moped, he removed his photo of Cindy and him under the nose of the Sweet Bird and a tear dropped on the photo. He shoved the photo back in his shirt pocket.

He walked around for a little while longer and saw Hans. He stuck his hand in his pocket and walked toward Hans.

He walked by Hans and discreetly handed him his letter to Cindy without making eye contact.

Hans discreetly shoved the letter into his pants pocket and walked away.

Thirty minutes later, the sound of machinery was vaguely heard from the back end of the Stalag deep in the woods.

The sound of machinery from the back end of the Stalag got louder from the woods. It now caught the attention of the guards in the wood towers, as this wasn't expected.

The POWs stopped walking around the Stalag and looked in the direction of the machinery sounds.

"Then one of the POWs eyes lit up. "That sounds like our tanks," he told a few of the POWs standing near him. It didn't take long for that suspicion to spread to the other POWs walking around the Stalag.

The sound got louder, and it was apparent it was American tanks.

The guards in the wood towers started shooting their machine guns in the direction of the sound in the woods.

The sound got louder, and it was apparent tanks were approaching the Stalag.

The guards in the wood towers continued to fire their machine guns in the direction of the approaching tanks.

One of the wooden towers and a huge section of barbed wired fence exploded after being shelled at by a tank.

All the POWs stopped dead in their tracks, while a glimmer of hope shined in their eyes.

Then gunfire came out of the woods at the rear of the Stalag. Two guards tumbled out of their wooden towers, and they slammed into the dirt dead.

Four M4 Sherman tanks roared out of the woods toward the hole they made in the Stalag perimeter fence.

The POWs eyes lit up with joy at the sight of the tanks. The POWs all cheered and finally smiled and looked alive.

Bullets zinged around the Stalag grounds while the German soldiers and American Infantry soldiers all exchanged gunfire.

The POWs all dropped to the dirt for cover.

Colonel Bruker ran out of his building in a panic and ran toward the barracks.

Bullets continued to zing in the dirt while the German and American Infantry soldiers exchanged gunfire.

Colonel Bruker watched while some of his soldiers were shot dead.

Another wooden tower exploded when a bazooka took it out.

Colonel Bruker stood there fearless while he looked around his Stalag that was now being invaded. He was furious.

Jason scampered into the crawlspace of one of the barracks.

He looked around and saw Hans hiding in the crawlspace of another barracks.

They saw each other and gave little waves.

Then around one hundred American Army ground pounders walked out of the woods from behind the tanks, and cautiously entered the Stalag grounds while firing their rifles at the German soldiers.

Another wooden tower exploded from a bazooka.

Bullets continued to zing around the Stalag grounds, and more POWs scampered into the crawl spaces of the buildings.

German soldiers ran between the barracks, and some of them dropped to their knees and fired at the approaching American soldiers.

Hans watched from under his hiding place while some of his fellow soldiers were shot dead.

Colonel Bruker rushed between the two barracks and saw his dead soldiers on the ground. He fired his Luger at an American soldier and killed him.

While he looked around, he spotted Hans cowering under a barracks. He got furious and stormed over to the building.

“Get out you coward!” Colonel Bruker yelled at Hans.

Hans slowly crawled out from under the barracks, and during the process, Jason’s letter slid out of his pocket and landed in the dirt.

Colonel Bruker saw the letter and curiously picked it up out of the dirt. He looked at the letter and saw it was addressed to Cindy Grant in Chipley Springs, England. Colonel Bruker got furious when it dawned on him Hans had been smuggling letters out of the Stalag. He reached down and grabbed Hans up by his hair. From under this hiding place, Jason watched while

Colonel Bruker pulled Hans up by his hair to his feet. He knew this wasn’t going to be pretty and wanted to save his friend. He saw a dead German soldier five feet from his hiding place. He realized it was Sergeant Dunstan, so he quickly crawled over and grabbed the dead sergeant’s rifle.

“Traitor!” Colonel Bruker yelled at Hans and whipped out his Luger. “And traitor’s should be shot!” he yelled while he aimed his Luger at Hans’ forehead.

Jason quickly fired a round from the German rifle.

Colonel Bruker dropped dead to the ground with a headshot.

Hans looked stunned, then relieved when he saw that Colonel Bruker was no longer a threat.

Three Sherman tanks crashed through the barbed wire fence with the trailing Army soldiers.

The POWs all stood up at the sight of the Army soldiers, and they all cheered.

Some POWs grabbed the rifles of the dead German soldiers.

The POWs aimed their rifles at the German soldiers who all immediately dropped their rifles and raised their arms in the air and surrendered.

Jason ran over to Hans who stood there in disbelief that the Stalag was captured. He got scared, and his eyes welled up. Jason placed his arm around Hans for comfort.

“It’s over. It’s finally over,” Jason cheered.

Hans smiled then looked down and saw Jason’s letter still in Bruker’s dead hand. He reached down, grabbed the letter, and handed it to Jason. “You can deliver this in person.”

Jason took the letter with a huge smile, and his mind filled with positive thoughts of being with Cindy once again. An Army SSgt walked up to Jason and pointed his rifle at Hans.

Hans got scared and raised his arms in the air.

“Sarge, I’m Lieutenant Jenkins, take good care of this Private. He was friendly to us while in this Stalag,” Jason told the sergeant.

Four other POWs walked up to Jason. “He’s right Sarge, this German was friendly. Take good care of him,” one of the POWs confirmed.

“We will,” the Staff Sergeant replied then grabbed Hans’ arm and escorted him away.

Hans looked back at Jason, and he seemed so scared while he was being escorted away to the other captured Germans.

“Don’t worry Hans, everything will be alright! I’ll find you in Kaiserslautern after the war!” Jason called out to comfort his friend.

Hans smiled at Jason while being escorted away.

Another Army sergeant walked over to Jason and the other POWs. "Is everybody okay?" the sergeant asked Jason and the other POWs.

"We're fine," Jason replied but kept an eye on Hans.

Two weeks later, Jason was in an Army hospital in England. He spent four weeks there getting medical exams and received a healthy diet and got some of his weight up.

During the days in the hospital, Jason would stroll around the hospital grounds for some exercise. Then he started to jog at a slow pace when he felt ready. He also wrote Cindy three letters and wondered why she hadn't come to visit him.

Then the night before he was to be discharged from the hospital, Jason had another dream.

In his dream, Jason and Cindy were married and bought a farmhouse in Iowa. He lived in a white two-story house with a wrap-around porch. He had a red barn where he housed his bi-wing airplane for his crop duster business. He was married to Cindy, and they had a son, who was now four years old. In his dream, life was excellent, and he was so happy.

It was now the middle of April 1945, and Jason was discharged from the Army hospital. The Commander of the airbase also paid him a visit and pinned Captain bars on Jason's uniform.

Jason returned back to the Chipley Springs airfield, where Colonel Franklin granted him two weeks leave.

So Jason got dressed in his Army Tunic uniform and rushed off to the English town of Chipley Springs.

Chapter 15

The story of Jason's life after being a prisoner of war.

Jason walked down the streets of Chipley Springs with a box of chocolates in hand and a huge smile on his face. Life was going to get better in a few minutes, and he couldn't wait.

Jason walked with a spring in his step while he walked into the door to Cindy's apartment building.

He went inside.

Jason walked down the hallway to Cindy's apartment door. His heart raced.

He paused while he let his heart settle down. He took a deep breath, knocked on her door. He nervously waited, and his legs started to shake a little.

Cindy's apartment door slowly opened, and Jason's heart raced faster. He had visions of Cindy rushing up to him and hugging him so tight that she might break a rib.

Elizabeth Shaw, a seventy-six-year-old English woman, from appeared inside Cindy's apartment.

Jason quickly leaned over and kissed the old woman on her lips, thinking it was Cindy.

Elizabeth was in shock, and she pushed him away.

Jason saw Elizabeth and turned red with embarrassment.

Albert walked down the hallway and passed by Jason while he headed to his apartment with a small grocery bag in his arms.

"I'm so sorry you must be Cindy's grandmother. I'm Jay Jay, your future son-in-law," Jason said with a huge warm smile.

"I'm sorry, I'm not Cindy's grandmother, and I've never heard of you or her. You must have the wrong apartment," Elizabeth replied.

Albert stopped at his apartment door while he stared at Jason. He had this feeling that he's seen Jason before and tried to remember where and when.

"No. Cindy Grant lives here as I've spent many hours in this apartment. We're engaged to be married," Jason responded, and his stomach started to get a little upset.

"I'm sorry, but I live here all alone," Elizabeth replied.

Jason looked lost and a little confused. "But I remember Cindy Grant living here," he said while then looked around the hallway to make sure he didn't enter the wrong building. "No, I remember Cindy living here," he added.

Elizabeth thought about his last comment for a few seconds. Then her eyes lit up when she remembered something. "Wait right there, young man," she said then went back inside her apartment.

Jason curiously waited out in the hallway.

Albert still stared at Jason while he tried to remember why that young man's face seemed so familiar.

Elizabeth appeared at the door with a bundle of letters in her hand. "These letters for a Cindy Grant kept on arriving here after I moved in. I was hoping that she would return so I can give her the letters, but she never did," she said.

Jason saw the letters in her hand, and he looked like he wanted to cry. "I wrote those letters while I was in a German prisoner camp," he said.

Elizabeth handed Jason the bundle of letters.

"Good day, young man, and I hope you find Cindy," Elizabeth said, then closed the apartment door.

Albert continued to stare down the hallway, and then it dawned where he knew Jason.

Elizabeth reopened her door. "But you are a good kisser," she said with a wink and a smile then closed her door.

"Where is she?" he said while he just stood there staring at the bundle of letters in disbelief.

"Excuse me, sir," Albert said while he walked up to Jason.

Jason turned and saw Albert approach him.

“I’m Albert and couldn’t help but overhear. Miss Grant moved away, oh, well over a year ago,” Albert told him.

Jason looked hopeful when he heard that bit of news. “Do you know where?” he quickly asked.

“I don’t know where but I do know she married a British pilot,” Albert replied.

It took a few seconds then it hit Jason like a ton of bricks. “Did you say married?” Jason asked to make sure he understood Albert.

“Yes, she married a British pilot,” Albert responded.

Jason still looked at Albert in disbelief. “Married a British pilot? But why? She was supposed to marry me?”

“She was pregnant, and he did the right thing, and he married her. He’s not like you Americans, who shagged our girls and leave them behind,” Albert replied.

“Pregnant? Are you sure?” Jason asked in disbelief.

“I’m sure. I saw him propose right where you’re standing. He claimed he would help her raise the baby,” Albert responded and had a little smirk, as he hated it when the Americans left pregnant English girls behind.

“She was going to marry me. I proposed and gave her an engagement ring before I got shot down by the Germans,” Jason said while he fought back his tears.

Jason opened up his pocket on his coat and removed the photo of Cindy and him under the nose of the Sweet Bird. He showed the photo to Albert. “This photo kept me strong in that German Stalag thinking I would return and marry Cindy.”

Albert started to feel sorry for Jason. “I’m sorry young man, but she moved away,” he said.

“She was going to marry me!” he said and looked depressed, and his eyes started to well up.

Jason let the box of chocolates slip out of his hand, and it dropped to the floor.

The box opened and spilled pieces of chocolate on the floor.

Jason turned and moped down the hallway with the bundle of letters in his hand.

Albert watched Jason while he moped down the hallway. He smiled when he looked down at the box of chocolates. Albert quickly bent down and scooped up the chocolates and shoved them back in the box.

He rushed down the hall to his door before Jason returned to claim his candy he left behind.

Jason moped down the street from Cindy's apartment building.

He moped over, sat down at a bench, and looked at the bundles of letters.

Jason spent five minutes on the bench while looked at all the letters and saw the postcard he first wrote.

"She never read one single letter," Jason said while his eyes welled up.

He got up from the bench, walked down the street, and found a trash can. He dropped the letters into the trash.

Jason walked in a daze down the street and headed to the nearest English Pub.

Jason went inside up to the Chipley Springs Pub and ordered a pint of Ale at the bar.

He grabbed his pint of Ale and walked over and sat down at a table.

Jason sat in a stupor while he drank his Ale, and all he could think about was Cindy getting pregnant and marrying another man.

Wendell, a sixty-eight-year-old English man, sat a nearby table looked over at Jason. "Hello Yank," he said while he raised his glass of Ale in the air for a greeting.

"She left me," Jason told the old man.

"Who left you?" Wendell curiously asked Jason.

Jason grabbed his glass of Ale, got up, walked over, and sat down at Wendell's table. He removed his picture of Cindy and showed it to the friendly Englishman. "Her name is Cindy."

Wendell looked at the picture and noticed the nose of the B-17. "Oh, you were a bomber pilot? My son was a Handley Page Hampden bomber pilot," Wendell while he took a sip of his Ale. He wiped away some tears. "He was shot down some

years back,” Wendell added while he took a gulp of his Ale remembering his son.

“My B seventeen was shot down, and we were captured by the Germans. I was sent to a Stalag for a long lonely time. All I thought about was getting out of there and returning to England to marry Cindy,” Jason said with a depressed state.

“What happened to Cindy?” Wendell curiously asked then sipped his Ale.

“While I was a POW, she got pregnant and married another pilot,” Jason replied, and he started to look pissed.

“I’m sorry about that chap,” Wendell said and drank some more of his Ale.

Jason gulped down his glass of Ale then got up from the table.

He walked over to the bar and bought another glass of Ale.

He walked back and sat down with Wendell at his table.

For the next two hours, Jason drank with Wendell and told him the whole story of his life with Cindy and Peggy.

Two hours later, and Jason staggered out drunk from the Pub.

He staggered down the street in search of a place to spend the night.

Jason staggered to the outskirts of Chipley Springs and found a small patch of woods.

Jason staggered into the woods and immediately relieved himself of the last two glasses of Ale.

Jason stumbled while he sat down in the dirt and leaves.

He fell on his back and fell fast asleep.

Jason woke up late the next morning with a bad hangover.

He stood up and brushed off the dirt and leaves off his uniform.

His eyes widened, he rushed over to a tree and vomited.

Jason moped back into Chipley Springs and eventually found a small restaurant.

He went inside and drank some coffee and had a muffin.

After breakfast, Jason moped down the street where Cindy’s apartment was located.

He found the bench by the street near her apartment and sat down.

Jason spent the whole day sitting on that bench while staring at his photo of Cindy and himself under the nose of the Sweet Bird and glanced back at her old bedroom window .

The sun dropped below the horizon, and Jason got up from that bench near Cindy's apartment.

He moped down the street and headed into the Chipley Springs Pub.

Jason bought some fish and chips and another glass of Ale.

He sat down at a table and ate his dinner.

An hour later, Jason was on his third glass of Ale and sat at his table in a depressed stupor while he thought about Cindy dumping him.

An occasional English man would come over to chat with Jason, but they soon left after he started whining about Cindy getting pregnant and marrying another man.

Everybody in the Pub soon got tired of Jason flashing the photo of Cindy and hearing his story over and over again.

It was eleven that night, and Jason staggered out of the Chipley Springs pub drunk with his photo of Cindy in his hand.

He moped down the sidewalk while he stared at the photo.

He stopped, ripped up the photo into small pieces, and let it fall to the pavement.

Jason staggered down the street and headed to those woods at the outskirts of town.

After Jason relieved himself from the last two glasses of Ale, he plopped back down in the dirt and leaves.

He soon fell fast asleep.

Jason woke up the next morning with a splitting headache, and after he brushed off the leaves and dirt, he headed back into Chipley Springs.

Jason walked back to that restaurant and had numerous cups of coffee. Some of the patrons were a little disgusted with the smelly appearance of Jason.

After his coffee breakfast, Jason walked the streets of Chipley Springs in hopes of finding Cindy.

“Maybe that old man in her apartment building was mistaken,” Jason said while he thought about Cindy some more and couldn’t believe she would marry someone else.

After a few more minutes of walking the streets, Jason spotted an older couple approaching him on the sidewalk.

“Excuse me, do you know where I might find Cindy Grant? She’s a beautiful blonde English woman,” Jason asked an older couple while they walked down the sidewalk.

“I’m sorry, but we don’t know a Cindy Grant,” the man replied.

Jason reached inside his coat pocket to remove his photo to show them but realized he tore it up last night. “Thank you,” he said, then walked away.

“My lord, that yank looks deplorable,” the lady told her husband.

“He also smells like he hadn’t taken a bath in days,” the man replied.

“I wish they would stay at their airfield,” the lady said while they walked down the sidewalk.

Jason continued to walk around the streets of Chipley Springs.

“Do you know Cindy Grant?” Jason asked a woman while she walked down the sidewalk.

“No,” the woman quickly replied, then rushed away leery of Jason.

Jason walked out of Chipley Springs and visited all the areas in the country where he spent some romantic times with Cindy.

Later that day, Jason walked back into Chipley Springs and moped around the streets searching for Cindy.

He saw a young couple and rushed across the street.

“Excuse me, do you know Cindy Grant?” Jason asked while he rushed over to the couple.

A young woman stopped and thought for a few seconds. “Ah, yes, I remember her. She got pregnant by some pilot then he married her, and they moved away,” she replied to Jason.

“Do you know where?” Jason curiously asked.

“I believe it was Sheffield,” she replied.

Her male companion thought for a few seconds. “No, I believe it was Manchester,” he replied.

She thought for a few seconds. “Or it could have been Birmingham?” she replied with a look that she was unsure.

“Anyway, we know she moved somewhere up north to stay his her in-laws while she had the baby,” the man replied. Jason moped away in a daze and crossed the street and almost got smacked by a car.

Jason moped down the street and headed back to the Chipley Springs Pub.

Jason entered the Pub and bought another glass of Ale. He sat down at a table and started drinking his sorrows away.

It was eleven-thirty that night, and Jason staggered out of the Pub drunk.

“The fucking bitch left me!” he screamed out while he stood by the door and swayed. “Fucking bitch!” he yelled again the headed down the sidewalk.

He staggered down the sidewalk and almost fell flat on his face a few times.

An old man walked down the sidewalk toward Jason.

“She cheated on me! My soul mate cheated on me!” Jason slurred out the old man and swayed.

The old man rushed away leery of Jason.

“She doesn’t love me!” Jason mumbled while he staggered down the sidewalk.

A middle-aged man and woman approached Jason on the sidewalk.

Jason stopped by the couple. “The bitch screwed another man. Can you believe it? She screwed someone while I was in a German Stalag,” Jason slurred out while he swayed.

Jason’s eyes widened, he swayed forward, and then he vomited on the front of the woman’s dress.

The woman jumped back and screamed at the awful sight of her dress.

The man got pissed and punched Jason in his face. Jason dropped to the sidewalk and looked dazed and confused.

The man and woman rushed away while the woman sobbed about her dress.

A Jeep with two MPs raced down the street and stopped by Jason.

The two MPs, Jack and Wally, jumped out and rushed over to Jason.

“The bitch cheated on me!” Jason screamed at Jack and Wally and was too drunk to notice that they were MPs. Jason stood up and looked down the street, where Cindy’s apartment was located. “Why did you leave me, you fucking bitch!” he screamed.

Jack whacked Jason on the back of his head with his nightstick.

Jason dropped to the sidewalk and was out cold.

Jack and Wally grabbed Jason by his arms, and they drabbed him to the Jeep.

They lifted him up and threw him in the backseat.

They got in the Jeep and drove off down the street toward the airfield.

A little while later, Jack and Wally drove up to the MP building.

They got out of the Jeep, grabbed Jason by his arms, and dragged him out of their vehicle.

They dragged him to the MP building with his feet trailing.

Inside the MP building, Jack and Wally dragged Jason to one of the open jail cells.

They threw Jason onto the bunk in the cell then slammed the door shut.

Jason stayed passed out on the jail cell bunk.

The next morning arrived, and Jason woke up in a daze in the jail cell. It took Jason a few minutes for him to realize he was in a jail cell. Then he started to sweat when he saw the MPs and realized he was in a military jail.

An hour later, SSgt Vinny Barber walked up to Jason's jail cell and unlocked the door.

"Colonel Franklin wants a kind word with you, Captain," Barber said with a smirk.

Barber escorted Jason out of the MP building.

A few minutes later, Jason stood at attention in Colonel Franklin's office while he paced back and forth. But he was hungover and swayed a little almost falling over a few times.

Colonel Franklin stopped and looked at Jason.

"I believe this is the second time we've met under these conditions," he yelled at Jason.

"Yes sir," Jason replied while he stared straight ahead.

"What's your excuse this time?" Colonel Franklin yelled.

"No excuse, sir. Just being stupid over a girl," Jason replied.

Colonel Franklin was silent while he decided how he was going to handle this situation.

He paced around, then sat behind his desk. "Well, Captain Jenkins, I remember the first time you acted stupid over a girl," Colonel Franklin said.

"Yes, sir," Jason replied.

Colonel Franklin looked at Jason. "Well, I'm going to factor in your time spent in the German Stalag, and I'm going to factor in that since we're about to end this war any day now, I'm giving you another chance."

"Thank you, sir," Jason replied.

"Get back to your barracks, I'm grounding you for two months, dismissed," Colonel Franklin said.

"Yes sir," Jason replied, then saluted and left his office.

Jason spent the next three weeks working at a desk job and then he was discharged in May since Hitler was now dead and Germany surrendered.

Chapter 16

The story of Jason's life after returning home to Glenn Burnie, Maryland.

June 1945 now arrived, and after a long boat ride across the Atlantic Ocean, Jason took the train from New York down to Baltimore.

The New York train pulled into the Mount Royal train station one mid-morning and stopped at the platform.

People started pouring out of the train.

Wilma and Wendy stood on the platform, anxious to see Jason.

He stepped off the train with his duffel bag in hand and looked depressed to be back home.

Jason stood on the platform then saw Wilma and Wendy while they waved at him.

He smiled while he watched Wendy run over to him.

Wendy immediately hugged Jason. "I missed you," she said while she hugged.

"You look, great sis," Jason replied.

Wendy hugged him tight then leaned up at his ear. "What about Cindy?" she whispered.

"She's the past, and I don't want to talk about her anymore," Jason whispered back in a depressed tone in Cindy's ear.

Wendy looked concerned with she separated from hugging Jason.

Wilma walked over, and her eyes welled up at the sight of her son still alive. “Welcome home son!”

Jason hugged Wilma.

Wilma saw his scar when they separated from his hug.

“Did the Germans do that?” she asked while she touched his reminder of Colonel Bruker’s kindness toward the POWs.

“Yes.”

Wilma looked upset for the Germans scaring her son.

“Let’s get you home,” Wilma said.

Jason walked down the platform with Wilma and Wendy.

They got into their 1939 Chevrolet and drove out of the parking lot.

“Is this our car?” Jason said from the backseat while Wilma drove down the street.

“Daddy bought it after Mister Moore gave him a promotion,” Wendy replied from the front passenger seat.

Wilma looked like something bugged her then she couldn’t keep it inside any longer. “I don’t know why you wanted that English girl, Jason. Peggy’s the one you should marry,” Wilma said in a scolding tone.

“I’m exhausted from my trip and really don’t want to talk about that right now,” Jason replied, then closed his eyes.

Wilma and Wendy both looked concerned during the drive home.

Later that day, Wendy and Jason sat on the swing on the wrap-around front porch of their new Victorian home while Wilma prepared dinner in the kitchen.

It was quiet while Jason sipped on his bottle of Arrow beer and Wendy cuddled next to him.

“I have a boyfriend, his name is Sidney, and he’s simply dreamy,” Wendy replied with a gleam in her eyes.

“What does he do?” Jason asked.

“He’s selling insurance at his father’s office and plans to take it over one day,” she replied with a smile while she thought about Sidney.

“He sounds nice,” Jason replied, then sipped his beer.

“I’m also working as a waitress down at Kirby’s Diner and saving my money for secretary’s school,” she replied.

“What are our plans?”

Jason thought for a few seconds. “I don’t know yet. I just don’t know,” he said then sipped his beer. “I might take a few months off and sort things out.”

Wendy had a gut feeling that something was wrong with her big brother. “Did Cindy dump you?”

Jason hesitated to respond but saw the concern in her eyes. “We were engaged just before I flew the mission when I got shot down. When I returned back to England, I learned that she got pregnant by a British pilot and married him,” Jason said then he gulped down the rest of his beer.

“I’m sorry about that,” Wendy replied, then gave him a kiss on his cheek to show her support. “She sounded nice, and to be honest, I never really cared for Peggy,” she added.

Jason kissed the top of her head. “Thanks, sis,” he said the stood up to get another beer.

Wendy waited on the swing while Jason went inside to get another beer.

A few minutes later, Jason walked back out of the house and saw his father, in a suit, while he walked up to the walkway to the porch.

Hank’s eyes lit up the second he saw Jason on the porch.

“Welcome home, son,” Hank said when he stepped on the porch.

Hank hugged Jason, and his eyes welled up so happy his son survived the war. “I’m so glad your home, now we can get things back to the way they once were,” Hank said while he separated from the hug. He noticed Jason’s scar above his left eye. “War wound?” he asked.

“Yeah,” Jason replied while he remembered that day.

“Did a bullet gaze you while flying your B seventeen?”

Hank curiously asked.

“No, some German Colonel beat me with his Luger while I was in the Stalag,” Jason replied.

“Bastards!” Hank replied mad at the Germans for hurting his son. He stepped back a little. “How do you like your old man wearing a suit to work?” Hank said with a gleam in his eyes.

“You look snappy,” Jason replied.

“Yep, Mister Moore gave me a nice promotion and a desk job, and I can now afford a car,” he said that gleam still in his eyes.

“That’s nice dad,” Jason replied but really didn’t want to hear about Mister Moore.

“How do you like our new fancy house?” Hank asked so proudly of his new home.

“It’s sure fancy,” Jason replied.

“Well, take a few days to relax, Mister Moore wants to see you in his office. I think he’s going to offer you a nice paying job,” Hank replied and was excited of Jason working down at the plant. “Well, let me go check up with mother on how’s dinner coming along,” Hank added then patted Jason on his back then went inside the house.

Jason sat down on the porch and looked bothered. “What are you going to do?” Wendy asked, concerned. “Maybe, I might reenlist back into the Army,” Jason replied while he took a drink of his beer.

“I don’t blame you if you did,” Wendy replied while she cuddled next to Jason.

An hour later, Wendy helped Wilma set the table for dinner.

While they were placing the pot roast on the table, someone knocked on the door.

Wilma had a smile on her face after hearing the knock. “I’ll get it,” she said then rushed over to the door. Wilma opened up the door, and Peggy entered the living room.

Jason cringed at the sight of Peggy but knew he would have to face her sooner or later.

“Look at our special dinner guest,” Wilma said with a smile.

“Hi Jason,” Peggy said with a sparkle in her eyes when she looked at him.

Jason hesitated for a few seconds. “Hi, Peggy.”

Wilma winked at Jason while she walked past him and headed to the kitchen.

Wendy discreetly rolled her eyes at the sight of Peggy.

Peggy walked up to Jason, gave him a hug, and kissed him on his cheek. “I’m so happy you survived that Stalag, I was worried sick when I heard the news,” Peggy said while she placed her arm around Jason’s arm.

“I’m happy to survive that Stalag also,” Jason said.

“Dinner’s ready,” Wilma called out while she brought out a bowl of mashed potatoes and placed it on the table.

“Let’s eat!” Hank told everybody.

Peggy walked Jason over to the table and made sure they sat by each other.

Hank and Wilma smiled at the sight of Peggy sitting next to Jason at the table.

“Jason, daddy wants you to come by the office in two days. He wants to talk some important business,” Peggy told Jason with a warm smile.

“I know, father already told me,” Jason replied but wasn’t interested in meeting with her father.

Everybody started eating, and Jason hated every moment of that dinner with Peggy by his side.

After dinner, Peggy wanted to take Jason out for a night of dancing, but he politely declined to state that he was still exhausted from the long journey home.

Peggy left a little disappointed but pretended that she understood.

Two days passed and Jason went to visit Kenny Moore at his plant.

Kenny sat down with Jason at a couch in his office. Peggy sat in a nearby chair.

“I’m so happy to see you returned safe and sound from that war,” Kenny told Jason.

“Thank you, sir.”

“I can forget everything that happened over in England. After all, there was a war going on, and people are under a lot of

stress. So now we can return things back to normal,” Kenny said while he winked at Peggy.

“Of course they will, daddy,” Peggy replied with a warm smile at Jason.

“Now Jason, I’m prepared to offer you a job as vice president of production. We’re going to branch out and start assembling television sets. I believe those devices are going to be huge in the future, and there’s a company called Murray Industries that has a new television design. They want my plant to assemble the sets. We’ll start out with a small production line, and I predict that in five years, we’ll be doubling that line,” Kenny told Jason and followed up with a pat on a back.

“Well sir, I really appreciate the offer, but I’ve been doing some thinking during the last day, and I’m going to reenlist back in the Army Air Corps. I want to get back to being a pilot,” Jason replied.

Peggy looked extremely disappointed with Jason turning down her father’s job offer.

“Well, I can respect that,” Kenny replied then looked at Peggy, who looked upset.

“Well sir, if you don’t mind, I think I’ll be going. I promised dad I would do some painting at the house,” Jason said then stood up from the couch.

“Well, son, please give my offer some serious thought before you reenlist,” Kenny said while he stood up.

“Yes sir,” Jason replied while he stood up.

Kenny and Jason shook hands then they walked to the door.

Peggy pouted while she watched Jason leave her father’s office.

Later that night, Jason had a little fight with his father and mother when he told them that he planned on turning down the job offer at Kenny’s plant.

So he stormed out of the house and walked down to the nearest bar to drink his sorrow’s away.

Two hours later, Jason, with hair a mess, sat drunk at a bar with a few patrons. There was a bottle of whiskey that was half-emptied on the bar in front of Jason.

Peggy entered the bar, looked the place over, and smiled when she spotted Jason.

She rushed over to the bar and sat down next to Jason.

“It’s you,” he slurred out, then took another drink.

She straightened out his hair with her fingers.

He shoed her hand away and took another drink. “The past is over. We must move onto our future,” Peggy told him.

Jason looked over at Peggy and his eyes well up when he thought about Cindy.

“What happened to Cindy?” she curiously asked. “I don’t want to talk about her right now,” Jason slurred out then took another swig of whiskey.

“Did she dump you?” she asked.

“Fucking bitch,” Jason slurred out then took another drink of whiskey.

He looked back over at Peggy, she leaned in and kissed Jason’s lips.

Jason was drunk, and he accepted her lips.

Peggy pulled away from Jason and grabbed his hand. “I better drive you home. I don’t want you getting lost while walking home or hurting yourself,” she said then helped Jason off the stool.

She grabbed his whiskey bottle and walked him to the door.

Once she got outside, she walked Jason to her father’s brand new shiny black 1945 Cadillac.

She helped him into the passenger seat then she got behind the wheel.

She started the car up and drove away.

Instead of driving Jason home, she drove out to the country.

Jason was still too drunk to realize she wasn’t taking him home. He just sat in the passenger seat in a drunken stupor and stared out the window thinking about Cindy.

A little while later, Peggy drove her father's Cadillac down the dirt driveway to the old man Adam's farm. She knew he was out of town, so she parked the car by the barn.

She got Jason out of the car and walked him to the trunk of the car. She opened up the trunk and removed a blanket.

After she closed the trunk and she walked him over to the barn.

Once they got inside the barn, she placed the blanket on the ground.

She gazed in Jason's eyes. "Just believe that I'm Cindy tonight," she said then she immediately kissed his lips. Jason was too drunk to come to his senses, so he accepted her kiss.

Peggy slipped out of her high heel shoes.

She then untied Jason's shoes, slipped them off, and removed his socks.

Peggy unbuttoned Jason's shirt and tossed it over to some hay.

She unbuttoned her dress and slipped out of it and tossed it over to Jason's shirt.

Jason swayed drunk while she unzipped his pants and slid them down his legs. He stepped out of his pants, and she tossed them over by her dress.

She lowered his boxer shorts, and he stepped out of them.

She unclipped her bra and removed it.

She then lowered her panties and slipped out of them. She stood naked with Jason and kissed his lips.

She then lowered Jason down to the blanket.

She started kissing Jason, and he was too drunk to resist.

Chapter 17

The story of Jason's life after returning home to Glenn Burnie, Maryland continued.

The next morning he woke up in old man Adam's barn.

He looked around dazed, confused, and hungover.

Then he noticed his clothes with Peggy's clothes in the hay. "What?" he said while he scratched his head. Then realized he was bare-ass naked. His eyes widened when he looked his left and saw Peggy asleep on her side and saw her bare ass cheeks.

"What's going on?" he said while he stared at Peggy's ass cheeks.

She woke up and rolled over to her back. "Good morning sweetheart," she said while she yawned and aimed her breasts at Jason.

Jason couldn't believe his eyes when he saw her fully naked body.

It hit him hard when it dawned on him. "Did we?" he asked and was afraid of the answer.

Peggy had a warm smile. "Yes, we did darling, and you were wonderful," she said while she lovingly ran her fingers up and down his arm.

He bolted up and rushed over to his clothes.

Peggy had a smirk while she watched Jason quickly dress in his clothes.

She got up and strolled over naked to Jason while he slipped on his boxer shorts. "We can do it again," she seductively said while she leaned in and kissed his lips.

"I got to go. I promised dad some help with painting the house," he said then quickly slipped on his pants.

Peggy slipped on the panties while Jason wore his shirt.

"Let me get dressed, and I'll drive you home," she said while she placed on her bra.

Jason slipped on his shoes and shoved his socks into his pants pockets.

He rushed over to the barn door and left the barn.

"But I'll drive you home!" Peggy yelled out while she ran to the barn door.

"I'll run home," Jason yelled back while he ran toward old man Adam's dirt driveway.

Peggy finished getting dressed while she watched Jason run down the dirt driveway. She felt hurt but had an evil smirk on her face while she placed her high-heeled shoes on her feet.

Jason was pissed with himself while he ran down the road into town.

A little while later, Jason ran down a street in Glenn Burnie.

Wendy was on waitress duty at Kirby's Diner this morning. She was at a table and poured coffee into a man's cup. She glanced at the window and saw Jason while he ran down the street. "What's wrong?" she thought while the look on Jason's face indicated he was upset. She didn't pay attention, and the coffee overflowed from the man's cup.

"Hey!" the man yelled out in a panic jumping over to avoid hot coffee in his crotch.

Wendy looked, and her eyes widened seeing coffee pouring out of the cup, and flowing all over the table.

"I'm so sorry," Wendy said then immediately grabbed her towel and soaked up the hot coffee before it ran over the table into the man's pants.

Back in his neighborhood, Jason continued to run down the street. "How could I be so stupid?" said Jason, and he wanted to kick himself in his butt.

Later that afternoon, Jason sat on the front porch swing, drank coffee, and popped aspirin.

Wendy walked up to the walkway to the front porch, exhausted from her shift at the diner.

She looked concerned when she entered the porch and walked over to the swing.

"What happened this morning?" she asked while she sat down on the swing.

"What do you mean?" he replied, then sipped some more coffee.

"I saw you run by the diner in a panic this morning. I almost poured coffee on this man's lap."

Jason looked back at the living room window to make sure their mom wasn't within hearing range. He leaned over to Wendy's ear. "I did something idiotic last night. Really stupid!" he whispered to her.

"What?" she curiously whispered back.

"I got drunk and then apparently I took Peggy to old man Adam's barn last night. We spent the night, and when I woke up, we were both naked," he whispered.

Wendy's mouth dropped open, and she shouldn't believe her ears. "You did what?"

"I had sex with Peggy last night," he whispered again.

Wendy looked at Jason in total shock.

"I'm so stupid," he said while he slapped his forehead with his free hand. He cringed, as he still had a headache from his hangover.

"You need to stay away from that girl," Wendy replied and looked worried for her big brother.

"I will," he replied, then drank the rest of his coffee.

A month had passed.

Jason painted his parents' house to kill some time while he figured out his future.

He was also successful in avoiding Peggy, but he didn't notice when she drove by the house numerous times while he painted the house.

The house was all painted, and Jason sat on the front porch swing drinking a bottle of Arrow beer.

Kenny's Cadillac drove down the street, and it parked in front of Jason's house.

Jason cringed when he saw Peggy get out of the Cadillac and walked down the walkway to the front porch.

"I knew it was too good to be true," he quietly said to himself while he took a drink of beer.

"Hello Jason," Peggy said in a sweet voice the second she stepped on the porch.

"Hi, Peggy," he replied, then took a sip of his beer looking away from her.

Peggy looked a little nervous while she walked over and sat down on the swing next to Jason.

Jason looked away while he sipped on his beer.

"The house looks good. You did an outstanding job painting it," she politely told him while she looked the house over.

"Thank you," he replied, then took another sip of beer and silently prayed she would leave.

Peggy fidgeted and looked nervous, as she was itching to say something but hesitated for the correct words.

Jason took another drink of his beer.

"I'm pregnant," she quickly blurted out.

Jason spat out his beer and choked on some. After he stopped choking, he looked at her. "What?" he asked, unsure he correctly heard what she told him.

"I'm pregnant."

Jason looked stunned. "Pregnant? How is that possible?"

"Remember our romantic night at old man Adams barn?" she said.

Jason thought for a second, then it dawned on him when he remembered waking up naked that morning. He rubbed his head in frustration. "What do we do now?"

"The right thing. Or bear the fury of daddy for getting his little girl pregnant. And then he'll probably fire your father."

Jason felt trapped, and wanted to scream.

"I would hate it if your parents would lose this beautiful house. I know your mother loves it so dearly," she said, staring at Jason to make him sweat.

Jason didn't respond, and he took another drink of beer.

Peggy glanced over at the beer bottle in Jason's hand. She quickly snatched the bottle from his grip and got up from the swing.

She walked to the edge of the porch. She poured the rest of his beer out on the flowers below.

She walked back to the swing and sat down. "I'll tell my parents tonight that you had a change of heart and decided to marry me. We'll get married in two weeks, and then they'll believe we conceived after we were married," she told him.

"But won't your doctor say something to your parents? After all, Dr. Benson plays golf with your father," Jason replied.

"I didn't have Dr. Benson look at me. I saw a doctor in Baltimore to be discreet," Peggy responded and looked serious.

Jason looked trapped and didn't have a way out of this dilemma.

An hour later, Peggy was gone, and Jason still sat on the front porch swing and looked stunned.

Wendy walked down the walkway in her waitress outfit, exhausted from another shift at the diner.

She saw Jason on the swing the second she stepped on the porch and sensed something was wrong.

"What happened now?" she asked while she sat down on the swing next to Jason.

Jason spent the next few minutes telling Wendy that Peggy was pregnant, and he doesn't have a choice but to get married.

Wendy was furious, as she knew Peggy tricked him so they could get married. "I'll always be here for you," she said then rested her head on his shoulder.

"And I'll always be here for you," he replied and placed his arm around his sister.

That night, Wilma and Hank were in heaven with the news that Jason finally decided to marry Peggy.

Kenny and his wife, Sally, were also elated that the wedding was finally going to take place. Peggy insisted that the wedding take place within two weeks before Jason chickened out again.

During the next week, Wilma, and Sally spent all of their free time putting together the wedding plans.

Also during that week, Kenny got his future son-in law's office ready to start his job after the honeymoon.

Two weeks passed, and it was the day of Jason and Peggy's wedding.

In a room in the church, Jason wore a tuxedo while he paced back and forth, still hating the thought of marrying Peggy. He often wished he died over there in Germany. This is my death sentence. He said over and over again in his mind.

Hank entered the room in his tuxedo and saw Jason while he paced back and forth. "I was nervous on my wedding day. I believe I vomited three times before going to the altar," Hank said then chuckled while he remembered that day. "I almost vomited on your mom," he added and chuckled again.

He walked over and patted Jason's shoulder. "Don't worry. You'll survive this beautiful moment. I promise."

Jason looked like he wanted to vomit. "I need some fresh hair," he said then walked to the door.

"Hurry back," Hank said while he watched Jason leave the room.

Jason walked down the hallway and passed by a door that was cracked open.

"Peggy, I'm glad Jason came to his senses," Donna, Peggy's best friend and maiden of honor, said from inside the room with the cracked door.

Jason walked a little farther down the hallway then he got curious.

He walked back to the door and listened.

Inside the room, Donna helped with the final touches with Peggy's wedding dress.

"He came to his sense because I tricked him," Peggy replied to Donna.

"How's that?" Donna curiously asked.

"You better promise to keep this a secret. Because if you don't, I'll have your daddy fired from the plant," Peggy replied.

"I won't tell a soul. I promise!" Donna swore.

"I told Jason I was pregnant," Peggy replied with an air of cockiness in her voice.

"Oh, my God! When did that happen?" Donna replied, shocked.

"We spent the night in old man Adams barn little over a month ago."

"I can't believe you had sex before you got married," Donna replied a little shocked.

"I didn't have sex with him. Jason was too drunk to do anything but fall asleep," Peggy replied with a smirk.

"You lied to him?" Donna replied.

"It was the only way I could get him to marry me. But you should have seen what that I did to that English bitch that Jason wanted to marry," Peggy said with another smirk.

"What?" Donna curiously asked.

Jason kicked the door opened. The girls screamed.

Jason stormed inside the room, and he was furious. He stormed over to Peggy. "You lied about being pregnant?" he yelled in her face.

Peggy shook. "It was the right thing to do. We're destined to be together forever. After all, you cheated on me with that fat English girl," Peggy stated.

"What else did you lie about?" Jason yelled out.

Peggy hesitated if she should tell him. "That's not important anymore. Our love and future are more important. She's the horrible past from England that you must forget forever," Peggy responded while her eyes welled up.

Jason got ready to slap her, but he refrained, knowing that would make him the bad guy.

He stormed out of the room and almost knocked down Wendy, who entered after she heard the conversation in the hallway.

Wendy looked out into the hallway then looked back at Peggy, who looked scared.

Wendy smirked while Peggy rushed past her and out of the room.

Wendy and Donna rushed out of the room and into the hallway.

Jason ran out of the church and headed to the parking lot.

Peggy ran out of the church and stopped while she searched for Jason in the church grounds.

She saw him while he ran to his father's car. "Jason!

Please don't leave me!" she yelled out and ran toward the car.

Jason started the car up.

Peggy ran over to the car.

Jason slammed the car in reverse and backed up.

He slammed the car into first gear and stomped on the gas pedal.

Peggy's wedding dress was sprayed with dirt and grass while Jason raced the car out of the parking lot.

She looked down at her dress that was covered in dirt and grass.

She looked at Jason's car while it sped down the road. She dropped to the ground and started sobbing. "What's the matter, dear?" Wilma and Sally said the second they ran up to Peggy.

"Jason ran out at our wedding?" Peggy sobbed out.

"He did what?" Kenny asked while he ran up to Peggy along with Hank.

"Jason ran out at our wedding?" Peggy sobbed again into her hands.

"Why would he do that?" Kenny asked while he glared at Hank.

"I don't know," Hank replied baffled with Jason's behavior.

"He ran out because Peggy tricked Jason into marrying him by making him believe she was pregnant," Wendy tattled.

"She did what?" Kenny asked a little unsure he heard Wendy correctly.

"She tricked Jason into marrying her by making him believe she was pregnant," Wendy repeated.

Sally looked at Donna, who stood next to Wendy. "Donna, what do you know about this?" she asked.

Donna looked nervous about saying anything. "I don't want my father to be fired," she nervously replied.

"Donna, if you lie to me, I'll fire your father. Now tell me the truth, and I won't fire him," Kenny said and looked serious.

Donna looked at Peggy, who continued to sob. "Peggy told me she lied to Jason about being pregnant so she could trick him into marrying her," Donna replied.

Peggy looked like she wanted to kill Donna for telling her secret.

Peggy got up and stormed away to the church. Kenny and Sally ran after Peggy.

Hank and Wilma looked worried while their car was just a small dot way down the road.

From the car, Jason's eyes welled up while he drove away from the church. He reached under the front seat and pulled a whiskey bottle he stashed under there a few days ago.

He looked at the bottle then rolled down the window. He tossed out the bottle and heard it shatter on the road.

He drove off down the street.

Jason returned home later that night and had a little heated argument with his parents for running out on the wedding. But they eventually understood that Jason was tricked and it was never mentioned again.

Two days later, Wendy went down with Jason to the Army recruiting station where he reenlisted in the Army Air Corps.

Two weeks later, Wilma and Wendy took Jason back to the Mount Royal train station for the third time and last time left home for the military.

Chapter 18

Back to reality back in 1978 at Spencer's museum.

Outside the bomber room, Cindy waited and looked at her watch. "Where is she?" Cindy quietly said to herself while she continued to look around her museum for the person who wanted to meet with her.

She glanced inside the Bomber Room and got curious noticing the crowd gathered around the Sweet Bird display.

She went inside the Bomber Room.

Inside the Bomber Room, the crowd all loved the story of Jason's life.

Some women wiped away tears, and even a few men also discreetly wiped away some tears.

"Same old story of a woman tricking a guy into marriage," one of the men said from the crowd.

His wife elbowed him to indicate she didn't like his comment. A few nearby men chuckled over that sight.

"After I reenlisted, I was stationed at MacDill in Florida for B twenty-nine training. Kenny Moore fired dad, so I sent him fifty percent of my pay until he found a job four months later in Baltimore. Then a few years later, I transferred into the Air Force, where I spent the rest of my thirty-year career. I retired as a Colonel in seventy," he told the crowd.

Robyn gave Jason a kiss on his cheek as she felt sorry for those events that happened so long ago.

"What happened to Hans?" one of the men curiously asked from the crowd.

"In fifty-four, I was stationed at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Since Hans lived in Kaiserslautern, I was able to see him again. Hans would rent an airplane at a local German airport, and I gave him some lessons. I got my flight instructor's license a few years before that while stationed in Illinois. I really don't regret shooting Colonel Bruker to save Hans life. He's

now a pilot for Lufthansa airlines, and I see him occasionally when he flies to the states,” Jason told everybody.

“What happened to your lovely sister?” a woman in the crowd asked.

“She married Sidney in forty-eight, and they had a beautiful daughter named Robyn,” he said then kissed Robyn’s cheek. Then he looked saddened while he remembered something else. “But then a drunk driver killed Wendy and Sidney in fifty-eight. Since my parents were too old, I took in Robyn and raised her,” he added.

“And he was a wonderful father and uncle to me,” Robyn said while she kissed his cheek.

“Did you never married? Or tried to contact Cindy?” another woman curiously asked from the crowd.

“No. Peggy tried to trick me into marrying her, and as far as Cindy went, I thought about contacting her, but she was married, and I knew I couldn’t have her. So why bring up that heartache again?” he responded.

“Not all women will break your heart, Uncle Jason.”

All the women in the crowd nodded in agreement with Robyn.

“She right,” a woman added.

“I never stopped loving Cindy. She still has my heart,” Jason said with sadness in his eyes.

Robyn gave Jason a little hug.

“Jay Jay, is that you?” Cindy’s voice curiously called out from the crowd.

Jason’s eyes widen, as that voice sounded so familiar.

He looked at the crowd for the source of that female voice.

Cindy pushed her way through the people and stopped the second she saw Jason on the bench. She stared at him, then her eyes widened like she saw a ghost. “Oh, my God! It’s you, Jay Jay! It’s really you! But, how can this be?” she said while her eyes welled up.

Jason looked at Cindy, and then it dawned on him; it was the girl he loved so long ago. Then he seemed stunned at the

sight of Cindy and got mad. “You said you would never love another man!” he yelled at her.

“But I thought,” Cindy replied while she walked up to him.

“You thought? When it looked like I wasn’t coming back, you thought of another man. That’s what you thought!” Jason said, interrupting Cindy.

She rushed over to Jason. “No! It wasn’t like that!” she replied while her eyes continued to well up.

Everybody in the crowd watched in awe while Jason’s life story continued in real life.

“Of course not. It’s like this,” he said while he touched his scar above his left eye. “A souvenir of trying to keep your memory alive while in a prisoner of war camp.”

“Jay Jay, please let me explain!” she pleaded.

Jason stormed off pushing his way back through the crowd.

Robyn looked back at the photo on display and then looked at Cindy and saw her “Cindy Spencer” name tag.

Robyn got up from the bench and ran after Jason and grabbed his arm. “Uncle Jason, I had no idea she was your past love when I set up a meeting.”

“You did what?” he asked, upset with Robyn.

“I set up a meeting to discuss opening up a bigger place at this airport. I thought you might have a better chance down here in West Haven.”

“I don’t ever want to see or talk to that woman!” he snapped back and started to walk away.

Robyn grabbed his arm and stopped him. “Maybe she has a valid reason for leaving you. I think you should hear her out,” she scolded him.

“The only valid reason is she let someone screw her, while I was a POW,” he yelled back.

Robyn looked back and saw Cindy wipe away some tears. “No! If you don’t give her this chance, you’ll lose her forever. So quit being a stubborn old fool!” she snapped back at him.

Jason looked at Robyn then he looked at Cindy, who was visibly upset. He thought about leaving but knew Robyn would be on his case about this for years.

He walked back to Cindy. "Okay, at least I can hear your side of what happened," he said while he sat down on the bench near Robyn.

It was total silence while everybody curiously waited for Cindy to tell her side of the story.

"I remember that day your plane flew off on that mission," Cindy said.

Robyn stood next to Jason and placed her hand on his shoulder while Cindy continued with her story.

Cindy's story about what happened back in England during World War II.

Back at the Chipley Springs airfield, Cindy stood by the corner of the Administration Building and watched while the B-17s waited in line for their turn to take-off.

Cindy saw that the Sweet Bird that was second in line to take-off. She silently prayed while she watched the Sweet Bird roll down the runway and was soon airborne.

She watched while the Sweet Bird banked to the right and flew off with the other B-17s.

She waited by the side of the building until the B17s were just small dots in the sky.

She turned around and went back inside the Administration Building to return to her typing.

Like all days when Jason flew out on a mission, Cindy was nervous, and her stomach was upset while she worried while she typed all those Army letters.

During her lunch break that day, Cindy rushed into

Chipley Springs and talked with a local Priest. She was elated when he agreed to marry Jason and Cindy, and couldn't wait to tell him when he returned from his mission.

It was later that day, and word started to spread throughout the building that the bombers were returning from their mission.

Cindy got up from her typewriter and rushed over to the side exit doors.

Cindy stood at her spot at the corner of the building. She looked to the sky where the B-17s were small dots approaching the airfield.

A few minutes later, the B-17s started their turn to final approach for the runway.

Her heart raced while she watched the planes took turns and landed on the runway.

“Four planes are missing,” an officer was heard from the front of the Administration Building.

Cindy’s stomach got upset hearing that news and had a strong feeling something was wrong.

She ran toward the flightline to get a closer look at the planes while they taxied off the runway.

Her heart raced while she watched while the B-17s parked on the flightline and she couldn’t see the Sweet Bird.

When it was safe, Cindy ran to the flightline for a closer view .

Cindy rushed down the flightline, and she had a horrible gut feeling something was wrong when she couldn’t find the Sweet Bird.

She saw Captain Clint Leigh while he walked away from his B-17 called Hitler’s Nightmare.

She rushed over Clint. “Excuse me, where’s the Sweet Bird?” she asked him with concern in her eyes.

Clint looked at Cindy’s worried eyes, and then he looked sad when he remembered hearing about her.

“I’m sorry, they got shot down, and we don’t know if they survived,” he answered with sadness in his eyes.

Cindy stared at Clint for a few seconds, then it dawned on her what happened to Jason. She dropped to her knees and sobbed in her hands.

Clint got Cindy up on her feet, hugged her, and she sobbed in his chest.

Clint placed his arm around her, and he walked her back to the Administration Building.

During the rest of that day, Cindy looked like a zombie while she attempted to type some letters.

The next two weeks were horrible for Cindy, as she didn't sleep a wink worrying if Jason was dead or alive.

One night, Cindy nervously paced outside the Let's Boogie Down dance hall. She looked exhausted with bags under her eyes while she eyed the door of the dance hall. Her stomach had been in constant turmoil from not knowing the fate of Jason.

She watched while soldiers entered and left the dance hall.

Her eyes widened the second she saw Clint step out of the dance hall, and she rushed over to him. "Excuse me, has there been any word on the crew of the Sweet Bird?" she asked and looked worried.

Clint looked remorseful at Cindy. "I'm sorry. We got word that gravesites of some of the crew members were found by the wreckage in a field by a farm," he told her.

Cindy's eyes welled up while she feared the worse. "Was Jason, Jay Jay, Jenkins one of them?" she asked, and her stomach was in turmoil while she waited for his response.

"No," he told her.

Cindy looked relieved. "Is he on his way back to England?" she asked with hopeful eyes.

Clint looked at Cindy's hopeful eyes. "I'm sorry. I also heard he was captured by the Germans and is probably in a Stalag," he said.

Cindy's eyes welled up, her knees shook, and she dropped to the ground in shock. She looked up at Clint. "Can I write to him?"

"I'll see what I can do," Clint replied while he helped her up on her feet.

Cindy smiled at Clint for being so kind.

Two weeks had passed, and it was Saturday morning. Cindy was in her apartment, drinking tea while she wrote a letter to Jason. She wrote four letters so far, and Clint promised he would pass them onto the Red Cross.

Someone knocked on her apartment door.

She got up, walked over, and opened her door.

She saw Peggy standing out in the hallway, in her Army uniform, and it was an uncomfortable moment.

“I don’t hate you for what happened. I fully accepted the fact that Jason loves you more than me,” Peggy said from the hallway and looked sincere.

Then Peggy suddenly looked bothered and glanced down the hallway. “Mind your own business!” she yelled, then looked back at Cindy. “I’m sorry, but some old man was peeking out his apartment door spying on me,” she said.

“That would be nose Albert. So, why are you here to see me?” Cindy asked a little bothered by her presence.

“May I please step inside for a few minutes?” Peggy asked politely.

“I don’t think we should be talking to each other,” Cindy replied.

“Please, I have news about Jason,” Peggy replied and looked serious.

“Okay, please come inside,” Cindy said while she stepped aside from the door.

Peggy walked into her apartment, and Cindy closed the door.

There was a moment of awkward silence while Peggy removed a hanky from her purse.

Cindy’s stomach started to get upset while she watched Peggy wipe her eyes with the hanky.

“I found out from the Army,” she said then wiped her eyes again with her hanky. “That Jason died from being shot while he and some other POWs, tried to escape from a German Stalag,” Peggy added with some more wiping of her eyes with the hanky.

Cindy looked at Peggy’s red and watery eyes.

Peggy reached in her purse, removed a folded letter, and she handed the letter to Cindy.

Cindy opened up the letter and saw it was official Army correspondence. Cindy read it then looked like her soul was

ripped out of her body. It stated that 1st Lieutenant Jason Jenkins was fatally shot in Luft Stalag XXG while attempting to escape. She dropped to the floor and sobbed into the letter.

Peggy helped her up and hugged her for comfort. Cindy cried all weekend over the death of Jason.

Monday morning arrived, and Cindy, with red puffy eyes, walked in a stupor to her typing job on the airfield.

She walked to her desk, sat down, and removed the cover off her typewriter.

Sergeant Wilson walked up to Cindy's desk and looked serious. "Major Parker would like a word with you," he said then turned around and walked away.

Cindy got up from behind her desk and walked over to Major Parker's office.

She knocked on his opened door.

"Please come inside Miss Grant," Major Parker said while he looked up from his desk.

Cindy walked inside his office. She was curious why the Major wanted to see her, as this never happened in the past.

"Please have a seat, Miss Grant," Major Parker said with a serious tone.

Cindy sat down in the chair in front of his desk.

He looked square in Cindy's eyes. "Sergeant Wilson, reacting on an anonymous tip, found some stolen medical supplies hidden in one of your desk drawers," Major Parker said.

Cindy's eyes widened in shock, overhearing his statement, and she got nervous. "I didn't steal any medical supplies. I swear!" Cindy nervously replied.

"I don't have a choice in this matter, you're fired," Major Parker responded with a serious look. "Please gather up your personal belongings, and you'll be escorted from the airfield," he added then returned to his paperwork.

Cindy got up and was dazed while she walked to his office door.

Cindy walked back to her desk where Jack and Wally, the MPs, waited for her to return.

"I need your identification card, Miss Grant," Jack asked.

Cindy opened up her purse and removed her identification card that granted her access onto the airfield. She walked to the side door with Jack and Wally by her side.

Jack and Wally walked Cindy to the gate and watched while she walked back into the English community.

Cindy moped down the street and headed back to her apartment in Chipley Springs.

Later that day, Cindy sat on the bench on the sidewalk near her apartment building. She held the picture of her and Jason under the nose of the Sweet Bird. Tears ran down her cheek and dropped on the picture while she thought about Jason.

Chapter 19

Back to reality back in 1978 at Spencer's museum.

The eyes of all the women in the crowd welled up after hearing Cindy's story.

Jason looked at Cindy with a change of heart. "I'm afraid that was probably Peggy's doing. And I bet she paid Sergeant Wilson to create a fake letter about me being shot by the Germans," he said.

"You were right, she was pure evil," Cindy added.

Jason nodded in agreement.

"Whatever happened to her?" Cindy curiously asked.

"Around nineteen sixty, I heard she was married with four kids. Her husband took over the plant after her dad died that year. The plant went belly up around sixty-eight and I then I lost track of her," he told Cindy.

Kimberly pushed her way through the crowd and walked up to Cindy. "Sorry I'm late mom, I had a flat tire on the Interstate," she said.

Jason saw Kimberly and looked surprised. "Kimberly? What are you doing here?"

Kimberly saw Jason on the bench. "Jason? I'm surprised to see you here," she said then looked at the crowd that gathered. "What's going on here?" she curiously asked.

"Those two had a love affair in back in England during World War II," a woman in the crowd replied.

"Who had a love affair?" Kimberly asked while she looked at the woman in the crowd.

The woman in the crowd pointed at Jason and Cindy.

Kimberly looked surprised at Jason and Cindy. "Jason's the love you told me about?"

"Yes," Cindy replied while she looked at Jason and still couldn't believe he was alive.

"But I thought you said he died while in a German prisoner of war camp?" Kimberly asked a little confused. "So

did I, but I just learned that someone else lied about Jason being killed to keep us apart,” Cindy told Kimberly.

“Her name was Peggy,” another woman in the crowd called out.

Kimberly looked at the woman in the crowd then she looked back at Jason. “Oh, my God. And I tried to get you two to date. Wow!” she said when it dawned on her.

Cindy looked surprised. “Jason’s your flight instructor?”

“Yes, and a good one at that,” Kimberly replied to butter Jason up a little.

Jason got curious while he looked at Kimberly. “So, if you don’t mind me asking, who was Kimberly’s father? Did I know him?”

There was a moment of silence while Cindy looked at Kimberly, and she got really nervous and fidgeted. She pondered hard in her head on whether to answer Jason’s question, then she decided it was time to come clean. “Kimberly, I was hoping to break this news some other way,” she said to her daughter then she looked at Jason. “Jay Jay,” she said, then paused for a few seconds, as this was difficult to say. “Kimberly’s your daughter.”

It took a few seconds for it to sink in Jason’s head when he remembered that night of sex after he proposed and then his mouth dropped open in shock.

Kimberly looked stunned with the sudden news stated by Cindy. She looked at Jason then she looked at Cindy, and she looked a little confused. “What?”

The crowd was stunned and felt they were in a drama movie.

“Jason’s your biological father,” Cindy told Kimberly.

Kimberly looked at Jason then back at Cindy. “Why didn’t you tell me this when I was younger?” she asked still a little baffled with the sudden news.

“I’m so sorry, Kimberly. But at the time, we felt it would be best that you didn’t know,” Cindy replied.

“How could not telling me about my real father, be best for me?” Kimberly yelled at Cindy then stormed off.

“Cindy got up off the bench and ran after Kimberly.

Jason got up off the bench and ran after Cindy.

Robyn stayed behind and looked shocked while the crowd followed Jason.

Robyn ran after the crowd.

Kimberly ran out of the Bomber Room and headed through the aircraft displays.

Cindy ran out of the Bomber Room and chased after Kimberly.

Jason ran out of the Bomber Room and chased after Cindy.

The crowd ran out of the Bomber Room and chased after Jason.

Robyn ran out of the Bomber Room and chased after the crowd.

People in the aircraft display room curiously saw the crowd, with Kimberly in the lead while they headed to the front doors.

Kimberly ran out of the front doors and headed to the parking lot.

Cindy ran out of the front door and picked up speed while she headed Kimberly.

Kimberly got out of breath and stopped running.

Cindy ran up to Kimberly. “Honey, I know we should have told you, but I loved Jay Jay so much. Then your father took care of me after I was devastated, thinking Jason was dead,” Cindy said out of breath.

“All these years I was lied to?” Kimberly replied out of breath, and her eyes welled up.

“Pete couldn’t have children, so the day you were born, he thought of you as part of him. He was scared to death you would never think of him as your father if you knew about Jason,” Cindy said while her eyes welled up.

Kimberly walked away from Cindy.

Jason ran up to Kimberly and grabbed her arm, stopping her. “Kimberly.”

She looked back at him. “What do you want?” she angrily yelled.

“She was only doing what she thought was best. She wanted you to have the full experience of having a father,” he told her in a fatherly tone.

“I want to be left alone,” Kimberly said then shook Jason’s arm away. She walked away and crossed her arms.

Jason walked back to Cindy, gazed into her tearful eyes then gave her a hug.

The crowd all smiled at the sight of Jason and Cindy making up after all those years.

Robyn ran up to Jason, and she smiled at the sight of Jason and Cindy hugging.

“Let’s go get something to eat or get some coffee,” Jason told Cindy while he watched Kimberly pacing back and forth pondering the sudden news.

“That would be lovely,” Cindy replied.

Jason walked Cindy back to her museum.

Robyn and the crowd tagged behind them. Everybody walked back into the museum.

They headed to the High In The Clouds restaurant located at the opposite end of the building from the Bomber Room.

In the restaurant, Cindy, Jason, and Robyn sat down in a booth.

The crowd sat nearby them and other tables so they could listen.

After the waitress left with their drink orders, the story continued.

“My father was furious when he found out I was pregnant and got fired. He disowned me, and after two weeks, I was kicked out of my apartment, and I was homeless,” Cindy told Jason.

Jason stroked Cindy’s hand to show his support.

“Then I met Pete Snyder one night while I was crying on a bench in Chipley Springs. He was so sweet and took care of me by letting me sleep on the couch of his apartment. Four months later, even though he knew how much I loved you, he proposed, and I accepted.”

Jason turned his head to hide his hurt feelings, but he knew that life sometimes sends you down the safest path available at the time.

Cindy's eyes welled up, and she blew her nose into a hanky. "Then as time flew by, I was in love with Pete as he was so sweet and taking care of me, yet I was still in love with you," she said then showed Jason her left hand. "I never removed your engagement ring, and Pete understood I wanted to wear it," she added.

Jason smiled at the sight of his old ring.

"Pete taught me how to fly, then we immigrated to the States in March of sixty-six. He moved his aviation company to Atlanta and became extremely successful," she told him.

Jason opened his mouth to say something; then he hesitated and got a little nervous. He took a breath of courage.

"Are you still married to Pete?" he curiously asked.

Cindy wiped away some tears. "Pete passed away eight years ago," she replied.

Jason discreetly looked relieved with that answer. "I'm sorry to hear about that," he replied to be polite then he gazed into her eyes. "How did you get the Sweet Bird?" he curiously asked.

"I found a German in Frankfort who salvaged parts from German and American aircraft left behind after the war. He ran into financial trouble and sold things off. I bought your nose section six months ago."

"I'm surprised you found it," he said while he held her hand.

"This was my prized piece for the museum," she replied.

"Why did you build this place?"

"It was a dream of Pete's. His parents were rich, and when they passed away in sixty-seven, they left him millions of dollars. He wanted to put some of that money into building a museum. But he passed away before he could start building the place. So I decided to make his dream come true." Cindy said then gazed into Jason's eyes. "But seeing you now, made me realize how much I still love you. The war and Peggy sure ruined our

chances of having a life together,” she said while holding Jason’s hand.

“But our lives aren’t over yet. And I believe you accepted my marriage proposal a long time ago,” Jason said with a loving smile while he touched his old engagement ring.

Cindy looked at Jason then she kissed him.

Robyn’s eyes welled up so happy to see her uncle kissing his true love.

The eyes of all the women at the nearby tables welled up.

“I want to be with my new family,” Kimberly said while she walked up to the booth.

Jason, Cindy, and Robyn turned around and saw Kimberly standing by the booth.

Jason got up from the booth and walked over to Kimberly. “My beautiful daughter,” he said while he hugged her.

“Dad,” she replied, and her eyes welled up.

Jason’s eyes welled up while he hugged Kimberly. Jason separated from Kimberly then looked over at Robyn. “Robyn, meet your cousin, Kimberly.” Robyn got up from the booth, walked over.

Kimberly and Robyn hugged.

The people at the nearby tables all clapped in joy with the sight of all the hugging.

Then on the loudspeakers, Glenn Miller’s Moonlight Serenade song started playing.

Jason looked over at Cindy. “Remember dancing to that song at the Let’s Boogie Down dance hall?”

“Every time I heard it since that day,” she replied with a loving smile.

“Well, may I have this dance?” Jason asked while he offered Cindy his hand.

Cindy took Jason’s hand and assisted her out of the booth. They started slow dancing by their table.

At the nearby tables, a few of the women dragged their husbands out of their seats and started slow dancing with them.

Robyn and Kimberly watched with loving eyes while Jason and Cindy slow danced once again.

Chapter 20

Six months had passed, and Jason and Cindy spent every weekend together.

He would fly his Cessna 172 down to West Haven on the weekend, and she would fly her 1941 Stearman up to Sandbar Island the following weekend.

During one weekend, Jason and Cindy attended Mandy's wedding in Melbourne. Mandy was shocked over the sudden turn with Jason's decision on attending her grand event.

A month later, Jason sold his business and house and moved into Cindy's home along Lake Hartridge.

Two months later, it was time for Jason and Cindy's long-awaited wedding.

Jason drove to the Orlando airport to pick up some guests for the wedding.

Jason waited at an Eastern gate for a flight from New York.

He looked anxious while he watched the passengers walk out of the gate.

"Hans!" he cried out the second he laid eyes on his old German friend.

"Jay Jay!" Hans, now fifty-two years old with salt and pepper hair, called out the second he saw his old American friend while he walked out of the gate.

The two old friends hugged for a few seconds. "How's retirement from Lufthansa?"

"It's great," Hans replied with a huge smile.

Then Jason saw Emilie standing behind Hans.

"Hello Emilie, it's been a while since I've seen you," he said then gave her a hug and a kiss on her cheek.

"It's good to see you again Jay Jay," she smiled.

"I can imagine you're happy Hans is retired," he told her.

"I kind of miss my time alone," she playfully said while then winked at Hans.

Jason chuckled. "Let's get your luggage."

Jason walked Hans and Emilie down the terminal and headed to the baggage claim area.

Jason drove Hans and Emilie to a hotel close to West Haven off Interstate 4.

While Hans and Emilie settled into their hotel room, Jason drove to the West Haven airport and waited outside the museum.

Fifteen minutes later, Robyn's Piper Arrow taxied and parked on the flight line by the museum.

The door opened, and Jerry White, thirty years old got out and walked down the wing.

Patty, their six-year-old daughter, got out from the back seat and walked down the wing.

"Uncle Jason!" Patty called out and ran over to him.

Jerry started tying down the Arrow while Robyn secured the cockpit.

Jason knelt down and hugged Patty. "It's so good to see you," he said then gave her a kiss on the cheek.

Robyn got out and locked the door to the plane. She walked down the wing then unlocked the baggage door and removed two small suitcases.

Jerry and Robyn walked over to Jason and Patty.

"Good to see you again, Uncle Jason," Robyn said while she hugged, and kissed his cheek.

"Hey Uncle Jason," Jerry said while he shook Jason's hand.

Jason carried Robyn's suitcase while they walked to his car.

That night, Cindy and Jason had Robyn, Jerry, Patty, Hans, and Emilie over for dinner at their house.

Jason couldn't believe that he had Cindy, Hans, and Emilie all in the same room.

They had a wonderful time talking about their lives since the war.

The next day, Jason took Hans and Emilie over to the museum.

"I can't believe this was part of your B seventeen," Hans said while he looked at the Sweet Bird nose section.

“Remember this?” Jason said while he walked Hans over to the display board.

“Oh, my,” Hans said in disbelief when he saw the photo of Cindy and Jason.

“Look, Emilie. Jay Jay would show me that picture when he was a prisoner at the Stalag,” he told her.

Emilie looked at the photo. “I remember you telling me about this,” she replied.

Jason spent the next hour, giving Hans the grand tour of the museum.

Then later that day, they waited outside the museum by Robyn’s airplane.

A Cessna 172 taxied over and parked next to Robyn’s Arrow. Kimberly was the pilot in command, as she got her license four months ago thanks to Jason’s fatherly attention. In fact, this was the Cessna that Jason once owned and gave it to Kimberly after he sold his business. He figured it was for thirty-five years of missing birthday and Christmas presents.

“Hey dad,” Kimberly said the second she got out of her airplane.

She rushed over and gave Jason a hug and kiss on the cheek.

“I still can’t believe that I’m going to be a grandfather,” he said while he continued to hug Kimberly.

“In five more months, grandpa,” she replied with another kiss on his cheek.

Rob Brooke, thirty-eight years old, got out of the passenger seat and he walked over to Jason.

“Did she scare you during the flight down from Sandbar Island?” Jason jokingly asked Rob.

“Actually, it was a very smooth flight. She only had to land once to ask for directions to West Haven,” Rob jokingly replied.

Kimberly playfully stuck out her tongue at her husband.

“Kimberly and Rob, meet Hans and Emilie from Germany,” Jason introduced his friends.

“Hans, it’s so good to finally meet you,” Kimberly replied.

“It’s good to finally meet Jay Jay’s daughter,” Hans replied while he placed his arm around Emilie. “And this is my wife, Emilie.”

“My husband Rob,” Kimberly replied.

“Come, my backseat pilot, we have to secure our plane,” Kimberly said then walked back to the airplane.

Jason and Hans helped tie down the Cessna.

It took thirty-four years, but Cindy and Jason’s wedding finally arrived.

It was a small wedding and Robyn, Patty, Jerry, Kimberly, Hans, and Emilie watched while Cindy and Jason kissed, as man and wife in front of the Priest.

“It gives me much pleasure to introduce to you Mister and Misses Jason Jenkins,” the Priest said told everybody.

Jason and Cindy turned around and smiled at everybody.

Two days later, and Robyn, Jerry and Patty flew back to Jacksonville in her Piper Arrow.

Kimberly and Rob flew back to Sandbar Island in her Cessna 172.

Jason and Cindy drove down to Sanibel Island down by Fort Myers for three days on the beach for a honeymoon.

Hans and Emilie spent three days at Disney World in Kissimmee.

After the honeymoon and stay at Disney, Cindy and Jason pulled out a 1978 Piper Seneca II twin-engine plane they bought, as their wedding present for each other. Jason had the old nose art of the sexy blonde from the Sweet Bird painted on the nose of the Piper under the “Sweet Bird II” words.

Jason loaded their suitcases into the baggage compartment.

Hans loaded their suitcases into the baggage compartment.

Cindy and Emilie walked up to the plane, and they got in the backseat.

Jason and Hans got behind the controls.

Jason started up the twin engines.

Jason taxied the Seneca down to runway 23.

“Gillis Field traffic, Piper Seneca six zero nine Sierra Bravo, aka the Sweet Bird II, departing runway two-three, Gillis Field,” Jason said into the radio.

Jason taxied the Seneca to runway 23, and then after double-checking his gauges, he gave it full throttle and rolled down the runway.

The Sweet Bird II rolled down the runway and took off.

Jason soon raised his landing gear. “Gillis Field, Seneca six zero nine Sierra Bravo, aka the Sweet Bird II, making a left crosswind departure and heading southeast, Gillis Field,” Jason said into the radio.

The Sweet Bird II made its left crosswind departure and headed southeast.

Cindy and Jason spent two weeks flying around numerous Caribbean Islands.

They first flew to Nassau in the Bahamas and Hans was in heaven, finally getting the chance to soak up some sun at a beach.

They then flew to the Cayman Islands and enjoyed some snorkeling while they also soaked up more sun on the beaches.

After they returned from their Caribbean trip, Hans and Emilie flew back to Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Jason and Cindy then spent the next three weeks setting up the new High Flying Adventures flight school at the museum. Jason also got approval to build his High Flying Eatery on Lake Hartridge, and Cindy helped with the financing.

Then five months later, Kimberly gave birth to a healthy boy named Jason junior.

Life was really great for Jason now that he realized he could spend his golden years with Cindy.