



I'll be home soon

By Kathleen Adams

(Adult Category)

It is hard to express the pain that comes from sending love ones off to fight in the great war, it wretches your heart, restricts your throat and you feel as if the world is crumbling around you. It is not a topic I bring up often you see, but here I am sitting in a retirement home almost 70 years later telling you my story; the story of my Edward, the man who got away.

It is May 13th 1916 the birds are singing, and the sky is beautiful baby blue, but the ringing of the Minster bell interrupts the tranquillity; one bell ring, two bell rings, three bell rings remind me that it is 6:45 and in 15 minutes my sweet Edward would leave me and would unknowingly never return. You see it is an everyday sound that bell, it helps me keep track of time while I am out doing the shopping but today, today it is a constant reminder of my love leaving. It is a sort of taunting sound as if it is saying "he will die" "he will die" but I push that out of my thoughts and think positively, after all Edward promised me we would start a family when he returns. How lovely would that be, an Edward junior, my little boy, our little boy. Though I guess fate had other plans, as I tell my grandchildren sitting around my rocking chair, none to which I must sadly say are part of my Edward, but I do not let that get me down, I have had a happy life, but one cannot help wondering how different my life would be if Edward was still here.

The bell strikes 7am and my face drops, Edward can see it despite my false smile, he comes over and kisses me like it was the first time we met. My heart melts and my knees are weak, but I keep standing because I do not want to miss a second of being in his arms. His arms drop, and he kisses me on the forehead "I love you my sweet little lady, I will be home soon" and he turns, and leaves and I am left standing there empty and lost since my heart walked out the door with him. I do not wish to tell the state I was in after he left and the following month, but I will say it was not ladylike and I am ashamed I let myself get like that especially since Edward would not approved. So, I'll skip to July when my first letter came from Edward.

My Little Lady,

I must say I miss you incredibly and not a day goes by that I do not think of you and our future life we will have.

Training is hard and I get shipped off to France soon, I want to be brave and tell you I am not scared, I want to continue to be the brave man you think I am but the truth is I am scared and I'd rather be at home with you but Lets not talk about that since I do not want you to worry. I hope all is well and you haven't been moping around my love, live life as normal as possible, I'll be home soon.

All my love,

Your Edward.

That letter, oh that letter brought me joy and pain something that will forever be close friends. To know he was okay and still thinking about me convinced me to make my life as normal as possible till he comes home but there is only so much I can distract myself with. The next few months came and passed with no news though I knew he was out there in France fighting not just for us but for others and one cannot help feeling a sense of pride despite the feeling of dread that follows.

More months passed, and snow began to fall, it was Christmas time, a time to share with loved ones but my only love was gone but little did I know it was forever. Christmas day passed in a blur, I spent it with mother and father (since he was too old to join the army) and my sister Annabelle since her fiancé was off fighting too. It was a simple and quiet day no mention of war and pain and so I guess it helped but that evening would change my life forever.

The bell struck four times as we were walking home from choir concert but as we arrived a smart soldier in his uniform was waiting patiently on the porch. We all stopped and said a silent prayer hoping he was not here to take father away, but no the news was much worse. The soldier removed his hat when we approached and in a calm professional voice "Sir, ma'am and ladies I am looking for Mrs Bennette" I stopped mid step and just fell, I knew I just knew as he stood there holding what would be Edward's death notice.

My father walked up to the soldier and took the note from him "tragically lost his life while fighting for his country in France" my father read out loud. The soldier saluted me and left

me to mourn with my family, but no tears came, I felt my mother arms around me and lead me into the house. My sister is trying to hide her tears, mother is making tea and father just sits in his armchair looking at the fire as if he is trying to find the right words to say. Nothing would make me feel better right now, nothing at all. I pull out the letter from July and hold it to my heart the last words he wrote "I'll be home soon" resting there as if a false hope would cure my sadness. Time stopped at that moment and all went quiet except the sound of the bells ringing saying, "he is dead" "he is dead".