

Waiting

She watched the knitting grow under her nimble fingers. How many weeks had it been since they received the telegram telling them that Graham was missing in action. Irene wouldn't believe that he had been killed. He had got lost that was all and would be coming home and, as the rhythmic sound of the needles calmed her, she believed that as long as she kept knitting her beloved son would be safe. Before that fateful day she had knitted socks and balaclavas to send to his unit near the front, a contribution to the war effort – and it gave her a connection.



Irene managed to fill her days with activity. She had dug up her husband's verdant lawn to grow vegetables and spent hours making jam from the fruit she had harvested from her garden. The oven spewed out cakes and buns for her to take to the centre where she helped in the canteen. So many hungry children and wounded soldiers passed through its doors seeking comfort – their shocked faces made her worry but she set her feelings aside to help those in need. The evenings were the worse. After dinner Wilfred would don his tin helmet and grab his gas mask ready for his shift watching the night skies for enemy bombers. The house was so empty. The clock ticked in the corner. The china knickknacks glowed in the firelight. She pulled her chair closer to the fire and picked up her needles. This fair isle pattern had proved a challenge but now she had nearly finished the sweater. The clicking of the needles soothed her and she would drift into memories of knitting matinee sets while eagerly awaiting the birth of her first, and only child. She still had them neatly folded into tissue paper ready for him to marry and have his own children. He had worn out the jumpers she had made over the years but now he would have new sweaters and socks when he came home. His cheeky grin would light up her life and she would breathe again.