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Two o'clock came quickly. I left to walk down to the guardhouse and Struppie wanted to come along. I told him that I would be back soon and he seemed to understand. I went in to chat with the guard and very soon a taxi pulled up and Sue got out.

I ran to her and we embraced, right there in front of the guardhouse. I kissed her like I had never kissed her before. Sue said, "Oh Karl, I just couldn't wait for a bus; I had to get here as fast as I could. I do love you Karl and my parents love you too, that's why they let me come."

Finally we went to my place for a cup of tea. As we walked past the guardhouse the guard grinned and waved to us. Sue started giving me greetings from everyone, especially from her parents and sisters.

When we arrived at my hut, Struppie went frantic. He chased round and round Sue, stopping every so often to be patted by her. Sue was pleased that I had found a good home for him.

As soon as he had settled down, Sue and I were in each other's arms again. When I told her that I was thinking of staying in England she said, "Please don't Karl, I love you enough to wait, however long it takes."

I kissed her passionately and held her as close as I possibly could and said, "Oh Darling, I just don't want to leave you behind, I am afraid of losing you."

There was a tear in her eye when she said, "You know Karl, it is going to be very hard for me too to see you go, but please don't be afraid of losing me. I love you too much to let anything come between us. Please promise me that you will never ever think like that again." I kissed her again and promised that I wouldn't. Tears rolled down her face again

and I gently wiped them away.

Then Sue opened her case and handed me some gifts. There were cigarettes and goodies that her mother sent along for me. Sue had bought me a beautiful fountain pen, for writing with after I returned home. There was also a card from Daisy and Pat, wishing me all the best for the future, and to come back soon.

We were getting hungry and I still hadn't managed to get the cup of tea I had promised her. She preferred to stay with Struppie, while I went over to the canteen. The boys there offered to make us both a sandwich and as much tea as we needed, providing I brought Sue over to see them some time. I promised that I would.

When I got back, Sue was having fun with Struppie. I was given a sausage for him and I made him sit up and beg for it. It kept him quiet for a while. Sue held my hand and said, "Oh Karl, I hope it will not be too long before we can share every minute of our life together like this."

I hugged her and said, "Because we love each other the way we do, I know that day will come."

The tea and the sandwich tasted good and the afternoon went by swiftly.

We walked down the lane to the house where Sue would be staying, talking of the experiences we had at Clayton and the Westfield camp, the beginning of our courting days, if you could call it that. Sometimes we didn't see each other for weeks and then, if we were lucky, spent a few moments talking through barbed wire. An unusual courtship.

The lady was expecting us. She lived alone and was glad of the company. I introduced Sue as my fiancée, and soon realized that the two of them would get along fine together.

Sue's bedroom was very roomy and had a pleasant atmosphere. The lady told us that she would make breakfast between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. Also she gave her a key and said she could come and go whenever she pleased. She herself was going to be there most of the time. We thanked the lady and said that Sue would look forward to seeing her at breakfast the next morning.

We picked up Struppie and took him for a walk to our favorite pond, and I was able to point out to Sue where Struppie was going to live after I had gone back to Germany.

We could not have wished for a nicer spring evening, with the

fragrance of spring flowers in the air and the birds singing their evening song. We watched a pair of blue tits making their nest, flying busily back and forth and feeding on insects and green caterpillars.

At the pond we saw more dragonflies than ever before. They seemed to perform their evening dance just for us. Their wings reflected every color in the evening sun. We sat down to admire their ballet performance and mating dance.

Slowly I turned towards my sweetheart to embrace her. She whispered, "Oh Karl, I love you so much, with all my heart and my whole being." As I held her close to me I had great difficulty controlling my feelings. I wanted to hold her closer than ever before. I held her face in my hands, looked deep into her beautiful eyes and whispered that we had to keep the promise I made to her parents.

She agreed, "Yes Karl, we will continue to love each other until the day when we shall be as one."

Suddenly Sue asked, "You introduced me as your fiancée Karl; does that mean that we are engaged?"

Immediately I knelt down before her and said, "I would like to ask the young lady for her hand, to be married at some later date. I don't have a ring to give you, but I give you my promise to be always true to you, not sharing my heart with anyone until the day that we shall be joined in marriage."

Tears of joy rolled down her face as she said, "Oh Karl, I do love you without a ring."

We kissed and I whispered softly, "Darling, we are now engaged."

We sat and watched the dance of the dragonflies a little longer and Sue said, "What a beautiful engagement, thank you Karl."

The sun had set. Arm in arm we walked slowly back and all the fears that I once had about leaving Sue behind had vanished.

Back at the Nissen hut, I made us a cup of tea, to celebrate our engagement. For the rest of the evening we sat on my bed talking, hugging and kissing. It was wonderful just being together. Sue told me how good it felt being my fiancée, even without a ring, and that having me was the most beautiful engagement present she could wish for.

We were surprised to see that it was almost ten o'clock. I walked Sue home to her bed and breakfast place. On the way I told her that I hoped to be through with the mail by around eleven o'clock the next day,

then we could take a bus into Peterborough and watch a movie. She thought that was a good idea.

The light at the house was still on and the lady called out to wish us a good night. I kissed Sue good night and went back to my hut.

I lay down to sleep, imagining Sue lying beside me. I relived our engagement and the wonderful moments we had together. Before long I was asleep.

The next day started out very dreary and rainy and a lot cooler. I went for breakfast early, where I heard that another 50 of our men were to be repatriated. I wondered when my time would come. I also picked the mail up early. To my biggest surprise there was a letter for Sue, in her mother's handwriting. There was not much mail, but it was enough to keep me busy all morning.

Jack paid me a visit at the office, asking about Sue. When I told him that we became engaged while sitting at the pond he felt privileged to be the first to congratulate me. He helped me to get my work finished early and then offered to give us a ride into Peterborough, as he had some business to take care of there.

It was almost 12 o'clock when Struppie started wagging his tail and watching the door. Before I could ask him what was up, the door opened and Sue walked in, looking as beautiful as ever. She fell into my arms and kissed me good morning. She was most surprised when I delivered her the letter from her mother. I told her that in the days before we were allowed to receive any mail, I always used to pick out her letters first. She let me read her mother's letter and I couldn't help but notice her concern for her daughter. She also wished us both a wonderful time together, and reminded me that very soon I would be back in my homeland and united with my loved ones.

Jack arrived to pick us up and greeted Sue with, "Welcome my beautiful lady, I hope you don't mind riding in a Land Rover." We all squeezed into the front seat together and he dropped us off in Peterborough.

Being alone with Sue in a city, I felt like a free man. We enjoyed strolling around the city, looking in shop windows. We looked for the bus stop and found out that a bus was leaving for Connington every half an hour.

Several movies were showing at the cinema. Sue chose to see *When*

the bough breaks, a love story. There was a long line of people waiting to get in and we sat in a full house. Like most of the couples, I put my arm around Sue. It felt good to be able to act like anyone else. During the film I kissed Sue occasionally. We enjoyed the love story but I was disappointed that it had a sad ending. Throughout the movie I held Sue's hand. We would send love signals by squeezing each other's hands.

We caught the bus back to camp and went to find out what was cooking at the sergeants' mess. It was roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, a real treat.

The evening was cool, but we always enjoyed a walk. We went along the road leading to Wansford. The fragrance of wild clematis, which lined the side of the road, filled the air. Every so often we would stop to embrace and kiss, not wanting to think about having to part again.

The rest of the week went by all too quickly. Sue's last day started dreary and miserable. I had no appetite for breakfast and sat waiting for Sue to come. All of a sudden I realized that she had a suitcase and that I should be helping her to bring it here. I walked down to the house and found Sue and her landlady having a little breakfast. I was invited to join them. Like magic I cheered up when she said, "You sure make a fine couple and you have so much to look forward to." After breakfast we sat and talked a little and then said good-bye to the lady and thanked her for her hospitality.

Jack was his usual cheery self when he came to pick us up and brought greetings from his fiancée. Sue said good-bye to Struppie, telling him that she loved him very much. He wagged his tail and seemed to understand.

The ride to the station was very quiet. We did not know when we would see each other again. Sue lay her head on my shoulder, choking back the tears and whispering to me that she loved me.

Jack said good-bye to Sue and told me he would wait outside the station.

The train was waiting at the platform. I helped Sue to put her suitcase into a compartment and put the window down for her. Then we waited outside until the last minute. The conductor called out, "All aboard," and blew his whistle.

Sue and I said at the same time, "I love you."

When she was in her compartment I held her hand with both of

mine. Tears were rolling down her face. I walked along with the train as far as I could, holding onto her hand. Finally I had to let go as the train picked up speed and carried her swiftly away.

For some time I stood motionless, gazing in the direction of the train.

Then I remembered Jack, waiting to take me back, and hurried out of the station. Jack offered to treat me to some Chinese food. He said he was hungry and knew a place where they cooked very well. We pulled up in front of a fine restaurant. I had chow mein with glazed chicken and rice and Jack had beef and chicken. We sat and talked about the future of the camp. He didn't know where he would go after the camp was dissolved. He had another year left in the army and he wasn't sure if he would sign on for a few more years after that.

Back at the camp, Struppie was looking for Sue when I entered my Nissen hut. I patted him and told him that she was gone. There was very little to do at the post office, so I sat down to write a letter to Sue.