

EXTRA TRANSCRIPTION PASSAGES (ORTHOGRAPHIC)

TRANSCRIPTION PASSAGE K

‘Put the gun down,’ Nellie said. ‘We shall have a cup of tea.’

‘Yes,’ said the boy, ‘we have seen enough of rifles.’

Harry sat down, exhausted, on the sofa. Nellie recovered her presence of mind and went into the kitchen. It was about seven o’clock. She busied herself preparing the sandwiches. All the time, while she was doing the various things, she was paying attention to the man in the other room, not so much listening to what he said, as feeling the soft sound of his voice. She puckered up her mouth tighter, in an effort to concentrate. Rapidly and carelessly, she cut huge chunks of bread and spread them with margarine – there was no butter. She racked her brains for something else to give him – but she only had a pot of jam, and the larder was bare. Unable to conjure anything else up, she went into the sitting room carrying the wooden tray.

TRANSCRIPTION PASSAGE L

At last the talk dwindled. Harry relaxed, pulled himself together, and looked around. Again, he became aware of Nellie, silent and almost invisible in the corner of the room.

‘You can stay here, if you like,’ put in Jill, ‘the spare room is ready.’

‘If you are sure it is not troubling you too much,’ he said, his face shining with pleasure.

‘Oh, it is really no trouble at all,’ Nellie and Jill both exclaimed together.

Nellie disappeared upstairs to make up the bed. Jill was as pleased as if it were her own young brother back home from the war. It gave her just the same kind of gratification to wait on him, and run a bath, and so on. And Harry luxuriated in her sisterly attention. But it puzzled him slightly to know that Nellie was also silently attending to him. It was as if he had not really seen her. He felt he would still not recognize her if he passed her in the street.

TRANSCRIPTION PASSAGE M

That night Nellie dreamt vividly. She heard singing outside which she was unable to understand. It surrounded the house and penetrated the darkness, and made her weep. Nellie went out and suddenly realised it was a fox howling; she saw the creature looking bright yellow like corn, and went over to touch him. She stretched out her hand, but suddenly the animal bit her wrist, bounded away, and she felt the fox's brush across her face. It seared her skin, and she awoke with the pain, lying trembling, as if it were not a dream but reality.

Yet in the morning she only remembered it as a distant memory. She rose, tidied the cottage, and gave the chickens their grain. Jill rode into the village on her bicycle to try and buy some groceries. But, alas, thanks to the war, there was little food to buy. Harry came downstairs, washed himself and shaved, and stepped outside whilst the women were cooking breakfast. He saw everything and examined everything – his curiosity was insatiable.

TRANSCRIPTION PASSAGE N

'It's a funny, dilapidated old place,' Harry said to the girls, as he sat at breakfast. His eyes were wide open like a child's. He said little, but ate avidly. Nellie kept her face averted – something about the glint of the buttons on his khaki uniform reminded her of the fox in her dream.

During the day the women went about their business. In the morning, Harry checked the guns, and shot a rabbit, and a wild duck that was flying high towards the pool. These were great additions to the empty larder shelves. They felt that Harry had already earned his keep. However, he said nothing about leaving. In the afternoon he went to the village high street, and did not return till tea-time. He had the same alert look on his roundish face, as he hung his hat on a peg with a care-free gesture.

'Well, what am I going to do? At the Swan they've got 'flu, and at the Plough they've got officers staying, and all the private houses have corporals and privates billeted. So where am I going to find a place to stay?'

TRANSCRIPTION PASSAGE O

‘You can go on staying here, if you like, Harry,’ Jill offered. A smile, like a little flame, came over his face, suddenly and involuntarily.

‘You’re too good. You don’t want to be bothered with me, I’m sure.’

‘It’s no trouble, if you want to stay. It’s just like having my own brother here – he is about your age. It is a pleasure to have somebody in the place besides ourselves.’

‘Well then, I should love it, if you only let me pay my board and help with the work.’

One or two days passed, and Harry stayed on at the farm. Jill was quite charmed by him. Harry was so soft and gentle, courteous in his speech, not wanting to say much, preferring to hear what others had to say. He helped readily with the work, but did not interfere excessively. He loved being out alone with the gun in his hands, watching and satisfying his insatiable curiosity. And in particular he watched Nellie.