

So the four refugee-soldiers grew to understand one another, as brothers, and they lived in these wild hills in Greece, as I have told you.

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Times were when an undeniable craving for lights and music and the bustle of city streets and the liveness and laughter of women—a terrible loneliness drove them down from the hills, along the flat land and into Athens. Armed, uniformed Jerries and Eyeties always were about, in every street and cafe, of course. But they had to risk capture because of the great loneliness, you understand.

The four would stroll along the pavements, arms linked, the two on the outside twirling watch-chains, as is a Greek custom. Their hair was long and carefully oiled, their borrowed clothes were appropriate—that was all right—and the constant sun and the mountain winds had darkened their complexions.

Sometimes a visit to the picture-theatres, where the flickering fairy stories of our twentieth century gave a little peace.

They, the four refugee-soldiers, would pass from one Greek family to another—a day here, three days under a recommended roof four tram sections away, on again. And although food was becoming more and more scarce and the hand of famine was upon the land, somehow, oh somehow, these little people would scrape together sufficient bread and scraps and olives and boiled weeds to fill their guests' bellies.

And after the evening meal the four comrades would lie down upon the floor, and a little wine would be produced, and the mandolin and guitar would make music for them. And so they found the lights and sounds and love they had craved when far away in their mountain retreat.

Sometimes a cordon of German soldiers, heavily armed, ordered to shoot and kill upon suspicion, would be thrown round a block of Athens, and from house to house patrols would crash searching for concealed enemy soldiers or agents, and Greeks suspected of pro-British sympathies or hoarding. And every time the four managed to escape, fleeing from roof-top to roof-top, hiding under floors,

in attics, in cesspits and wells. The Jerries were cruel and hard and exacting in the cities. Oh yes.

Then the strain of the prison city would begin to tell upon them (especially upon two particular members of the little party), and the restlessness and fear was upon them again, and they would depart from Athens, and, walking by night, return once more to the solitude and security of the hills and little hamlets they knew.

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And, as the months and then the years went by, the four men learned of the guerrillas gathering in the hills, and of the Forces of the occupied nations rising against the German conquerors. Yet, somehow, between the four soldiers was a great friendship, a great understanding, a love beyond words, and they lived on together, as before, yet deep down within them feeling that the time of their comradeship was drawing to a close.

And back from the Russian Front winged Junkers 52—long black transport planes bearing hundreds, then thousands, of German wounded, smashed by bullet, shell, grenade, or mine, or crippled and in the agony of severe frostbite. They

