

Charlotte and the Avalanche of Hope

by evntho

At first the dot appeared as a single granule of coffee might in a jar of sugar. Edward Hall and his sister Charlotte sat and watched as it became two, then three, then four, until suddenly the whole thing turned into a rather large clump on the horizon.

The shape was undoubtedly a seafaring vessel and the first thing Charlotte said was, "Papa!"

Edward had grown tired of explaining to Charlotte that their Father had been captured by the German's and was after all a pilot, therefore would most likely return home by plane when the end of the war came about.

"Still it could be!" she said.

"My goodness how that child nurses hope," Edward's Grandad would often say, "were it not for her where indeed would this family be?"

Grandma, not prone to such idle-talk, would scold him, "There is a difference between realistic hopes Frederick," she'd say, "and foolish dreams turning into an avalanche of disappointment."

As the ship came closer, now the size of a generous daub of jam, even more boats appeared on the horizon. Allied gun-ships and supply boats most likely from Newfoundland, perhaps a sign the U-Boats had been destroyed or had returned to their homeland to salvage a crumbling German Initiative. Unlikely though, as it was August of 1942. The U-boats had sunk almost at will for the last few months or so.

Looking at his sister now with anger boiling over in his expression, unable to stomach that level of optimism any longer, Edward said, "Maybe Dad will never come home."

"You shouldn't say such things, Dad would be very disappointed in you," she cried out.

Then she stood up, brushed the loose grass from off her skirt, brightened and said, "I'm going to tell everyone and we'll prepare a party for him."

"Charlotte would you just stop and have a listen to yourself," he said.

"I bet you anything that he's putting his things in his bag this very minute preparing for dock," she said, then ran off toward the house; a little sea-side cottage, red with white trim doors and windows.

Edward watched her go and as he did his heart jumped, not with the anticipation of his Fathers return but with the smile his sister was about to give their fading Grandad. There he'd be in his favorite chair with his ear to the radio, a sudden look of surprise washing over him as Charlotte come running into the house proclaiming her father's arrival, the boats Edward and her had seen, the preparations they'd have to make.

To see his Grandad's face, lit up like a Christmas Tree, watching in delight as this avalanche of hope rushed in from the terrible bleakness that was encroaching all around them. How could Edward miss such a thing? He stood up and ran for the house as fast as he could.

The answer was that he could not, would not, not for all the preserves in England.

