**BSH 6**

**SOMETHING IN THE DARK**

Mary’s niece Glenda said for the third time “You have no idea what it is like here when there is a power cut, we were in the dark for three hours, it was terrible, we could not go out as there were no street lights.”

Glenda started to repeat it all again, Mary interrupted her.

“I’m sorry Glenda there is someone at the door I must go.”

It was a lie but Glenda moans about everything for her a broken fingernail is a major catastrophe. Mary went back into the sitting room and picked up her knitting. Stephan, her husband of fifty years was sitting, with his eyes closed listening to Chopin on the radio. She smiled he was still a handsome man despite the few grey hairs and a few lines on his face. She thought about her niece saying you have no idea what it is like during a power cut. No Glenda, she thought you have no idea, remembering the war time blackout, not just three hours but all night. She remembered the night she bumped into Stephan, quite literally. It was during the blackout in 1943 she had her torch and she did not have far to go, to save the batteries she had the torch switched off as she neared home. Turning the corner Mary walked into something solid and dropped her torch. The ‘something solid’ grunted in a foreign language. Panic set in was this a fifth columnist, a spy or worse an enemy parachutist. A heavily accented voice said “I am sorry, please can you tell me where number 10, Sebastopol Terrace is”

Having found her torch its shielded light showed a R.A.F. uniform. There had been talk of the enemy disguising themselves as nuns but not as British airman. Before she could say anything he said

“I am looking for the house of Mrs Sampson.”

Mary knew Sarah Sampson had let a room to a Polish refugee, said “This way” and led him to number 10. Where there was a lot of music and singing, Sarah opened the door and Mary’s unknown airman was welcomed in Polish and with much laughter. The officer looked at Mary and pointing to the airman said.

“This is Stephan thank you for rescuing him when he was lost, he will never live this down as he is our navigator.”

Mary smiled “It was not a problem” Turning to Stephan said “I hope you are better at navigating your plane.” After more laughter she left

The next day Mary went to the lunch time concert in the town hall she was not surprised to see the group of Polish airmen she met last night as the programme was Chopin. At the end of the concert and with calls from his friends that hopefully we would not get lost in daylight Stephan wanted to marry as soon as possible. Although neither said it, both thought they should grab happiness now and not wait as no one knew what tomorrow would bring. Mary wore her best skirt and matching jacket, there was no spare coupons for a fancy dress. No one in the family had a wedding dress that Mary could alter to fit her. In the old tradition, ‘the something old’ was her shoes, ‘the something new’ was the blouse,’ ‘the something borrowed’ was her mother’s gold pendant and chain, ‘the something blue’ was her new blue blouse. At the register office her mother wiped away the odd tear or two but it all went smoothly. The reception was at her mother’s house, food rationing meant no lavish wedding breakfast but all the friends and family contributed to the food. A traditional wedding cake was out of the question a small cake sat underneath a dummy cardboard ‘cake’ that looked good in the photos. The airmen who were able to attend were cheerful making lots of comments in Polish that Stephan refused to translate. Well! Not until much later on their one night in a hotel honeymoon.

Mary picked up her knitting and sighed thinking about those days long ago, when she and Stephan fell in love and married. Some said it was too quick and would never last but last it did, they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary a month ago. The music ended and Stephan opened his eyes, saw his wife smiling and said.

“What are you thinking about?”

“How we met all those years ago in the dark”