

Roses and Thorns

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Actually my Mum wrote this and she wanted me to type it out on the computer for her and I haven't finished yet and we are getting a new computer and I don't wanna start writing it out all over again so I'll put it on here so I can save it.

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It was a lovely spring day in England, the year was 1944. Eleanor Huband was staying at her mother's house. It was hot in the front bedroom.

Eleanor had been in labour for hours now; at last she gave birth to a baby girl weighing 3lb. The baby looked very small, and Eleanor was worried because she wasn't breathing. The doctor eventually got her to breathe, much to Eleanor's relief.

Eleanor had one daughter now, it was several hours later that another little girl arrived, she was smaller than the first, and stillborn.

"Get ready for a surprise" said the doctor. "I think there is another baby to come."

Eventually Eleanor's third baby arrived, she looked a little bigger than the first born, and weighed 3½lb, although she was small she looked healthy.

The two surviving babies were named Janette and Jennifer. They were put into a makeshift cot for the time being. A large drawer had been taken out of the dressing table.

A cot had been ordered, but being wartime, it was taking longer to be delivered. Also the babies had arrived a little earlier, as most multiple births usually do.

Because one of the babies was still born, Eleanor would refer to them as her twins.

The first to be born Janette, had a lot of dark hair, Jennifer on the other hand was nearly bald. What little hair she did have was fair.

Eleanor was so exhausted; she had a quick look at her two surviving infants and slipped into a deep sleep.

Eleanor's husband was in the Fleet Air Arm and he was informed of the birth of his daughters and was given leave.

He first saw his two little girls asleep in the drawer. He was amazed at how small they were.

Eleanor's mother came into the bedroom to make sure that Eleanor and her two granddaughters were all right, and she was pleased that Eleanor was getting a bit stronger. She had been worried about her for a few days but now she seemed to be eating better.

Eleanor was advised by the doctor to bottle feed her babies. He decided that Eleanor wasn't well enough and breast-feeding would be too much for her.

Eleanor's mother helped look after the babies for a while, she had brought up eight of her own, four boys and four girls. Most of them had grown up now.

Eleanor's parents still had two children at home. Her daughter Gina was 15 and her son Ron was 13. Gina was very excited to have the two babies in the house; she loved to help out with them as much as she could.

Ron was also very interested in his new nieces, but he wasn't too keen on holding them though. They seemed too fragile to him, he told his friends all about them though.

In 1944, the war was still on, Britain was fighting against Germany, because they lived about 22 miles from London, sometimes there would be quite a lot of planes flying overhead.

Occasionally, instead of dropping bombs on London, which happened to be their target, the bombs would be dropped near to where Eleanor and her family lived.

Eleanor was fed up with the Air Raid sirens and the false alarms. One day Eleanor was bathing the twins when an Air Raid siren went off.

Eleanor's mother tried to insist that Eleanor went to the shelter with the rest of the family, But Eleanor

replied "No Mum, it will only be another false alarm. The babies will be better off in the house than in that draughty, cold air raid shelter."

Eleanor's Mother, Father and two younger children went reluctantly without Eleanor and the babies. It wasn't long before Eleanor realised that this time it was a false alarm. The planes were loud and she could hear explosions all around her. Eleanor didn't dare go outside; instead she grabbed her two babies out of the bath, wrapped a towel around them and sat under the table clutching at them for dear life. She wasn't sure how safe it was under there but she felt a little safer.

To Eleanor it seemed like hours before the noise and flashes finally died down. Eleanor realised it can't have been all that long, but when you feel as though you and your babies could be killed any minute time dragged.

When they thought it was safe to do so, Eleanor's family came back into the house; they looked very pale and shaken. It was dark outside, so it was difficult to tell just how much damage had been done. Eleanor's Dad Charles left the house when he knew everyone was all right. He said he just had to go out and see if he could help, because he thought some people must have been killed or injured. It was a terrible time for Charles, something he never wanted to live through again. A lot of people were standing around, not knowing what to do. Others were organising search parties for the people who had been trapped in the bombed houses.

Charles could hear people screaming and babies crying. In one air raid shelter just up the road from them, there was a family with small children who Charles knew very well. It was a shock for him to find out that their shelter had a direct hit. Everyone in the family, parents and 3 small children had died. Ambulances and Fire Engines were now arriving. The injured were taken to hospital as quickly as they could get them out. In many cases it took a long time because they were trapped.

The rubble had to be moved first. They had to be very careful how they moved it or they could have been killed. Also there was a possibility that a bomb might not have exploded, and could be very dangerous.

One woman was screaming, her two-year-old son and four-year-old daughter were trapped under a pile of bricks. Very carefully Charles and several other men removed the bricks to find the little girl dead, but the two year old son was still alive, he looked in a bad way and was rushed to hospital where he slowly recovered.

Eleanor's father was in shock; Eleanor made him a cup of tea. He had been up nearly all night. He had helped to take the injured to hospital. Most of the dead had been taken away and identified.

Eleanor thought of her babies. What a terrible time it was to have children. During wartime you don't know how long they will survive. They could be killed any day with the air raids.

Eleanor's mother was also called Eleanor but for some reason everyone always called her Dolly. Eleanor wasn't sure why this was but she thought it could have been because she was small.

Gina loved to take her small nieces for walks in their twin pram. She was proud of them and thought it was quite a novelty-taking twin out in the pram. Gina was a help to Eleanor, and took them out often so Eleanor could get some rest.

Eleanor's husband George came home on leave, he told Eleanor that he was being moved to Liverpool for a while.

Eleanor had been staying at her parent's house in Kent with the twins. They were about a month old now. Eleanor decided she would like to move to Liverpool with him, because of the war it would be a long time before she saw him again if she stayed in Kent.

During the war it was difficult to find rental accommodation. George decided it would be nice to have

Eleanor and the twins in Liverpool. While he was there the next weekend he decided to knock on doors trying to find lodges for his wife and two daughters. There weren't many people that were keen on taking in a woman with two babies.

At last he came across a nice lady called Agnes and her husband Harry. The house that Harry and Agnes lived in was quite small. It only had two bedrooms, two small living rooms and a kitchen with a coal range, which heated the water. Agnes had a gas cooker to cook on, which was quite a modern one. At the end of the road was a view of the Gas Works. George didn't think Eleanor would be very impressed by that.

Agnes though, was a very nice lady and was quite happy to have Eleanor and the twins lodge with them, if George thought it was suitable for them.

George and Eleanor arranged to move into Liverpool in a few weeks time. They didn't have a car and arranged to travel by train. The twin pram was quite big and had storage compartments underneath. Eleanor packed nappies, baby clothes, bottles, powdered milk and everything else she needed for the babies in that part of the pram. Then with the suitcases and other things they walked $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the train station. When they arrived they decided to have a quick cup of tea at the station Cafe while they waited for the train. Quite a few people came to look at Janette and Jennifer.

The train arrived on time, they were asked if they could travel in the guards Compartment with the children in the pram. Eleanor was happy to do so, because the children could sleep on the way in the pram.

There was a stop on the way, Eleanor was tired and George asked if there was enough time to get off the train and buy some refreshments. The guard assured him he had. Eleanor was horrified when she realised the train was gradually moving away from the station. She could see George refreshments at hand, running as fast as he could. But try as he may, he couldn't catch up with the train. Eleanor was depressed; here she was with two small babies and no money because George was taking care of all the money. Also she had no idea where to go when she reached Liverpool.

Eventually the train pulled to a stop at Liverpool Station. The guard helped Eleanor off with the pram and the entire luggage. Eleanor explained the situation to him. The guard handed her over to a Policewoman. The Policewoman was sympathetic. She took Eleanor to the Station cafe and brought her tea and cakes. Eleanor was assured that there would be another train coming soon, in about an hour. If George wasn't on that one, they would take her to the Police Station and they would arrange for somewhere for her and the girls to stay for the night. It was a great relief for Eleanor, when a very apologetic George arrived on the next train.

George said the guard had assured him, he wouldn't let the train leave without him but the guard had either forgot or thought George was all ready on the train. George has been worried about Eleanor, because he knew it wouldn't be easy on her own with the children. He also realised she didn't have any money.

George and Eleanor had to walk quite a distance with the pram, to their lodgings.

It was getting quite late by the time Eleanor and George arrived. Agnes didn't mind at all. "Come in George, this must be wife Eleanor, let me have a look at the babies, they are lovely." Agnes decided that Jennifer looked a lot like her daughter when she was a baby, probably because she didn't have much hair.

“How many children have you got?” Asked Eleanor. “Just one daughter.” Replied Agnes “She lives in Scotland with her husband Edwin and two little boys. James is eight and David is six. We don’t see much of them, perhaps when the war is over we will see them more.” Agnes pointed to a photograph of two fair-haired boys and a dog.

“The last time we saw them was about a year ago. We are hoping to see them again at Christmas. If you would like to bath the babies, I have a tin bath in the kitchen and I will get you something to eat while you do that.” Agnes finished.

Eleanor and George had a rest for about half an hour before the twins began to wake up. Eleanor gave the girls a bottle; Janette went back to sleep in the pram so Eleanor bathed Jennifer.

Jennifer was restless and cried for about an hour. Janette went back to sleep in the pram after her bath. It was about an hour before Jennifer settled down to sleep again.