

Extract from  
**None Stood Taller**

“Spare an old man his delusion, Mrs Heywood! And it will help if you would call me Winston.”

“Lily, please call me Lily.”

“Nothing will give me greater pleasure, Lily. You’re from London, I believe, which part?”

“Stockwell, and then Stepney, within the sound of St Mary-Le-Bow bells.”

“And proud of it, I would wager, and so you should be! Nobody has suffered more at the hands of the Luftwaffe than the magnificent people of East London. So many have lost homes and loved ones, but their spirit is unbreakable. They are an inspiration to the entire country. Have you lost anyone, Lily?”

“I lost my house in Stepney, and I lost my best friend and her two young boys. They killed my brother at Dunkirk, and my husband was on board HMS Hood. So yes, I’ve had my share of heartache.”

“I am truly sorry, my dear, you have suffered more than your share, but I can see it has not broken your spirit.”

“It’s been hard, sir, believe me. I have my difficult days, but it just makes me want to fight back; how dare that monster destroy my home and my friends and family? Hitler made a terrible mistake when he thought he could break the British people. We didn’t give up in the East End during the Blitz, it just made us more determined to fight back. The more they destroyed our homes, and killed our loved ones, the more determined we became. I saw it every night during the Blitz; they’ll never break the spirit of the British people.”

I hesitated then, realising I had allowed myself to get carried away, not appropriate at the dining table.

“I apologise, Caroline, I shouldn’t let my emotions get the better of me like that.”

Winston put his knife and fork down forcibly against his plate, the sudden noise making us all look up with a start.

“*Never* apologise for the pain that monster has inflicted upon you, Lily!” he said, in a raised voice. “Hitler has unleashed a mighty spirit; I can see it sitting here before me now. *We will* be victorious, I promise you, and it will be because of people like you, Lily. They will never defeat a nation whose spirit is unbreakable! If I were you, Edward, I wouldn’t let this woman out of my sight!”