

De Grey motioned to Margot and, presumably, the decrypt she'd just carried over. "De Wilde cracked the cypher. Haven't had time yet to apply it to whatever has come in since."

The Director of the Intelligence Division—fondly referred to as DID by everyone under his command—sent her an approving smile. "Well done, Margot." He blinked a few times and moved his gaze to take in de Grey and Culbreth. "Will you be leaving, then? Knox was just behind me, and Adcock too."

Culbreth nodded and stood, placing his hat over his blond hair in the same motion. De Grey smoothed his tormented locks back down to hide the hours of frustration his fingers had left in them. "I need to speak to Dilly first, but then I shall, yes."

Hall arched his brows her way. "Margot?"

"I'll wait until my mother arrives before I go." Otherwise she might miss her on the walk to their flat, and then Maman would worry all day. No matter how many times she'd made the trek on her own, no matter how old she got, still her mother worried.

Her prerogative, Maman claimed.

A useless argument, Margot knew.

"Very good." Hall moved away a step, then pivoted back again. "I have an appointment first thing this morning with Lady Hambro and a new recruit. If by chance they arrive before the secretaries, could you direct them to my office?"

"Of course." Margot smiled at her superior and then kept it in place as her colleagues followed him out—Culbreth apparently aimed at the stairs, de Grey turning the opposite direction, toward Room 53, which Dilly Knox had claimed as his domain. Among the first cryptographers to be recruited to Room 40, Knox had already been firmly established here when Margot arrived. Though absent-minded about practical things, he had a head for mathematics. Margot had liked him from the start.

Silence fell. Crystalline, perfect, and soon gone as the pneumatic tubes delivered another passel of papers with a *thunk*. Pulling in a long breath, Margot took a moment to wish they'd finished the codebreaking an hour earlier. She would have let herself into Knox's chambers and made use of the bath he'd had installed. The very thought of gallons of warm water surrounding her was enough to make her shoulders sag. The flat she shared with her mother had a private bath, but the room was always frigid, and there was never sufficient hot water.

She fished the papers out of the tube and sent the holder back down to the basement, where a team was constantly at work typing up the intercepted telegrams from Germany and sending them wherever in the intelligence department they needed to go. A glance at the latest collection told her that if she sat down to get started on it, she'd still be at it come noon.

Tossing them instead onto another desk, Margot stood, stretching as she did so, and wandered to the window. She was more accustomed to this view