

Daisy and the Unknown Warrior by Tony Bradman

Extract from Chapter 1

"Right, last one to school doesn't get any tea tonight," said Daisy. She ran down the street but not too fast. She let her younger brothers beat her to the school gates.

"We're the winners!" said William, out of breath and laughing. "So it's no tea for you tonight, Daisy!"

"Oh well, I'll just have to go hungry, won't I?" said Daisy with a shrug. "Now you'd better run along and line up with your class."

William grinned and dashed through the school gates. They called it the playground, but it was just a courtyard covered in black tarmac. The school was a tall, dirty, sooty red-brick building with two doors; one for boys, one for girls. Children were lined up in front of them, waiting to go in.

"I don't want you to be hungry, Daisy," Albert said softly as he slipped his little hand into hers. "I'll share my tea with you tonight."

"Thanks, Albert," said Daisy, ruffling his hair. "That's sweet of you, but I was just joking. You'd better run along and line up too."

Daisy looked over at her brothers, smiling to herself at how much they looked like Dad ... Thinking of Dad made her smile vanish.

As she went into the classroom and sat at her desk, all her old sad feelings flooded in. Dad had been dead for two years, and she was more upset than ever about it. She was angry too. Why had he joined the Army and gone off to fight in such a stupid war? He should have stayed at home with her and Mum and William and Albert ... Daisy knew, though, that couldn't have happened. She'd been just five years old when the war began in 1914, and she didn't really remember those days. But Mum had told her what that time was like.

Most people were excited about the war, and lots of men were keen to fight the Germans. Dad wanted to join up as soon as possible. Mum had been expecting Albert, though, and she'd made Dad wait. In the end, Dad signed up in the summer of 1915, and from then on they didn't see him much.

Daisy remembered the last time he'd come home on leave, in 1918. He was thin and very tired. Three weeks later they were told he was missing, presumed dead.

Like thousands of other soldiers in the war, Dad's body had never been found. So they'd never had a funeral for him, and to this day they didn't know where his body was. Daisy often wished they could have said goodbye to him somehow ...