



Firestorm Survival

Joan Woolley

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As the Second World War comes to an end, two brave young German women forge a bond of friendship among the ruins. Ilse, an auxiliary Red Cross nurse and Michelle, a doctor, meet on the night when Allied bombs destroy their city and are separated when the Red Army sweeps across their country. In their time together they witness the terrible ravages of war, tend the ordinary civilians wounded, bereaved and mind-damaged by the raids and forage for food in the countryside. When they are forced to flee, they hide like animals in a badger set and a turnip heap, facing constant danger and hardship. Even when the war is over there are wounds to be healed and fresh battles to be fought - this time without each other. In her new life, Ilse wonders if she and Michelle will survive the peace, and if their paths will ever cross again. Firestorm Survival is dedicated to people of every race whose lives have been caught up in the whirlwind of war and politics but who have survived against overwhelming odds. Many of us have been privileged to know people who lived through the tumultuous times during and after the Second World War. Sadly their number grows fewer. Many never told their full story but years later, a sentence here, a memory there; snippets of conversation recalled still reverberate. Mercifully for some the mind blotted out that which was too painful, whilst for others it was disturbing to talk at length about the past. They are men and women we see in the street carrying their groceries home; the man with the white cane and empty coat sleeve sitting on the park bench. Some occurrences in the book did happen, but the characters and places are entirely fictitious. Firestorm Survival weaves together the fragments of several people's experiences to illustrate the fragility and strength of human endurance and sanity when powers beyond our control dictate our actions. Above all, it is a tribute to those who lost everything and survived to enjoy a return to more peaceful times, harbouring no bitterness against any race or country. Author, Joan Woolley, is the daughter of an RAF officer and Dresden firestorm survivor.

Excerpt

"The enemy at the door would wait no longer. The wooden planks were bulging as heavy implements were repeatedly battered against it. Herr Bertold opened the top portion. A boot kicked in the bottom half. The room darkened and yellow and blue danced before their eyes as forked lightning sped to the ground behind five men...They wore tin helmets and jodhpurs and reeked of horses, sweat and ill will. Rifle poised, the bow-legged leader strode across the room."

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