



# Write your own Historical Fiction 2025

Villain  
by Annabel Convy

My steps echo through the silence as I walk the hallways, heavy boots rhythmically thumping against the cold, stone floor. Reaching the bathroom, I open the door and make a beeline for the sink, desperate to wash the dirt and grime from my hands. The water is cold, sending a jolt across my skin as the dirt slowly melts from my fingertips, falling onto the pale marble below. I sigh and briefly look up, stepping to inspect the bruising on my face. Kaleidoscopes of blue and grey paint my cheekbones, the artwork of a prisoner who'd attempted to run. He'd fought fiercely for a minute before I managed to fully grab him. I saw the fear in his eyes, the way it so clearly bled through him. He shook in my grasp, chapped lips aching to scream, beg. He was pleading with me to let him go. It shook me, the desperation. Most screamed and protested. This, the silence, the freezing, the surrender; it's rare. His life was in my hands, every inch of him begging to be freed. I loosened my grip momentarily and saw ~~his~~<sup>a</sup> flash ~~of light~~ in his eyes. It sunk through his irises and into the foundations of his existence, stirring something so wonderful, so beautiful inside of him. Hope. Which was why, when I made eye contact with a commanding officer, it pained me so much. I could not help him, I could not let him go. I tightened my grip once again, and watched as the brightness slowly faded from his eyes. It wasn't instant, almost as if he wanted to wait until the very last moment to admit that it was over. When I handed him over, allowing the other officer to grab him, he knew he would not be saved. The hope, it drained from him in one final wave.

The gun was placed to his head and I could not bare to look.

A moment later, he was dead.

My hands have now gone numb and I quickly pull them from the water's painful grasp. My eyes, however, don't leave the mirror, staring intently at the man before me. I haven't truly taken the time to look at my reflection since I joined the army. Only in brief, passing moments. My jaw has widened slightly and my hair flops forwards easily at the front. It's slightly darker now and remains in a permanent state of being subtly tangled. I look older.

It's been 2 years since I joined the army. 2 months since I became an SS guard.

Momentarily, I allow myself to think back to who I was before the war. Innocent, unprepared. I liked writing and music and the smell of whisky. Easy, content. I almost envy that boy. The bruises ache slightly and my jaw hardens, thinking of the man.

~~Would~~

would the younger me have let him go?

No.

I am a Soldier.

An asset.

A Nazi.

I can not afford to dwell on that.

My gaze falls to the Nazi symbol that lays on the arm of my shirt. A symbol of loyalty. Pure, unending.

A symbol of power.

Of freedom.

Of purity.

Of strength.

... but that is not how I feel. Nausea rises steadily from my stomach.

I am a soldier.

I follow orders.

I do not question.

I am here to serve my country, to protect those who can not protect themselves, to bring pride to those I love.

I smile, absentmindedly spinning my wedding ring on my finger; my mind drifting to my wife.

Dimpled smile, auburn hair, green eyes.

slow mornings, soft nights. The slight crinkle of her nose with every laugh. Tired eyes, kind soul, beautiful mind. The slight rasp to her voice and her distinct smell of almonds and cinnamon.

I smile sadly and feel my heart begin to constrict in my chest. It aches, throbs, a lump forming in my throat.

04<sup>th</sup> December, 1943.

That was the day I lost her.

The war had already been raging on for 4 years. The allies were staying strong, and the USAAF had organised an attack. The bomb was dropped without a second thought.

It fell over Leipzig, the city in which she was living at the time. I only found out 12 days later.

The lump in my throat grows, beginning to feel like stone. Hands shake. Anger. I claw through me, dripping through my body and infiltrating every crevice in a desperate attempt to justify the hatred that courses through my blood.

American dogs.

pigs. vermin. Animals. I need them to suffer, the same way in which I need oxygen to breathe. It pulses through me in violent waves.

The rush, the adrenaline. It scares me, reminds me of the hurt I am capable of.

I am a soldier.

An asset.

A Nazi.

Yet, amongst all my fury, the very admittance of that makes me ill. But, how can it? I chose to be here, to serve this cause.

The conflict inside me becomes overwhelming and I grip the marble below me, knuckles bleeding white. My neck bends awkwardly, head dipping as I try to re-gain my breathing. I notice the blood staining my trousers and my head spins.

I think back to the man from before. His pleading eyes and silent desperation flashing through my mind.

I wonder if he had a wife.

The thought makes me pause.

Did he?

... No. He couldn't have ...

I couldn't do something like that.

To take someone's husband, child, sibling?

I couldn't.

They took her from me.

I will not accept the thought that I might've taken him from her.

... but, regardless, I could've. And not just him.

I've killed many, and I'm part of an army that killed many & more.

My soul, the very foundation of the pillars of my existence, is dripping in red.

How many lives did I take?

Wives, daughters, sons?

I called the Americans 'vermin' but they were only following orders, as was I. How do you kn-

No. Stop.

My ears ring.

Screams, deafening, silent.

I shake my head, trying to rid my brain of the sound but it only angers them.

Them.

People. The lives I took.

Necessarily, I remind myself. They were the enemy, a threat, a danger.

... is that what they thought about my wife?

... is that what they think about me?

My breathing quickens, mouth going dry. Air forces its way down my throat and into my burning lungs. The room seems to feel smaller, walls slowly closing in. My mind aches.

I blink harshly, but am only met with a blur of grey and white. I can't think, can't breathe. Reality blurs.

Breathe, breathe, br-

Almonds. The smell hits me immediately, soothing my panic and filing the edges of my guilt.

I sigh, the sound piercing through my spiralling like a scream in a forest of ~~shattering~~ fragile tranquility. Arms envelop my waist, soft and warm, thumbs rubbing gently over my bloodied uniform. A body presses into the back of mine, completely engulfing me in it's endless warmth. I still, waiting for the second smell to hit me, to let me know that it's

her.

Cinnamon. It crashed over me, the love, the trust, the safety. I lean back into the embrace, visions of warmth and comfort residing behind my eyelids. Her movements are slow, calculated.

A kiss on my shoulder, the base of my neck, my throat, slowly trailing upwards. My heart swells in my chest, the rhythmic thumping against the bones that so cruelly cage it within my body giving me a falsified essence of hope that, for a moment, everything might be okay.

Her kisses burn into my skin, the pain welcomed in merciful distraction. They speak softly, murmuring sweet nothings in a language only I, entrapped in my prison of disillusion and ignorance, can ~~hear~~ understand.

I open my eyes to catch a glimpse of her, maybe. Her soft features, freckled shoulders, pale pink lips.

Instead, however, I'm immediately met with the symbol <sup>on</sup> my uniform. Now, somehow bigger than the last time I saw.



This time, it overwhelms me. The fear, the guilt.

The kisses turn harsher. Teeth meet my neck, my jaw,  
my earlobe's biting harshly.

Head ringing.  
This isn't real.  
This isn't real.

Tears blur my vision.  
A whisper, a word.

"Villain."

Spoken so lovingly in a voice held so dearly I  
would know it ~~in~~ in any lifetime, in any body.

I crumble, knees dropping to the stone of the  
aching, waiting floor.

one.  
two.  
three.

The first tear falls.  
Her arms let go.

I cry, begging internally for it all to just stop.

Villain?

How can it be so simply defined? It can't be  
contained, confined, constricted to just a soul. A  
person.

How can I, in all that I am, be the defining factor in what a villain may be?

I am not merciless. I do not enjoy violence. I do not find it fulfilling. I am a piece, a pawn, following orders. I am balanced.

This symbol, these scars. They're mosaics of battles won, of power and protection.

Not of suffering or injustice.

○ I had to. Those words ring in my head.

I had to.

I had to.

I had to.

... but did I?

Stop.

○ Nicht Sprechen!

Don't speak.

Alle Mann in Position!

All men in position.

Feuer Frei!

Fire at will.

I am not a villain.

All those I harmed, laying in\* the cold, endless

earth with nailed coffin lids.

I am not a villain.

The Attack on ~~Warsaw~~ Warsaw  
200,000 deaths.

The Battle of France  
450,000 deaths

Dunkirk  
68,000 deaths.

I am not a villain.

Families weeping for those they love, whose eyes  
are forever glazed over with the gentle mercy of  
death.

I am not a villain.

People begging to be heard.  
ostracised, Segregated-

I am not a villain.

I repeat it like a mantra.

It plays through my head until my breathing  
slows and the last tears fall. They dance down  
my cheeks, drying on the surface of my lips in  
beautiful silence. My fists unclench, shoulders  
relaxing. slowly, I become aware of my  
surroundings. The floor, grounding, real, right.

The remains of tears on my tongue, aching my teeth.

Then, the noise. It's subtle. The sound of marching outside, of begging, of orders.

Breathe.

I am not a villain.

The general's shout, voices rough and harsh.

'Achtung!'

○ 'Hände hoch!'

I am not a villain.

'Keine Gnade!'

'Arbeit macht frei!'

'Kein Entkommen!'

I am not a villain.

○ I pause, I think.

Dread, guilt, hurt.

I realise ~~no~~<sup>no</sup> soldier ever to have been, ever  
~~thought~~<sup>thought</sup> the problem was something that  
they did.