



GUY WALTERS

THE TRAITOR

He had the courage to betray his country

About the Book

It is 1943. British SOE agent Captain John Lockhart is in Crete, fighting with the Resistance. Captured by the Germans, Lockhart faces a stark choice, between death and betrayal of his country. Concealing his true motives, Lockhart makes a bargain: in return for the life of his imprisoned wife, he will work with the Germans. When his mission is revealed, Lockhart is stunned. He is to lead a unit of the Waffen SS made up of British fascists and renegades culled from POW camps: the British Free Corps, Lockhart takes command, but he has an audacious plan to free his wife and other innocent victims of the war – whatever the personal cost.

About the Author

Guy Walters is the author of six books on the Second World War, including *Berlin Games*. A former journalist on *The Times*, he writes widely on historical topics for the national press. He lives in Wiltshire with his wife, the author Annabel Venning, and their two children.

For more information on Guy Walters and his books, visit his website at www.guywalters.com

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THE TRAITOR

Guy Walters

headline

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Epub ISBN: 9781446436165

Version 1.0

www.randomhouse.co.uk

TRANSWORLD PUBLISHERS
61-63 Uxbridge Road, London W5 5SA
A Random House Group Company
www.rbooks.co.uk

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First published in 2002
by HEADLINE BOOK PUBLISHING

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

All characters in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. Although the BFC did exist, the details presented in *The Traitor* are fictional.

ISBN 0 7553 0056 4

This book is for
ANNABEL

Acknowledgements

FOR HISTORICAL ADVICE and guidance, I must thank Adrian Weale. He has taken my appropriation – and subsequent subversion – of the subject in very good spirit, and I am very grateful.

For medical matters, I turned to Dr Peter Kyle, and his daughter, Vanessa Andreae. They were both exceedingly helpful and allowed their brains to be picked without the slightest complaint.

His son-in-law, Tobyn Andreae, was immeasurably helpful in matters of plot. He knows how thankful I hope to be.

I could not have had a finer and more rigorous editor than Marion Donaldson. She must take enormous credit for any enjoyment the reader may gain over these few hundred pages. I would recommend her to any author.

My agent, Tif Loehnis at Janklow & Nesbit, is a wonder. She has exhibited enormous faith and kindness, and has set me on a path that I hope to be very long. She is worth every percentage point.

My parents, Martin and Angela Walters, my brother Dominic, and my parents-in-law, Richard and Venetia Venning, have given me so much of the confidence and support needed to carry out such a venture. I can never fully repay them.

Finally, and most importantly, there is the person to whom this book is dedicated.

Prologue

June 1986

HUGH WAS AWAY, and there was nobody to help get the children up. That sounded like Simon shouting upstairs, no doubt being picked upon by Giles, his twin. Louise would still be in bed. Only twelve, she had already reached that adolescent stage of permanent indolence. This morning was going to be a shocker, she could just feel it – they had to leave in an hour. Roll on the spring term, when they'd all be back at school.

'What?' she shouted up the stairs.

'Giles is throwing all my soldiers out the window,' came a sobbed reply.

'Giles! GILES! Stop that! Now get dressed and one of you go and wake up your sister.'

She went into the kitchen and filled up the kettle. All her actions at this time were automatic. Put teabags in pot. Open fridge, get out milk and orange juice. Put on table. Go to cupboard next to sink. Get out five bowls and five plates. Stop – no Hugh. Only get four. Lay table. Get cornflakes out of cupboard under clock. Look at time. Half past seven. Put cornflakes on table. Look out of window. Watch soldiers raining down from boys' bedroom. Ignore it and look at paper. Hear post arrive. Go to hall, shout at children, pick up post.

She rifled through them. Nothing interesting – a newsletter from her Oxford college, British Gas, a couple of letters for Hugh, and then, curiously, a final envelope

addressed to 'Miss Amy Lockhart'. That was her maiden name. There was a badly printed insignia on the top left corner and the words 'On Her Majesty's Service' running along the bottom in maroon. It was probably from the taxman. She took them into the kitchen.

The kettle had boiled, and she poured the water into the teapot. As it brewed, she studied the envelope. The insignia seemed to be of an eagle on top of an anchor, crossed out by what might have been a couple of swords. Not very Inland-Revenue-ish, she thought. It was quite bulky, and the envelope could barely contain whatever was stuffed into it. She poured herself a cup of tea and sat down at the table.

A huge crash came from above, from the boys' bedroom. A moment's silence and then some really loud screaming. Resigned, she went upstairs to find Simon sitting on the floor in tears, next to a knocked-over chest of drawers. Giles was reading an Asterix book on his bed, still wearing his pyjamas, looking the innocent.

'Giles pushed me into the chest because I tried to stop him throwing my soldiers out the window.'

'Giles? Did you?'

'No, Mummy - I've been reading, I promise.'

'I don't believe you for a second. If you don't both get dressed and downstairs in five minutes, I'll make sure your father slippers the pair of you when he gets back.'

She stared at them. Giles stared impudently back, but reluctantly got up as slowly as possible. She left the room and went across the corridor and pushed open Louise's door. The curtains were drawn and Louise was still in bed.

'Come on, young madam, time to get up,' she said as she opened the curtains.

'But Mummy,' came a voice from under the blankets, 'we don't have to get up for ages. I can miss breakfast if I want.'

'No you won't.'

'But Daddy lets me when you're away.'

'No he doesn't.'

'He does.'

'Well, he shouldn't. Now get up.'

A surly grunt. With that, Amy pulled off the sheets and blankets with one vigorous tug.

'Mummy! What are you doing? How dare you? Stop being such a fascist!'

Amy paused.

'What did you call me?'

'A fascist.'

'And what is a "fascist" exactly?'

'Why, don't you know?'

'No, I don't. I'd like you to tell me.'

Louise stayed silent.

'Go on,' Amy urged. 'What's a fascist, Louise?'

'Give it up, it's just a word.'

'No, I won't. Come on.'

'Well, it just means that you're really bossy and stuff.'

'Does it now?'

'Yeah.'

'Don't ever call me a fascist again, do you hear? You've obviously no idea what it means. I'd rather you called me a bossy cow than called me that.'

Louise went silent, shocked by her mother's intensity.

'OK, OK - sorry.'

'Good - now get up.'

Amy went back downstairs. Fascist indeed. Where had she got that from? Presumably they all called their teachers that.

She sat down and picked up the envelope. She slit it open with a spoon handle. It was from the Ministry of Defence - so that was the insignia. There were at least a dozen sheets of neatly typed paper. Even before she read it, she knew what it would be about.

Dear Miss Lockhart,

I am writing to you concerning your father, Captain

John Lockhart . . .

Her eyes started to fill. She had waited nearly a quarter of a century for this, and it was hard to believe it had arrived. She looked out the window. Another soldier fell down.

August 1934

The graffiti makes it clear they are not wanted. 'Smash Fascists!' 'Get Rid of Blackshirt Thugs!' If he were alone, he would be feeling scared, but with his band of brothers he feels strong, ready to give these Jew bastards what-for. They have it coming, that scum, they really do, taking away their jobs and charging all those high prices. They're out for revenge, and some Hebrew blood will be spilt tonight.

And what a lovely warm night for it. They certainly cut a dash walking down Commercial Street, the twenty of them, fine upstanding fellows ready to defend the sacredness of Albion's soil. They aren't wearing their black shirts - this is 'unofficial' business, a little bit of extracurricular if you like. Party line is against violence, but then most members of the British Union of Fascists prefer a punch-up to a knees-up.

All they need now is a Jew, a nice fat Jew who can be taught a lesson. This is the place for it - lots of rag-trade Shylocks ready for a good kicking. But where the hell are they all, these sons of Israel? They must have had a tip-off, because the streets are empty. Could there be an anti-fascist in their ranks, a bleeding Communist, in league with the Jews? As far as he is concerned, this proves it, proves that the Bolshies and the Yids are all in it together.

One of the mob throws a rock through a shop window. The breaking glass sounds good, and a cheer goes up. The shop name is Solomon - a sure sign that it deserves the rock. A Star of David gets painted on the door with the words 'Jews

Out'. Another cheer. They'll soon get the message, these leeches, and bugger off somewhere else.

They continue walking, curtains twitching as they pass. It smells foul round here - can't these people keep themselves clean? Another window gets broken and . . . Jesus! What the hell was that? Did someone just hurl a rock at them? Where in God's name did that bloody come from? He thinks he knows, he thinks he saw one of them running down that side street.

'Come on, lads!' he shouts. 'Get the little shit!'

More cheering and he leads them into a run, turning right down the side street, entering a row of slum housing, a few shocked pedestrians standing still.

'Get 'em all!' and the blows come down, indiscriminately.

'Fucking Jewish scum!'

The mob are nicely worked up now; nothing can stop them, not even the police. He spots the rock-thrower again, turning down another street. This is like a maze, are they being led into a trap? He doubts it. Blood is all he wants - how dare a Yid throw a rock at an Englishman!

'Keep running! We're gaining on him!'

He's glad he keeps himself fit. No Jew is going to outrun him, and this one will be the first to know it. He can see him clearly now, thirty yards away, his little legs doing their best. He looks a real shorty, this one. Good, he'll be even shorter in a few minutes, if he ever walks again.

There are four of them in the lead now. Some of the others are finishing off the ones back there, and some are a little slower. Shameful. He must make sure they get some proper PT. Twenty yards now, then ten, and then the lad turns round, panting, looking back at them with fear and boldness in his eyes. He must be only fifteen.

'Just leave us alone!' the lad calls out.

'Fuck you!' one of the men shouts, and the four of them pounce.

Oh yes, this is good, this is what they came here for. This little Jew-boy will regret throwing that rock. These new boots are proving worthy additions too, judging by the screams the boy gives at each kick. His face is coming up nice and red and purple under the gaslight. There's blood in his mouth too - internal bleeding that is, which means they are really giving it to him.

The boy tries covering his head but it's no help. Two of them pick him up and hold him between them, while the others take turns to hit him. The boy cannot even say 'Stop' any more, just a strange groaning. He looks a real mess and he's slipping in and out of consciousness. They cannot see his eyes any more, just a mass of bruises and cuts. Should they kill him? he thinks. Why not? Nobody will throw rocks at them again.

A whistle! The four men look back. They see the silhouettes of at least six policemen.

'Coppers!' he shouts.

They're running once more, but this time faster than before. He is running like a superman. He feels supreme now, he feels great. They will never catch him. For he is too quick, he is too clever. One day, when the country is theirs, they will run from no one. But until then, he will live underground, plotting and waiting.

Chapter One

November 1943

LOCKHART WAS ANXIOUS. They had been navigating the same three miles of coast for two hours, and still there had been no signal. The night air was clear and the sea was calm. The captain had insisted they were in the right place, although Lockhart didn't believe him.

'Who are you going to trust?' asked the sailor. 'Me, or a bunch of drunken shepherds?'

Lockhart held his tongue. Pompous naval halfwit. He didn't want to start lecturing the man on Cretan bravery. He turned, and continued to scan the inlets for the three flashes of torchlight.

The air was scented with thyme. The aroma brought back good memories, but now wasn't the moment to reminisce. The last thing he wanted was to miss the signal and find himself kicking his heels back in dusty Cairo. Perhaps Manoli and his gang of *andartes* had been captured, tortured, shot, their families raped and deported. Those too frail to move would have been burned alive inside their homes. Lockhart slowly exhaled.

The little crewman next to him started tugging at his sleeve and pointing. Lockhart looked through his binoculars to see the dim light of a flashing torch.

'Get the captain to take us in,' Lockhart ordered under his breath.

As the crewman made his way aft, Lockhart tried to discern anything around the light, but it was too dark. He should have been helping to ready the dinghy, but something wasn't right. And then he realised the obvious: the torch was flashing four times. He looked again. There was no doubt - it was the wrong signal. Bugger. It could be a German trap, or, just as easily, a simple mistake. He went aft to find the captain.

'Bad news,' Lockhart announced. 'It's the wrong bloody signal.'

'Christ,' the captain sighed, shutting his eyes and pinching the bridge of his nose. It had been a long night and he still had to get back to Cairo.

'It's flashing four times instead of three. I'm sure my man knows the drill - he's done this before.'

'Your Cretan friend probably can't count.'

'And you can barely sail, so why don't you just shut up and do as you're told?'

Lockhart glowered at him, detecting a small, cynical smile through the captain's dark ginger beard. Lockhart held his stare.

'All right then, *sir*,' the captain said. 'What would *you* like to do then?'

Lockhart paused. The captain was making him bloody-minded. He didn't want to stay on board, but a decision made in anger could see him trussed up in the back of a German lorry, en route to a bloodstained cell in Heraklion. Sod it, thought Lockhart, Manoli had probably just made a mistake.

He looked the captain straight in the eye.

'I'm going ashore.'

The captain snorted. 'Whatever you say.'

Lockhart regretted his decision as soon he went back on deck. He had let some damn-fool sailor wind him up. He bet Theseus never had this problem when he sailed to Crete. Lockhart tried remembering his Plutarch - what was the

name of Theseus's pilot? He had read it only the other day, thinking that he too should have sacrificed a goat to Aphrodite before he left.

He looked through his binoculars again. There, still, were those same four confident flashes. He felt perversely reassured. If the Germans had discovered the location of the landing point, then they would have known the correct signal too. Was he trying to justify his rash decision? Perhaps. But he had come too far now. It would be too much of a climbdown to go back.

The crewmen were readying the dinghy. On to it was lowered food, weapons and ammunition, a radio, clothing, and - most crucially for those spending the winter stuck in small mountain caves - spirits and cigarettes. As Christmas was coming up, the supply officer had even slipped in a Christmas pudding at Lockhart's request.

Lockhart checked himself over. He was dressed as a native - baggy breeches known as 'crap-catchers', a black bandanna, a thick shirt and an embroidered waistcoat. He had even grown a moustache, although it was not up to the hirsute magnificence of the typical Cretan example. Slung over his shoulder was his Sten gun and round his chest a belt of ammunition. He slowly cocked the weapon and engaged the safety catch with his right thumb.

There was one more thing, one thing that he had promised himself to get rid of. He felt the point of his left collar. It was still there, that small bump, his ultimate escape route - his suicide pill. They called them 'cough drops' at Arisaig, their training centre in Scotland, although this was a medication that killed in five seconds. In theory, it meant that you never talked, you never suffered and your friends stayed safe. It was supposed to be the honourable thing to do, because everybody cracked, running out of things to tell, until all that was left was the truth. But many of them threw the cough drops away, determined that they would never talk, and would suffer anything rather than take

their own lives. If there was life, far better to hang on – let someone else kill you. Lockhart unpicked the stitching on his collar and removed the little grey capsule. He looked at it briefly, and then threw it into the water. As it landed with a tiny high-pitched splash, Lockhart hoped some poor fish didn't regard it as a tasty morsel.

'We're ready to go now, sir.'

Lockhart looked at the little crewman. There was a tremor in his voice, and his eyes were unnaturally wide. He must have been only twenty, yet here he was risking his young life in the middle of the Mediterranean for a man he had never met.

'Fancy some bravery juice?' asked Lockhart, pulling his hip flask from his breeches.

'Sorry, sir?'

'Well, if we're going to get blown to bits by whoever it is on the beach, then I'd prefer to have some Talisker inside me, wouldn't you?'

The crewman smiled gauchely – he plainly had no idea what Lockhart was talking about.

'Do you want a *drink*, man?'

'Oh, yes please, sir,' the crewman replied, taking the hip flask.

He swigged it, and Lockhart was surprised to see that the whisky didn't make him cough and choke. Richard had always said that Talisker was a lot smoother than Lockhart's 'filthy' Glenfiddich. It looked as though his brother had been proved right. The crewman handed the flask back.

'Thank you, sir, that was very nice, sir.'

'My pleasure,' said Lockhart, taking a neckful. 'Right – let's get on with it then.'

They made their way to the side of the boat. Lockhart looked around the deck. The captain waved a perfunctory goodbye. Cretin. Lockhart nodded back, turned and swung himself on to the scrambling rope. The dinghy was almost too packed for him and the crewman to board. Lockhart sat

on an ammunition box in the stern, while his companion pushed them away with an oar. Unslinging the Sten, Lockhart steeled himself for an imminent volley of shots.

They were two hundred yards from the shore, and the crewman was rowing the heavy dinghy with great difficulty. Over his shoulder, Lockhart could see the torch, still flashing that exasperating four times. He gripped his gun tighter, trying to make out perhaps the shape of a German helmet, but there was nothing visible. Whoever was there was well hidden.

Lockhart looked back at the boat. They were now too far away to go back. If it was a trap, and the Germans had seen them leaving, then they would open fire. Lockhart didn't fancy his chances sitting on a box full of hand grenades. At least he wouldn't feel anything, he thought. No, they had to keep going in.

A cough. Not a loud one, but loud enough to carry across the smooth waters. The crewman looked startled. Just as he was about to speak, Lockhart put his finger to his lips. Lockhart squinted again - they were a hundred yards away and the cough had seemed to come from the right of the torch. He tried playing the sound back in his head. Had it been a German cough or a Cretan cough? Was there a difference? Lockhart knew he was clutching at straws.

With fifty yards to go, he ordered the crewman to stop rowing. As they bobbed, Lockhart noticed the flashing becoming more rapid, more insistent. The crewman looked up at him, bewildered. Lockhart scanned the beach - he began to make out three figures near the light. They didn't appear to be wearing uniforms; their shapes looked more baggy, informal, as if wearing peasant clothes.

Lockhart gesticulated to the crewman to continue rowing. It could yet be Germans in disguise, but Lockhart was now more confident. Nevertheless, he levelled his Sten gun at the three figures, waiting for a suspicious move. If that happened, he would open fire. There would be no

indecision. The SOE training school at Arisaig had taught him to use weapons as part of his body, and to react without a pause.

‘Hurry up, John!’

The crewman stopped rowing. It had come from one of the shapes, now only thirty or so yards away. Lockhart broke out into a big smile. It was that hairy brute Manoli! He looked at the crewman, who had shut his eyes in relief.

‘Come on, keep rowing,’ whispered Lockhart. ‘There’s a glass of raki for you when we get this lot off.’

‘What the hell is raki?’

‘It’s a sort of local fuel. Don’t worry – it’s bloody dreadful.’

The men on the shore started wading towards them. They were dressed like Lockhart, and carrying either Marlin sub-machine guns or rifles over their shoulders. At their head was Manoli, Lockhart’s old friend from the digs, his six-and-a-half-foot frame wading firmly through the surf. Lockhart jumped out of the dinghy.

‘You took your time getting here,’ said Manoli, gripping Lockhart by the shoulders.

‘It was nice of me to come at all considering you gave the wrong bloody signal.’

‘But we did as instructed – we flashed four times.’

‘It should have been three,’ said Lockhart, and then added with a smirk, ‘You great big idiotic peasant.’

‘And you’re a pathetic excuse for a man,’ replied Manoli, pulling Lockhart’s moustache. ‘The runner from Mr Yanni said it was four times.’

‘Never mind,’ said Lockhart. ‘Come on, let’s get the dinghy ashore.’

The two men added their weight to pulling the dinghy in. Eight more *andartes* had come down from the rocks, along with five mules. It was quite a party, and their tired faces looked excited at the cargo.

‘What have you got for us here then?’ asked Manoli, as they dragged the craft up the sand.

'Christmas pudding,' Lockhart replied.

'What?'

'You'll find out next month.'

By two o'clock the mules had been loaded. The creatures looked as though they were about to collapse.

'Are they going to make it?' Lockhart asked.

'Of course!' Manoli replied. 'My mules are the best in Crete. I've never known one to give up - if they do, they will make an excellent stew.'

'In that case they'd better bloody make it.'

The party left the beach, the tide starting to erase their presence. Lockhart wasn't relishing the long hike. Even though they were only walking five miles, they had to make their way up muddy goat tracks to a height of two thousand feet. The Cretans measured distance in time, and they had a habit of underestimation that irritated Lockhart. Manoli had said two hours, but Lockhart knew five would be more likely.

The paths would take them to their hideout, a cave in the side of Mount Kefala, near Alones, Manoli's village. Lockhart remembered it from peacetime, visiting Manoli's parents in their one-roomed whitewashed cottage. It was Easter, and they had served up lamb and endless bottles of raki. Lockhart had never been so drunk - not even at May Balls in Oxford. He dimly recalled falling into a coma underneath a tree, and being woken up by Manoli telling him it was time for more raki. Lockhart had unappreciatively vomited at the mention of the word.

Lockhart smiled to himself as he walked in the middle of the file. Manoli was leading briskly, and the beasts were struggling. Despite Manoli's boasting, they needed a lot of encouragement, and the men were constantly thrashing them into action. They were walking through scrubland peppered with the ubiquitous thyme bushes. Lockhart was concerned by the lack of cover, but Manoli had assured them that the nearest Germans would be in Plakia, a good

seven miles away. Lockhart kept his gun at the ready, although the Cretans had slung theirs nonchalantly over their shoulders.

After half an hour they reached a road. As Manoli ordered the file to halt, Lockhart ran up to join him. They made their way to a ditch at the roadside.

'I didn't think we were going on any roads,' Lockhart whispered.

'We're not,' said Manoli. 'But we have to cross this one. It's the main coast road to Plakia - there's no way we can avoid it. It's all paths again after this.'

They sat still and listened. All was silent, except for the wind. As Lockhart's ears strained, he thought he could hear a car.

'Can you hear that?'

'Hear what?'

'The car.'

Manoli shut his eyes.

'I can't hear a thing. Are you sure you heard something?'

Lockhart listened again. Nothing. Perhaps his ears were playing tricks.

'It seems to have gone - how about giving it a few minutes?'

Manoli nodded, and went back to tell his men. There was little cover for the mules, but, grateful for the rest, they were keeping still. The men lay on the ground, their rifles aimed towards the road. After a few long minutes, there was still no sound. The car had been all in Lockhart's mind.

There was a wood on the other side, for which he was grateful - finally they could get into some decent cover. Manoli rejoined Lockhart in the ditch.

'Right, let's do this quickly,' said Lockhart.

'Agreed.'

Manoli waved his men forward. They got up swiftly, and quietly goaded the mules forward. Seeming to sense the danger, the beasts moved quickly towards the road. They

crossed without too much cajoling, although the final one was proving reluctant.

Lockhart remained on the road, looking down the slope in the direction of Plakia. The road went round a blind corner after fifty yards, but various sections could be seen as it snaked down the valley. It looked clear. He turned to inspect the progress.

The final mule was still being obstinate. Despite its handler's best efforts, the beast wouldn't budge.

'Can't you move that bloody thing?' Lockhart stage-whispered to the man.

'It won't move,' groaned the *andarte* as he strained on the mule's rope. Lockhart looked back down the road. What he saw made his blood freeze.

Two bends away, he could quite clearly see headlights, moving at great speed.

'Car!' he shouted. The mule's handler stopped.

'Car! Keep pulling!'

Lockhart ran up to shove the mule by its haunches. Manoli ran out of the wood to help them. Lockhart looked back - no car. That meant it had only one more bend to travel until it came to the bend before their stretch. They had a minute at the most, and still the sodding mule wouldn't move.

The three men pulled and pushed, and eventually the beast decided to lift its hooves. Lockhart turned round - this time he could see the lights. The car had one more bend to go.

The mule was nearly walking, but with Manoli's exertions, the animal and its load was actually being dragged into the woods. Lockhart looked again - the car was invisible. It would only be seconds until it rounded their bend.

As Lockhart jumped into the trees, he became aware of the muted yellow of the headlights. The light rudely entered the wood, and the powerful Daimler Benz motor invaded the silence. All the men had their rifles trained on the car.

Manoli had ordered them not to shoot, but Lockhart half expected one might get nervous and let off a round.

What Lockhart hadn't expected was for the car to slow down and then come to a stop alongside their hiding place. Lockhart's finger crept inside his trigger guard as he heard voices coming from the black staff car. He turned his head towards the anxious Cretans, and gestured towards them to hold fire.

The front passenger door opened, and out stepped a German officer, smoking a cigarette. Lockhart recognised him immediately to be an oberstleutnant - a major. The officer walked casually towards them, his boots slowly crunching along the stony road. He stopped at the ditch before the wood and looked down at his trousers.

'Ich habe schon zu viel Bier getrunken!' he shouted back to his driver. Lockhart, with his fluent knowledge of German, knew what that meant: the man had had too much beer.

Laughter came from the car. With that, the drunken officer clumsily unbuttoned his trousers and proceeded to urinate, swaying slightly as he did so.

If the German hadn't looked up, he might well have lived. The sequence of events was so rapid that Lockhart later couldn't recall what started them. Manoli maintained it was the sound of a mule, but Lockhart thought that it was nervous laughter from one of the *andartes* that had caused the officer to look into the wood.

The German's drunken eyes met Lockhart's, and just as they were registering a glassy surprise, Lockhart opened fire. The impact sent the oberstleutnant's body hurtling back towards the car. And then there was a pause, as Lockhart and the partisans looked down at the twitching body, the man's penis still leaking urine.

Lockhart ran towards the car, aiming at the driver through the passenger window. The young man had frozen. It had only been twenty seconds since his officer had stepped from

the car, and now he was looking into the barrel of a British machine gun.

'Hands up!' shouted Lockhart.

The driver continued to look back at him, rigid with fear.

'I said put your hands up!'

The man didn't move.

Just as Lockhart was about to shout again, the car windscreen shattered. The driver's face instantly turned into an unrecognisable mess. Lockhart looked to his right, towards the front of the car. There was Manoli, the barrel of his Marlin smoking.

'Fuck all of them.'

Lockhart nodded slowly, looking back at the fresh corpse.

The rest of the men began to extract what they could from the car and the bodies. Within a minute, money, cigarettes and the men's pistols had been removed. Even their boots were taken. In a rushed attempt to conceal it, the car was then pushed into the ditch, with the body of the oberstleutnant restored to the passenger seat.

'They'll kill many for this,' said Manoli. 'Ten of us for every one of them, and I expect they'll burn down a village. And then there'll be the rapes and the tortures.'

'We didn't have a bloody choice,' Lockhart replied.

'I know, I know,' Manoli muttered darkly. He walked back to the wood, and Lockhart thought he heard him stifling a sob. The band followed. They were silent, shocked at the violence. For some, it had been their first engagement with a hated enemy. All were eager *andartes*, but the rawness of the killings had turned even the strongest of their stomachs.

Lockhart spent the rest of the hike in a daze. Despite the intensity and seriousness of his training, he had partly convinced himself it was all a big adventure. And now he had killed a man, added another to his list. He felt a long, long way from Anna, wherever she was.

They had first seen each other across a pile of rubble. Lockhart had been helping to remove the thick layer of earth covering a Minoan floor near the palace at Knossos. It had already taken the team of four Cretans and two Englishmen a week to uncover a mere twenty square feet, and it was dawning on Lockhart that archaeology was harder work than he normally cared for. He was spending his summer down from Oxford at the site, and he feared that all he would see of Crete would be this bloody floor. He only saw the sun at lunchtime, when the team would sit on the piles of rubble to enjoy a simple lunch of retsina, olives, bread and cheese. And it was one lunchtime, at the start of his second week, when he first saw her.

She was being led on to the site by the head of the digs, the tedious Dr Buchan. She wore a pair of long shorts, walking boots and a thick white cotton shirt. A large sunhat hid her face, and over her shoulder she carried a small knapsack. She looked slightly ungainly, her long legs tripping over the piles of ancient masonry. Lockhart and his companions started to laugh at her stumbling efforts to keep up with Buchan's long strides.

The laughter stopped when the curious couple drew near. The team stood up to receive them, all eager to see what lay underneath that large hat.

'Gentlemen,' Buchan began, 'this is Miss Anna Green, who will be joining us for the rest of the summer.'

She looked up defiantly. From then, Lockhart knew he would be more than happy to spend his time cooped up in a filthy ruin. She had a strong face - handsome even - and yet she was still pretty. Her large brown eyes looked straight into Lockhart's. Unfortunately for him, his companions felt equally mesmerised - they too stood silent, all speculating on what the summer might now bring.

'Miss Green has just spent a year at the British School of Archaeology in Athens, where she has already earned quite a name for herself. I'd ask you all to remember that she is

not here as an entertainment, but as a hardworking professional.'

Lockhart noticed that their new colleague had lifted her chin a little, giving the slight impression she was looking down at them. Know-it-all, thought Lockhart. Buchan then addressed Lockhart directly.

'John, could you show Miss Green around the rest of the site?'

'I certainly will, sir,' Lockhart replied, doing his best not to smile too obviously.

'Miss Green, this is John Lockhart, who is here from Merton College for the summer. I'll leave you in his hands.'

A titter from the ranks.

They shook hands, Lockhart feeling self-conscious at the five pairs of jealous eyes behind him.

'How do you do?' he asked.

'Very well, thank you,' she replied.

The formality felt absurd amongst the rubble.

'Let me introduce you to everybody. Ah, this is Manoli Pentaris, who has been working here for . . . how long is it now, Manoli?'

'Three years.' The big Cretan grinned under his moustache, which was already vast for a twenty-three-year-old. He kissed Anna's hand with a flourish, which caused her to raise her eyebrows in amusement. Lockhart was aware that Manoli had a reputation as a ladies' man. He spent most of his spare time chasing girls in the bars in nearby Heraklion. Lockhart knew that he would be the first to regard their new arrival as 'an entertainment'.

Lockhart introduced Anna to the other Englishman, Andrew Worstead. Like Lockhart, Worstead was also still at university, at King's College in London. Lockhart liked Worstead, although many didn't. He could be chippy and aggressive, as he imagined most people were out to get him. Lockhart suspected that he had been teased about his weight at school and was thus cursed with an inferiority

complex. But when he was relaxed, Worstead was good company – witty and, like Lockhart, a good drinker. The Cretan climate didn't suit him though. He found the heat hard to deal with, and his shirt was permanently drenched with sweat.

Thus it was a sweaty palm that shook Anna's.

'How nice to have you here, Miss Green,' he beamed, laying on the charm a little thick, Lockhart thought. He doubted that Worstead would be much of an adversary.

After Anna had met the rest of the group, she and Lockhart made their way around the site. As he told her about the various rooms, he noticed that she wasn't really listening. Lockhart did his best to sound authoritative, but as he was talking about the origins of the antechamber, he realised that he was wasting his time.

'You can't have been studying for very long,' she said. 'In fact it may even date from much earlier than that. Look here at the shape of these bricks.' She squatted down and pointed them out. 'Do you see how different they are from the ones back there?'

She looked up at Lockhart and smiled, a little too smugly for his liking. She really was bloody know-it-all.

'I bet you were head girl at school,' said Lockhart.

'How did you guess that?'

'I wonder.'

'Are you making fun of me, Mr Lockhart?'

'Maybe, Miss Green.'

Lockhart was smirking at her, and she was clearly doing her best to look serious.

'Because if you are, then I shall—'

'What? What will you do?'

'Then I shall put you across my knee. I was allowed to beat people as head girl, you know.'

As she said it, she tapped his chest. He wanted to grab her hand and kiss her there and then, but he thought better of it. His time would come.