



The Forbidden Zone 1940: Part Two

Anne Angelo

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Populated by brave souls, The Forbidden Zone 1940 is a gut-wrenching memoir that recalls the havoc caused by the Second World War.

Anne Angelo's *The Forbidden Zone 1940* is the second installment of her compelling memoir series set during World War II.

When German forces started trooping into France, Angelo found herself in a difficult position. She tried to flee to Britain, but her attempt proved futile. Lille was soon cordoned off and became part of the forbidden zone. Upon her return, she was swept into the intricacies of the French Resistance. She facilitated the escape of British soldiers, arousing the suspicions and annoyance of the German forces, who proved to be innovative with their string of tricks in their attempts to catch her red-handed.

The cat-and-mouse game continued well into 1941, with Angelo getting arrested multiple times just for being British. Quick-witted and seeming to possess the nine lives of a cat, Angelo knew when to stay put and when to flee. So, when faced with the option of a firing squad, shipment to a concentration camp in Germany, or a hazardous escape to Britain, she knew what she needed to do.

Angelo narrates her experiences with Scottish, British, French, and German soldiers in detail, comparing and contrasting each. She met young and inexperienced Scottish soldiers who confessed their fears of fighting in the war, callous British and French soldiers who treated her with contempt, and hypocritical Germans who alternated between playing the sympathy card and switching to beasts whenever Hitler commanded.

Angelo's lover, Gerald, is introduced after a long delay. Their much-anticipated love story is brief here and is overshadowed by Angelo's involvement with the resistance.

Functioning as a mini tour of Europe, complete with a few pictures, Angelo's memoir lays bare the ugly and horrifying details of the Second World War. As a civilian, she struggled to survive while Germans ravaged France and bombed entire cities and towns multiple times. Her narration is devoid of pretense, even when recalling her own blunders.

Despite the grimness of the war, the book includes some comic relief: Angelo recalls the cowardice of her friend Paul, her poor attempt to escape her first imprisonment, and the mockery meted out to Germans by the enraged French populace. Throughout, her account is absorbing and insightful, brimming with suspense and gruesome details of the massacre that the Germans brought upon France, which is described with sickening, graphic clarity (not for tender sensibilities). Still, while the book ends on a heartwarming note, it also leaves many questions unanswered.

The Forbidden Zone 1940 is a gut-wrenching memoir that recalls the havoc caused by the Second World War.

GABRIELLA HARRISON (December 2, 2022)

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