**COMPLETED PROOFREAD**

Rumours had been circulating around town that the nearby RAF station was to become the training establishment for boy entrants. The rumours soon became reality. “As many as fifteen hundred,” I heard somebody say. How would our small town cope? Adults spoke over garden fences, often in whispers with their hands over the mouths. This made it all the more intriguing. “They can only bring trouble,” I’d overheard one neighbour comment. Fights had apparently broken out between RAF boys and local ones. It seemed their presence were upsetting everyone.

Thinking back, my parents must have been terrified. It's was one thing to talk to the local boys, but quite another thing to talk to the RAF boys. I was the youngest of three children and the only daughter; and my father was fiercely protective. With all that testosterone flying around the town, what were my parents to do?

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Our school days were over, and Sarah and I got apprenticeships lined up at Julio’s, one of the ladies' hairdressers in town. We had four weeks before we due to start, and we were going to make the most of our freedom. It was a Saturday, and we could hardly wait to make the 20-minute walk into town. Yes, we’d been banned from speaking to the RAF boys and given lectures before we left home, but this wasn’t going to stop us from looking. We were 15 and thought we know everything there was to know about the opposite sex.

We’d set off apace, wearing identical clothes. If Sarah had something new, I would copy. Even through my parents had little money to spare, they generally gave in to my pleas. We looked and left like twins, striding though the streets with our fair hair, white blouses and pink polka dot skirts. With my new skirt swishing from side to side as I walked, we headed for the record shop and each brought the same record, Runaway by Del Shannon.

We clutched our paper bags, with their small vinyl discs, and made our way to one of the many coffee bars springing up all over town. These had become popular haunts for the ever-growing number of newcomers. As we neared our favourite coffee bar, the sound of Walking Back to Happiness by Helen Shapiro was playing on the juke box. The local lads started taunting us. We weren’t interested in them – the majority of them were from school and far to immature for us. We pushed past them and sat sipping your coffee, thinking we were very grownup .

Afterward, we made our way into the centre of town. Sarah was the first to spot the boys in blue. “Gillian, look.” She taped my arm and pointed in their direction. “Can you see them? Don’t they look amazing?”

“Yes, but we’re not supposed to talk to them,” I reminded her. Would we ever dare to go against our parents’ wishes? The weekly pattern continued. First the walk into town to our favourite coffee bar in the hope that someone would put coins into the jukebox so we could hear the latest hit songs. Then we’d make our way to the local cinema where the after noon matinee showed the film of the week. I remember were never in a rush to get to home afterward.\*

END

\*Text kindly provided by Maggie Dann, author of He Loves Me He Loves Me Not

**Available on Amazon**

Do you believe in fate?

Do you believe that truth is stranger than fiction?

Are you a romantic?

If you have answered yes to these questions then the debut novel by Maggie Dann, “He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not”, is a must for you. Unbelievably, the story is true. The names of the characters and place names have been changed in order to protect identities.

The story is filled with coincidences, love, intrigue, pain and bravery.

August will always remain a very special month in Gillian’s life.

After leaving school, it wasn’t long before she met the boy of her dreams. They fell deeply in love. He was her first love and first loves are truly special.

Heartbreakingly, they were parted by circumstances and went their separate ways. All she had to remember him by, was an engagement ring, along with her memories, her shattered dreams and a photograph. A photograph she would keep for the rest of her life.

This is a true, romantic story.

Perhaps real life is more unbelievable than fiction!