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Her previous London sagas have been warmly praised:

'A good traditional romance, and its author has a feeling for the atmosphere of postwar London' *Sunday Express*

'Well peopled with warm personalities' *Liverpool Post*

'Very readable' *Bella*

'The leading characters are finely drawn . . . crisp prose . . . a superb and heartwarming read' *Irish Independent*





# A Song In Your Heart

Pamela Evans

headline





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## *Chapter One*

In the private functions room of a back-street pub in Fulham one Saturday in January 1957, a wedding reception was in progress. It was a small, low-budget affair, just a few close friends and relatives gathered together to celebrate the occasion.

‘The ham’s nice and tasty, love,’ remarked the father of the bride, Hal Miller, to his wife Winnie, who was sitting beside him at a large communal table.

‘Not bad for the price, I suppose,’ she said, glad of a few words with her husband while their guests were chattering among themselves. ‘The mashed potato’s lumpy, though.’

‘Mine’s all right,’ reassured Hal, a tall, amiable man with a ruddy complexion and dark, greying hair. His most notable feature was his unflappable nature, which was useful to him in his work as a bookings clerk at Paddington station.

‘This is vastly different to the wedding I had in mind for our eldest daughter,’ said Winnie, a dumpy woman whose anxious disposition tended to overshadow her warm heart. A pillar of respectability, she was staid in appearance, her mousy-brown hair set in tight symmetrical waves around a shiny, plump face which bore no trace of cosmetic embellishment. Still wearing her outdoor clothes because the room was draughty, she was dressed in her best tweed coat and a new red hat purchased especially for the occasion.

‘It’s only natural for you to want a posh wedding for both our daughters. Most mothers do,’ Hal said, turning to her, his hand touching her arm in a comforting gesture, his warm

brown eyes meeting her worried grey ones. 'But you've done ever so well to get this do organised at such short notice.'

'You think so?'

'Yeah, I really do,' he said, with strong emphasis because his wife's confidence was more fragile than her manner sometimes indicated.

'I suppose you get what you pay for – and lumpy potato is part of the deal when you do it on the cheap,' she said.

'Look, love, eating out is a treat for all of us here; no one is gonna worry about a few lumps in the mashed potato.'

'I hope not.'

'Just stop worrying and try to enjoy yourself,' he said, patting her hand.

'It isn't just the cheap wedding, Hal,' Winnie continued darkly. 'It's the tackiness that goes with it . . . the stigma.'

'He *has* married her, so there'll be nothing like that.'

'There'll be gossip,' she said sagely. 'Always is when someone gets married in a hurry.'

'If there is it'll all be forgotten by the time the baby's born, 'cause they'll be an old married couple by then.'

'There is that,' Winnie said, but she couldn't restrain a wistful sigh.

My daughter is worth more than a shabby do like this, she thought, casting her eye around the dismal room with its fusty miasma of stale beer, old cigarette smoke and boiled cabbage. The wallpaper was muddy-maroon with raised cream flowers turned beige with age, and the bumpy brown lino looked as though it had been there since the year dot. Gill should have got married in style, with church bells and bridesmaids and a reception in a big hall with dancing and a band. She would have, too – had it not been for Arnie Briscoe.

A pretty girl in her eighteenth year with an office job and music qualifications, Gill could have done well for herself. But what sort of future did she have to look forward to now? What kind of life would she have with an unskilled factory worker currently doing his national service in the army – a

man who hadn't even had the decency to put an engagement ring on her finger before taking the sort of liberties that led to a cheapjack wedding with all the usual trappings abandoned for the sake of speed?

Mashing the offending potato determinedly with her fork, it occurred to Winnie that she could count the times on one hand that she'd eaten out – apart from an occasional doughnut with a cup of tea in Lyon's when she was shopping. It was only over these last few years, since Britain had finally recovered from the war and a new wave of affluence had given the working classes the money and confidence to broaden their horizons, that people of their class had been able to afford meals in cafés and restaurants on a regular basis.

Winnie and Hal preferred to stay at home of an evening, though, especially now that they were the proud owners of a television set. They couldn't afford to go out very often anyway, not on what Hal earned; and Winnie hadn't been out to work in all her twenty-odd years of marriage. It had never been an option either of them even considered, because they had grown up in an age when a wife automatically stayed at home to look after the family. Even during the war years, when Hal had been away in the army and married women were forced out to work by law, as the mother of young children Winnie had been exempt.

Although she was usually shy and inhibited, Winnie's primal instincts overruled timidity when it came to defending her family; and unfortunately, in the resultant masking of her natural shyness, she had adopted a formidable air which often created a false impression.

'I could cheerfully throttle that Arnie Briscoe for what he's done to our Gill,' she said to Hal under her breath.

'Shush, Win,' he admonished in a hushed voice. 'That sort of talk isn't gonna help anybody, especially today.'

'But a third-rate wedding like this for Gill . . . She should have had a white dress and time to collect a bottom drawer.'

'I agree with you, but this is the way it's worked out and

there's nothing we can do about it,' Hal wisely pointed out. 'We've done all our shoutin' and hollerin' – the recriminations are over. They're married now.'

'More's the pity,' said Winnie, who had actually been stalwart these last few weeks despite her bitter disappointment.

'Arnie isn't so bad,' said Hal, who usually managed to see the best in people. He'd been devastated when the news of Gill's pregnancy had first broken, of course, and had given Arnie a thorough trouncing – but he had now accepted the situation and decided to make the best of things.

'She could have done a lot better, though.'

'Maybe she could. But he's her husband now and we have to accept him as one of the family.'

'I know that.' Winnie sliced a piece of ham without enthusiasm. 'But they're both so young, and he doesn't have any prospects . . .'

'They'll manage.'

'Just managing isn't good enough for our daughter,' Winnie said.

'Give Arnie a chance, he might surprise us all.'

'I can't see that happening.' She paused. 'I never thought Gill would let us down, you know.'

'Nor me. But these things happen,' Hal said, careful not to speak loud enough to be overheard. 'And she's obviously dotty about the bloke.'

'Totally besotted with him,' declared Winnie, her voice rising with feeling. 'She'll do anything he tells her.'

'Keep your voice down.'

'No one's listening to us,' she said, casting a swift glance around at the babbling guests. 'They're all too busy yapping.'

'You can't be too careful at a do like this,' Hal warned. 'We don't want any arguments breaking out and spoiling Gill's day.'

'What is there to spoil at a do like this?' Winnie said glumly.

‘Give yourself *some* credit, Win. We’ve put on the best reception we could possibly afford – and you’re the one who’s done all the work, getting everything arranged at such short notice.’

‘I didn’t have any choice, did I, as you’re at work all day.’

Despite the way she was speaking, Hal knew his wife had been an absolute diamond. Once she’d got over the initial shock she’d comforted Gill, thrown herself into the wedding arrangements, offered the couple a home with the family in Maisie Road, and robbed her precious post office savings – a small nest-egg built painstakingly from years of careful housekeeping – for Gill’s wedding outfit. Although Winnie’s manner was often abrasive – poor Arnie had been on the receiving end of it on more than one occasion since Gill’s condition had become known – beneath his wife’s redoubtable presence beat a heart of gold.

‘But look around you, love,’ Hal said. ‘They’re all having a smashing time – especially Gill. And all thanks to you.’

Winnie glanced towards the head of the table where the newly-weds were laughing together, completely engrossed in each other. ‘Yeah, I suppose you’re right.’ She shrugged. ‘You can only do your best with what you have, can’t you? If they’d got engaged in the normal way and given us time to save up we’d have given her the works.’

‘Course we would and Gill knows that. She’s as happy as a queen with what we’ve put on for her today. It might not be the wedding of her dreams but it’ll still be a day for her to remember.’

Looking at her daughter, Winnie swallowed hard on a lump in her throat. Gill looked so young and vulnerable, her small face turned eagerly towards her new husband, dark hair worn short with a floppy, uneven fringe. It was true what people said about her: she did have a look of Audrey Hepburn, with those huge brown eyes and heavy brows dominating her slender face. Winnie had to admit that she looked radiantly happy too, her cheeks brightly suffused against her

fashionable scarlet suit. The much-maligned pillbox hat she'd worn dutifully to the register office had been removed; it seemed hats weren't popular with young women of Gill's generation.

'They're just like a couple o' kids playing at weddings,' murmured Winnie, blinking back the tears. 'I hope to God they've got the stamina to cope with reality, because they'll have plenty of that when the baby arrives.'

'Let's worry about that when the time comes, shall we?' said Hal, turning his attention back to his meal and lapsing into thought. Winnie was a dear, but she was like a dog with a bone over this wedding. Personally, Hal thought Gill and Arnie had what it took to make their marriage work. Admittedly Arnie wasn't the husband they'd have chosen for their daughter – and Hal had been as much against his going out with Gill as Winnie was at the beginning – but he wasn't a bad lad. He'd been through a yobbish stage a few years ago, swaggering around the streets in teddy boy clothes with marauding gangs of louts, but that had just been youthful exuberance and he seemed over it now – partly due to the army, in Hal's opinion. And anyone who could perform on a football field like Arnie Briscoe couldn't be all bad.

'You enjoying yourself, Hal?' asked a voice from across the table that was only just audible above the conversational hubbub.

'Not half,' he replied to Arnie's mother Phoebe, a tall, busty blonde in a bright blue suit that matched her sparkling eyes. 'Are you?'

'I'm having a smashing time, thanks,' she said, smiling and glancing towards Winnie. 'You and Win have done us proud.'

Sitting next to Phoebe was her younger son, John, a lanky eleven-year-old with the same compelling brown eyes and curly hair as his older brother. The Millers and the Briscoes had lived in Maisie Road for many years. But although they had known *of* each other for all that time, they had never

exchanged more than a passing greeting – until a couple of years ago, when Gill had started going out with Arnie.

From what Hal gathered from local gossip, it hadn't been easy for Phoebe, bringing up two boys on her own these last ten years since her husband had died. She'd done a variety of jobs to put food on the table, apparently: charring, factory work, and she now worked on the sweet counter in Woolworth's.

And after all she'd done for Arnie, he'd brought shame on her by getting a neighbour's daughter into trouble. Not that Phoebe seemed ashamed; that wasn't her way. Unlike Hal's dear Winnie, Phoebe was a relaxed sort of person able to take things in her stride. From the little he knew of her, she was the gregarious type who liked nothing better than a party. She had a bit of a reputation with the men, as a matter of fact.

'Winnie must take all the credit,' he said to Phoebe. 'She organised everything.'

A roar of laughter erupted nearby, and Phoebe put her hand behind her ear to indicate that she couldn't hear. 'Later,' she mouthed.

Hal nodded, and Phoebe became immediately engrossed in conversation with a friend of Arnie's sitting next to her.

'What was all that about?' asked Winnie, who had been out of earshot.

'She was just being friendly.'

'That's her speciality . . . being friendly,' she said with strong disapproval. Because Phoebe's unwavering confidence made her feel inferior, Winnie was inclined to be uncharitable towards her as a sort of defence mechanism. To a reserved soul like herself, Phoebe's self-assurance didn't fall far short of arrogance. 'It's where Arnie gets it from. It's no wonder that boy is degenerate.'

'Now that isn't fair, Win,' Hal said, gently reproachful but determinedly firm.

'Oh, do me a favour,' she replied. 'Everyone in Maisie Road knows what she's like. If snowmen were around for

long enough she'd try to get off with 'em.'

At that moment fifteen-year-old Carol Miller, who was sitting on her mother's other side out of earshot of her parents' conversation, gave Winnie a nudge.

'What's for afters, Mum?' she asked.

'Sherry trifle.' Winnie looked at Carol's plate. 'But you've not finished your dinner.'

'Don't want any more. The ham's fatty and the potatoes are lumpy.'

'That's a waste of good food,' tutted Winnie, still inclined to practise the habit she'd picked up during the long years of rationing.

'Too bad, 'cause I'm not eating it,' was Carol's petulant reply.

'Leave it then, dear,' sighed Winnie, who was ashamed to admit that she often gave in to her younger daughter out of sheer exhaustion. Unlike her sunny-natured older sister, Carol had always been a difficult child. She could bend people to her will by wearing them down to a point where they would agree to anything. She was also very sensitive and needed lots of attention. Her demanding nature had been exacerbated by the onset of adolescence, with its biological changes and heightened self-awareness, and now her head was full of romance and she always seemed to be lusting after some boy or other. She was extremely affectionate; sometimes it seemed to Winnie as though she had too much love for anyone to cope with. Having recently left school, she had a job as a filing clerk in the offices of a local shoe-polish factory.

Winnie's thoughts drifted back to the wedding arrangements – and she gave due credit to Phoebe, who had offered to contribute towards the cost of the reception because of the special circumstances. But Winnie wasn't having that! What, and have people say the Millers couldn't afford to do the traditional thing and pay for their own daughter's wedding reception? Not bloomin' likely!

In the end they had agreed for Phoebe to pay for the

photographs outside the register office, and to provide a spray of flowers for Gill and the buttonholes. As a wedding present Phoebe had booked the couple into a small hotel on the outskirts of the West End for tonight.

Although Winnie thought the gift somewhat frivolous in the light of the couple's impending responsibilities, she was secretly rather relieved. The thought of the newly-weds spending their first night as a married couple at home with her and Hal in Maisie Road was acutely embarrassing to her – even though Gill's condition made it obvious that there would be no bashfulness behind their bedroom door.

'Dead romantic, innit?' said Carol with an elaborate sigh.

'What is?' asked her mother, turning to look at her daughter who didn't resemble her sister in physical appearance at all. Carol wasn't exactly pretty, but she was growing into an attractive young woman with an exceptionally well developed figure for her age. In contrast to Gill's dark colouring, Carol had light-brown hair and a pale, freckled complexion. Her almond-shaped, hazel eyes lost something because they were always simmering with discontent.

'Gill and Arnie, o' course.'

Her mother shot her a warning look, terrified that Carol might see her sister as a role model. Winnie couldn't face the prospect of having to go through all this again with her second daughter. 'There's nothing romantic about having to get married, my girl,' she said.

'Getting married is romantic however it happens,' Carol stated categorically.

'It's more romantic to wait and have all the trimmings, though: the white dress and bridesmaids.' She threw Carol a look. 'Surely you wouldn't want to miss out on all of that.'

'Maybe not. But Gill and Arnie are happy together even though they didn't have any of that,' she said, looking at the couple and emitting another sigh. 'Ooh, Arnie really sends me. He's even more gorgeous than Elvis Presley.'

Winnie cast a studious eye over her new son-in-law who,

admittedly, did cut rather a dash in the livery of the Middlesex Regiment, which he was wearing because Gill had wanted him to get married in uniform. Yes, she supposed his clean-cut looks would have a certain attraction for young women. Having played football since he was so high, he looked fit and athletic, and he had a smooth complexion and greenish-brown eyes that sparkled with warmth and devilment. His curly, chestnut-coloured hair was cut very short, army-style, and his smile could be quite devastating. But what use was a melting smile to the mother of his child with no home of her own?

‘She’s so lucky having Arnie as a husband,’ continued Carol, who thought her sister’s recent scandal was the most thrilling thing that had happened in ages. It had certainly livened things up at home. And such fuel for her lively young imagination too! Carol and her girlfriends had had great fun speculating on when and where the deed had actually taken place. The girl felt quite weak with excitement at the thought of what had been going on. ‘I wish I was the one who had just got married.’

‘Good heavens above!’ reproached her mother. ‘You’re far too young.’

‘Gill isn’t that much older than I am.’

‘She’s nearly three years older,’ declared Winnie, keeping her voice low as the waitress cleared their dinner plates. ‘Anyway, Gill’s still too young to get married. She wouldn’t have done so if the circumstances had been different.’

‘Well I still think it’s romantic whatever you say.’

Romantic, my eye, thought Winnie. Drudgery, poverty and council accommodation – that about summed up her view of what life had in store for Mrs Arnie Briscoe. Winnie thanked God the pregnancy had come to light when it had. A few days later and Arnie wouldn’t have been around to do the decent thing – for he’d been posted to Germany and was leaving on Monday with his regiment. He was likely to be abroad for months, certainly until after the baby was born.



Although Gill was quite naturally dreading his departure, it was a positive blessing to Winnie. At least she would be spared having a relative stranger living in her house – until after he was demobbed, anyway. Heaven only knew how long it would be before they could afford a place of their own. They certainly couldn't set up home on Arnie's army pay, and his own mother didn't have room for them in her poky little flat in the pre-war block on the corner of Maisie Road.

Winnie wondered how their marriage would stand up to the trials and tribulations of everyday living when he came out of the army, especially with the added demands of a baby to cope with. It certainly didn't have the ingredients for durability, being merely an arrangement of necessity. Still, whatever happened in the future, the wedding would have served a purpose in preventing her first grandchild from being born a bastard.

Who would have thought one of her girls would have landed in trouble? She thought she'd protected herself against every mother's nightmare by giving her daughters a strict and moral upbringing, hammering decent values into them for all she was worth. Hal had left that sort of thing to her, since it was generally accepted that bringing up the children was a woman's job.

But then who would have thought Gill would have got mixed up with someone like Arnie? Until he'd come into her life she'd been a serious-minded sort of girl, diligent in her work as a clerk in an accountant's office and passionate about her musical hobby. Since she had shown an interest in the family piano at a very young age, Winnie and Hal had made their budget stretch to piano lessons for her, and she'd rewarded them by showing real talent and dedication.

Before she'd got friendly with Arnie most of her spare time had been spent at the piano. Practising had never been anathema to Gill; she'd passed exams with flying colours and competed regularly at music festivals. Winnie and Hal had been so proud.



Then she'd caught the eye of Arnie Briscoe and become a different person almost overnight. Her piano was forgotten in her eagerness to go with him to dance halls and coffee bars. Her taste in music changed from inoffensive ballads and sober classical pieces to crude and deafening rock 'n' roll.

Her style of dress had altered too. She now spent all her spare money on stiletto-heeled shoes with winkle-picker points, and tight skirts, or exaggeratedly full skirts with stiff petticoats and flat pumps. And as if all that wasn't bad enough, Arnie had bought her a portable record player for a birthday present, and the disgraceful Elvis Presley could be heard bellowing out some tuneless drivel about his blue suede shoes.

The amicable relationship that Winnie and Hal had always had with their daughter became fraught with arguments. There was constant tension in the house. But nothing could persuade Gill to give Arnie up. Times had changed since Winnie and Hal were young; these days youngsters were far more assertive towards their parents than they had ever dared to be.

Their disapproval only drove Gill more determinedly into Arnie's arms. There had been one dreadful scene when Winnie, in desperation, had simply forbidden her to see him again. She'd never seen her daughter so angry. Through tight lips Gill had announced that she would leave home rather than give him up.

'Just 'cause he dresses like a teddy boy doesn't make him bad,' Gill had said. 'They don't all go out smashing up cinemas and dance halls, you know. He just likes wearing the gear, that's all, and dancing to rock 'n' roll music . . . and so do I.'

After that Winnie and Hal had kept a diplomatic silence, hoping the affair would run its course and die the death. After all, he would be going away to do his national service soon – surely, they reasoned, that would put an end to it.

But it hadn't. They'd written to each other almost every day and spent every second together when he came home on leave.

God only knows where it will end, thought Winnie now, as the crockery was finally cleared away and the waitresses began serving dessert.

‘I’d like to thank you all for coming to share our special day with us,’ said Arnie, who was on his feet making a speech. He paused for a moment with a wicked look in his eye. ‘Even though it was rather short notice . . .’

Oh, really, has he no shame? thought Winnie furiously, as the company erupted into laughter. How dare he embarrass Gill in such a cheap and vulgar way? But Gill was laughing, which spoke volumes about the power he had over her. Hal was chuckling too. Winnie gave him a sharp dig in the ribs with her elbow and scowled at him when he turned towards her.

‘He’s only bringing something out into the open that everyone knows about anyway, Win,’ he whispered, unheard by the others beneath the gales of mirth. ‘He means well.’

‘He shouldn’t talk like that.’

‘Don’t take everything so seriously, love,’ he said quietly as Arnie began speaking again.

‘We’re all friends here, so I want to be honest with you . . .’ Arnie glanced at his wife and then fixed his gaze on Winnie, in the hope of getting his heartfelt message across to her and easing her mind about this marriage. ‘I’ll admit that this isn’t the way Gill and I planned to get married, and it’s sooner than we expected. But I want you all to know that we would have got married sooner or later anyway, and we’re both really happy that it’s happened now.’ He turned and smiled lovingly at Gill, then looked back towards the company again. ‘I consider myself to be a very lucky man. This is the happiest day of my life.’

A communal sigh rippled through the females in the room, interspersed with some loud and saucy badinage from the men. Arnie could feel his mother-in-law’s eyes piercing into him. She’d sent plenty of hostile vibes in his direction since



he'd been seeing Gill, and had given him a real roasting when they'd told her and Hal about the baby. It was a predictable reaction and he didn't blame her. But knowing she didn't approve of him as a son-in-law made him feel uncomfortable, and he dealt with it in the best way he knew: by ignoring it and being friendly towards her, despite her coolness to him.

Thank God he was spared having to live with his in-laws – for a while, at least. Having to face his mother-in-law's disapproving stare over his corn flakes every morning didn't bear thinking about.

The very first priority on his agenda when he got demobbed was to find them a place of their own.

But that was a long way off and, although he loved Gill to bits and didn't want to leave her, he couldn't help anticipating his trip abroad with a certain amount of excitement. He was young and hungry for adventure. Since he'd been forced into the army for two years, he was glad to be given the opportunity to see some of the world at the government's expense.

It was traditional among the blokes to complain about national service, and Arnie went along with the herd in this respect. But once the torturous basic training had ended he'd begun to enjoy his service. He was luckier than most: his skill on the football field had not only got him a job as a PT instructor, it had also earned him a place in the regiment team. As well as being given time off work for football training, he also travelled all over the country to play in matches. It was a damned sight pleasanter than working at a machine all day as he'd done in civvy street.

'I'd like to thank my mother for all she's done for me all my life, and for her support this last few weeks,' he said now, looking at his mother who beamed at him in acknowledgment.

He turned again to Winnie and Hal. 'I'd also like to thank my mother- and father-in-law for all their help . . . and for giving us this smashing party today.'

A cheer went up among the guests, and Arnie raised his hands for silence.

‘And most of all I’d like to thank them for letting me marry their beautiful daughter.’

That’s a good one, since we didn’t have any choice in the matter, thought Winnie, meeting his eyes and, much to her annoyance, finding that hers were brimming with tears.

‘I must assure them that I shall look after her and do my very best to make her happy.’

‘You’d better do an’ all, mate,’ shouted Hal jokingly.

With a broad grin, Arnie assured him again before sitting down to rousing cheers from the assembled company and a hesitant smile from Winnie.

He was convincing, she’d say that much for him. She rummaged in her pocket for a handkerchief. It was no wonder Gill had fallen for him – he couldn’t half turn on the charm.

Despite not having all the trimmings, this was the happiest day of Gill’s life. A white wedding would have been lovely of course, if things had been different, but the important thing was marrying Arnie. The rest didn’t really matter to her. She was so happy and proud to be his wife.

‘Well done,’ she said as he sat down.

‘Was it okay?’

‘It was great.’

‘Phew. I’m glad it’s over,’ he said. ‘It was a bit nerve-racking.’

‘Fancy coming right out with the reason for the wedding, though.’

‘It was a sudden impulse,’ he said, looking at her with a serious expression. ‘As it’s common knowledge among the guests even though everyone’s keeping shtum about it, I thought I’d let them know that we really wanted to get married and haven’t done it just because of the baby.’ He paused, looking doubtful. ‘I hope I haven’t upset you.’

‘No, course you haven’t,’ she said, touched by his eagerness to declare his feelings for her in public.

‘I don’t think your mum was any too pleased, though.’

‘You know how reserved Mum is,’ she said. ‘Her bark’s worse than her bite.’

‘I didn’t want to offend her ’cause she’s been good to us,’ he said.

‘Yes, she has.’

‘I was trying to reassure her about my feelings for you as much as anything.’

‘I know.’

Through the mists of joy, Gill was aware of her mother’s disappointment in her, even though she’d been wonderfully supportive. But the knowledge did little more than cast a slight shadow over Gill’s mood because her happiness was so intense.

This didn’t mean that Gill didn’t feel bad about letting her parents down. She was permanently suspended between guilt and rapture. But, in all honesty, she couldn’t regret marrying Arnie and carrying his child when it was all she wanted from her life, which had blossomed since he’d been a part of it.

She looked across at her mother and smiled affectionately. Winnie smiled back, a brave effort that twisted Gill’s heart. Her mother looked older suddenly, somehow frailer and less stern than usual.

Tears swelled beneath Gill’s lids as she realised that nothing would be the same again between her mother and herself. Her wedding day was a new beginning, but it also marked the end of an era.

Imbued with emotion, her thoughts lingered on all the good things her parents had done for her. As well as providing her with a loving family life, they had made sacrifices so that she could have piano lessons. And she had repaid them by bringing shame on the family.

But for all that she wouldn’t change a thing. She was young and inexperienced, but she knew that she and Arnie were right for each other.

‘It’s your dad’s turn now,’ said Arnie, jolting her out of her reverie to see her father rising to propose a toast to the happy



couple. Her eyes filled with fresh tears as he spoke from the heart, wishing them well in their life together. He'd been the only man in her life until she'd met Arnie, and she had failed him.

Does your own happiness always come at the expense of someone else's? she wondered.

Hal's toast to the newly-weds marked the end of the formalities and people began to get up from the table and mingle. As the host, Hal got everyone a drink from the bar and the atmosphere soon became thick with smoke and alcohol fumes, the volume of noise and laughter rising as the drinks flowed.

With a gin and tonic in her hand, Phoebe went over to Winnie. 'Well, it's all going with a swing,' she said, smiling. 'You did a good job organising it.'

'There were no major catastrophes anyway,' said Winnie.

Phoebe inhaled on her cigarette, looking at Winnie thoughtfully. 'Except the biggest catastrophe of them all in your book . . . the fact that your daughter has married my son, eh?' she said with a wry grin.

Winnie's stomach knotted with nerves but she felt compelled to stand up for herself. 'How would you feel if it was your daughter who'd got into trouble?' she asked.

'I can't answer that, since I don't have any daughters,' said Phoebe candidly. 'But I can't see that it's any worse than seeing a son get married before he's ready.'

'It's a different thing altogether for a woman,' said Winnie through dry lips.

'Different, but potentially as damaging to a man's future,' said Phoebe, in a tone that bore no malice and was merely her considered opinion.

'I don't see how.'

'Arnie's only nineteen. He's much too young to be tied down with a wife and kiddie to support. He needs freedom to develop, to work out what he wants to do with his life.'

'He should have thought of that—'

‘I couldn’t agree more, dear, but young people are fresh to what life has to offer and it makes them impulsive,’ Phoebe said in an even tone. ‘They don’t always stop to think.’

‘Arnie obviously didn’t.’

‘Arnie wasn’t a solo player,’ was Phoebe’s answer to that. ‘And I haven’t heard young Gill saying anything about rape.’

Phoebe sipped her drink, watching Winnie as her mouth opened then closed again, scarlet patches staining her cheeks, her mouth set in a grim line. Phoebe felt rather sorry for her. She always seemed to have the worries of the world on her shoulders.

‘Look, Winnie dear,’ she said with genuine friendliness, because she was a very even-tempered person who spoke her mind but rarely fell out with anyone, ‘the kids have got married and we have to accept it whether we like it or not. How *we* feel about it isn’t important, and certainly isn’t gonna make a scrap of difference to the outcome of their marriage. So all we can do is let Gill and Arnie get on with it in their own way and stop worrying about them.’

Before Winnie had a chance to reply, Gill appeared at her side. ‘Glad to see that you two are getting to know each other,’ she said.

‘We thought we ought to make the effort now that we’re practically related, isn’t that right?’ said Phoebe with a meaningful look in Winnie’s direction.

‘Yeah, that’s right,’ said Winnie, because she knew it would please Gill.

Phoebe turned back to Gill. ‘So, what time is Arnie going back to camp tomorrow?’ she asked.

‘In the afternoon.’

‘How about coming to our place for Sunday dinner then . . . when you get back from the hotel? It’s the last time I’ll be seeing my son for quite a while.’ She turned to Winnie. ‘As long as that won’t put you out, love.’

‘Not at all,’ said Winnie politely. ‘We can have what’s left of the joint on Monday.’

‘We’d love to come then,’ said Gill, smiling at her new mother-in-law.

‘That’s settled then.’ Phoebe wriggled her shoulders and grinned to indicate her pleasure in the arrangement. ‘Have I told you how pleased I am to have you join our family?’

‘Several times,’ said Gill, who liked Phoebe very much.

‘I’ll say it again just for good measure,’ she said, hugging her new daughter-in-law. ‘Welcome to the Briscoe family.’

‘Glad to have joined.’

Aware that her mother was excluded from this uninhibited display of warmth and friendliness, Gill turned to Winnie. ‘Thanks for everything you’ve done for us, Mum.’ She hugged her tight. ‘You’ve been really great, and we appreciate it.’

‘That’s all right, love,’ said Winnie, warmed and softened by these few words of appreciation. ‘It was the least I could do.’

‘Well, I think I’ll go and do some socialising before the party comes to an end,’ said Phoebe, and sauntered off.

Watching her swinging her hips as she walked, Winnie felt a stab of envy for someone of whom she had never approved. It wasn’t Phoebe’s way of life she envied. Working on the counter in Woolworth’s because she didn’t have a husband to support her must be purgatory – and she was as common as muck with her heavy make-up and bleached hair.

But her vivacious personality and exuberant attitude to life seemed highly desirable to Winnie at that moment. She knew she could never be like that herself because it wasn’t in her nature – and most of the time she didn’t want to be – but at that precise moment she would have given anything for a small measure of Phoebe Briscoe’s casual confidence and indomitable spirit.

Although Gill and Arnie had become accustomed to partings since he’d been in the army, they had never got any easier for Gill. And the one she faced the following afternoon cut deeper than any before because he was going abroad. There would

be no weekend passes to look forward to from Germany, she thought gloomily as they left his mother's flat and made their way past the grey Victorian terraces that made up the majority of Maisie Road, heading for Fulham Broadway station.

It was a bitterly cold afternoon, with a sharp wind and dark, threatening clouds rolling above the grey slate rooftops; the tiny front gardens were bleak at this time of year. Arnie was wearing his army greatcoat, while Gill shivered inside a camel-coloured duffle-coat over black tapered trousers. His kitbag was strapped to his shoulders and her hand was tucked into his arm. She was savouring having him near, their last minutes together ticking away as steadily as the beating of her heart.

'It's been the most wonderful weekend of my life,' she said as they progressed into North End Road, which was bathed in the quiet of a Sunday afternoon, the shops closed, the street empty of market barrows until tomorrow, the wind blowing dust and litter across the road.

Dusk was already falling, and lights were beginning to appear in the windows of the homes in the residential side streets, some of which had changed since Gill was a child and the bomb-sites were built over. Lots of the slum areas in the borough had been cleared too, many of them replaced by municipal housing developments.

'Yeah, it was really smashing,' Arnie said, looking lovingly at her face, her cheeks glowing with the cold, her dark fringe flopping out of her hood on to her forehead. 'Especially last night. Cor, I won't forget that in a hurry.'

'I'll never forget it,' she declared earnestly, thinking back.

The hotel was more of a guest house really, but it was spotlessly clean and the food was delicious. One of the things Gill had enjoyed most about it, though, was the feeling of anonymity, people coming and going unnoticed, which was such a novelty to Gill and Arnie.

Throughout the whole of their love affair they had wanted nothing more than to be alone, and had expended a great deal

of effort to this end, usually to be thwarted by family or neighbours or friends. Just one of the drawbacks of finding romance so close to home, Gill supposed. But at the hotel, with its dark, antiquated residents' lounge, creaky old lift and freezing starched sheets, no one had taken any notice of them at all. Immediately after dinner last night they'd gone to their room and stayed there until breakfast without raising so much as a flicker of interest. It had been bliss!

Now they were back down to earth with a bump. Arnie had said goodbye to the folks, and it would be a long time before any of them saw him again.

'I'll miss you,' Gill said.

'I'll miss you too.'

'I'll write often,' she said.

'Me too.'

'Oh, Arnie, I can't believe we're actually married,' she said, just the thought of it making her heart race. 'Can you?'

He halted in his step and slipped his arms around her, looking into her eyes. 'Ooh, yeah, I can believe it all right – and it's really great.' He gave her a wicked grin. 'I'm a bit choked about not being around to take advantage of the fact that it's legal, though.'

'Is that all you think about?'

'Men of my age think of nothing else,' he replied, teasing her. 'It's expected of us.'

She gave him a playful punch on the shoulder and said, 'As long as it's only in relation to me.'

'Of course.'

'I should hope so too.'

They walked on in silence for a while, each lost in their own thoughts.

'Do you realise that this is the last time we'll be together as just a couple?' she said. 'When you come home next time we'll be a family.'

'Yeah,' he said, his tone becoming serious. 'That's gonna take some getting used to.'

‘It’ll be different.’  
‘Me a dad. Wow!’  
‘You’ll be great.’  
‘I’ll certainly do my best.’

At the station, they stood huddled together in the draughty foyer, away from the crowds hurrying to and from the platform. Brimming with emotion, Gill was both dreading the parting and wanting it to be over.

‘I’ll be counting the days till you come home,’ she said.

‘Me too,’ he said. ‘I shall cross them off on my calendar.’

‘You can keep your sexy eyes off the fräuleins out there in Germany too,’ she chided playfully. ‘I don’t want you getting off with any German girl.’

‘As if I would.’

‘You’d better not.’

‘What about you?’

‘Me?’

‘Yes, you,’ he confirmed with forced laughter. ‘How do I know you’re not gonna take a fancy to some other bloke while I’m away?’

‘Oh, yeah. As a married woman with a baby on the way I’m gonna have bags of opportunity to play around,’ she said with irony.

It was all just meaningless chatter to ease the pain of parting.

‘Love you loads,’ he said, kissing her deeply on the lips.

‘Love you too,’ she said.

And after one last feverish embrace he was gone, making his way across the foyer with long, purposeful strides – a tall, athletic figure, his kitbag shifting slightly from side to side as he walked.

Gill waited until he was out of sight then walked slowly out into the cold street, now fully dark and lit by the yellow glow from the street-lights which she saw through a blur of tears.

It was a punishing wrench, but she had a feeling of elation



and confidence in the future too. With Arnie's wedding ring on her finger and his baby growing inside her, she felt invincible. Nothing could defeat the wife of Arnie Briscoe!



a song in your heart. a feeling of great or euphoric happiness. The expression originated in the title of a song, "With a song in my heart" ( 1929 ), by Lorenz Hart . See also: heart, song. Farlex Partner Idioms Dictionary © Farlex 2017. See also: a song in (one's) heart. opium. the opiate of the masses. Tell a friend about us, add a link to this page, or visit the webmaster's page for free fun content. Link to this page: [a song in your heart](#) Facebook. Twitter. Find out at which radio station you can hear Clannad - The song in your heart. This is a modal window. Beginning of dialog window. Escape will cancel and close the window. Artist: Trilogy. Song: The Song in Your Heart. Translations: French, German. English. A A. The Song in Your Heart. Why did it have to dawn on me? Why did this morning show? Hard to leave your starry eyes. It's my time; I have to go. The song in your heart I'm taking with me. All over the hills, on oceans wide. Down echoing roads, when rivers run dry. I'll cherish its feeling deep inside. Won't take it away in rain or in shine. You'll be on my mind the long long way. I'll search in the clouds, a rainbow up high. To colour the storm until the day. I'm close to your heart. I'm close to your heart. Won't defeat our tender hearts. To sounds of beating drums. The song in your heart I'm taking with me. All over the hills, on oceans wide. Down echoing roads, when rivers run dry. Watch music video "Clannad - The Song In Your Heart" online. Update music video. Send lyrics Send translation. Similar songs. Clannad - From Your Heart. Clannad - Closer To Your Heart. Clannad - Closer To Your Heart (Remastered 2003). Clannad - In Search Of A Heart. Yoshiaki Dewa - True Blue - The Song That's In Your Heart. Bb & L - True Blue - The Song That's In Your Heart. Lionel Cohen - The Song In Your Heart Is Murder. Clannad - In Flight. Loading "The Blue Fairy to Snow White and Prince Charming. "The Song in Your Heart" is the twentieth episode of Season Six of ABC's Once Upon a Time. It was written by David H. Goodman & Andrew Chambliss, and directed by Ron Underwood. It is the one hundred and thirty-first episode of the series overall, and premiered on May 7, 2017. This is the only musical episode of the series. The songs were written by Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner.