

JULIE

SHORT STORY/HISTORICAL FICTION: A DAWN OF PEACE by TOM HEEREN

The story focuses on a mother of three children who faces the haunting reality of the end of the Great War on November 11, 1918.

Adv. choice?

Start with a figurative - or literal - BANG!

What did it sound like?

"A loud noise disturbed..."

Mary Hopkins, recently widowed, was knitting a scarf for one of her best friend's son who was at the Front when noise outside interrupted the peace of her study. Her heart beat heavily as she put the knitting aside on the sofa and went to the window, Mary slowly opened the window and leaned forward to observe her neighbors going out of their houses to find what was going on.

x2

x2

Not sure what was going on, Mary closed the window and pulled the curtains shut. She

was overwhelmed with sadness and guilt as she walked to the door. Bad memories caught

Mary's shaking hands on the door. A bead of sweat began to appear around the face. Mary, a

beautiful woman of 35 years old with blonde hair arranged in a knot, panted heavily, imagining

the worst.

word choice  
peal of laughter  
bead of sweat

imagining x2

My God, what's wrong with me? ~~Am I imagining things out of the world?~~ Mary thought

as she struggled with the knob, trying to open it. She pleaded to God for guidance while looking up

to the ceiling. But it never appeared. Mary returned to the sofa and broke into tears. After ten to

fifteen minutes, she composed herself as she stood up. Mary came to the door, getting ready for a

new day.

too far away from antecedent "door"

(she plead the fifth.)  
www.dailywritingtips.com

or to check out sound?

The passing of Mary's husband, Alfred, at the Marne battle <sup>had</sup> left the Hopkins family with a great loss. Two teenaged sons, Peter and Henry, and one ten-year-old daughter, Kathleen, helped their mother deal with the tragedy themselves. Despite the loss of their father and husband, the family avoided poverty through investments made by Alfred who worked as a vice

Comma to set off oppositives

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president of a bank. When the Great War began on 4 August 1914, Alfred decided to join the Army to fight for King and Country. Two years later, he lost his life due to shrapnel hitting him on the head, causing him to fall to the ground.

Thinking about the tragic events caused Mary to grieve more. After a while, she descended down the stairs, humming a popular wartime tune, Keeping the Home Fires Burning. The front hall was welcomed with numerous bouquets scattered across the room. Mary stood in the center, contemplating the tranquility. Mr. Johnston, the butler, came out of the backstairs door, carrying a note on a salver. He bowed to his mistress.

“Good morning, Ma’am,” Mr. Johnston said. “I have a message from your brother. He’s at the War Ministry and will be home shortly. Anything else I can do for you?”

Mary shook her head and took the message on the salver. She scanned it briefly and returned it to the salver. Mary knew that Peter, her younger brother was working at the War Ministry as a counselor to the Minister of War. He lost his wife, Angela of fifteen years to the dreadful Spanish flu in September 1918. They had two children, one 18-year-old son attending Oxford and a 22-year-old daughter working as a VAD nurse at the front. The house had three children and two young adults in all and both Mary and Peter had to master the responsibility of raising them. Mary sighed and looked at her black dress, still six inches from the floor, representing the new style of late 1918.

“No, thank you, Johnston,” Mary replied.

“Very well, Ma’am. May I leave now?” the butler asked.

“Of course, you may go. Thank you very much.”

The butler bowed and took the cue. Mary marched to the sitting room to reflect on the strange events outside 152 Eaton Place, her and Peter’s home. She took one of the magazines

x2  
redundant

M  
salver x3  
tucked it in her pocket?

silver tray

brother + son named Peter?

Would a butler even ask that? Wouldn't he want to be dismissed?

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from a small table and went to a sofa. Mary leaned back, flipping through the pages of Women's Weekly for an article to read. The clock above the fireplace showed 11:00 a.m.

*I missed this my first few read-throughs. Wouldn't it be after 11:00 by now?*

"Johnston, the war is over! Can you get the servants downstairs to the front door?"

Peter's voice echoed in the front hall. Mary's head jerked from the magazine, causing her to be surprised.

*Revised*

Mary put the magazine away and rose to open the door. She saw a deliriously happy Peter hug Cook, Paula and Katie, the two housemaids. Mary was both embarrassed and shocked at the spontaneous sight. She tiptoed behind Peter, causing the housemaids to curtsy fast before their disapproving mistress. Johnston was rather restrained in controlling his happiness at the happy news. He stood near the backstairs door.

*happy synonyms*

"Sorry about your brother hugging us. Have you heard the news?" Katie asked nervously.

"The war's over, Ma'am. Aren't you happy for all of us?"

Mary looked at the happy servants in shell shock and felt light-headed. Peter sensed that his older sister was near fainting and crossed to prevent that help her from fainting. Mary collapsed before Peter, bursting into tears.

"My God, is it true that the war is over?" Mary sobbed as she held Peter's arms.

"Yes, Sister. We're at peace at last. Do get up and we'll have champagne to toast to Peace. Johnston, would you get a bottle of champagne and two goblets for Mrs. Hopkins and me in the library?"

"Very well, Sir," Johnston said, bowing to the siblings. He went backstairs, the other servants following him. With the household staff gone, Peter and Mary looked at each other.

*# down*

The siblings walked to the library next door and entered it. The library has a small table, few chairs and three high bookcases on the right and left walls. They contained many books from

*purchase*

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*many x2* many centuries and few ~~paper~~ <sup>back?</sup> ~~book~~ books. In the center there was a French window with doors leading to the balcony.

~~Mary and Peter walked to the table and embraced each other. Mary looked up from the hug and looked at Peter.~~

"Wow, we're lucky that we survived the Great War and the Spanish flu," Mary replied ~~as~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~she held her brother tightly.~~ <sup>embraced</sup> "As for <sup>dear Angela</sup> your wife, we'll remember her from time to time, right?" <sup>Not always?</sup>

Peter sadly nodded and released Mary from the embrace. He walked ~~to the window and~~ <sup>out on the balcony</sup> ~~opened the doors~~ and looked at the crowds gathering in the square. Mary <sup>followed</sup> ~~joined~~ her grieving brother ~~on the balcony.~~ <sup>relief washing over her.</sup> She looked at the happy atmosphere, ~~feeling relieved.~~

~~Mary could not believe her eyes.~~ <sup>?!</sup> The War was over now! She left Peter and walked to the bookcase with her beloved Alfred's portrait on the fourth shelf. He was in his official uniform of the Wiltshire Regiment. She smiled at the portrait, sobbing.

*verbs tense* *you were* "Thank God the horrible war is OVER! Your children and I will have peace at last. I wish you'd be here to celebrate to celebrate the special occasion with us, my dear. But you're in Heaven with God. I hope you're proud of our accomplishments," Mary said as she swiped away her tears. "There you go." *(Return photo to shelf.)*

*happy again* Mary touched the picture with tender love. She returned to the balcony and looked at the happy crowds. Mary touched Peter's arm.

"Are you okay?" Mary asked gently.

"I'm fine, thank you. God, I can't believe that we men have to return to the jobs and the women to being housewives again. What about you, my sister?"

Mary shrugged at the question.

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"I don't know yet. Maybe I'll join a voluntary organization at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children or something like that. I must occupy myself to help my children and myself. It's hard these days, you know."

Peter nodded and turned to observe the happy scene. Mary mouthed "Excuse me" to him and walked inside. She sighed as she took her family King James Bible out of the right bookcase and put it on a nearby table.

*no mystery to peace  
war is the mystery*

Trying to find something to help her understand the mystery of Peace, Mary fumbled through the pages to find a suitable scripture that ~~deals~~ <sup>dealt</sup> with Peace. She found Romans and scanned its verses until she came to 15:13.

*Find 2 more powerful peace passages*

Mary read the verse aloud, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." She repeated it over and over to make her understand clear.

Mary smiled to herself as she put the King James Bible away and raised her eyes to God.

"Thank God for making me aware of Romans 15:13. Peace is what we should need as we celebrate the end of the Great War. Praise to God!"

*awkward wording*

*"At the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, the Great War ends...." ARMISTICE DAY WAS A MONUMENTAL EVENT. HAVE MARY GLANCE AT THE CLOCK OR TURN ON THE RADIO TO INTRODUCE THE EVENTS.*  
*THIS IS AN UNBELIEVABLE TIME IN WORLD HISTORY. HAVE YOUR STORY REFLECT THAT. THE CHARACTERS SEEM TWO-DIMENSIONAL AND APPEAR TO BE WADING THROUGH MOLASSES.*  
*THE SPANISH FLU OF 1917-18 WAS A DEVASTATING PANDEMIC. DID ANYONE ELSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD GET SICK AND RECOVER? GIVE SOME DETAILS.*  
*WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN IN THIS EXCERPT?*  
*20 BIBLE VERSES ABOUT PEACE - ENCOURAGING SCRIPTURE - BIBLE STUDY TOOLS AT WWW.BIBLESTUDYTOOLS.COM*  
*THIS SHOWS PROMISE. INCLUDE MORE DIALOGUE AND ACTION.*



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Jean's Comments

*The story focuses on a mother of three children who faces the haunting reality of the end of the Great War on November 11, 1918.*

Mary Hopkins, recently widowed, was knitting a scarf for one of her best friend's son, who was at the Front when noise outside interrupted the peace of her study. Her heart ~~beat~~ <sup>pounded</sup> heavily as she put the knitting aside ~~on the sofa~~ and went to the window. Mary ~~slowly~~ opened the window and leaned forward to observe her neighbors ~~going out~~ <sup>leaving</sup> of their houses to find what was going on.

Not sure what was going on, Mary ~~closed the window~~ and pulled the curtains shut. She was overwhelmed with sadness and guilt as she walked to the door. Bad memories caught Mary's shaking hands on the door. A ~~peal~~ <sup>humble</sup> of sweat ~~began to~~ <sup>peel?</sup> appear around ~~her~~ <sup>ed</sup> the face. Mary, a beautiful woman of 35 years ~~old~~ with blonde hair arranged in a knot, panted ~~heavily~~, imagining the worst. - What is the worst?

My God, what's wrong with me? Am I imagining things out of the world? Mary thought as she struggled with the knob, trying to open it. She pled to God for guidance while looking up to the ceiling. But it never ~~appeared~~ <sup>came</sup>. Mary returned to the sofa and broke into tears. After ~~ten to fifteen minutes~~ <sup>returned</sup>, she composed herself as she stood up. Mary came to the door, getting ready for a new day. (I don't understand why she's now needy. She still doesn't know what the noise was.)

The passing of Mary's husband, Alfred, at the Marne battle left the Hopkins family with a great loss. Two teenaged sons, Peter and Henry, and one ten-year-old daughter, Kathleen, helped their mother deal with the tragedy ~~themselves~~. Despite the loss of their father and ~~her~~ husband, the family avoided poverty through investments made by Alfred who worked as a vice <sup>had</sup> ~~made~~ <sup>had made</sup>

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president of a bank. When the Great War began on 4 August 1914, Alfred <sup>joined</sup> decided to join the Army to fight for King and Country. Two years later, he lost his life <sup>when flying shrapnel</sup> due to shrapnel hitting him <sup>a</sup> ~~caused a fatal head injury.~~ on the head, causing him to fall to the ground.

Thinking about the <sup>tragedy</sup> tragic events caused Mary to grieve more. After a while, she descended ~~down~~ the stairs, humming a popular wartime tune, "Keeping the Home Fires Burning."

The front hall was <sup>welcoming</sup> welcomed with numerous bouquets scattered across the room. Mary stood in the center, contemplating the tranquility. Mr. Johnston, the butler, came out of the backstairs door, carrying a note on a salver. He bowed to his mistress.

"Good morning, ma'am," Mr. Johnston said. "I have a message from your brother. He's at the War Ministry and will be home shortly. Anything else I can do for you?"

Mary shook her head and took the <sup>note from</sup> message on the salver. She scanned it briefly and returned it to the salver. ~~Mary knew that~~ Peter, her younger brother, was working at the War

Ministry as a counselor to the Minister of War. He lost his wife, Angela, of fifteen years to the dreadful Spanish flu in September 1918. They had two children, <sup>an</sup> one 18-year-old son attending

Oxford and a 22-year-old daughter working as a VAD nurse at the front. The house had three children and two young adults in all, and both Mary and Peter had to master the responsibility of

raising them. Mary sighed and looked at her black dress, <sup>the hem was</sup> still six inches from the floor, ~~representing~~ the new style of late 1918.

"No, thank you, Johnston," Mary replied.

"Very well, ma'am. May I leave now?" the butler asked.

"Of course, you may go. Thank you very much."

The butler bowed and took the cue. Mary marched to the sitting room to reflect on the strange events outside 152 Eaton Place, her and Peter's home. She took <sup>a</sup> one of the magazines

How long has he been dead?

What year is it now? How long has Angela been dead?

I like this detail.

What strange events? You haven't told us what the noise was.

she went from grieving to humming?

- what did it say?

you capitalize "the front" on the 1st page

so it's 1918? then how could Angela have had a 18yo daughter if she was only married to Peter for 15 years?

where?

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from a small table and went to a sofa. Mary ~~leaned back~~, <sup>ed</sup>flapping through the pages of "Women's Weekly" for an article to read. The clock above the fireplace showed 11:00 a.m.

"Johnston, the war is over! Can you get the servants downstairs to the front door?"

Peter's voice echoed in the front hall. Mary's head jerked from the magazine, ~~causing her to be~~ surprised.

Mary put the magazine away and rose to open the door. She ~~saw~~ <sup>hugged</sup> a deliriously happy Peter hug Cook, Paula and Katie, the two housemaids. Mary was both embarrassed and shocked at the spontaneous sight. She tiptoed behind Peter, causing the housemaids to curtsy fast before their disapproving mistress. Johnston was ~~rather~~ <sup>and controlled</sup> restrained in controlling his happiness at the

happy news. He stood near the backstairs door.

"Sorry about your brother hugging us. Have you heard the news?" Katie asked nervously.

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Mary looked at the happy servants in shell shock and felt light-headed. Peter ~~sensed that~~ his older sister was near fainting and crossed to help her from fainting. Mary collapsed before Peter, bursting into tears.

"My God, is it true that the war is over?" Mary sobbed as she held Peter's arms.

"Yes, sister. We're at peace at last. Do get up and we'll have champagne to toast to Peace. Johnston, would you get a bottle of champagne and two goblets for Mrs. Hopkins and me in the library?"

"Very well, sir," Johnston said, bowing ~~to the siblings~~. He ~~went~~ <sup>huh?</sup> backstairs, the other servants following <sup>ed</sup> him. ~~With the household staff gone, Peter and Mary looked at each other.~~

<sup>Peter & Mary</sup> The siblings walked to the library, <sup>which had</sup> next door and entered it. The library has a small table, few chairs, and three high bookcases on the right and left walls. They contained many books from



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many centuries and few <sup>uh?</sup> paper book books. In the center, ~~there was~~ a French window with doors <sup>led</sup> leading to the balcony.

<sup>they</sup> Mary and Peter walked to the table and embraced each other. Mary ~~looked up from the~~ hug and ~~looked at~~ Peter.

“Wow, ~~we~~’re lucky that we survived the Great War and the Spanish flu,” Mary replied as she held her brother tightly. “~~As for your wife, we’ll remember her from time to time, right?~~”

Peter sadly nodded and released Mary ~~from the embrace~~. He ~~walked to the window and~~ opened the doors and looked at the crowds gathering in the square. Mary joined her grieving brother on the balcony. ~~She looked at the happy atmosphere, feeling relieved.~~ <sup>Search on the word "look". you use it too much.</sup>

Mary could not believe her eyes. The War was over now! She ~~left Peter and~~ walked to the bookcase with her beloved Alfred’s portrait on the fourth shelf. He was in his official uniform of the Wiltshire Regiment. She smiled at the portrait, sobbing.

“Thank God the horrible war is OVER! Your children and I will have peace at last. I wish <sup>you were</sup> you ~~could~~ be here to celebrate ~~to celebrate the special occasion~~ with us, my dear. But you’re ~~in~~ ~~Heaven~~ with God. I hope you’re proud of our accomplishments,” Mary said as she swiped away her tears. “There you go.”

Mary ~~touched~~ the picture with tender love. She returned to the balcony and looked at the happy crowds. Mary ~~touched~~ Peter’s arm.

“Are you okay?” Mary asked gently.

“I’m fine, thank you. God, I can’t believe that we men have to return to <sup>ours</sup> ~~the~~ jobs, and the <sup>back</sup> women to being housewives again. What about you, my sister?”

Mary shrugged at the question.

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"I don't know yet. Maybe I'll join a ~~voluntary organization~~ <sup>volunteer</sup> at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children or something like that. I must occupy myself to help my children and myself It's hard these days, you know."

Peter nodded ~~and turned to observe~~ <sup>still observing</sup> the happy scene. Mary mouthed "Excuse me" to him and walked inside. She sighed as she took her family King James Bible out of the right bookcase and put it on a nearby table.

Trying to find something to help her understand the mystery of Peace, Mary fumbled through the pages to find a suitable scripture that dealt with Peace. She found Romans and scanned its verses until she came to 15:13.

Mary read the verse aloud, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." She repeated it over and over, ~~to make her understand clear~~.

Mary smiled to herself ~~as she put the King James Bible away~~ and raised her eyes to God.

"Thank God for making me aware of Romans 15:13. Peace is what we ~~should~~ need as we celebrate the end of the Great War. Praise to God!"

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Ed

The story focuses on a mother of three children who faces the haunting reality of the end of the Great War on November 11, 1918.

let us figure this out

1000s? 1000s? 1000s? explosions? hrruh bells?

Mary Hopkins, recently widowed, was knitting a scarf for ~~one of~~ her best friend's son who was at the Front when noise outside interrupted the peace of her study. Her heart beat heavily as she put the knitting aside on the sofa and went to the window. Mary slowly opened

to let me forget the scene before the noise! where is she

the window and leaned forward to observe her neighbors going out of their houses to find what was going on.

what are they actually doing? they aren't finding out what was going on! they might be walking or talking or looking around or wandering about

Not sure what was going on, Mary closed the window and pulled the curtains shut. She was overwhelmed with sadness and guilt as she walked to the door. Bad memories caught

why?

why? door? room? house? of?

Mary's shaking hands on the door. A <sup>s.w.</sup>peal of sweat began to appear around the face. Mary a

beautiful woman of 35 years old with blonde hair arranged in a knot, panted heavily, imagining the worst.

about what? about whom?

My God, what's wrong with me? Am I imagining things out of the world? Mary thought as she struggled with the knob, trying to open it. She pled to God for guidance while looking up to the ceiling. But it never appeared. Mary returned to the sofa and broke into tears. After ten to

fifteen minutes, she composed herself as she stood up. Mary came to the door getting ready for a new day.

she was knitting sounds very mild: he was killed

telling can she think this or remember why is this a pertinent here

The passing of Mary's husband, Alfred, at the Marne battle left the Hopkins family with a great loss. Two teenaged sons, Peter and Henry and one ten-year-old daughter, Kathleen,

Battle of the Marne - when compared to now

helped their mother deal with the tragedy themselves. Despite the loss of their father and her husband, the family avoided poverty through investments made by Alfred who worked as a vice

- characters do not seem upper class British

- be careful of word choice

- how is her life different?

how does this affect Lev?

w.c. = word choice # = new paragraph

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local president of a bank. When the Great War began [on 4 August 1914] Alfred decided to join the Army to fight for King and Country. Two years later, he lost his life [due to shrapnel hitting him on the head] [causing him to fall to the ground] [again, world description]

Thinking about the tragic events caused Mary to grieve more. After a while, she descended down the stairs, humming a popular wartime tune, Keeping the Home Fires Burning. The front hall [was welcomed] with numerous bouquets scattered across the room. Mary stood in the center, contemplating the tranquility. Mr. Johnston, the butler came out of the backstairs door, carrying a note on a salver. He bowed to his mistress.

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what are they?

necessary?

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"Johnston, <sup>the war</sup> the war is over! Can you get the servants downstairs to the front door?"

[Peter's voice echoed in the front hall. Mary's head jerked from the magazine, causing her to be surprised.] *it's not her head jerking that surprised her*

Mary put ~~the magazine away~~ <sup>tossed!</sup> and rose to open the door. She saw <sup>ran to?</sup> a deliriously happy

Peter hug Cook, Paula and Katie <sup>and who?</sup> [the two housemaids] <sup>who?</sup> Mary was both embarrassed and shocked

[at the spontaneous sight.] *awk.* She tiptoed behind Peter, causing the housemaids to curtsy fast before

their disapproving mistress. Johnston was rather restrained in controlling his happiness at the

happy news. He stood near the backstairs door.

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Mary looked at the happy servants <sup>no.</sup> in shell shock and felt light-headed. Peter sensed that his older sister was near fainting and crossed to help her from fainting. Mary collapsed before Peter, bursting into tears.

"My God, <sup>is it</sup> is it true that the war is over?" Mary sobbed as she held Peter's arms.

"Yes, sister. We're at peace at last. Do get up and we'll have champagne to toast to Peace. Johnston, would you get a bottle of champagne and two goblets for Mrs. Hopkins and me in the library?" *Why did he ask for the servants?*

"Very well, sir," Johnston said, bowing to the siblings. He went backstairs, the other servants following him. With the household staff gone, Peter and Mary looked at each other.

The siblings walked to the library next door and entered it. [The library has a small table, *seems like a note* few chairs and three high bookcases on the right and left walls. They contained many books from



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many centuries and <sup>not invented</sup> [ant. 1930s] few paper book books. In the center there was a French window with doors leading to the balcony. <sup>of what?</sup> <sup>they're on the first floor</sup>

Mary and Peter walked to the table and embraced each other. Mary looked up from the hug and looked at Peter.

"Wow, we're lucky that we survived the Great War and the Spanish flu," Mary replied as she held her brother tightly. <sup>seems very artificial</sup> "As for your wife, we'll remember her from time to time, right?" <sup>pretty insensitive</sup> <sup>not very upper class</sup>

Peter sadly nodded and released Mary from the embrace. He walked to the window and opened the doors and looked at the crowds gathering in the square. Mary joined her grieving brother on the balcony. She looked at the happy atmosphere, feeling relieved.

Mary could not believe her eyes. The War was over now! She left Peter and walked to the bookcase with her beloved Alfred's portrait on the fourth shelf. He was in his official uniform of the Wiltshire Regiment. She smiled at the portrait, sobbing.

"Thank God the horrible war is OVER! [Your children and I will have peace at last] I wish you'd be here to celebrate ~~to celebrate~~ the special occasion with us, my dear. But you're in Heaven with God. I hope you're proud of our accomplishments," Mary said as she swiped away her tears. "There you go." <sup>is he what?</sup> <sup>W.C.</sup>

Mary touched the picture with tender love. She returned to the balcony and looked at the happy crowds. Mary touched Peter's arm.

"Are you okay?" Mary asked gently. <sup>not upper class English</sup>

"I'm fine, thank you. God, I can't believe that we men have to return to the jobs and the women to being housewives again. What about you, my sister?"

Mary shrugged at the question.

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"I don't know yet. Maybe I'll join a voluntary organization at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children or <sup>not u.c.</sup> something like that <sup>how?</sup> I must occupy myself to help my children and myself. It's hard these days, you know."

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Mary read the verse aloud, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." She repeated it over and over to make her understand <sup>big</sup> clear.

Mary smiled to herself as she put the ~~King James~~ Bible away and raised her eyes to God.

"Thank God for making me aware of Romans 15:13. Peace is what we should need as we celebrate the end of the Great War. Praise to God!"

*is this the end?*

*This is a story that takes place during an interesting time in history. It's a formula that works in most cases. We have a family before, during, and, I assume, after the transition. In this case, the transition is the end of World War I. No matter what the story, these studies have to be done with kid gloves. If too sentimental, you lose a large portion of an audience. Readers want to root for the strong protagonist and not a sniveling wimp. So far, I have no sense of Mary. This is a problem. A major character has to be brought out early and powerfully.*

*Her brother, Peter, adds little to this section, other than to be a vehicle for information.*

*Both of them have suffered losses. We have to expect that we, the readers, will watch as they fight through seemingly impossible emotional and physical obstacles in their way and come out at the end in control of their lives.*

*Clearly, they have money. Sympathy for the wealthy is difficult to elicit. Too many readers are suffering their own battles with money and will have little concern for the 'poor little rich kid.'*

*In addition to the problems with establishing character, you have many sections that are difficult to follow. I've embedded my thoughts on these places. I hope they point out a weakness and give you a place to begin some revisions.*

*You've chosen an interesting time period. Now you have to take it and make it work.*

*Good luck.*

*PS. I just noticed that this piece is the beginning of a short story. In that case, you have to bring the character and the action in much earlier. So far, in the first 5 pages, you've established the setting and named a couple of characters. That might work for a longer piece, a novel, but a short story has to begin with a bang. We have to know the reason we're reading it right out of the gate.*

***The story focuses on a mother of three children who faces the haunting reality of the end of the Great War on November 11, 1918.***

Mary Hopkins, recently widowed, was knitting a scarf for one of her best friend's son [~~who was at the Front~~] when noise outside interrupted the peace of her study. Her heart beat heavily as she put the knitting aside on the sofa and went to the window. ~~Mary~~ *She* slowly opened the window and leaned forward to observe her neighbors ~~going out of~~ *running, escaping, leaving - something more than 'going out of'* their houses to find *out* what was going on.

~~Not sure what was going on,~~ Mary closed the window and pulled the curtains shut. She was overwhelmed with sadness and guilt as she walked to the door. *(sadness and guilt from*

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*what? Bad memories (of what?) caught Mary's shaking hands on the door. A peal of sweat began to appear around the face. Mary, a beautiful blond haired woman of 35 years, old-with blonde hair arranged in a knot, panted heavily, imagining the worst. (You have to give us a hint of what the worst might be.)*

My God, what's wrong with me? Am I imagining things out of the world? Mary thought as she struggled with the knob, trying to open it. She pled to God for guidance while looking up to the ceiling. But <sup>God?</sup> it never appeared. Mary returned to the sofa and broke into tears. After ten to fifteen minutes, she composed herself as she stood up. Mary came to the door, getting ready for a new day. *Very confusing paragraph. She couldn't open the door? Hard to believe, unless there's something wrong with the door handle. She returned to the sofa to cry? Very odd behavior. She composes herself, approaches the door, getting ready for a new day. Where did the new day thought come from? Very confusing.)*

The passing of Mary's husband, Alfred, at the Marne battle left the Hopkins family with a great loss. Two teenaged sons, Peter and Henry and one ten-year-old daughter, Kathleen, helped their mother deal with the tragedy themselves. Despite the loss of their father and husband, the family avoided poverty through investments made by Alfred who worked as a vice president of a bank. When the Great War began on 4 August 1914, Alfred decided to join the Army to fight for King and Country. Two years later, he lost his life due to shrapnel hitting him on the head, causing him to fell to the ground. *(All of this paragraph is back story that should come first to give the reader a platform to understand the situation – war, husband's death, three kids, not poor, etc. Important stuff but out of place here.)*

Thinking about the tragic events caused Mary to grieve more. After a while, she descended down the stairs, humming a popular wartime tune, Keeping the Home Fires Burning.

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*(She left the bedroom? Descended the stairs to the first floor? Help us with the change of settings.)* ~~The front hall was welcomed (passive voice. Try to avoid it.) with numerous bouquets scattered across the room.~~ *Bouquets of flowers scented the front room. (- something like that)* Mary *(reached the bottom of the stairway and walked to* ~~stood in~~ *the center, contemplating the tranquility. New paragraph.* Mr. Johnston, the butler came out of the backstairs door, carrying a note on a salver. He bowed to his mistress.

“Good morning, ma’am,” Mr. Johnston said. “I have a message from your brother. ~~He’s at the War Ministry and will be home shortly. Anything else I can do for you?”~~

Mary shook her head and took the message on the salver. She scanned it briefly and returned it to ~~the salver~~. Mary knew that Peter, her younger brother was working at the War Ministry as a counselor to the Minister of War. He lost his wife, Angela of fifteen years to the dreadful Spanish flu in September 1918. They had two children, one 18-year-old son attending Oxford and a 22-year-old daughter working as a VAD nurse at the front. The house had three children and two young adults in all and both Mary and Peter had to master the responsibility of raising them. Mary sighed and looked at her black dress, still six inches from the floor, representing the new style of late 1918. *(This is an awkward paragraph with three elements – death of brother’s wife, two kids in addition to her own, new style of black dress. Decide what is essential and cut the rest.)*

“No, thank you, Johnston,” Mary replied.

~~“Very well, ma’am. May I leave now?” the butler asked.~~

~~“Of course, you may go. Thank you very much.”~~

The butler bowed and ~~took the cue-~~ *left*. Mary ~~marched~~ *(Really? Marched?) entered to* the sitting room to reflect on the strange events outside *her home*. ~~152 Eaton Place, her and~~



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~~Peter's home.~~ *(I don't think she's going to flip through a magazine when there's a big commotion outside her house.)* She took one of the magazines from a small table and went to a sofa. Mary leaned back, flipping through the pages of Women's Weekly for an article to read. The clock above the fireplace showed 11:00 a.m. *(Really think about this bit of action. Try to have a more rational way to establish that the war has ended. Mary would certainly want to find out what was going on outside. What was the reason for the commotion?)*

→ "Johnston, the war is over! Can you get the servants downstairs to the front door?"

Peter's voice echoed in the front hall. Mary's head jerked from the magazine, causing her to be surprised. *(Jerking didn't surprise her. The news did.)*

~~Mary put the magazine away and rose to open the door.~~ She saw a deliriously happy Peter hug Cook, Paula and Katie, the two housemaids. *(Who did he hug? Two or three? Cook? and the housemaids)* Mary was both embarrassed and shocked at the spontaneous sight. She tiptoed behind Peter, causing the housemaids to curtsy fast before their disapproving mistress. Johnston was rather restrained in controlling his happiness at the happy news. He stood near the backstairs door.

~~"Sorry about your brother hugging us.~~ Have you heard the news?" Katie asked nervously.

"The war's over, ma'am. Aren't you happy for all of us?"

Mary looked at the happy servants in shell shock *(who was shell shocked and light headed?)* and felt light-headed. Peter sensed that his older sister was near fainting and crossed to help her from fainting. Mary collapsed before Peter, bursting into tears. *(An odd sequence of events and description. Need to revise or eliminate.)*

"My God, Is it true that the war is over?" Mary sobbed as she held Peter's arms.

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"Yes, sister. We're at peace at last. Do get up and we'll have champagne to toast to Peace. Johnston, would you get a bottle of champagne and two goblets for Mrs. Hopkins and me in the library?"

"Very well, sir," Johnston said, bowing to the siblings. He went backstairs, the other servants following him. With the household staff gone, Peter and Mary looked at each other.

The siblings walked to the library next door and entered it (-) The library has a *with its* small table, few chairs, and three high *floor to ceiling* bookcases on the right and left walls. They contained many books from many centuries and few paper book books. In the center there was a *A* French window with *its windowed* doors leading *led* to the balcony.

Mary and Peter walked to the table and embraced each other. Mary looked up from the hug and looked at Peter.

"Wow, we're lucky that we survived the Great War and the Spanish flu," Mary replied (*replied to what?*) as she held her brother tightly. "As for your wife, we'll remember her from time to time, right?"

Peter sadly nodded and released Mary from the embrace. He walked to the window, and opened the doors, and looked at the crowds gathering in the square. Mary joined her grieving brother on the balcony. She looked at the happy (*See if you can come up with something more descriptive than happy.*) atmosphere, feeling relieved.

Mary could not believe her eyes. The War was over now! She left Peter and walked to the bookcase with her beloved Alfred's portrait on the fourth shelf. He was in his official uniform of the Wiltshire Regiment. She smiled at the portrait, sobbing.

"Thank God the horrible war is OVER! Your children and I will have peace at last. I wish you'd be *were* here to celebrate to celebrate the *this* special occasion with us, my dear. But

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you're in Heaven with God. I hope you're proud of our *(Our? Your?)* accomplishments," Mary said as she swiped away her tears. "~~There you go.~~"

Mary touched the picture with tender love. She returned to the balcony and looked at the **happy** crowds. Mary touched Peter's arm.

"Are you okay?" Mary asked gently.

"I'm fine, thank you. God, I can't believe that we ~~men~~ have to return to ~~the~~ jobs and the women to being housewives again. What about you, my sister?"

Mary shrugged at the question.

"I don't know yet. Maybe I'll join a voluntary organization at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children or something like that. I must occupy myself to help my children and myself. It's hard these days, you know." *(Volunteer. How does that help her children. Are they at that hospital?)*

Peter nodded and turned to observe the **happy** scene. Mary mouthed "Excuse me" to him and walked inside. She sighed as she took her family King James Bible out ~~of the right bookcase~~ and put it on a nearby table.

Trying to find something to help her understand the mystery of Peace, Mary fumbled through the pages to find a suitable scripture that deals with Peace. She found Romans and scanned its verses until she came to 15:13.

Mary read the verse aloud, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." She repeated it over and over to make her understand clear. *(This sentence isn't clear.)*

Mary smiled to herself as she put the King James Bible away and raised her eyes to God.

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“Thank God for making me aware of Romans 15:13. Peace is what we should need as we celebrate the end of the Great War. Praise to God!”

Kansas

Send rewrite

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*The story focuses on a mother of three children who faces the haunting reality of the end of the Great War on November 11, 1918.*

Mary Hopkins, recently widowed, was knitting a scarf for one of her best friend's son who was at the front when noise outside interrupted the peace of her study. Her heart beat heavily as she put the knitting aside on the sofa and went to the window. Mary slowly opened the window and leaned forward to observe her neighbors going out of their houses leaving their homes to find what was going on.

Comment [s1]: This first phrase, despite the reference to her being widowed, made me think that she was having an ordinary moment. It set the tone for someone knitting peacefully, and then something happens. I'd start it off differently. Maybe, Mary sat in the living room, her knitting untouched, staring out the window, etc etc. Also, just say Mary, no last name. Makes the reader have a more intimate connection with her.

Not sure what was going on, Mary closed the window and pulled the curtains shut. She was overwhelmed with sadness and guilt as she walked to the door. Bad memories caught Mary's shaking hands on the door. A peal of sweat began to appear around the face. Mary, a beautiful woman of 35 years old with blonde hair arranged in a knot, panted heavily, imagining the worst.

Comment [s2]: Okay, now that I've read a couple of paragraphs, I know she's upstairs. But at first, I thought she was opening the front door of the house.

interrupting an important moment w/ something trite

Comment [s3]: Too much info in one sentence.

My God, what's wrong with me? Am I imagining things out of the world? Mary thought as she struggled with the knob, trying to open it. She pled to God for guidance while looking up to the ceiling. But it never appeared. Mary returned to the sofa and broke into tears. After ten to fifteen minutes, she composed herself as she stood up. Mary came to the door, getting ready for a new day.

Comment [s4]: ?

The passing of Mary's husband, Alfred, at the Marne battle had left the Hopkins family with a great loss. Two teenaged sons, Peter and Henry, and one ten-year-old daughter, Kathleen, helped their mother deal with the tragedy themselves. Despite the loss of their father and husband, the family avoided poverty through investments made by Alfred who had worked as a

Comment [s5]: How far back from the present moment?



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vice president of a bank. When the Great War began on 4 August 1914, Alfred decided to join the Army to fight for King and Country. Two years later, he lost his life due to shrapnel hitting him on the head, ~~causing him to fell to the ground.~~

Comment [s6]: I would shorten the previous page to a couple of sentences, and then move into a scene. Let us find out through dialogue (with someone who expresses sorrow at her husband's passing) or through her actions (picking up a wedding photo and crying).

Thinking about the tragic events caused Mary to grieve more. After a while, she descended down the stairs, humming a popular wartime tune, ~~(Keeping the Home Fires Burning.)~~ *italics* The front hall was welcomed with numerous bouquets scattered across the room. Mary stood in the center, contemplating the tranquility. Mr. Johnston, the butler, came out of the backstairs door, carrying a note on a salver. He bowed to his mistress.

"Good morning, ma'am," Mr. Johnston said. "I have a message from your brother. He's at the War Ministry and will be home shortly. Anything else I can do for you?"

Mary shook her head and took the message on the salver. She scanned it briefly and returned it to the salver. Mary knew that Peter, her younger brother, was working ~~at the War Ministry~~ as a counselor to the Minister of War. He'd lost his wife, Angela, ~~of fifteen years~~ to the dreadful Spanish flu in September 1918. They had two children, one 18-year-old son attending Oxford and a 22-year-old daughter working as a VAD nurse at the front. The house had three children and two young adults in all and both Mary and Peter had to master the responsibility of raising them. Mary sighed and looked at her black dress, still six inches from the floor, representing the new style of late 1918.

Comment [s7]: By the time I was done reading this paragraph, I forgot Mary was talking to someone. Shorten it.

"No, thank you, Johnston," Mary replied.

"Very well, ma'am. May I leave now?" the butler asked.

"Of course, you may go. Thank you very much."

The butler bowed and took the cue. Mary marched to the sitting room to reflect on the strange events outside 152 Eaton Place, her and Peter's home. She took one of the magazines

Comment [s8]: What strange events? Everyone leaving their homes?

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from a small table and went to a sofa. Mary leaned back, flipping through the pages of Women's Weekly for an article to read. The clock above the fireplace showed 11:00 ~~AM~~<sup>m</sup>.

Formatted: Small caps

"Johnston, the war is over! Can you get the servants downstairs to the front door?"

Comment [s9]: Seems strange to yell that the war is over and then follow that with such a sentence. It's anti-climatic. Also, wouldn't he find his mother and tell her first? Maybe run into the room and pick her up and swing her around? That sort of thing. Or take her hands in his and tell her. You need to show the relationship between the two of them.

Peter's voice echoed in the front hall. Mary's head jerked from the magazine, ~~causing her to be~~ surprised.

Comment [s10]: What caused her to be surprised? The magazine? Her head jerking? This is being picky but this is an example of a misplaced modifier. Also, her head jerking from the magazine indicates she's surprised, so you don't even need the last clause.

Mary put the magazine away and rose to open the door. She saw a deliriously happy Peter hug Cook, Paula and Katie, the two housemaids. Mary was both embarrassed and shocked at the spontaneous sight. She tiptoed behind Peter, causing the housemaids to curtsy fast before their disapproving mistress. Johnston was rather restrained in controlling his happiness at the happy news. He stood near the backstairs door.

Comment [s11]: Cook?

"Sorry about your brother hugging us. Have you heard the news?" Katie asked nervously.

"The war's over, ma'am. Aren't you ~~happy~~ for all of us?"

Comment [s12]: Who says this? And why would Mary care about Peter hugging them when she just heard the war is over? Perhaps she'd watch them in shell shock as they hugged, but not necessarily being embarrassed-she'd be too preoccupied with her son's announcement.

Mary looked at the ~~happy~~ servants in shell shock and felt light-headed. Peter sensed that his ~~older sister~~ was near ~~fainting~~ and crossed to help her ~~from fainting~~. Mary collapsed before Peter, bursting into tears.

Comment [s13]: I thought that Mary was Peter's mother?

"My God, Is it true ~~that the war is over~~?" Mary sobbed as she held Peter's arms.

"Yes, sister. We're at peace at last. ~~Do get up and w~~We'll have champagne to toast to Peace. Johnston, would you get a bottle of champagne and two goblets for Mrs. Hopkins and me in the library?"

reread: now I understand that Peter is her brother

"Very well, sir," Johnston said, bowing to the siblings. He went backstairs, the other servants following him. With the household staff gone, Peter and Mary looked at each other.

The siblings walked to the library next door and entered it. The library ~~has held~~ a small table, ~~a few chairs and three high bookcases on the right and left walls~~. ~~They contained many~~

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~~books~~ Books which spanned from many centuries lined the shelves, along with ~~and~~ a few paper book books. ~~In the center there was a~~ French window with doors leading ~~led~~ to the balcony.

Mary and Peter walked to the table and embraced each other. Mary looked up from the hug and looked at Peter.

"Wow, we're lucky that we survived the Great War and the Spanish flu," Mary replied as she held her brother tightly. "As for your wife, we'll remember her from time to time, right?"

Comment [s14]: Did they say "wow" back in 1918?

Peter ~~sadly-nodded-and~~ released Mary from the embrace. He walked to the window, ~~and~~ opened the doors, and ~~stepped onto the balcony, looked at~~ observing the crowds gathering in the square.

Mary joined ~~her grieving brother~~ ~~him on the balcony~~. She looked at the happy atmosphere, feeling relieved.

Mary could not believe her eyes. ~~And then it really hit her.~~ The War was over now! She left Peter and ~~walked~~ to the bookcase with her beloved Alfred's portrait on the fourth shelf. He was in his official uniform of the Wiltshire Regiment. She smiled at the portrait, ~~sobbing~~.

Comment [s15]: Find a better verb

Comment [s16]: She's really all over the place.

"Thank God the horrible war is OVER! Your children and I will have peace at last. I wish you'd be here to celebrate ~~to-celebrate~~ the special occasion with us, my dear. But you're in Heaven with God. I hope you're proud of our accomplishments," ~~,"~~ Mary ~~said as she~~ swiped away her tears. "There you go."

Mary touched the picture with tender love. She returned to the balcony and looked at the happy crowds. Mary touched Peter's arm.

"Are you okay?" Mary asked gently.

"I'm fine, thank you. God, ~~I can't believe that we men have to return to the jobs and the women to being housewives again.~~ What about you, my sister?"

Comment [s17]: Is that something he'd say?

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Mary shrugged at the question.

"I don't know yet. Maybe I'll join a voluntary organization at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children or something like that. I must occupy myself to help my children and myself. It's hard these days, you know."

Peter nodded and turned to observe the happy scene. Mary mouthed "Excuse me" to him and walked inside. She sighed as she took her family King James Bible out of the right bookcase and put it on a nearby table.

Watch usage of "happy"

Trying to find something to help her understand the mystery of Peace, Mary fumbled through the pages to find a suitable scripture ~~that deals with Peace~~. She found Romans and scanned its verses until she came to 15:13.

Mary read the verse aloud, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." She repeated it over and over to make her understand clear.

Comment [s18]: I'm not sure what's to understand here.

Mary smiled to herself as she put the King James Bible away and raised her eyes to God.

"Thank God for making me aware of Romans 15:13. Peace is what we should need as we celebrate the end of the Great War. Praise to God!"