UNIT 6

Naples and Port Said. We went through the Suez Canal and down the Red Sea. It was all tremendously exciting. For the first time, I saw great san dy deserts, and Arab soldiers on camels, and palm trees with dates growing on them, and flying fish and thousands of other marvellous things.

By the summer of 1939, it became obvious that there was .going to be a war with Hitler's Germany. On the next day after Britain entered the war I got into my car and drove north to Nairobi, in Kenya, to join the RAP.[1] For six months they trained us in small airplanes called Tiger Moths, and those days were also glorious. There were twenty of us training to be pilots out there in Nairobi. Seventeen of those twenty were killed during the war.

I myself was shot down. My plane crashed in the Libyan desert and burst into flames, but I managed to get out and was finally rescued by our soldiers. In 1942 my injuries began to give me too much trouble and I had to stop flying. They gave me a month's leave and then sent me to Washington, D. C. as assistant air attache, at this point the United States was already in the war as well.

I was twenty-six years old when I arrived in Washington, and I still had no thoughts of becoming a writer. During the morning of my third day, I was sitting in my new office at the British Embassy when there was a knock on my door. "Come In."

A very small man with thick spectacles entered the room. "Forgive me for bothering you," he said. "My name is Forester. C. S. Forester."*

I nearly fell out of my chair. "Are you joking?"" I said. "No," he said, smiling. "That's me."

And it was. It was the great writer himself.

"took," he said. "A magazine called the ***Saturday Evening Post*** will publish any story I write. I have a contract with them. And I have come to you because I think you might have a good story to tell. I mean about flying. Come and have lunch with me," he said. "And while we're eating, you can tell me all about It. Tell me your most exciting adventure. PU write it up for the ***Saturday Evening Poet.*** The Americans should know more about this war and help us.*

I was thrilled. I had never met a famous writer before. In the small French restaurant we took roast duck with vegetables and potatoes. The diah required so much attention thst I found It difficult to talk. And apart from that, I have never been good at telling stories aloud.

. y^{TM} ■«» l » try to write down on paper what happened and send It to you. Then you can rewrite It properly **Yourself** In your own good time. Wouldn't that be easier? I could dolt; tonight/'

C. 8. Forester (1S99- **ipafli — $_a$ HiHNh writer ui v„ - .,** . _