

DARKNESS

Scrabbling in the darkness of the locker room; muttering in the furthest corner. Who is there? I enter and flick on the light.

STOKES

Rear Gunner Stokes has high locker emptied almost entirely, his impatience clear.

Cursing profusely – he has lost something.

- Lost my fucking gloves, he says. – Can't fly at that height without them or your hands will freeze off.
- Well, I haven't seen them. Sorry.

I gather the cigarettes I had come for and leave, leaving Stokes alone with his panic.

SOMBRE

Sombre faces in the NAAFI. Friendly faces look grim. My absence has only been brief, but something has changed here for the worse. I am greeted curtly.

- What's up?
- Bad night on the Ruhr. B squad took a hit. Reconnaissance was shot. Ack ack coming at them from south of Duisburg. Never stood chance.

I am startled. Stokes flew in B223.

- Stokes...he had a lucky escape.
- Stokes? He went down as well.

SPECTRE

Then I realised. Stokes was searching for his gloves in darkness. Yet I spoke with him. I saw him.

- Funny thing...he almost missed the sortie...he couldn't find his flying gloves. Poor bastard.

I leave in confused silence. Whatever I saw and spoke with was solid enough to open and empty a locker. He seemed *real*.

I now left wondering; how many of these people I see around me are really people, and how many are ghosts? You cannot tell.