

Two Wars and a Wedding, which covers—you guessed it!—two wars, was one of my longest books in manuscript. The history was so fascinating and the sources were so rich that all I wanted was to cram in as many details drawn from the historical record as I could fit.

The result of this? Spending two months cutting out about forty thousand words to get to a reasonable length.

Out of all that, there were only two scenes I truly regret losing. And now, for the first time, you can read those deleted scenes in their entirety below.

The Wedding at Arachova

(deleted from Chapter Eight of *Two Wars and a Wedding*)

This account of the students of the American School bumbling into a wedding in the hillside town of Arachova was drawn directly from the biography of Harriet Boyd, my model for Betsy Hayes. In the book, their arrival at the wedding falls just after Charles, despite being married, kisses Betsy. Naturally, being at a wedding is salt in the wound for Betsy (and there's nothing an author likes better than pouring salt in the wound). But the book was too long, so the wedding had to go....

The mountainous terrain was a blessing. No one could question why she no longer rode next to Monsieur de Robecourt if they could only ride single file through the rough passes, where firs began to replace the olive trees. They were hardy trees, clinging stubbornly to the rock as the path angled up and around. Betsy had a fierce fellow-feeling for them, defying the elements, standing their ground.

It was sunset by the time they made Arachova, through picturesque gates into a stone courtyard alight with torches and music. There was a wild fanfare of pipes and drums and for a confused moment Betsy thought it was for them, that all chance-met travelers were greeted so. A man in a grand white fustanella and a vest rich with embroidery and braid detached himself from the crowd, pressing his hand to his heart and his head in the traditional gesture of welcome.

"It is a wedding!" exclaimed their guide, as though he himself had arranged it personally for their enjoyment. "This is the father of the bride, who invites you to join in their joy. For a stranger brings good luck, and a whole party of strangers even more so. You are a blessing on their match."

Betsy didn't feel like a blessing. She felt more like an ill wish. But she did her best to smile and express her joy for the happy couple in her halting modern Greek. The father beamed at Betsy in approval, even though she rather suspected she might not have entirely said what she meant to have said, and called forth the bride to welcome her unexpected well-wishers.

Betsy's first thought was that she wasn't so much a woman as a walking treasury.

The girl had been bedecked with her worldly goods. Wide gold bracelets covered her arms; silver rings crowded her henna-stained fingers; row after row of gold coins hung around her neck, jangling on her breast. A thick gold fillet anchored the veil that screened her face.

"This," announced their guide in a stage whisper, "is the heiress of the village. It is a very good match for the groom."

But what about the heiress? Did anyone care about the heiress? Her eyes were becomingly lowered as she greeted the party of foreigners, kissing the hands of the men in a way that made the Harvard boys preen and made Betsy see red. Somehow, it hadn't seemed offensive to her to have a gentleman kissing her hand in the continental fashion, but to have this poor woman kissing the hand of strangers—it felt like subjection.

She was the bride. They should be feting her, not the other way around.

"She has," announced their guide, "just come back from the spring where she has been introduced to the sacred duty of washing the household linen."

He let the words roll grandly off the tongue as though this were some marvelous mystery rather than the drudgery of the laundry.

"I should there'd be a lot of it with those fustanella skirts," said Ethel, eyeing the men's wide kilts with the practiced eye of someone who done her share of dealing with household linens.

"It's rather like Nausicaa, in the Odyssey," said Jenks expansively, still chuffed over having his hand kissed. "Who meets Odysseus as she washes her clothes with her handmaids by the seaside."

Odysseus. Another man who left his wife at home while he went off gallivanting and flirting with younger women.

"Why shouldn't the men wash their own skirts?" snapped Betsy. "If they dirtied it, they should clean it, not leave someone else to scrub up their mess."

Ethel gave her a long, sideways look.

"The men have other duties," said their guide expansively. Yes, thought Betsy, whose neck was stiff with not looking at Monsieur de Robecourt. Amusing themselves elsewhere. Sitting in the village square bragging while the women did all the work. "Now the bride will lead the village maidens in the dance of the virgins."

A group of about twenty women followed the bride into the center of the square, their movements slow and stylized as they circled to the ancient music, like something off an attic vase. And just as outmoded, Betsy thought furiously. All of them men were staring. Jenks elbowed Wingate and said something low that made them both guffaw. Betsy hated everyone.

"What a charming survival," said Wingate, ogling the village maidens as they turned and dipped in their white cotton dresses.

"I think it's horrid," said Betsy sharply. Everyone turned to look at her. She glared right back at them. "She's being sold for her dowry. Doesn't anyone else find anything troubling about that? They're not even subtle about it."

"It is the way of the world." Monsieur de Robecourt spoke for the first time, his voice rusty from disuse. His gaze held Betsy's and she knew it wasn't about this bride that he was speaking. "It is how it is done."

Betsy was in a flaming temper and too tired to bother to hide it. "Just because things are how they're done doesn't make them all right. You can stay and do the dance of the virgins. I'm going to bed."

Behind her, she could hear Wingate saying, "Someone should have had her coffee today."

And wasn't that just the crux of it? There was Ethel, who was a better epigrapher than any of them, dutifully lugging along her coffee pot in her pack so she could make coffee for these louts. Just like those Greek maidens hauling yards and yards of linen to the village spring.

It wasn't any different at all. They might think they were colleagues, but they'd always be something less.

The pipes and drums went on and on. Betsy put a blanket over of her head to try to blot out the sounds of revelry. It didn't dull the music. All it did was make her itch, and the mitten-like extensions Aikaterini had gifted her to wear over the hem and sleeves of her nightdress didn't help at all.

Betsy kicked uncomfortably at the sack-like garment hobbling her feet. The addition was ostensibly to ward off the predatory insects of Mount Parnassus—but it had the uncomfortable savor of the chastity belt about it.

Was that what Aikaterini had been warning her about? Not heartache or embarrassment, but something much simpler, much darker, and much more devastating.

No. She couldn't see Monsieur de Robecourt forcing himself on her.

Seducing her, on the other hand....

Betsy flopped uncomfortably over in her itchy sack. So much for keeping out the bugs. She was pretty sure there were fleas inside it as well as without.

What would have happened if she hadn't walked away today? That was the worst of it, that she didn't trust herself. No. That wasn't the worst of it, she decided, jackknifing herself furiously into a sitting position. The worst of it was that she'd truly thought they'd had a meeting of minds. Something rare and wonderful. She'd believed he genuinely cared about her thoughts, her ideas.

And, yes, he might be married; yes, that might be a disappointment, whether she admitted it to Aikaterini or not; but he could married and still share his mind—so long as he didn't attempt to share her body.

I never intended, he'd said.

He'd certainly never intended to tell her the truth. Betsy writhed uncomfortably in her felt layers. Outside time, indeed! What he meant was "far enough away not to be caught". And if they were caught? There would be no consequences for him. He'd go on excavating. There might be some coldness, perhaps, from the more straitlaced members of the American School, but it would all fade in a season or two.

But Betsy—Betsy would be ruined. It wouldn't matter that she hadn't known he wasn't free. She'd be used goods—and, even worse, it would be used as an object lesson in the dangers of admitting women into previously male provinces. Women in the schools? A dreadful idea. Just look what had happened to that little American girl who thought she could be an archaeologist.

Below, there was the smell of roasting meat and sharp red wine; male shouts and laughter.

Betsy pulled her flea-infested blanket back over her head and told herself she'd had a lucky escape. And she wouldn't, absolutely wouldn't, let anything distract her again.

Except possibly these fleas, which were driving her mad with itching.

Advice from Mrs. Schliemann

(deleted from Chapter Twelve of Two Wars and a Wedding)

You may recognize Betsy's interview with Mrs. Schliemann from the book. This scene remained, but with large chunks cut out, including the part where Mrs. Schliemann confides in Betsy that she was once sexually assaulted on a dig. Below, you can read the full conversation between Betsy and Mrs. Schliemann with the missing bits restored.

Mrs. Schliemann's mansion made Aikaterini's look like a humble Boston brownstone. It was an enormous, rectangular building with a double colonnade and gratuitous statuary on the roof. Inside, the walls were rich with murals depicting scenes from the Trojan War. Of course, thought Betsy, craning her neck every which way so as not to miss any detail and tripping over her own feet in the process. What else would they be? This was the woman who, with her husband, had found Troy.

Even Ava couldn't object to her spending an afternoon calling on one of the great names in Betsy's field. Admittedly, it was her husband who had been the great name, but everyone knew that Mrs. Schliemann had been by his side every step of the way, had wheedled the workman, transcribed the reports, and had become, in her widowhood, a focal point of the classicist community, hosting gatherings and giving lectures on her—er, their—discoveries.

Here was a woman who could teach her more about excavations than Professor Richardson had ever begun to imagine.

"Is it true that you carried Priam's gold out wrapped in your shawl?" Betsy asked eagerly, as soon as the proprieties had been observed.

Mrs. Schliemann, respectable and surprisingly ordinary, smiled kindly at her. "No. I wasn't even there when they discovered it."

"But—" Her father had loved that story, had repeated it to Betsy with such relish that she felt she'd been there, had seen young Mrs. Schliemann stooped protectively over the precious bundle in her arms.

Mrs. Schliemann handed her a plate of cakes. "It does make a pretty story, doesn't it? My husband could never resist spinning a good story, whether it was true or not. Men are such romantics. Just look at them all go swoony over the notion of Helen."

Betsy goggled at her, speechless.

"In real life, most of them probably couldn't abide a Helen," said Mrs. Schliemann thoughtfully. "But they all like the idea of her in theory. Goodness only knows to whom those jewels belonged. But once you claim they're Helen's, the world takes note. It made a nice symmetry, my smuggling the jewels out of Troy, just as Helen herself was once smuggled to Troy."

"But you weren't actually there?" Betsy was still trying to wrap her head around the fact that what she had always taken as truth was instead a prettily arranged fiction.

"I had been called away to Athens upon the death of my father and missed all the more exciting parts of that particular excavation." Taking pity on Betsy, Mrs. Schliemann added, "But that doesn't make the find itself any less valuable. Just a bit less... romantic."

Betsy had a moment of panic that everything she thought was true might not be. "But—you did excavate, didn't you?"

"Oh, my dear, yes. I was supervising crews of workmen by the time I was eighteen."

Thank goodness. Betsy scooted eagerly forward in her chair. “At the American School—they’ve as good as told me that they’ll never let me into the field. But *you* worked in the field. How did you do it? How did you make them listen to you?”

“I had the authority of my husband. I spoke with his voice. There might have been times when his voice sounded remarkably like my own—but the truth is that I couldn’t have done any of it without him.” Betsy’s face fell. Mrs. Schliemann regarded her with tolerant sympathy. “If you truly want to excavate, the easiest way to go about it is to find yourself an archaeologist to marry.”

Betsy couldn’t tell if she were joking or not. She suspected not.

If Charles were free....

No. Not only was it wrong to think that way—although she did catch herself daydreaming about it more often than not—it was a betrayal of everything she believed to accede to the notion that a woman’s position depended on her husband.

“But what if I want to be someone in my own right?” Belatedly, Betsy realized how offensive it sounded, implying Mrs. Schliemann wasn’t. But hadn’t Mrs. Schliemann just said as much herself? “What if I want to excavate on my own account?”

The amusement drained from Mrs. Schliemann’s face. She pressed her lips together, making lines appear on either side of her mouth. “It is not an easy thing, being a woman in the field. I missed several seasons due to the care of my children. For a time, I could only dig in the vicinity of Athens, in case one of the children should fall ill or need me.” A glimmer shone in her dark eyes. “But I did still dig.”

“I don’t know if I’ll ever have children.” If she couldn’t marry Charles, Betsy wasn’t sure she wanted to marry anyone. There couldn’t be that many Charleses in the world, men who would love her for her mind and not just for the dowry she would bring or the children she might bear.

Mrs. Schliemann shook her head. “Even before I had children.... It was hard, making the men listen. I had to show them I could get in the dirt like them, dig like them, appeal to their egos, tell them the great part they were playing in uncovering our heritage. I recited Homer to them.” Her slight, ironic smile reminded Betsy eerily of the expression found on ancient statues. The archaic smile they called it. “They were less impressed by that than I might have hoped.”

“I can show them I can dig.” Betsy sat up straighter, relieved to have some constructive advice at last. “And I’ve been working on my modern Greek so I can speak to them in their own language.”

“It’s not just that.” Mrs. Schliemann looked at Betsy, looked at her so long and so hard that Betsy had to resist the urge to squirm in her seat. Slowly, she said, “What I have to tell you is not a story I share. But you are nearly the age of my daughter. And I shouldn’t like to think of you going out there without knowing everything you need to know.”

That sounded intriguing. Betsy leaned forward, waiting for words of wisdom. “What do you mean?”

“In my third season in the field.... We were at Troy.” Mrs. Schliemann twisted one of the rings on her fingers, turning it back and forth, the stone winking in the light. She looked directly at Betsy. “One of the workmen. He attempted to force himself on me.”

“Oh,” said Betsy. It felt deeply inadequate. It wasn’t what she’d expected at all. She had no idea what to say.

“It was a great shock to me. I had never considered—I had never imagined—” Mrs. Schliemann took a deep breath. “It is not something one talks about.”

“No,” agreed Betsy dazedly. Charles trying to kiss her at Delphi—well, that was different. To be the object of an assault—she’d never even entertained the possibility.

Had Dr. Richardson? Was that why he wouldn’t let her into the field?

“And you are so little,” said Mrs. Schliemann, almost apologetically. She was twisting the ring again. “Perhaps, because you are American, that might be a help to you, might set you apart... or perhaps not. Men are men.”

Men were men, great gallumping things, but Betsy had never viewed them as a threat to anything more than her pride. Size and strength had never come into it.

“What did you do?” she asked.

“I told my husband, of course.” The stone on Mrs. Schliemann’s ring winked in and out as she turned it. “The man was let go. I was terrified, for a long time after that, of being on my own with the men.”

“But you kept digging.”

Mrs. Schliemann inclined her head, that beautiful head that had once worn Helen’s jewels. “I kept digging. I knew, if I let myself succumb to fear, I should never be free. I had my husband send me to supervise the men at Pasha Tepe. It was a mound about a kilometer from Hisarlik.”

“Yes, I’ve read about your discoveries there.” Betsy had read everything there was to read about the Schliemanns’ excavations. “Your husband didn’t go with you?”

“No.” That was all, but it was enough. Betsy had a glimpse of just how formidable Mrs. Schliemann must have been, even in her youth. “After that, I could go back. But I did so knowing the risk I was taking. As you should know.”

“But you went back,” said Betsy stubbornly.

“I went back. It was my husband’s work—and my own,” she admitted. “I remember the day we found the side chamber of the tholos at Orchomenos. The workman struck away some stone, and there, beneath it, was the top of a doorway, so beautifully worked you can hardly imagine. A door where we expected no door! And inside....” Mrs. Schliemann’s face seemed lit from within, looking at scenes Betsy had seen only in smudged newsprint and artists’ renderings. “There is nothing to the feeling of uncovering a piece of the past, bringing it back to light out of the rubble.”

Betsy clasped her hands tightly together, practically bouncing on the chair in her excitement. “That’s what I want. To uncover the past. To find those hidden doorways.”

“Then that is what you must do. But do it knowingly. And carry a knife.” Mrs. Schliemann fixed Betsy with a serious look. “If you wish to control your own excavation, you must show no weakness, either to your men or to your peers. If you falter, even for a moment, the men will shirk—and your colleagues will say they always knew you weren’t up to the task.”

Betsy lifted her head high, thrilled by the fact that Mrs. Schliemann—Mrs. Schliemann!—had taken her into her confidence. “I won’t give them the opportunity.”

It was only after she’d left that it occurred to her that it wasn’t so much her not giving her colleagues an opportunity to mock her as her colleagues not even affording her an opportunity to be mocked.