Pip Williams was born in London, grew up in Sydney and now lives in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia with her family and an assortment of animals. She has spent most of her working life as a social researcher, studying what keeps us well and what helps us thrive, and she is the author of *One Italian Summer*, a memoir of her family's travels in search of the good life, which was published by Affirm Press to wide acclaim. Her first novel, *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, based on her original research in the Oxford English Dictionary archives, was published in 2020 and became an international bestseller. *The Bookbinder of Jericho* is her second novel, a companion to *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, and again combines her talents for historical research and beautiful storytelling.

PRAISE FOR *THE DICTIONARY OF LOST WORDS*

'From this quirky lexicographical incident Pip Williams has conjured an extraordinary, charming novel … Williams pins a whole, rich life to the page.' *The Times* (UK)

'What a novel of words, their adventure and their capacity to define and, above all, challenge the world. There will not be this year a more original novel published. I just know it.' Tom Keneally

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'The debut novelist who's become a lockdown sensation.' *Guardian Australia*

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'In the annals of lexicography, no more imaginative, delightful, charming and clever book has yet been written.' Simon Winchester

'Pip Williams has spun a marvelous fiction about the power of language to elevate or repress … It is at once timely and timeless.' Geraldine Brooks

'The biggest treat of *The Dictionary of Lost Words* is the complexity of a central character who is not easy to classify – a listener with an innate understanding of the life-changing importance of valuing people's words.' *The Saturday Paper*

PRAISE FOR *THE BOOKBINDER OF JERICHO*

'I've longed to return to Williams' distinctive blend of riveting historical detail and brilliant women. *The Bookbinder of Jericho* is everything I wanted and more.'
Toni Jordan

'*The Bookbinder of Jericho* is an extraordinary work of poetic grace and raw beauty that will enfold readers in its powerful and moving narrative. A stunning companion to *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, this book is a classic and another triumph for Pip Williams.'
Karen Brooks

'After finishing Pip's beautiful book I had to wander along my shelves, taking my old books out and turning them over to see how they had been stitched together. *The Bookbinder of Jericho* will teach you things you'll never forget – not just about how books were made, but who the women were who made them. Rich, deep and fascinating, it's what all novels should be – a companion for life.'
Tegan Bennett Daylight

'Heart wrenching and bittersweet, *The Bookbinder of Jericho* is a lovingly woven story of hardship, longing and hope. Pip Williams writes with great insight and fascinating detail of working-class women, the war effort and World War I refugees. It was such a pleasure to spend time with these completely charming women.'
Mirandi Riwoe

First published by Affirm Press in 2023
Boon Wurrung Country
28 Thistlethwaite Street
South Melbourne VIC 3205
affirmpress.com.au

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

ISBN: 9781922806628 (paperback)

Cover design by Andy Warren © Affirm Press
Map and map illustrations by Mike Hall
Author photo by Andre Goosen
Typeset in 12/18pt Minion Pro by Post Pre-Press Group
Proudly printed and bound in Australia by McPherson's Printing Group

The Bookbinder *of* Jericho

PIP WILLIAMS

affirm press

For my sister,
Nicola

‘Now goddess, child of Zeus, tell the old story for our modern times. Find the beginning.’

Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Emily Wilson

OXFORD

• 1913 •

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Scale in feet

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RIVER CHERWELL

UNIVERSITY PARKS

SOMERVILLE COLLEGE

BANBURY ROAD

WOODSTOCK ROAD

ST SEPULCHRE'S CEMETERY

Somerville College

Radcliffe Infirmary

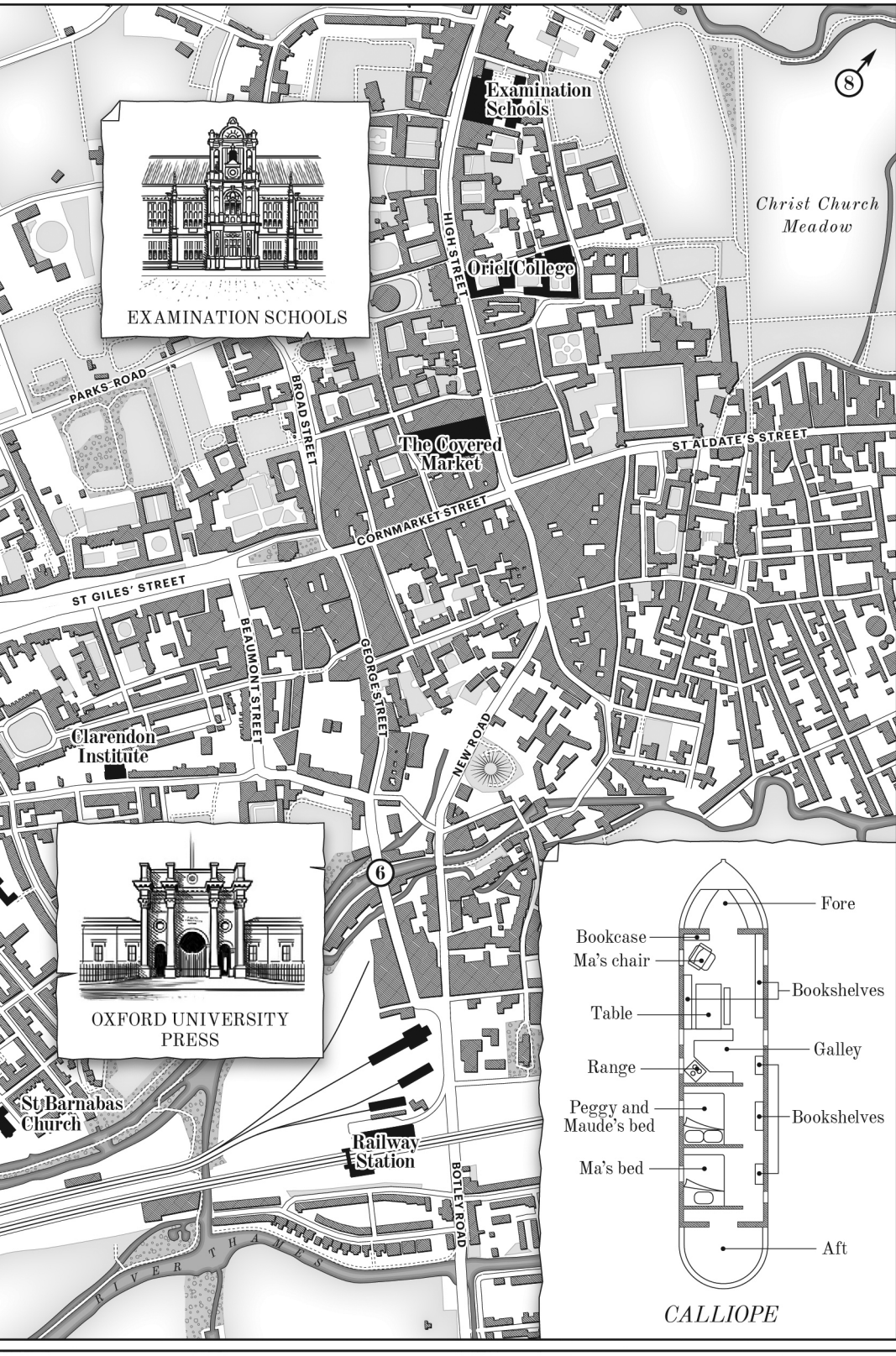
Oxford University Press

WALTON STREET

JERICHO

St Sepulchre's Cemetery

1 *Calliope*'s mooring
2 Walton Well Bridge
3 The Jericho Tavern
4 Prince of Wales
5 The Bookbinder's Arms
6 Hythe Bridge
7 Port Meadow
8 Cowley Barracks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BEAUMONT STREET
GEORGE STREET
NEW ROAD
Clarendon Institute
St Barnabas Church
Railway Station
BOTLEY ROAD
RIVER THAMES
8
6
Fore
Bookcase
Ma's chair
Bookshelves
Table
Galley
Range
Peggy and Maude's bed
Bookshelves
Ma's bed
Aft
CALLIOPE

Before

Scraps. That's all I got. Fragments that made no sense without the words before or the words after.

We were folding *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* and I'd scanned the first page of the editor's preface a hundred times. The last line on the page rang in my mind, incomplete and teasing. *I have only ventured to deviate where it seemed to me that …*

Ventured to deviate. My eye caught the phrase each time I folded a section.

Where it seemed to me that …

That what? I thought. Then I'd start on another sheet.

First fold: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Second fold: *Edited by WJ Craig*. Third fold: *ventured to* bloody *deviate*.

My hand hovered as I read that last line and tried to guess at the rest.

WJ Craig changed Shakespeare, I thought. Where it seemed to him that …

I grew desperate to know.

I glanced around the bindery, along the folding bench piled with quires of sheets and folded sections. I looked at Maude.

She couldn't care less about the words on the page. I could hear her humming a little tune, each fold marking time like the second hand of a clock. Folding was her favourite job, and she could fold better than anyone, but that didn't stop mistakes. *Folding tangents*, Ma used to call them. Folds of her own design and purpose. From the corner of my eye, I'd sense a change in rhythm. It was easy enough to reach over, stay her hand. She understood. She wasn't simple, despite what people thought. And if I missed the signs? Well, a section ruined. It could happen to any of us with the slip of a bonefolder. But we'd notice. We'd put the damaged section aside. My sister never did. And so I had to.

Keep an eye.

Watch over.

Deep breath.

Dear Maude. I love you, I really do. But sometimes … This is how my mind ran.

Already I could see a folded section in Maude's pile that didn't sit square. I'd remove it later. She wouldn't know, and neither would Mrs Hogg. There'd be no need for tutting.

The only thing that could upset the applecart at that moment was me.

If I didn't find out why WJ Craig had changed Shakespeare, I thought I might scream. I raised my hand.

'Yes, Miss Jones?'

'Lavatory, Mrs Hogg.'

She nodded.

I finished the fold I'd started and waited for Mrs Hogg to drift away. *Mrs Hogg, the freckly frog.* Maude had said it out loud once and I'd never been forgiven. She had no trouble telling us apart, but as far as Mrs Hogg was concerned, Maude and I were one and the same.

'Back in a mo, Maudie.'

'Back in a mo,' she said.

Lou was folding the second section. As I passed behind her chair, I leant over her shoulder. 'Can you stop for a second?' I said.

'I thought you were desperate for the lav.'

'Of course not. I just need to know what it says.'

She paused long enough for me to read the end of the sentence. I added it to what I knew and whispered it to myself: '*I have only ventured to deviate where it seemed to me that the carelessness of either copyist or printer deprived a word or sentence wholly of meaning.*'

'Can I keep folding now, Peggy?' Lou asked.

'Yes, you can, Louise,' said Mrs Hogg.

Lou blushed and gave me a look.

'Miss *Jones* …'

Mrs Hogg had been at school with Ma and she'd known me since Maude and I were newborns. Still, Miss *Jones*. The emphasis on Ma's maiden name, just in case anyone in the bindery had forgotten her disgrace.

'Your job is to bind the books, not read them …'

She kept talking but I stopped listening. I'd heard it a hundred times. The sheets were there to be folded not read, the sections gathered not read, the text blocks sewn not read – and for the hundredth time I thought that reading the pages was the only thing that made the rest tolerable. *I have only ventured to deviate where it seemed to me that the carelessness of either copyist or printer deprived a word or sentence wholly of meaning.*

Mrs Hogg raised her finger, and I wondered what response I had failed to give. She was going red in the face, the way she invariably did. Then our forewoman interrupted.

'Peggy, as you are up, I wonder if you could run an errand for me?' Mrs Stoddard turned a smile on the floor supervisor. 'I'm sure you can spare her for ten minutes, Mrs Hogg?'

Freckly frog nodded and continued down the line of girls without another glance at me. I looked toward my sister.

'Maude will be fine,' said Mrs Stoddard.

We walked the length of the bindery, and Mrs Stoddard stopped occasionally to encourage one of the younger girls or to advise on posture if she saw someone slouching. When we got to her office, she picked up a book, newly bound, lettered in gold so shiny it looked wet.

The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250–1900. We printed it almost every year.

'Has no one written a poem since 1900?' I asked.

Mrs Stoddard suppressed a smile. 'The Controller will want to see how the latest print run has turned out.' She handed me the book. 'The walk to his office should relieve your boredom.'

I held the book to my nose: clean leather and the fading scent of ink and glue. I never tired of it. It was the freshly minted smell of a new idea, an old story, a disturbing rhyme. I knew it would be gone from that book within a month, so I inhaled, as if I might absorb whatever was printed on the pages within.

I walked back slowly between two long rows of benches piled with flat printed sheets and folded sections. Women and girls were bent to the task of transforming one to the other, and I had been given a moment's reprieve. I started to open the book when a freckly hand covered mine and pushed the book shut.

'It won't do to have the spine creased,' said Mrs Hogg. 'Not by the likes of you, Miss *Jones*.'

I took my time walking through the corridors of the Clarendon Press.

Mr Hart had a visitor: her words were escaping the privacy of their conversation. She was young, well spoken, with a faint hint of the

Midlands. I lightened my tread so as not to scare the words into silence.

'And what does your father think?' asked Mr Hart.

I paused just outside the office door. It was half-open and I could see her fashionable shoes and slim ankles below a straight lilac skirt. A long matching jacket.

'He was reluctant but eventually persuaded.'

'He's a businessman. Practical. He didn't need a degree to make a success of milling paper. He probably can't see the point for a young woman.'

'No, he can't,' she said, and I felt her frustration. 'So I must show him the point by making it worthwhile.'

'And when will you come up to Oxford?'

'September. Just before Michaelmas term. I'm coming up to Somerville, so we'll be neighbours.'

Somerville. Every morning, I imagined leaving Maude at the entrance to the Press and walking across the road and into the porter's lodge of Somerville College. I imagined the quad and the library and a desk in one of the rooms that overlooked Walton Street. I imagined spending my days reading books instead of binding them. I imagined, for a moment, that there was no need for me to earn an income and that Maude could fend for herself.

'And what will you read?'

There was an answer on the tip of my tongue, but the young woman stole it.

'English. I want to be a writer.'

'Well, perhaps one day we will have the privilege of printing your work.'

'Perhaps you will, Mr Hart. I look forward to seeing my name among your first editions.'

There was a hush, not uncomfortable, and I knew they were looking at the Controller's bookshelf, at all the first editions with

their pristine leather spines and gold-leaf lettering. The book in my hand asserted itself. I'd almost forgotten why I was there.

'Give my regards to your father, Miss Brittain.'

'I will, Mr Hart.'

The door swung open and I had no time to step back, so for a moment we stood eye to eye. Miss Brittain might have been nineteen or twenty, twenty-one perhaps, the same age as me. She was my height and just as slender, and she was pretty, despite her mousy hair. Lilac suited her well, I thought, and I wondered what she might think of me. Pretty, no doubt; everyone said so. Hair as dark as the canal at night and eyes to match, like Ma's. Though my nose was different: a little too big. I might not have been so conscious of it except I saw it in profile when I looked at Maude.

It was just a moment, but sometimes that's all it takes – I could see there was something steely in Miss Brittain's expression: a determination. We could be friends, I thought.

She seemed to know better. She was not rude, but there were protocols. She saw the apron of a bindery girl over a plain brown cotton-drill skirt and a wash-worn blouse, sleeves rolled up to the elbows. She smiled and nodded, then walked away along the corridor.

I knocked on the open door and Mr Hart looked up from his desk. I'd been seven years at the Press and never seen him smile, but one now lingered around the corners of his mouth. When he realised I was not Miss Brittain returned, it retreated. He motioned for me to come in but returned his attention to the ledger on his desk.

My ten minutes had run down, but it was not my place to interrupt. I looked beyond Mr Hart and out the window. There she was, Miss Brittain, crossing Walton Street. She stopped on the pavement and looked up at the windows of Somerville College. She stayed there for some time, and people were forced to walk around her. In that moment, I felt her excitement. She was wondering if one of those

windows would be hers. She was imagining the desk overlooking the street and all the books she would read.

And then there was a tightness in my chest. A familiar resentment. Perhaps Mrs Hogg knew the truth of things and I had no right to read the books I bound, or imagine myself anywhere but Jericho, or contemplate for one moment that I could ever have a life beyond Maude. The book started to feel heavy in my hands, and I was surprised I'd been entrusted with it at all.

And then I was angry.

I opened *The Oxford Book of English Verse* and heard the spine crack. I turned the pages – John Barbour, Geoffrey Chaucer, Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, Anonymous, Anonymous. If they had names, might they be Anna or Mary or Lucy or Peg? I looked up and saw the Controller staring at me.

For a moment I thought he might ask what I thought. But he simply held out his hand for the book. I hesitated and he raised his eyebrows. It was enough. I put the book in his hand. He nodded and looked down at his ledger.

Without a word, I was dismissed.

PART ONE

Shakespeare's England

August 1914 to October 1914

Chapter One

The paperboys shouted the news all over Jericho; our walk to work was noisy with it. 'Defend Belgian neutrality,' Maude repeated. 'Support France.' She said it all, just as the paperboys did, over and over.

When we stopped at Turner's Newsagency to collect our post, the counter was crowded with people buying newspapers.

'Nothing this morning, Miss Jones,' Mr Turner said when he finally saw me. I picked up a copy of the *Daily Mail* and handed over a halfpenny. Mr Turner raised his eyebrows; I'd never bought the paper before. *Waste of a halfpenny*, Ma used to say. There were always papers lying around at the Press.

Maude scanned the front page as we walked along Walton Street. '*Great Britain declares war on Germany*?' It was a headline and a question – she was confused by the celebrating of young men and the worry she saw on the brows of their mothers. But was she asking what war would mean for England or what it might mean for us?

'We'll be all right, Maudie.' I squeezed her hand. 'But some things may change.' I hoped they would and felt a little guilty, but not a lot. Maude continued to scan the newsprint.

'*Practical hats at popular prices*,' she read aloud. It was her habit, ever since she'd learnt to read. It was a skill hard earned, and although she didn't care to read a book, she loved headlines and cartoons – words already arranged and ready to use.

We joined the mass of men and women, boys and girls, flowing through the stone arch of the Clarendon Press. We walked through the quad, past well-tended garden beds, the copper beech and grand pond, into the south wing of the building – the Bible side, we called it, though Bibles were now printed in London. Once inside, all the vestiges of an Oxford college gave way to the sounds and smells and textures of industry. We stored our bags and hats in the cloakroom in the bindery, took clean aprons from their hooks and made our way through the girls' side. The tables were piled high with text blocks in need of sewing, and the gathering bench was arranged with sections ready to be collated into books.

The folding benches were arranged in three long rows with room for twelve women along each. They faced tall, undressed windows, and morning light spilled over quires of flat printed sheets and piles of folded sections from the day before. Lou and Aggie were already in their places at one end of the bench directly under the windows. Maude and I sat between them.

'What have they given us today?' I said to Aggie.

'Something old,' she said. She never cared what.

'You've got bits and pieces from *Shakespeare's England*,' said Lou. 'Proof pages. They'll take you five minutes. Then there's his complete works to keep you going for the rest of the day.'

'The Craig edition, still?'

She nodded.

'Surely everyone in England has a copy of that by now.'

I pulled the first proof sheet in front of me and picked up Ma's bonefolder. No one else liked folding proof pages – there were never

enough to get into a rhythm – but I loved them. And I especially loved them when they kept coming back. I'd look for the changes that had been made to the text and congratulate myself if I'd anticipated them. It was a small achievement that kept the monotony of the day from sending me mad. Mrs Stoddard made a point of giving me the proofs, and everyone was grateful.

I cast an eye over the printed sheets from *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life & Manners of His Age*. They were chapter proofs and likely full of errors. One I'd seen before – an essay about booksellers, printers and stationers. I'd been caught reading it the last time it came through – 'Your job, Miss Jones …' – but it was worth the reprimand. It was about us, what we did here at the Press and how in Shakespeare's day it had been dangerous to print a book considered obnoxious to the Queen or the Archbishop of Canterbury. Off with their heads, I'd thought at the time. The other proof chapters were new: 'Ballads and Broadsides', 'The Playhouse', 'The Home'. There were fewer than there should have been. If *Shakespeare's England* was to be ready for the three hundredth anniversary of the Bard's death, all the proof pages needed to be coming through now.

The last printed sheet was the first proper draft of the preface. I looked to see where Mrs Hogg was hovering. She was by the gathering bench, checking that the trays of sections were in the correct order. I brought the preface to the top of the stack of sheets and read a few lines: *Those who want to know what Shakespeare thinks must not neglect what his fools say.*

It was enough to keep me going. I took up the right edge of the sheet and brought it to the left, lining up the printer's marks just so. I ran Ma's bonefolder along the crease to make it sharp.

First fold. Folio.

I turned it. Took up the right edge and brought it to the left. It was double the thickness and there was a slight increase in resistance.

I adjusted the pressure on Ma's bonefolder – instinct, not thought. I made the crease sharp.

Second fold. Quarto.

Ma's bonefolder. I still called it that despite its being mine for the past three years. It was nothing more than a flat bit of cow bone, rounded at one end and with a point at the other. But it was silken smooth from decades of use, and it still held the shape of her hand. It was subtle, but bonefolders, like wooden spoons and axe handles, wear the character of their owner's grasp. I'd taken up Ma's bonefolder before Maude could claim it. I'd wrestled with the way it felt in my hand the same way I'd wrestled with Ma's absence. Stubbornly. Refusing to yield.

Eventually, I'd stopped trying to hold it my way, and I'd let the bonefolder settle into my palm as it had once settled into Ma's. I'd felt the gentle curve of the bone where her fingers had lain. And I'd sobbed.

Mrs Stoddard rang her bell and I let the memory go.

'There's to be a parade,' she said. 'A farewell for the Press men who are in the Territorial Army and others who've managed to volunteer since the announcement was made.'

The *announcement*. She couldn't get her tongue around *war*, not yet.

There were more than fifty of us bindery girls – the youngest twelve, the oldest beyond sixty – and all of us followed Mrs Stoddard through the corridors of the Press as if we were schoolgirls on an excursion. When our chatter became too much, our forewoman stopped, turned and held a finger to her lips. Like schoolgirls, we obeyed, and only then did I understand what this war might mean for us: the print house was utterly silent. The presses had been stopped. I'd never known it to be quiet and was suddenly unnerved. We all felt it, I think, because our chatter didn't resume until we came into the quadrangle. Six hundred men and boys were already gathered there. Mrs Stoddard ushered us forward, and I realised that almost every family in Jericho was represented.

There were machine minders and compositors, foundry men, mechanics and readers. Apprentices, journeymen and foremen alike. They were gathered in groups according to their occupation; the state of their aprons and hands made it easy to recognise them. They filled the spaces between the Bible side and the Learned side, around the pond, between the garden beds and all the way back toward the house where Mr and Mrs Hart lived. We'd never gathered like this, and I was impressed by our number; then I realised that at least half the men were of fighting age, or soon would be. I studied the crowd.

Older men passed the time in quiet conversation; younger men were more animated, some congratulating friends, others boasting that the Kaiser didn't stand a chance.

'It's bound to last more than a year,' I heard one lad say.

'I hope so,' said his friend.

They were barely sixteen.

Two foremen, dressed in the uniform of the Territorial Army instead of their Press aprons, tried to bring the younger recruits into line, but the lads were bursting with details of the night before. Those who'd been outside Buckingham Palace held court. They told of the crowd and the crush, the countdown to midnight, the cheers when it was clear the Kaiser would not retreat from Belgium and that England would go to war. 'It's our duty to defend Belgium,' said one, 'so we sang "God Save the King" at the top of our lungs.'

'God save us all,' said a gravelly voice behind me. I turned and saw old Ned shaking his head. He removed his cap and held it to his chest, his gnarled and ink-stained fingers worrying the fabric. When he dropped his head, I thought it was in prayer.

Then a voice, clear and familiar. Maude singing 'God Save the King' at the top of her lungs.

'That's it, Miss Maude,' shouted Jack Rowntree.

Jack was our neighbour on the canal, an apprenticed compositor. He'd be a journeyman in three years if nothing changed. He stood in the centre of the quad with all the others who'd joined the Territorial Army over the past few months in anticipation. I thought about the picnic we'd had just a few days before. A cake for his eighteenth birthday, a game of charades.

'Don't encourage her, Jack,' I shouted, but he held his hands up as if he had no choice and began to conduct. Maude kept singing and the lads took up the verse. There was the assured voice of a tenor, then a baritone. Soon the rest of the Press choir joined in, and the quad resounded like a concert hall. The foremen gave up their efforts to have the recruits fall into line. They folded their arms until the anthem had been sung to the end. The last notes hung in the cool air for a full minute, undisturbed.

Then one of the foremen shouted to the men to form two lines. His voice was more commanding in the hush, and the men did as they were asked. But it was not as soldiers might. There was quiet jostling and adjusting, and a couple of lads swapped places to be near their mates. Before they'd settled, Mrs Stoddard directed us bindery girls to arrange ourselves on either side of the parade. 'It's a pretty face they want to see when they march out of here,' she said, 'so be sure to keep smiling.'

Lou was the first to sob. Other girls sought out their beaus in the line and blew kisses. Some brought out handkerchiefs to wave or wipe their eyes. The apprentices stood taller. One or two suddenly looked pale. Jack caught my eye and I expected some smart comment, but it didn't come. He just nodded and smiled a little. Then he turned his face forward.

I counted sixty-five recruits. Some were grey at their temples, their faces lined with life. But most were young, and too many were yet to fill out. Mr Hart strode across the quad with Mr Cannan, the Press Secretary, the master of us all. We rarely saw him among the paper and

the ink and the presses, but there he was, scanning the rows of men, calculating, perhaps, what the war might cost the business of the Press. He saw a man he knew and stepped toward him, shook his hand.

'His assistant,' whispered Aggie. 'He'll have to write his own letters now.'

Cannan stepped back as Mr Hart spoke to one of his foremen. Two puny youngsters were pulled from the parade. They tried to protest, but there was no point. I wondered what adventure they thought they'd miss out on. Then the Controller stood on a box and said something fitting – I can't recall what. There'd been rain overnight and it clung, here and there, to leaves and stone. It darkened the gravel beneath our feet. I wondered who would make us laugh if Jack went away, who would lug our water and seal our leaks. I wondered who would take over his work in the composing room. If all these men left, *Shakespeare's England* might never be finished.

The morning sun reflected in a puddle. An old boot splashed it away. I looked up. The men were marching out through the stone archway into Walton Street. Everyone was clapping, calling after them.

'Come home safe, Angus McDonald,' a bindery girl shouted, her face wet with emotion.

'Come home safe, Angus McDonald,' repeated Maude. Angus McDonald blew her a kiss and Maude blew one back. His sweetheart scowled at my sister, but there was no need. From then on, Maude blew kisses to them all.

When the last of the men had disappeared into the street, we fell quiet. We formed awkward groups around the quad, and one or two foremen looked at their pocket watches, anticipating a late finish. The Controller and the Secretary were talking in low voices, both frowning. Mr Hart looked toward the archway and shook his head.

Mrs Stoddard was the first to mobilise. She clapped her hands. 'Back to work, ladies,' she said. Mrs Hogg led the way.

The foremen followed suit, and all the remaining men returned to their jobs: to the machine rooms and type foundry, the composing room and paper store, the reading rooms, depot and the men's side of the bindery. Not one was spared the loss of a well-trained man.

Only the girls' side of the bindery would be fully staffed from now on, I thought. I fell back to walk with Mrs Stoddard. 'Who's going to fill all the vacancies?' I asked.

'Bright young women, if those in charge have any sense and the unions allow it.' She glanced sideways. 'There are no restrictions on women working in administration, Peggy. You could consider applying for something.'

I shook my head.

'Why not?' Mrs Stoddard said.

I looked to Maude.

'Why not?' Maude said.

Because you need me, I thought. 'Because you'll miss me,' I said.

Mrs Stoddard stopped walking and looked me in the eye. 'The door will not stay open for long, Peggy. You must try to slip in while you can.'

I tried to slip in during my afternoon tea break.

The presses had resumed, but the noise faded as I moved along the corridors. Then the smells of machine oil and gas lamps, and the low-tide fishy smell of glue, were replaced by wood polish and a hint of vinegar. I took the letter I'd written from the pocket of my apron and read it. It was neat and without error, a convincing application. But my hand shook as I knocked on Mr Cannan's door.

It was answered by a young woman.

'Can I help you?'

She had the same nose as her father, the same cultured speech. I'd heard she was a poet. She held a bundle of papers in her hand and I

realised she had come to assist. Of course she had. She had the right education and all the time in the world. It made perfect sense.

'Is that for Father?' She nodded at my application letter.

I shook my head and backed out. 'I'm in the wrong place,' I mumbled as I closed the door.

I ripped my letter in half, turned it, ripped a second time, turned it, ripped a third time. Then I walked back toward the low-tide fishy smell of the bindery.