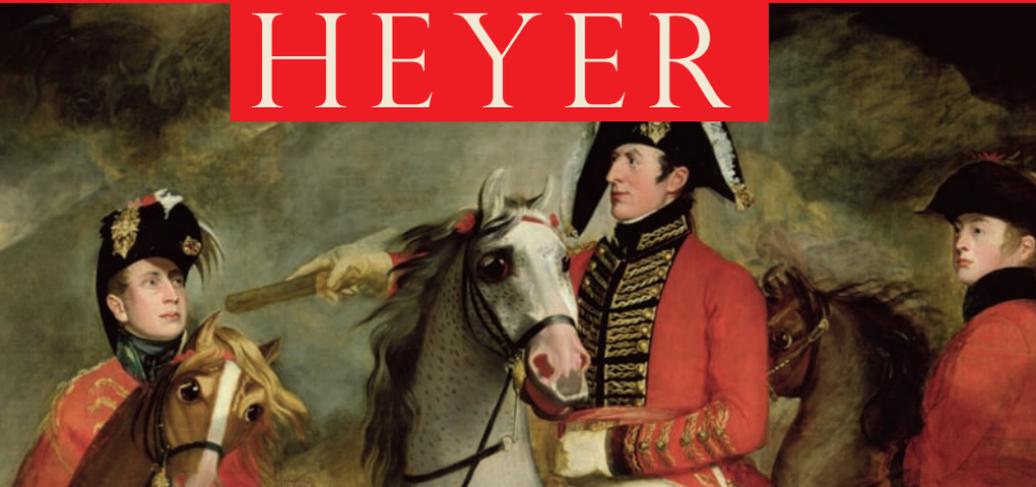
A close-up of a woman's face and upper body. She is wearing a white, off-the-shoulder dress with gold embroidery on the sleeves and a gold sash. The background is dark and indistinct.

an infamous army

A NOVEL
OF LOVE, WAR,
WELLINGTON
AND WATERLOO

"My favourite historical novelist."
—Margaret Drabble

GEORGETTE
HEYER



an infamous army

“My favourite historical novelist—stylish, romantic, sharp, and witty. Her sense of period is superb, her heroines are enterprising, and her heroes dashing. I owe her many happy hours.”

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—KATE FENTON, DAILY TELEGRAPH

A decorative, ornate frame with intricate scrollwork and flourishes, resembling a classic bookplate or title ornament. It is centered on the page and contains the text.

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infamous
army*

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'I have got an infamous army;
Very weak and ill-equipped,
And a very inexperienced staff.'

Wellington to Lt Gen Lord Stewart, G.C.B.

8th May, 1815

Author's Note

IN WRITING THIS STORY I HAVE REALIZED AN AMBITION which, though I fear it may have been presumptuous, I could not resist attempting. Apart from the epic nature of the subject, the spectre of Thackeray must loom over anyone wishing to tackle the battle of Waterloo. It would not allow me to set pen to paper until I banished it, at last, with the reflection that no one, after all, would judge a minor poet by Shakespeare's standard of excellence. I should add, perhaps, that it is many years since I read *Vanity Fair*; and although I have encroached on Thackeray's preserves, at least I have stolen nothing from him.

With regard to the Bibliography published at the end of this book, to obviate the necessity of appending a somewhat tedious list of Authorities, I have limited it to those works which, in writing a Novel, and not a History, I have found most useful. Works dealing with the purely tactical aspect of the Campaign have been omitted; so too have many minor accounts; and a host of Biographies, Memoirs, and Periodicals which, though not primarily concerned with any of the personages figuring in this story, contained, here and there, stray items of information about them. It will further be seen that, with the exception of Houssaye, no

French Authorities have been given: the French point of view was not relevant to my purpose. On the other hand, certain works have been included which, though they do not deal with the Waterloo Campaign, were invaluable for the light they throw on Wellington's character, and the customs obtaining in his army.

Wherever possible, I have allowed the Duke to speak for himself, borrowing freely from the twelve volumes of his Despatches. If it should be objected that I should not have made him say in 1815 what he wrote in 1808, or said many years after Waterloo, I can only hope that, since his own words, whether spoken or written, were so infinitely superior to any which I could have put into his mouth, I may be pardoned for the occasional chronological inexactitudes thus entailed.

GEORGETTE HEYER

One

THE YOUTHFUL GENTLEMAN IN THE SCARLET COAT WITH blue facings and gold lace, who was seated in the window of Lady Worth's drawing-room, idly looking down into the street, ceased for a moment to pay any attention to the conversation that was in progress. Among the passers-by, a Bruxelloise in a black mantilla had caught his eye. She was lovely enough to be watched the whole way down the street. Besides, the conversation in the salon was very dull: just the same stuff that was being said all over Brussels.

'I own, one can be more comfortable now that Lord Hill is here, but I wish the Duke would come!'

The Bruxelloise had cast a roguish dark eye up at the window as she passed; the gentleman in scarlet did not even hear this remark, delivered by Lady Worth in an anxious tone which made her morning visitors look grave for a minute.

The Earl of Worth said dryly: 'To be sure, my love: so do we all.'

Georgiana Lennox, who was seated on the sofa with her hands clasped on top of her muff, subscribed to her hostess's sentiments with a sigh, but smiled at the Earl's words, and

reminded him that there was one person at least in Brussels who did not wish for the Duke's arrival. 'My dear sir, the Prince is in the most dreadful huff! No other word for it! Only fancy! He scolded me for wanting the Duke to make haste—as though I could not trust *him* to account for Bonaparte, if you please!'

'How awkward for you!' said Lady Worth. 'What did you say?'

'Oh, I said nothing that was not true, I assure you! I like the Prince very well, but it is a little too much to suppose that a mere boy is capable of taking the field against Bonaparte. Why, what experience has he had? I might as well consider my brother March a fit commander. Indeed, he was on the Duke's Staff for longer than the Prince.'

'Is it true that the Prince and his father don't agree?' asked Sir Peregrine Taverner, a fair young man in a blue coat with very large silver buttons. 'I heard—'

A plump gentleman of cheerful and inquisitive mien broke into the conversation with all the air of an incorrigible gossip-monger. 'Quite true! The Prince is all for the English, of course, and that don't suit Frog's notions at all. Frog, you know, is what I call the King. I believe it to be a fact that the Prince is much easier in English or French than he is in Dutch! I heard that there was a capital quarrel the other day, which ended with the Prince telling Frog in good round terms that if he hadn't wished him to make his friends among the English he shouldn't have had him reared in England, or have sent him out to learn his soldiering in the Peninsula. Off he went, leaving Papa and Brother Fred without a word to say, and of course poured out the whole story to Colborne. I daresay Colborne don't care how soon he goes back to his regiment. I would not be Orange's military secretary for something!'

The Bruxelloise had passed from Lord Hay's range of vision; there was nothing left to look at but the pointed gables

and nankeen-yellow front of a house on the opposite side of the street. Lord Hay, overhearing the last remark, turned his head, and asked innocently: 'Oh, did Sir John tell you so, Mr Creevey?'

An involuntary smile flickered on Judith Worth's lips; the curled ostrich plumes in Lady Georgiana's hat quivered; she raised her muff to her face. The company was allowed a moment to reflect upon the imaginary spectacle of more than six feet of taciturnity in the handsome shape of Sir John Colborne, Colonel of the Fighting 52nd, unburdening his soul to Mr Creevey.

Mr Creevey was not in the least abashed. He shook a finger at the young Guardsman, and replied with a knowing look: 'Oh, you must not think I am going to divulge *all* the sources of my information, Lord Hay!'

'I like the Prince of Orange,' declared Hay. 'He's a rattling good fellow.'

'Oh, as to that—!'

Lady Worth, aware that Mr Creevey's opinion of the Prince would hardly please Lord Hay, intervened with the observation that his brother, Prince Frederick, seemed to be a fine young man.

'Stiff as a poker,' said Hay. 'Prussian style. They call him the Stabs-Captain.'

'He's nice enough to look at,' conceded Lady Georgiana, adjusting the folds of her olive-brown pelisse. 'But he's only eighteen, and can't signify.'

'Georgy!' protested Hay.

She laughed. 'Well, but you don't signify either, Hay: you know you don't! You are just a boy.'

'Wait until we go into action!'

'Certainly, yes! You will perform prodigies, and be mentioned in despatches, I have no doubt at all. I daresay the Duke will

write of you in the most glowing terms. "General Maitland's ADC, Ensign Lord Hay—"

There was a general laugh.

"I have every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of Ensign Lord Hay," said Hay in a prim voice. 'Old Hookey writing in glowing terms! That's good!'

'Hush, now! I won't hear a word against the Duke. He is quite the greatest man in the world.'

It was not to be expected that Mr Creevey, a confirmed Whig, could allow this generous estimate to pass unchallenged. Under cover of the noise of cheerful argument, Sir Peregrine Taverner moved to where his brother-in-law stood in front of the fire, and said in a low voice: 'I suppose you don't know when the Duke is expected in Brussels, Worth?'

'No, how should I?' replied Worth in his cool way.

'I thought you might have heard from your brother.'

'Your sister had a letter from him a week ago, but he did not know when he wrote when the Duke would be free to leave Vienna.'

'He ought to be here. However, I'm told that since Lord Hill came out the Prince has not been talking any more of invading France. I suppose it's true he was sent to keep the Prince quiet?'

'I expect your information is quite as good as mine, my dear Peregrine.'

Sir Peregrine Taverner had attained the mature age of twenty-three, had been three years married, and two years out of the Earl of Worth's guardianship, and was, besides, the father of a pair of hopeful children, but he still stood a little in awe of his brother-in-law. He accepted the snub with a sigh, and merely said: 'One can't help feeling anxious, you know. After all, Worth, I'm a family man now.'

The Earl smiled. 'Very true.'

'I don't think, if I had known Boney would get away from Elba, I should have taken a house in Brussels at all. You must admit it is not a comfortable situation for a civilian to be in.' He ended on a slightly disconsolate note, his gaze wandering to the scarlet splendour of Lord Hay.

'In fact,' said the Earl, 'you would like very much to buy yourself a pair of colours.'

Sir Peregrine grinned sheepishly. 'Well, yes, I would. One feels confoundedly out of it. At least, I daresay you don't, because you are a military man yourself.'

'My dear Perry, I sold out years ago!' The Earl turned away from his young relative as he spoke, for Lady Georgiana had got up to take her leave.

Beside Judith Worth's golden magnificence, Lady Georgiana seemed very tiny. She submitted to having her pelisse buttoned close to her throat by her tall friend, for even on this 4th day of April the weather still remained chilly; stood on tiptoe to kiss Judith's cheek; promised herself the pleasure of meeting her at Lady Charlotte Greville's that evening; and went off under Hay's escort to join her mother, the Duchess of Richmond, at the Marquis d'Assche's house at the corner of the Park.

Since Mr Creevey showed no immediate disposition to go away, Lady Worth sat down again, and made kind enquiries after his wife and stepdaughters. One of the Misses Ord, he confided, had become engaged to be married. Lady Worth exclaimed suitably, and Mr Creevey, beaming all over his kindly face, disclosed the name of the fortunate man. It was Hamilton; yes, Major Andrew Hamilton, of the Adjutant-General's Staff: an excellent fellow! Between themselves, Hamilton kept him pretty well informed of what was going on. He got all the news from France, but under pledge of strict secrecy. Lady Worth would understand that his lips were sealed. 'And you too,' he

added, fixing his penetrating gaze upon her, 'I daresay *you* have information for your private ear, eh?'

'I?' said Lady Worth. 'My dear Mr Creevey, none in the world! What can you be thinking of?'

He looked arch. 'Come, come, isn't Colonel Audley with the Great Man?'

'My brother-in-law! Yes, certainly he is in Vienna, but I assure you he doesn't tell me any secrets. We don't even know when we may expect to see him here.'

He was disappointed, for news, titbits of scandal, interesting confidences whispered behind sheltering hands, were the breath of life to him. However, since there was nothing to be learned from his hostess, he had to content himself with settling down to what he called a comfortable prose with her. He had already told her, upon his first coming into her salon, of a singular occurrence, but he could not resist adverting to it again: it was so very remarkable. Sir Peregrine had not been present when he had first related the circumstance, so he nodded to him and said: 'You will have heard of the new arrivals, I daresay. I was telling your good sister about them.'

'The King?' said Peregrine. 'The French King, I mean? Is he really coming to Brussels? I did hear a rumour, but someone said it was no such thing.'

'Oh, the King!' Mr Creevey waved his Sacred Majesty aside with one plump hand. 'I was not referring to him—though I have reason to believe he will remain in Ghent for the present. Paltry fellow, ain't he? No, no something a little more singular—or so it seemed to me. Three of Boney's old Marshals, no less! I had the good fortune to see them all arrive, not ten days ago. There was Marmont, who went to the Hôtel d'Angleterre; Berthier, to the Duc d'Arenberg's; and Victor—now where do you suppose? Why, to the Hôtel Wellington, of all places in the world!'

'How ironic!' remarked Worth, who had come back into the room from seeing his other guests off. 'Is it true, or just one of your stories, Creevey?'

'No, no, I promise you it's quite true! I knew you would enjoy the joke.'

Lady Worth, who had accorded the tale at this second hearing no more than a polite smile, said in a reflective tone: 'It is certainly very odd to think of Marmont in particular being in the English camp.'

'The Allied camp, my love,' corrected the Earl, with a sardonic smile.

'Well, yes,' she admitted, 'but you know I can't bring myself to believe that the Dutch-Belgian troops count for much, while as for the Prussians, the only one I have laid eyes on is General Röder, and—well—!' She made an expressive gesture. 'He is always so stiff, and takes such stupid offence at trifles, that it puts me out of all patience with him.'

'Yes, *he* will never do for the Duke,' agreed Mr Creevey. 'Hamilton was telling me there is no dealing with him at all. He thinks himself insulted if any of our officers remain seated in his presence. Such stuff! A man who sets so much store by all that ceremonious nonsense won't do for the Duke's Headquarters. They couldn't have made a worse choice of Commissioner. There's another man, too, who they say will never do for the Duke.' He nodded, and pronounced: 'Our respected Quartermaster-General!'

'Oh, poor Sir Hudson Lowe! He is very stiff also,' said Lady Worth. 'People say he is an efficient officer, however.'

'I daresay he may be, but you know how it is with these fellows who have served with the Prussians: there's no doing anything with them. Well, no doubt we shall see some changes when the Beau arrives from Vienna.'

'If only he would arrive! It is very uncomfortable with him so far away. One cannot help feeling uneasy. Now that all communication with Paris has been stopped, war seems so very close. Then Lord Fitzroy Somerset and all the Embassy people being refused passports to come across the frontier, and having to embark from Dieppe! When our Chargé d'Affaires is treated like that it is very bad, you must allow.'

'Yes,' interjected Peregrine, 'and the best of our troops being in America! That is what is so shocking! I don't see how any of them can be brought back in time to be of the least use. When I saw the Prince he was in expectation of war breaking out at any moment.'

'No chance of that, I assure you. Young Frog don't know what he's talking about. Meanwhile, we have some very fine regiments quartered here, you know.'

'We have some very young and inexperienced troops,' said Worth. 'Happily, the cavalry did not go to America.'

'Of course, you were a hussar yourself, but you must know very well there's no sense in cavalry without infantry,' replied Peregrine knowledgeably. 'Only to think of all the Peninsular veterans shipped off to that curst American war! Nothing was ever so badly contrived.'

'It is easy to be wise after the event, my dear Perry.'

Lady Worth, who had listened to many such discussions, interposed to give the conversation a turn towards less controversial subjects. She was assisted very readily by Mr Creevey, who had some entertaining scandal to relate, and for the remainder of his visit nothing was talked of but social topics.

Of these there were many, since Brussels overflowed with English visitors. The English had been confined to their own island for so long that upon the Emperor Napoleon's abdication and retirement to Elba they had flocked abroad. The presence of

an Army of Occupation in the Low Countries made Brussels a desirable goal. Several provident Mamas conveyed marriageable daughters across the Channel in the wake of the Guards, while pleasure-seeking ladies such as Caroline Lamb and Lady Vidal packed up their most daring gauzes and established their courts in houses hired for an indefinite term in the best part of Brussels.

The presence of the Guards was not, of course, the only attraction offered by Brussels. Mr Creevey, for instance, had brought his good lady to a snug little apartment in the Rue du Musée for her health's sake. Others had come to take part in the festivities attendant upon the long-exiled William of Orange's instatement as King of the Netherlands.

This gentleman, whom Mr Creevey and his friends called the Frog, had been well known in London; and his elder son, the Hereditary Prince of Orange, was a hopeful young man of engaging manners, and a reputation for dashing gallantry in the field, who had lately enjoyed a brief engagement to the Princess Charlotte of Wales. The breaking off of the engagement by that strong-minded damsel, though it had made his Highness appear a trifle ridiculous in English eyes, and had afforded huge gratification to Mr Creevey and his friends, did not seem to have cast any sort of cloud over the Prince's spirits. It was felt that gaiety would attend his footsteps; nor were the seekers after pleasure destined to be disappointed. Within its old ramparts, Brussels became the centre of all that was fashionable and light hearted. King William, a somewhat uninspiring figure, was proclaimed with due pomp at Brussels, and if his new subjects, who had been quite content under the Bonapartist régime, regarded with misgiving their fusion with their Dutch neighbours, this was not allowed to appear upon the surface. The Hereditary Prince, who spoke English and French better than his native tongue, and