

Emma Carroll

LETTERS  
FROM THE  
LIGHTHOUSE



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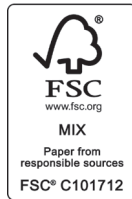
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As usual, the Budmouth Point kids were gathered at the school gates – not as many as there'd been that first day, but enough to remind me we were still a bit of a novelty. Today though, something else had their attention.

'Listen to that engine. He's in trouble,' said a red-haired boy.

I heard the spluttering of what I thought was a broken-down van, until I realised they were looking at the sky. Moments later, the plane came fully into view. The black cross of the Luftwaffe, visible on its tail, made my stomach drop. So much for the camouflage paint protecting us: just like the others before him, this pilot was turning right, away from the open sea towards land, using the lighthouse to guide him.

It was obvious something was wrong with the plane.

Thick black smoke trailed from the engine on the left. Flames were visible under the wing. There was another spluttering. Then silence. Another splutter. Silence. It was horrible yet compelling to watch.

About four hundred yards off the coast, the plane started losing height. It didn't drop down gently, either. There was a terrific lurch. The whole aircraft shuddered. It veered left, then right, almost drunkenly. I was afraid it was going to keep going and crash into the village. The truth was worse: it wouldn't make it that far.

Two hundred yards out to sea, the plane dropped further. The left wing dipped down. Straightened. The right one did the same. The horror of what was happening flashed before me: the German plane was on a collision course with the lighthouse. It'd never clear the top of the building. But it had to. Cliff and Pixie were still inside. Not that I could do anything, it was too late for that. I couldn't even scream: my heart was jammed in my throat.

'He's aiming right for it!' one of the Budmouth kids cried out.

'Flipping heck! He's going to hit it!'

'He must have a parachute. Why doesn't he bail out?'

I couldn't watch. Yet I couldn't bear not to. *Shut*