

BIRDS, FOOLS, AND ANGELS

A novel with a substantial autobiographical content.

It can be obtained at: www.authorhouse.com/ also at: www.amazon.com

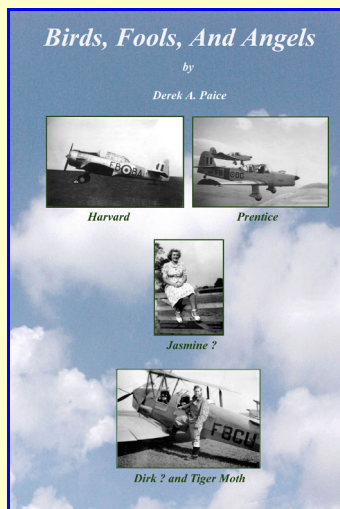
Feel the excitement and thrills experienced by Dirk, a young Royal Air Force cadet pilot undergoing training in England during the period of the Berlin Airlift in 1949. From a solo flight in an open cockpit biplane, Dirk soon graduates to more powerful piston-engine aircraft.

Two cadets from his training course of twenty will be chosen to fly a top-secret jet fighter. The competition for these positions is intense.

The cadets are unaware that the normal hazards of flying are not the only thing they have to fear. A spy is in their midst. His mission: acquire the specs to the top-secret jet fighter. To do this, he must be one of those selected to fly the jet fighter — no matter what it takes.

Initially, near fatal accidents appear to be chance events, but eventually Dirk and those working to expose the spy suspect sabotage. People and their purposes are not as they first appear.

In the midst of this intrigue, Dirk soon finds himself wrestling with love and duty when, at off-duty parties, he meets and is entranced by the charm of his flying instructor's wife. A passionate, clandestine romance develops. If exposed, it could scuttle his longed-for flying career and interfere with plans to trap the spy.



One of the Harvards flown by the author at the RAF base at No. 7 FTS, Cottesmore, England

The book front cover.

From the book . . .

Excerpt # 1

She stopped the car fifty yards from the barracks entrance, then turned off the engine and the head lights. The side lights remained on, but they barely showed the light drizzle now descending.

"I'm so glad that you came out this evening," said Jasmine. "I really like your piano playing and so do the others. I can't help feeling romantic when I hear some of the songs, and others just make me feel happy. I'm sure there will be other opportunities to play at our parties, if you're interested."

"I'd love to play for you and your friends whenever I get the chance," said Dirk, unable to break his gaze away from her bright blue eyes. "Your parties are such fun, and you make everyone so welcome."

"Thank you. I really enjoy meeting people. My parents love to entertain and I had plenty of practice at partying when I was growing up during the war. There were always plenty of servicemen around." She smiled. "But my dad was

very strict and protective.”

Dirk grinned. “And I imagine your father was kept busy.”

Jasmine gave him a coy look. “Yes,” she said, “and he was successful.”

Dirk gulped. “Well, I’d better be going,” he said. “I’m looking forward to playing for you again. Just call anytime.”

“Wonderful!” She gave Dirk a smile that engulfed his being and added, “Remember that tune, *‘We’ll Meet Again.’*” With that she leaned across and gave him a prolonged soft kiss on the mouth.

A warmth spread throughout his body. Her kiss was more meaningful than a simple goodnight kiss and he knew it! The sensuous softness of her lips made his throat tighten and his heart race. He wanted to embrace her, but how could he? She was married to his flying instructor.

Contradictory clichés circled around in his head. *Faint heart never won fair lady. Better safe than sorry.*

Rather than risk being seen as anything but a gentleman, Dirk reluctantly decided on safety. “Goodnight, Jasmine, and thanks for a great evening.” He opened the car door and already had one foot outside when she replied,

“Good night Dirk, and sleep tight.” Then, lowering her eyes a little, she said, “I can tell that you really like me.”

Dirk blushed. Here was another opportunity to be more than casual. He desperately wanted to get back in the car, close the door, and pull her to him. But what should he do? Common sense told him to leave and not get involved. Nothing must come between him and his flying career.

“Oh, Jasmine . . . you make me feel so . . . you’re so beautiful and sweet. How could anyone not like you? I know that you’re married and I shouldn’t be speaking like this, but I’ve never felt this way before about anybody.” He paused. Jasmine’s luminous eyes locked with his. For a moment he thought she might speak, but she said nothing. His mind groped for simple words to show the depth of his feelings. He leaned his head toward her. “Thanks for a great evening Jasmine . . . I’ll see you in my dreams.” She gave him a mischievous smile and nodded as he got out of the car. He closed the door, oblivious to the drizzle around him, and watched while she restarted the engine and drove away. His eyes stayed locked on the ever-diminishing red glow of the car’s rear lights until she disappeared into the night.

Slowly, he realized that he was getting wet.

Excerpt # 2

He was about to rotate the wings and roll out into level flight when suddenly he saw the De Havilland Vampire coming straight at him. It was dead ahead looming larger and larger in the cockpit window. His heart pounded. A midair collision was just seconds away. Instinctively he pulled back on the stick. The nose of his still inverted plane curved down toward the earth. The Vampire shot safely overhead.

Bloody hell! That was close.

He prepared to complete the maneuver as in a normal loop. It should have been a piece-of-cake, but the plane gathered speed quickly in its downward path, and the airspeed indicator confused him. It registered 230 knots; it should only have been about 130 knots. He struggled to pull up the plane’s nose but powerful centrifugal forces made his arms feel heavy as lead. Air speed continued to increase . . . 250 knots . . . 280 knots. He tried to tighten up the circle, but came close to losing consciousness. Everything went gray; he would soon black out. A reduced pull on the stick and vision returned, but the plane’s nose was not coming up quickly enough. *I’ve got to pull up.* He pulled back on the control stick. Once more everything went gray. He would black out if the acceleration force exceeded more than about five times the force of gravity, 5G. *I’m losing control.*

Extra weight caused by the increasing G forces pulled at the skin on his face and dragged it downward. His radio mask, now too heavy for the elastic retaining straps, fell down below his chin. He sweated, struggling to stay conscious and keep the plane in a loop, but his arms were too heavy. His right hand slid down the control stick and his left hand fell to his side. The trees on the ground, no more than patches of green and gray when viewed from 5,000 feet, were starting to take on shape and still he had not reached the bottom of the loop. He hurtled toward the ground.

