

CHAPTER 1



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL, LONDON, 1860

Jane Vernon re-tucked the bedsheets tightly at the corners of the bed as the nurses had taught her. Her patient was an unidentified soldier—an officer, judging by what was left of his uniform after the shipwreck. He lay, still and unconscious, a bandage bound around his head of dark curls. His face was pale and thin, but even the unshaven beard couldn't hide the fact that the soldier was a remarkably handsome man. Jane wondered, not for the first time, who he was and if he had a family that missed him. A wife or a fiancée. Surely, somewhere, there must be someone out there, wondering where he was.

She smoothed the rough blanket over the soldier's chest. It had been so long since she had touched a man. He murmured something, adrift in his dreams, and grabbed Jane's wrist in a strong grip. She froze, shocked. Should she summon a nurse? The soldier pushed her hand down, over the erection straining the front of his nightshirt. Jane tried to pull back. He pressed her hand down harder. The fabric was damp from his seed. He moaned and thrust

against her hand. The poor man. Jane glanced at the door. He pushed her hand up and down along his length, in a fever of need.

Jane tore her hand away. He tossed his head blindly as if seeking her. Jane reached towards him again and stopped. What was she thinking? The soldier uttered a small desperate sound. Jane bit her lip. Without conscious decision, she pulled up his nightshirt. His member was hugely erect with thick veins and a red cap, drops of his seed dripping onto his belly. Her breathing quickened, her heart pounding in an agony of excitement. She had never felt this way before.

Her husband's member had been much smaller, the few times she had a glimpse of his phallus before he had thrust into her without finesse, intent only on his own pleasure. The man on the bed was desperate. Jane swallowed nervously. Did she dare?

Oh, Lord, she could smell his arousal and the scent was intoxicating, speeding along her veins to the throbbing between her legs. Jane clasped his member in a firm grip and worked her hand along his length. He hissed between his teeth and thrust upwards. His skin was slick and hard. Her fingers slid down and then up. He moaned. She felt his need, a need which so closely mirrored her own. Jane worked him then, pulling him through her fist, jerking him through her fingers, as he twitched and groaned. She sought his testicles with her other hand, squeezing them gently. His whole body tightened and he climaxed suddenly, spurting over her hand and his lean belly and chest.

Jane felt light-headed as she pulled away, her breath coming in short, hard breaths, her own arousal trickling down her thighs. Had anybody heard them? Surely this wasn't the usual kind of service that volunteer ladies provided! She used a cloth and the water in the pitcher to clean away the evidence of her depravity. The soldier slept deeply now, his chest moving in a slow rhythm.

"Well, he seems better." Sister Watson bustled in, reeking of starch and carbolic. "Whatever you've done, Lady Vernon, keep on doing it. He hasn't rested so well in weeks."

Jane nodded and bit back a smile. If the formidable nurse approved the result, what Jane had done couldn't really be that bad—or so she told her conscience. So, for the next several weeks, Jane continued to visit the wards at the hospital, always leaving her soldier until the last. And then Jane would caress the unconscious man until he climaxed. At times, it seemed to bring him closer to consciousness. But he always retreated to his private, silent world.

One week, her stepmother's social plans had kept Jane away from her usual stint of volunteering and so she arrived on a rainy Monday when the wards were deserted, except for a nurse or two. Jane pulled off her gloves and her hat. Her soldier was dreaming, murmuring things, bits of words that she didn't understand. She stood over him and bit her lip, trying to conquer those base desires which held her in their grip. She had dreamed the night before of being naked in bed with her soldier, now awake and smiling at her as he bent to suckle her breasts and finger her pussy. In the dream, Jane had pushed him on his back and lowered her head to take his member in her mouth. Jane had never done such a thing with her husband. He had never asked and she had not dreamed of it. But it was different with her soldier. True, his fine features and well-cut lips would have made any woman give him a second look. He was thin, of course, but the lines of his long, lean muscles still had the power to excite her imagination. There was something about him that drew her, something intangible.

Jane licked her lips. She couldn't. She shouldn't. But, still, she took the plain wooden chair and placed it under the doorknob. And then she went to his side and folded down his blanket. She flipped up his nightshirt. His member lay calm and flaccid against his thigh. She leaned over and blew a gust of warm breath over it, fascinated to see his member stir. She touched the head and he grew harder. Jane stroked his length, rubbing her thumb over the now weeping head. He was fully erect when Jane bent to take him in her mouth.

Her soldier jerked back, popping from between her lips with a

cry. Heavens, had she injured him? Jane drew back, her pulse pounding as he settled again. He thrust up his pelvis in an unmistakable motion and Jane took him in her mouth again. Ah, he was strong and yet so helpless. She ran her tongue over the head of his member and down the ridge on the other side. Her soldier moaned and pushed in deeper. Jane grasped him firmly and began to suck—long, drafts that hollowed her cheeks. The taste of him—salt and mineral and male. He made an odd sound, deep in his throat, and spurted into her mouth. Jane held on, milking his straining shaft as she swallowed his offering. She let him slide off her tongue and arranged his nightshirt and blanket once again. Jane touched her swollen lips and prayed that no one would notice. Then she kissed her soldier on his forehead and slipped from the room, hurrying home with the memory of his surrender and the taste of him still in her mouth.



"LADY GORING WAS ASKING for you, my lady."

"Thank you, Ames."

Jane removed her hat, fluffing her flattened hair in the hall mirror. She pulled off her gloves and took a deep breath before braving her stepmother. She followed the sound of Lady Goring's shrill tones to the drawing room on the first floor. The door was ajar and just as Jane was about to enter, she heard her own name mentioned. She paused on the threshold and listened.

"Jane fancies herself as a nurse," Lady Goring said, her disdain audible. "She volunteers quite regularly at *St. Bartholomew's Hospital*."

"Very commendable."

It was Mrs. Hadley-Price, one of her stepmother's friends.

Lady Goring sipped her tea. "Do you think so? I must tell you that I find such behavior entirely inappropriate and so improper. Really, a young woman exposed to so much coarseness. I would

never permit a daughter of mine to act so, but her father dotes on her. More tea?"

Jane heard the clink of china.

"Do you know," her stepmother continued, "Jane actually wanted to train as a nurse? So common. At least her father forbade her from doing that."

"Forgive me, Louisa, but since Jane is a widow, is she not permitted to make some of her own decisions?"

"Jane may be a widow, but Lord Vernon left her in sore straits, almost a bankrupt. If not for our charity, who knows where she would be? But is she grateful? Not in the least. The best thing would be to marry her off, but Jane is so particular. She was not very fond of her late husband, you know. I have often wondered..."

"Yes?"

"Well, I wondered if Jane ever strayed from her marriage bed."

"Louisa!"

"I must confess that there's something about her that I just don't trust. Those eyes of hers, so sly. And there is a decided wantonness in her expression at times."

"Perhaps she does miss her husband."

"I don't believe so. I think she must be one of those women who..." Lady Goring lowered her voice and Jane strained to hear. "One of those women who actually enjoy their husbands' attentions."

"You mean..."

"I mean she is oversexed. If she were my daughter, I'd lock her up until she was cured."

"In an asylum, you mean?"

"I do. My second cousin was another just the same, simply mad for men, and too poor to ever receive an offer. Her father brought her to the *London Surgical Home for Women* and Dr. Baker-Brown performed an operation. A very reputable fellow. My cousin quite lost her abnormal urges."

A pause ensued. Finally, her stepmother's guest asked in an undertone, "What sort of operation?"

"The surgeon removed the troublesome portion of her anatomy which gave rise to her depraved sexual appetite."

"My dear Louisa, is that not a little drastic? Jane is a very pretty woman. She may yet make a suitable marriage."

Lady Goring sighed heavily. "I can only pray that you are right. Stepchildren are a dreadful burden. At least when this one is born, I can hand it off to the nurse."

Jane drew back from the door, her heart thumping furiously. Her hands felt like ice and her stomach roiled from her stepmother's cruel words. How could she? Jane ran up the stairs to her room on the second floor, locking the door behind her. Surely Papa, even as entranced as he was by the conniving hag he'd married, would never agree to such a proposition, such an unspeakable act. As if Jane and her stepmother's poor cousin were animals, whose bodies could be mutilated simply for the convenience of their families. She had to escape. Somehow, she had to get away.



JANE SPENT the remainder of the week in turmoil, half of her in a fever of desire and the other half fearful of her stepmother's plans. Her thoughts kept returning to the passionate interlude with her soldier. She remembered the feel of him in her mouth and how his body, even unconscious, strained towards completion, the taste of his seed as she swallowed him. Her perfect, beautiful man, unable to speak or complain and break the spell.

She would toss and turn in her lonely bed, yearning and frustrated. Jane wanted, she *needed* more. Something to fill the emptiness, the hungry space between her legs that wept for completion. In desperation, she would rub herself, but a climax by her own hand was never enough. She wanted a man's member...no, she

wanted a *cock* sunk deep inside, thrusting, pushing her over the edge to the perfect orgasm that beckoned just beyond her reach.

And then the worst thought of all occurred to her. Jane couldn't stop thinking of it, even while she sat in church and her mind wandered away from the sermon to the warm and helpless flesh of her lover. Perhaps her stepmother was right and Jane was deviant, with an unhealthy sexual appetite. But as time went on, Jane stopped caring. Her desire filled her thoughts and dreams and, finally, she made her plans.

The following Monday, Jane went to the hospital, knowing the wards would be quiet once again. The canister of condoms that she had bribed the footman to procure from the apothecary rested in her purse. Would he tell her father? It was another chance that she couldn't help taking. Her lover lay silent on the bed as Jane wedged the door shut and approached him. His hair had grown longer since his admittance, dipping over his forehead in loose curls. She wondered again what color his eyes were and how he looked when he smiled. She bent to brush her lips across his mouth. And then she folded back the blanket and lifted his nightshirt. He stirred at her touch, hardening and lengthening as his cock responded to her caresses. Could she really do this?

Jane removed her drawers and stuffed them in her bag. She felt sick with excitement. She climbed onto the narrow bed and perched above the soldier. She fumbled with the condom, rolling the rubber tube over his member. It looked strange and shiny when she was finished. And, God, so hard. Her fingers dropped between her legs. Her pussy was moist, but not wet. She rubbed her little pearl and pressed one finger inside her passage. The mere fact that she did this while astride her unconscious lover, his stiff member bobbing against his belly, was so exciting she nearly fell off the bed. Enough. She hovered over him as her hand grasped his thickness and guided the blunt head between her legs. Oh, it felt good. She raised herself up and pressed down. His cock, lodged inside, pushed upward. Lord, he was huge. She was so tight, her poor

pussy shrunken from disuse. She stopped, biting her lip. It was almost too much. Her breathing sounded so loud in the little room. Jane pressed down again and felt her passage ease around him. Ah, yes. She rose up and shoved downward, driving him deeper. She tightened around him and nearly cried out at the rightness and the pleasure of it. And then she started to move, cautiously at first, her weight resting on her calves as she rode him. Oh, she was full of him and he responded, his pelvis pushing upward to meet her downward plunge, the movement pulling on her pearl. So good. So close.

And then the unthinkable happened. Two large hands closed on her waist, shoving her down hard. Jane climaxed with a wail, feeling him in every inch of her pussy as he thrust wildly and she opened her eyes to find his blue stare locked with hers as he came deep inside her.

She panicked, pushing against his chest, falling off him and crashing to the floor. Oh, heavens. Jane stumbled to her feet. He was staring at her, his brows drawn together in a frown. There was nothing to say, no way to explain. She backed away, grabbed her gloves and hat, pushed the chair out of the way and fled into the corridor without saying a word. She didn't stop until she had reached her father's house and bolted upstairs to her room. What had she done? She was ruined.