

SECRETS OF THE REVOLUTION

HARBOR OF SPIES ~ BOOK 2



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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, Kings James Version.

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For Steve

*Without you, none of this would be possible. Thank you for
walking alongside me, cheering me on, and always believing in me.*

I love you.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

— PSALM 91:1, 15 KJV

“Our country is in danger, but not to be despaired of. Our enemies are numerous and powerful; but we have many friends, determining to be free, and heaven and earth will aid the resolution. On you depend the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important question, on which rest the happiness and liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves.”

— JOSEPH WARREN, MARCH 6, 1775

CHAPTER 1



BOSTON

MAY, 1774

William Abbott had never broken a promise, but now he had no choice. Or rather, no reason left to keep it.

He sank to the edge of his bed and stared at the letter clasped in his hand, as though reading the words again could change what they said.

I am grateful for the closeness we shared as children, but we are not children now, and I confess, I did not imagine more than friendship between us. I never suspected your feelings had changed, and I must beg your forgiveness if any of my actions gave you reason to hope in such a way.

Will sighed and scrubbed a hand down his face. He had waited months for this letter from Charlotte Foster. He'd written her just days after arriving in Boston last December,

but correspondence traveled slowly when there was an ocean between you. And now that her reply was here, he almost wished it had never come at all.

He dropped the letter onto the bed and stood to pace the small room. The fire in the hearth burned low and did little to stave off the damp chill that hung in the air. It was early May, but spring was slow in coming to Boston. The dark clouds that hovered over the harbor earlier in the day had blown inland. Now, rain pounded the roof, and lightning illuminated his bedroom with jagged flashes. A rumble of thunder echoed overhead, followed by a hesitant knock at the door. He strode to answer it.

His stepsister, Libby, peered up at him with a cautious smile and a plate full of food in her hands. Honey-blond curls framed her cheeks, made rosy by her work in the kitchen. "I brought you something to eat, since you did not join us for the evening meal."

"Thank you. Forgive me. It was inconsiderate not to come, though I would have been poor company."

"Mama understands. As do I."

He accepted the meal from her outstretched hands, the savory smell of fried sausage mixed with the sweet tang of stewed cabbage and apples making his stomach growl.

"I'll leave you alone." Libby ducked her head and backed away, then paused and met his gaze. "Unless you'd like some company. I know it isn't the same as having Patience here, but I am a good listener."

"Are you?" He offered a teasing grin, anxious to lighten the mood and divert the attention from himself. "I seem to recall that you are a good talker."

She giggled. "I am that too. But the offer remains."

Tempting as it was to hide in his room and nurse his self-

pity, her offer was a kind one and reminded him of something his own sister, Patience, would do. He missed her, and the close bond they shared, but now Patience was married and living in Watertown, miles from Boston. Glad as he was for her happiness, he wished for her presence now. Talking with Libby would not be the same, and yet he felt a similar brotherly protectiveness for her. Even if she could not take Patience's place, perhaps he would welcome her companionship, after all.

He nodded toward the parlor behind her. "Well, then, I accept."

"You do?" Libby's blue eyes widened in surprise.

"Aye. Sit by the fire with me?"

She settled into one of the high-backed chairs in front of the brick hearth, and he took the other, balancing his plate on his lap. He sliced into the sausage and tasted it, humming appreciatively at the flavorful bite. For several minutes, they sat in silence as he ate, the crackling fire the only accompaniment to his overly loud thoughts.

At nine-and-ten years old, Libby was younger than Patience and different from her in many ways, yet the two had become dear friends in the months since being thrown together in a new family. The adjustment had been especially hard for his sister, whose high hopes for her reunion with their father were dashed by his unexpected remarriage to Libby's mother, Mary. Will, on the other hand, was used to being disappointed by Father and had come to expect little else.

But now their father was gone, leaving Will once more to shoulder the responsibility of those left behind. Perhaps one good thing to come out of Charlotte's rejection was that it gave him the freedom to remain in Boston and see to the

wellbeing of Libby and Mary, who was now a widow for the second time in less than a year.

Libby shifted in her seat and eyed him warily. “Are you testing me to see how long I will last without speaking?”

He chuckled. “Nay, simply gathering my thoughts while I fill my stomach.”

“Patience told me you were like that.”

“What? Always eager to eat?”

“Slow to speak. Thoughtful. That you like time to mull over things before sharing with others.”

“She knows me well.” He paused to spoon another bite into his mouth and chewed slowly. “But I’ll not keep you in suspense any longer. Perhaps Patience also told you about Miss Charlotte Foster?”

Libby shook her head.

“She was our neighbor growing up. The three of us were good friends—Charlotte, Patience, and I. But over the past year, I had begun to think...” His voice trailed off on a sigh. Saying it aloud was harder than expected. “I came to feel—that is, I began to consider her in a different way.”

He glanced at Libby, waiting for her reaction, but she proved true to her word as a good listener and waited quietly for him to continue.

“I told her as much before we left. I promised her I would return as soon as Patience was settled. But I received a letter from her today in which she expressed feelings quite the contrary to my own. In fact, she is to be wed—is likely married already.”

“Married?” Libby gasped. “How could she? After what you told her?”

“She never promised me anything in return.” Even now, despite how much Charlotte’s reply hurt, he could not speak

poorly of her. "The truth is, I should have known that day that she did not feel the same. She hardly gave a response to my declaration, but I convinced myself it was merely her surprise or some sorrow over our parting." He let out a scoffing laugh. "She did not have to wait for me. She did not tell me she would."

"I'm sorry, Will." Libby propped her elbow on the arm of the chair and rested her chin in her palm. "What will you do now?"

Will stared into the fire. What would he do, indeed? For years, the motivation for every decision he made had been the good of those he loved. First his mother, to provide for her needs through her illness and be by her side when she died. Then for Patience, to bring her safely to America. Keeping his promise to Charlotte had been the next foreseeable step...until today. He was not quite sure what to think or how to feel about the suddenly blank slate of his future.

"I suppose I will stay in Boston, for I've little reason now to leave."

"Patience will be glad of it," Libby said, "and you know you are welcome here with Mama and I as long as you wish."

"Thank you." Will scraped the final bits of food from his plate.

Despite the fact that his father had lived here for a time, Will considered it the Caldwell's home. Dr. Caldwell, Mary's first husband and Libby's father, had owned the house. Will's father only came to inherit it by marriage. In Will's eyes, it belonged to those two women, and he would not impose if they did not wish him to stay. But perhaps his presence could be of help to them. His work as a printer with Benjamin Edes and John Gill at the *Boston Gazette* could provide a comfortable living for the time being and

keep his stepmother from needing to rush into another marriage.

He glanced at the door that led to his makeshift bedroom off the back of the house. It had previously served as an office for the late Dr. Caldwell. It wasn't much, but it gave him space of his own and afforded the ladies of the house more privacy. He could stay here. Keep working at the press. Remain near to Patience, who would indeed be very glad of that, though he knew she would sympathize with him at the same time. He could still care for those who needed him and could finally invest himself fully in the Patriot cause, without the thought of returning to England hovering over him.

Mayhap some good could come out of his disappointment.



Hannah Pierce blinked back the tears that threatened to blur her father's familiar scrawl. She traced a finger along the label on the blue-and-white delft jar—*Calendula officinalis*. Except that wasn't what the bottle contained. The buds were much too small, their color a faded yellow that edged toward tan. Dried calendula flowers were larger, with long, narrow petals and an orange hue.

She lifted the jar to her nose and breathed in the crisp, earthy scent. "*Matricaria chamomilla*. Chamomile," she said aloud in the empty apothecary shop, her voice wavering slightly. Even though there was no one to hear, she hated the pitiful tone. Shaking her head, she placed the jar on the counter.

Papa was making more mistakes lately. His once-sharp mind was not what it used to be. The change had begun two

years ago, though it was only little things at first. A misplaced ingredient here, a forgotten order there. Then Mama died last October and his decline rapidly increased.

It had been six months since her mother's passing, and though her father was no longer lost in the throes of grief, his mental faculties had never recovered. Even this morning, when it was nearly time to open the apothecary for the day, he was still abed. In the past, he would have been behind the counter as soon as the sun rose.

Hannah spun to eye the jars lining the open shelves behind her. She stood on tiptoe to reach the jar of chamomile and pried off the lid. Sure enough, it was calendula inside instead. He'd switched the two. It was a simple thing to fix, and she set about doing so right away, but that did little to untangle the knot in her stomach.

How much longer could she keep her father's condition a secret? Their customers were used to seeing her around the shop. After all, their family home was right behind the apothecary and she'd grown up spending time there whenever she could. But what would they think if they knew how much she was doing in her father's place? They would take their business elsewhere, and be wholly justified in doing so.

She was no apothecary. It did not matter how much she had observed her father, how many questions she'd peppered him with around the family table, or how many Latin names she'd memorized until she knew the meaning of every single label in the shop. It did not matter that she could prescribe and prepare the right teas, tinctures, salves, and poultices to treat a multitude of conditions. She had not apprenticed and she was a woman. She would not claim a place that did not rightfully belong to her.

Still, she could not let Papa's reputation suffer, and who

else was there to help? If only Andrew were to return home. She sighed and replaced the jars, now filled with the proper contents.

Her older brother had been the one to apprentice under their father. When he'd asked to travel to London two years prior for further training at St. Thomas's Hospital, Papa had readily agreed. But then Andrew had fallen in love with a young woman there and written to say they had married. Hannah knew he would have returned when Mama grew ill, but his wife was expecting their first child and could not manage the journey, nor would Andrew leave her alone. Hannah had written to him again, a month ago, to tell him of their father's condition, but had assured him she could manage. Perhaps she should not have been so confident of that in her letter.

For now, there was little else to do but continue her attempts to hide and correct her father's mistakes. It meant early mornings like this, perusing the shelves and deciphering Papa's scrawled notes in the large leather-bound book where he recorded every purchase, and late nights spent preparing all manner of treatments by flickering candlelight. But it was worth it if doing so could preserve his dignity while also ensuring the needs of their customers were met.

The door at the back of the apothecary creaked open, and Hannah turned as her father shuffled in. His wig was askew, his stock only half tied round his neck, but he greeted her with the same tender smile he had since she was a wee girl perched on his lap for prayers before bed.

"Good morning." She kept her voice bright as she crossed the room to meet him. Pressing a kiss to his cheek, she reached for his neckerchief. "Let me help."

“Thank you. I seem to have gotten myself all in a tangle.” He tipped his chin up as she finished tying the cloth.

She tucked the ends into his waistcoat. “All better. I’ve some porridge warm by the fire. Will you join me before you open the shop?”

He glanced at the front door and furrowed his brow, as though her question had confused him, but then he looked back at her and nodded. “Porridge sounds good, and your company even better.”

Hannah smiled, though her heart ached. He treasured her company now, but would there come a day when, like the chamomile and calendula, he did not know who she was?

