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LIES AND
SEDUCTION
VICTORIA BLACK

Lies and Seduction

By

Victoria Black

Lies and Seduction by Victoria Black

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Lies and Seduction

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ISBN: 978-1-60088-540-2

Cover Artist: Sable Grey

Editor: Barbara Louise

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Cobblestone Press, LLC

www.cobblestone-press.com

Chapter One

London, 1941

Helen closed the front door of her drab boarding house and walked down the front steps to the footpath. She glanced around at her surroundings. Everything was still badly damaged by the Blitz that had devastated London. She thanked God that the bombing seemed to have abated since Corporal Hitler, as Evan always called him, had turned on Russia.

As she thought of her brother, her eyes pricked with tears. When would she be able to remember him without crying?

She seemed to be the only person up and about on this miserable morning. The grey dripping skies and the glistening footpath suited the rubble and blackened timbers all about her.

She shuddered at the memories—the slow whooping of the sirens, the whistle then crash of the bombs. The wrecked building next door was testament to how close she and the rest of the girls had come to dying that night when there had been no time to reach the air raid shelter. Then there had been the fires, with ashes raining from the sky, the fire bell clanging insanely, the ambulances arriving... Helen shut her eyes.

An army staff car coming down the road toward her slowed suddenly. She glanced at the driver and noticed he was a young soldier. *He's probably lost.*

The idea of taking away all of the street signs had been good in

theory. The Germans were so close. If—and as many people thought, when—they invaded, not knowing the street names would help to confuse them. The trouble was, it had also confused a lot of Londoners!

The car pulled over near Helen, and the soldier called out in a cockney accent, “Excuse me, lady, could you help me with a few directions?”

Helen walked over to the car and smiled at the young army private who had walked around to the passenger side and was waiting, map in hand.

“Thanks, Miss,” he said, grinning “I’m supposed to be a driver, but I still manage to get lost.”

Helen leaned over the map and was about to reply when she heard the door behind her open. She noticed a fleeting movement behind her back, and realized that someone had jumped out of the rear passenger seat. She gasped as she felt a very strong, tall man grab her from behind and toss her with ease onto the back seat of the car, then leap in behind her. The soldier with the map ran back to the driver’s seat, slammed his door, engaged the gears, and roared off down the street.

Helen panicked. *Why didn’t you scream for help?* She knew the answer: her attacker had been too quick. But if she hadn’t screamed then, she did now—and kicked and bit and scratched her much stronger assailant. She could tell that, despite his strength, he was having a difficult time restraining her, but she knew she couldn’t keep this up. She was already tiring. She reached for the door handle and opened the door slightly, screaming, “Help me! Help me! Somebody help me!”

“What a wildcat,” said the amused voice of her tormentor as he slammed the door closed. Before she could turn in his arms to scratch him again, he gathered her up and sat her on his lap, holding her tightly. He was so strong. She couldn’t move.

“Let me go, let me go,” she screamed in terror, trying to wriggle and squirm but completely unable to do so. He held both of her small hands in his one much larger hand and wrapped his other arm around her body. His arm was pressed up against her chest and his hand tightly grasped most of her left breast.

Helen felt something starting to jut into her bottom, and she moaned in fear and sudden anger, "Oh my Lord, what are you going to do to me? You revolting PIG!"

The man laughed. He released her breast, but held her more tightly still, with his hand reaching around to her back. "I'm very sorry," he said with amusement and guilt in his voice. "You are very lovely, and I really can't help it. Now, be a good girl, and stop fighting me."

Helen stopped struggling and tried to calm herself to face whatever was to come. Being restrained as she was, Helen couldn't turn to look at her assailant, but she could see the khaki color of his sleeves. It seemed likely this man was a soldier, too. His voice was a cultured one, and, despite the evidence of what was still jutting into her, he did not seem to be threatening her with imminent ravishment. Anyway, she was too exhausted to fight any more just now. She knew she needed to save her strength.

They drove almost in silence, with only a short self-congratulatory speech from the driver, who said, "Well, that all went off very well. We were lucky to spot her."

Her captor did not reply. Still in his straightjacket grip, she forced herself to observe and try to memorize the route they were taking. She recognized many of the landmarks and streets of central and then west London. Everywhere she looked were bombed-out buildings, rubble, and what was left of houses and shops after the fireball had passed through.

The car slowed at a narrow laneway beside a large, brick building and drove down into a small car park. Helen tried to steel herself, to quell her terror. Whatever these men had in mind for her was about to happen.

Her assailant released her. Helen twisted around and found herself looking into the eyes of a very handsome young man wearing a captain's uniform. He smiled and said, "You know, Marianne, I'm really quite impressed by your terrified lady act, but let's not pretend any more, please. After you." He gestured to her to look outside, where his driver had opened the door and was waiting. Helen opened her mouth to protest her change of name, but fear had frozen her throat.

The driver helped her as she climbed out of the car. She tried to

build up the strength to scream for help, but her lungs seemed to have no air, and she was gasping for breath. Her legs shook, and she had difficulty standing. The man in the captain's uniform had got out and had taken the private's place. He glanced down at her and frowned, a brief flicker of concern showing in his eyes. He clasped her around her waist with one arm, and half led, half lifted her towards the door of the nearby stairs.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked, finally able to speak. She was annoyed to hear her voice shaking. Clenching her teeth, she forced herself to be strong, to face with some semblance of courage whatever was to come so that Evan would have been proud of her. In a firmer voice, she said, "You can put me down now, Captain. I can walk. And my name is *not* Marianne."

He didn't reply, but, although he retained a loose grip on her arm, he did release his hold on her waist. Instantly, Helen twisted herself free and started to run away. "Help me! Someone help me!" she screamed.

She heard a muttered, "Damn" and footsteps behind her before feeling a strong arm grab her around her waist.

She screamed again. "Please, somebody, help me!" This was the middle of London. Surely someone would hear? The captain put his hand over her mouth. She bit him.

He stifled an oath and spoke in an urgent whisper to his accomplice. "For God's sake, John, open the bloody door of the stairwell." He scooped her up underneath her knees and lifted her as if she weighed nothing, then ran the few steps to the stairs with her in his arms. She heard the door slam shut behind her. He put her down, a grim look on his face.

"Scream all you like now, Marianne. No one can hear you in here."

Helen stopped fighting. She forced back her tears of frustration and fear. The captain grasped her tightly around her waist and frog-marched her in silence up the four flights of stairs from where she was led out into an ill-lit corridor.

At the first door along the corridor, the younger soldier knocked. A voice said, "Come," and Helen and her two escorts entered the room.

In the room was a table at which was seated a small, tubby man,

also in uniform and wearing round, steel rimmed glasses. She thought he was about fifty years of age. He rose and smiled in surprised delight at Helen. Insensibly, she began to relax, feeling that murder and rape were perhaps not on the agenda, although she still had no idea what was happening.

"Well, Marianne, this *is* a surprise! We have been looking for you for some time."

The army officer guided her with a steely grip on her upper arm to one of the empty chairs around the table, and pushed her, none too gently, into it.

"Any trouble, Adrian?" asked the older man.

"None at all from the general populace," he replied. "No one saw a thing. But heaps of trouble from this one." Adrian, as Helen gathered was his name, looked down at her and laughed. "My pretty one, we know all about your charming activities, so you can stop wasting our time with this lady-in-distress act, and know that we *will* get answers from you. It can be done gently if you cooperate or quite the opposite, if you don't."

Helen thought she was going to be sick. "What are you talking about?" she gasped. "My name is Helen James, and I'm a British citizen. What am I supposed to have done?"

The captain sighed and looked regretfully at her. "You know, my dear, please believe me when I say that I hate inflicting pain on anyone, especially women, particularly women as lovely as you. But so many of our men have died because of you. You really need to be stopped, you know."

As he spoke, he grasped her left hand and began to bend back her little finger. She screamed, more in fright than pain.

There was a loud knock on the door. Another soldier burst in and blurted, "Sir, sir," with a nod and salute to both officers, "we've found Marianne! She's been at Guy's Hospital all week. A hit and run. She's dead."

Chapter Two

Adrian dropped the woman's hand and barked at the soldier. "What are you talking about, man? *This* is Marianne." He frowned at the lovely young woman who was looking back up at him with dawning anger in her eyes.

Colonel Donaldson walked over to the filing cabinet, selected a manila folder, and then came back to give it to Adrian. "This young lady certainly looks like Marianne, but I think we should look at the photographs again, Adrian."

Adrian opened the folder which contained several large photographs—all, as far as he could see, of the pretty lady beside him. Both women wore severely cut coats tied tightly at the waist to enhance trim but shapely figures. Both wore hats perched on top of shoulder-length, wavy blonde hair.

He and his commanding officer looked from the seated girl to the photographs until Adrian stiffened. He said slowly, "Her nose is different and the jaw line. Her eyebrows aren't the same shape. My God!" He turned and looked down into the woman's blue eyes. "What did you say your name was?"

The girl looked up at him, relief and anger darting from her eyes into his. She said through clenched teeth, "My name is Helen, Helen James. And I think you are a violent, horrible man with roaming hands!"

At that, Colonel Donaldson turned with raised eyebrows to look at him. Adrian opened his mouth to explain but realized that an explanation

would be most embarrassing.

Colonel Donaldson then spoke to Helen. "My dear, I fear a grave mistake has been made and that you have suffered greatly at our hands. I can't apologize enough. If you need ice for your hand..."

She shook her head. "No, he frightened me. Badly!" She glared at Adrian, "But he didn't actually hurt me."

Adrian's commanding officer smiled with relief. "Please let me introduce myself. My name is Colonel William Donaldson. This is Captain Adrian Carruthers, and this is Private John Brown, who drove you here."

"Well, how do you do? How nice to meet you all," said Helen politely but with a heavy edge of sarcasm. "You know, as much as I really enjoying meeting you and learning your names—especially yours, Captain Carruthers—I'd still rather like to know what's going on."

Adrian did not answer. An inkling of an idea had occurred to him as he looked down at her. Colonel Donaldson did not answer her either, but looked instead at Adrian. "How did this happen, Adrian?"

Adrian sighed, and sat in one of the chairs. "We thought it was a lucky break, sir. We saw her on the footpath only a few blocks from Marianne's flat and thought she was Marianne, so we grabbed her." He sat while Colonel Donaldson stood, and they looked at the now very irate young woman beside them. Adrian knew he and Colonel Donaldson were thinking exactly the same thing.

Adrian stood abruptly as he made a decision. "Sir, could we talk in the other office, please?"

* * * * *

"Sir, we can do this. It's our only chance to find out who Marianne was working for."

"Adrian, I admit it's an excellent chance for us, but you know that it may be very dangerous for Miss James. Even if Marianne's German friends don't know she's dead, they'll have been checking on her flat and wondering where she has gone. Good God, man, they could even snatch her up, just like you did, to find out why she went missing. Miss James

wouldn't be able to keep up the deception for more than two seconds."

"I'll take good care of her, sir," Adrian insisted. "She just needs to pass on the information, and then we'll take it from there." Another idea occurred to him. "And if they do grab her, so much the better. We'll be following right behind them, and they'll lead us straight to their headquarters."

Colonel Donaldson, who was leaning against the table, said thoughtfully, "Of course, there is the chance that Miss James is a relative of Marianne's. She could be her sister, by the similarity of their looks."

Adrian stood still, wondering what he might do if he found that the pretty Miss James was working for the enemy. If she was related to Marianne, then there was nothing more likely. He shook his head. Time enough to worry about that later.

His voice was devoid of expression as he said, "If she is an enemy agent, then I'll take care of that, too. She can stay with me until she passes on the information tomorrow. If she is working for the Germans, she won't have a chance to contact them."

Colonel Donaldson looked at Adrian for some time before he said, "Very well, Adrian, I'll leave all the details up to you."

"Thank you, sir. Would you arrange for our chaps to do an urgent security check on Miss James, please?"

* * * * *

"Miss James," said Colonel Donaldson, "are you prepared to come to your country's assistance? You will be needed for only two days, and there should be little or no danger involved to yourself. Captain Carruthers will take very good care of you."

Helen's head swirled. While still in shock from the very unusual turn that the day had taken, one thing shone like a beacon. She was being offered a chance to do what she had been yearning to do for over a year now, to not just work for long weary hours in a factory. She was being offered a chance to be as brave as her brother had been.

She stood. "Colonel Donaldson, whatever it is, whoever I have to

associate with..." She glared at Captain Carruthers again. "...I will be honored to do whatever you ask of me."

Colonel Donaldson smiled at her and said, "My dear, I thank you. Now, I must go. I will leave you in Captain Carruthers' capable hands. And Private Brown, would you arrange elevenses for Miss James and Captain Carruthers? And one other matter about which I'll speak to you outside. Good day, Miss James." With that, both Colonel Donaldson and Private Brown left the room, leaving Helen and Adrian alone, facing each other.

"So, Captain Carruthers," said Helen sweetly, "you are going to be my protector. And who is going to protect me from you?"

Adrian laughed and said, "My dear, I do apologize for what may have seemed to you to have been my 'wandering hands.' I really was just trying to stop you from scratching me. My hands just ended up where they did, and," he smiled in remembrance, "a very pleasant experience it was, too. But my hands will be very well behaved in future."

Just in time, Helen stopped herself from smiling. He really was a most attractive man, but she wasn't prepared to forgive him quite yet. He needed to be punished for so badly frightening her. And no one seemed to think it was necessary to explain to her why she had been abducted in the first place!

"Do you have any idea how frightened I was?" she demanded. "I thought you and Private Brown were going to rape and murder me. Do you realize how rough and cruel you were?"

"No, surely not rough and cruel!" protested Captain Carruthers. "I'll admit to forceful, and I do apologize about that—"

"What about your threatening me with horrible tortures?" Helen interrupted, feeling very indignant at his apparent short memory. "Would you really have broken my finger?"

Adrian Carruthers looked at Helen guiltily. "You know, my dear, I actually wouldn't have. Torturing lovely ladies, even if I think they are spies, is not what I do. I just thought I'd try to bluff a little, to save time. You see, Marianne—who we thought *you* were—was an Englishwoman, but she was spying for Germany. Many of the latest sinkings and

bombings have been traced back to her. We need to know who her masters are and where to find them."

Helen suddenly understood the reasons behind Captain Carruthers' actions, why he had been so *forceful*. She was grateful he hadn't actually hurt her, either during the abduction or later, when she'd believed he was going to break her finger. She was also relieved that he didn't have a sinister side to his nature, after all. Many British people had died because of what Marianne had done, and she would have deserved her fate of an interrogation, but at the hands of someone other than this good looking and charming man.

"I understand, Captain Carruthers."

He led her to a chair. "Please call me Adrian. Now, as to what we want you to do. Marianne was blackmailing a member of the War Office staff to give her the latest reports of troop movements and weapons production. According to our blackmailed staff member, who is in a lot of trouble as you can imagine, the two meet up every Friday morning for her latest installment, but last Friday she didn't show. We now know she is dead, but the Germans may not know that, and most fortuitously, you have appeared. We want you to pretend to be Marianne tomorrow."

"So are you going pick me up from my boarding house tomorrow morning, then? Colonel Donaldson mentioned my being needed for two days?"

Adrian looked at Helen with an expression she could not fathom. "No, my dear. We can't take the chance that German agents may see you accidentally, just as we did. I will be most honored if you will spend the rest of today and, er, tonight with me. We will leave, going first to your boarding house in order that you may pack, as soon as Private Brown has brought us some of the British Army's finest tea and cake. Ah, here he is now."

As Adrian began pouring the tea into the cups that the private had placed in front of them, Helen blinked at the thoroughness of his plans, especially at the part about her spending the night with him. However, she was determined to appear as nonchalant as he.

So she said, as she toasted him with her cup of tea, "Your plans

sound excellent, Adrian. But just one thing. Please call me Helen, not 'my dear'!"

Chapter Three

Adrian sat outside the boarding house while Helen went inside to pack. Private Brown accompanied her and was to wait outside her room—to carry her luggage down for her, Adrian had told her, but in reality so that the private could listen out for any use of telephone or radio.

Adrian thought of Helen. He agreed with Colonel Donaldson that, if she was the innocent British citizen that she claimed she was, then they might be placing her in a very dangerous position. The men whom Germany employed were not known for their kindness, especially to imposters within their ranks.

On the other hand, if Helen were Marianne's sister, then the Germans probably knew her well. She could well be doing the same sort of thing that Marianne had done.

As he thought of Helen, he shook his head in exasperation. Every instinct told him to trust her. Her reactions in the car had been exactly those of a woman who had no idea what was happening. He smiled when he thought of her anger at his arousal, when he had inadvertently held her breast. Would an enemy agent have reacted that way? He remembered Dominique's quick use of his sexual attraction to her.

Dominique. He closed his eyes in anguish, but forced himself to think of her, to remember her. His mind went back to that morning nearly a year ago in northern France.

* * * * *

It was dark, just before dawn. He was in a deep sleep, until a hand began to stroke his chest. Dominique's long legs were draped across his hips, her naked body pressed up against his back. A soft, firm hand began to circle his nipples then travel further down his body, stroking the hard muscles of his abdomen, until it found what it was looking for. He was already beginning to harden. Dominique caressed him until he woke enough to roll on top of her, smiling sleepily. He kissed her soft lips; then, as she parted her thighs and wrapped them around his back, he entered her.

Their lovemaking was gentle at first, but became more passionate as he pushed harder and harder. With a final thrust, Adrian convulsed deep inside her. He kissed her once more as he rolled away and began drifting back to sleep.

"Adieu, mon cher," murmured Dominique.

Adrian was dimly aware of her slipping out of bed before he fell asleep.

"Englander. Raus!"

Adrian woke to a loud, guttural voice. A German in a black uniform with an SS swastika armband was in the bedroom, pointing a submachine gun and indicating that Adrian should rise.

Adrian's heart lurched. He was wide awake and thinking quickly. Yet he lay, putting up his hands as if in surrender. The soldier relaxed slightly. Adrian grasped the handle of the British Commando knife which was concealed beneath his pillow. He threw it, as he had done so often in training. The knife pierced the German's throat up to its hilt, and he fell, dying, to the floor.

Adrian raced to the drawer in which was hidden his revolver and looked about him for Dominique. Dragging on his clothes, he glanced out of the ground level window. Adrian could see Dominique and the other Resistance fighters—all of them—some distance away, partially surrounded by a group of German soldiers. If he went out of the front door, he would emerge right in front of them all. Adrian threw himself

out of the window. Rolling with his fall, he rose and ran at a crouch to lie behind one of the trees that was at the start of the dense forest behind the chalet.

From his hiding place Adrian could see his French comrades. God, they had every one of them, all fifteen. They were pushed roughly into a line up against the wall of the building. Jean Paul's face was a bloody pulp. Anton's eyes were swollen and bruised. What the hell had happened? Dominique seemed unharmed, though. They hadn't shoved her into line with the others. Adrian closed his eyes in despair. What were they going to do to her?

A German SS commander saluted Dominique and barked, 'Heil Hitler!' To Adrian's horror, Dominique returned the salute and greeting, and then shook the German's hand.

At the commander's order, the German soldiers sprayed the Frenchmen with bullets. Dominique watched them without expression as they died.

Through Adrian's mind flashed a memory of their lovemaking so few hours ago. He then recollected, with sick fear, everything he had taught her. She knew so much about British Security—because he had told her. Adrian took careful aim with his revolver and pulled the trigger. Dominique fell to the ground, dead.

Adrian knew he had only seconds before he was discovered. Already the soldiers were looking in his direction. He stood and ran into the forest. Bullets flew as he twisted and turned. He could hear the barking of dogs. Minutes passed as he raced through the forest, avoiding trees, bushes, hillocks, ditches. His gasping breath and the baying of the dogs were all he could hear. Just as he felt his lungs could take no more, he arrived at the river he had been seeking, and, without hesitation, dived into it.

The river was freezing and swift flowing. He swam fast, head down, adrenaline silencing his need for oxygen until he reached the other side. He clambered out and staggered, exhausted, into the deep forest. From some distance behind him, he heard the dogs and men stopping on the other side of the river. They hadn't seen him.

* * * * *

He had learned a bitter lesson that morning in Le Havre. He understood men, knew how to fight them and how to defend himself against them. But women? They played by very different and nasty rules. While this war lasted, he would not allow himself to become entangled with another woman. Even the seemingly genuine and lovely Miss James.

They were good actresses, the women who worked for Germany.

What would he do to her if he found she was working for the Germans?

He thought back to when he had struggled with her in the car and in the car park, when he held her trim waist and her firm, rounded hips. And she had such lovely, full breasts. His cock stiffened at the memory of her delicious, soft body. He pictured her naked, her nipples hardening beneath his caress, imagined stroking her satin-like skin and parting her thighs to reveal her moist... His erection pressed hard against his trousers.

Dominique had used her body and her lovely face to seduce him into trusting her. If Helen James wanted to do the same thing in the hope of learning all about British Security—well, he could play her game up to a certain point, and enjoy what she had to offer.

The next two days, Adrian thought with a smile of anticipation, might turn out to be very interesting indeed.

* * * * *

Helen ran up the stairs to her bedroom and made a swift selection of the items she thought she may need for two days. As she made her choices, however, she thought of the situation in which she had found herself, and, even more, of the man who waited for her outside.

She thought of his charming smile when they had toasted each other with the tea and how his dark brown eyes crinkled at the corners when he laughed. She liked his short, curly, dark blond hair, his slightly freckled nose, and determined chin. He was tall, good looking,

witty—everything she found attractive in a man—and she was going to spend tonight with him.

She smiled as she remembered him snatching her up and throwing her into the car and the way he effortlessly lifted her in the car park. He hadn't hurt her at all, either time, just easily overpowered her. She was conscious of tightness and heat between her thighs as she thought of his strength, of his hard, taut body holding hers. She could almost feel the touch of his hands on her breasts and his hardening penis pressing against her. The tightness between her thighs increased to a throb that made her gasp. She sat down on the bed.

All thoughts of Adrian vanished as her gaze alighted on the framed photograph on her bedside table. She recollected why she was leaving her home tonight and staying with a man she did not know—and it was nothing to do Adrian's attractiveness. She wanted to fight the Germans, not with a gun, like Evan had, but in a way that a woman could, with her body and her wits. This chance to learn how to fight the enemy could not be allowed to be her only chance. She must convince Adrian to let her continue, to learn more.

She reached out and picked up the picture of her dead brother. Tears welled in her eyes as she remembered the day it was taken, just before he left for France. His face was so cheeky and alive. He was only twenty-two years old.

Helen whispered, "I want to be brave too, Evan."

* * * * *

Adrian was waiting outside the car as Helen and Private Brown emerged. He noticed the traces of her tears. She seemed subdued.

"Is something wrong, Helen?"

Helen shook her head, saying, "No. I just thought of something sad, that's all. But I'm fine." She obviously took herself in hand, for she smiled and changed the subject. "Where do you live?"

"Mayfair," he answered.

What had happened inside, to make her sad? Was she thinking of

her sister's death?

As he helped her into the back seat, he commented, "Your hands are cold. I'll start the fire as soon as we get to my flat, and you'll be as warm as toast in no time."

The journey to Adrian's flat passed by happily with Adrian chatting about the nude ladies at the Windmill Theatre and their response to a mouse being released on stage. They talked about theatre and the latest jazz music coming over from America. Helen giggled at his jokes and the atmosphere became much more relaxed.

As they talked and Helen responded to his flirting, Adrian was conscious of a deep yearning—that there was no war, that he was just taking a pretty girl out for the evening, and that the word "traitor" did not exist.

Private Brown pulled up outside Adrian's home, an old, attractive brownstone building which had once been a nobleman's residence but had long since been converted into a block of flats.

Adrian led Helen up a short flight of stairs. They entered his flat, and he closed the door. For several seconds they stood still, with Adrian very aware that they were alone together. He glanced at Helen and saw she was looking down at the floor, away from him.

He put her luggage down, smiled at her, and said, "Well, my dear—I mean Helen—welcome to my humble abode, as they say, though I wish they wouldn't as it sounds quite pretentious. If you'd like to sit down, I'll get the fire started, we'll have the grand tour, and then I'll make you lunch. Are you hungry?"

His speech seemed to break the spell of awkwardness and sexual awareness that engulfed them.

"Yes, I'm starving." She sat down in his comfortable armchair while he busied himself with the fire. "Your flat wasn't hit, then?" asked Helen.

"No," he said over his shoulder, "we were very lucky. I noticed a lot of damage around your neighborhood, though. Did your boarding house cop anything?"

Helen shook her head. "No, just lots of broken windows. But the

house next door got a direct hit. A whole family was wiped out—Grandma, Grandpa, Mum, Dad and three children. The poor husband had just come home on leave when it happened.”

Adrian shook his head sympathetically, although it was a common enough tale.

“There. Done,” he said, standing in front of the fire that was quickly warming the room. He picked up her bag. “As you can see, this is the main living area, where I spend most of my time when I’m in London. Every mortal thing in this room and, actually, in the whole flat, comes from my parents’ place in Surrey. All of the furniture for this room was wrenched from my father’s study by my mother. So I feel quite at home, though I don’t think my father does. Actually, I know he doesn’t, as he tells me so every time he sees me.”

Helen laughed and followed him into the kitchen. The room was as neat as a pin, with shining copper pans hanging from hooks, a large gas oven, and a small table with two chairs taking up most of the space.

“I’ve only just started learning how to cook,” Adrian confessed with a sheepish grin. “What are your cooking skills like?”

Helen shook her head. “Boarding school filled my head with lots of possibly useful knowledge, but I’m afraid cooking skills were not part of the curriculum. Would you like me to parse a paragraph by Milton for you? Or read a poem in French to you? My French mistress said my pronunciation was excellent. But, cooking—no.”

Adrian laughed, and said, “Your education sounds like mine. We’ll have to make do with eggs. My mother gave me two dozen when I visited them. I’m not bad with an omelet. This way, if you please.” As they walked down the hallway, Helen noticed a huge porcelain bath dominating the bathroom.

She looked enviously at the bathtub. “You’re very lucky. You should see the tiny bathtub we have at the Mrs. Machim’s boarding house. And it has to be shared amongst eight of us!”

Adrian smiled and said, “Well, for two days, you can live in bathtub paradise. Now, here is the bedroom. There’s only one, I’m afraid.”

Helen followed Adrian into the bedroom, where Adrian put down

her suitcase. Apart from a small cupboard and chest of drawers along one wall, the room was taken up with a large double bed.

She turned her head slowly and looked at him.

He tried not to laugh as he took in Helen's look of stern enquiry. "So this is where you will sleep. I'll sleep on the sofa in the living room. Unless, of course, you feel there may be room for us both...." At this point Helen's blue eyes widened, and he rushed into speech. "No, of course not. You have the bed. I have the sofa. An excellent arrangement."

Helen's lips twitched, but she said, "You should keep your bed. I'll sleep on the sofa."

Adrian shook his head decidedly and said, "No, that is not the action of a gentleman. Lady on bed, gentleman on sofa. I'm sure that was one of the things I was taught at school. Weren't you?"

Helen laughed and said, "Your school sounds more practical than mine was. But thank you, I'll take the bed."

Adrian escorted her back to the kitchen, pulled out a chair at the table for her to sit down, and briskly set to making omelets for two.

They sat a short time later in the cozy living room, with a cup of tea that Helen had insisted on making. "I do have one cooking skill that no self respecting Englishwoman can be without," she told him. "I can make an excellent cup of tea."

Unknown to Helen, Adrian was thinking again of Dominique and the little inconsistencies in her life story that had only become apparent to him later.

"Now, Miss Helen James," he said, "I'd like to know something more about you. For starters, what is a beautiful young lady with an excellent education, albeit deficient in the art of cookery, doing living at a rather sordid-looking boarding house?"

Helen frowned at the sharpness of his question. She said slowly, "I live at Mrs Matchim's boarding house because, as you perhaps may have heard, there is a shortage of accommodation in London due to the enthusiasm of the Luftwaffe bomber crews. One must take what one can get. If one is lucky, one may have parents who own a flat in London." Helen looked questioningly at Adrian. He smiled in surprise at her

acumen and nodded. "But," Helen continued, "if one's parents are dead, and one wishes to live in London, then, as I say, one must live somewhere."

Adrian decided to add his mite to the "one-ness" of the conversation. "One is most fortunate to have a roof over one's head, when one thinks about it."

While Adrian was enjoying very much Helen's wit and intelligence, he was still being careful. Helen's descriptions of boarding school education were very accurate and made her seem British to the core. Her reasons for living in a cheap boarding house seemed reasonable, but still he hesitated. Even if she were as innocent as she appeared, he had no intention of becoming involved with this very pretty lady. He was determined to be true to his vow, "No Women In My Life While the War is On." He had a job to do—protect her until she lead them to whoever was in charge of Marianne—and he would do it to the best of his ability. But once Helen had done her Marianne impression, that would be the end.

Of course, if she was a German agent, his job description was quite different. Keep her away from the telephone, don't let her leave, and take full advantage of her sweet body should she offer it to him in the hope of finding out Britain's secrets.

"And do you have an occupation, Helen?"

"Yes, I work in a munitions factory, not far from where I live. Today was my day off."

Another area of inquiry. Look into possible espionage at her factory.

She was silent for a little while and then continued with a sigh, "They needed women in the factories, they said. I know I'm doing something important to help my country, but I feel so—so useless, like I should be doing much more."

Adrian eyed at her curiously. "You know we have lots of men from all over the country, actually the Commonwealth, who are answering the call to arms. Do you think you can do more than they can? Surely helping to make ammunition and weapons is exactly what our country and our men need?"

Helen cried out in exasperation, "But I could do so much more! There are lots of women at the factory, all of them doing an excellent job. They don't really need me. Look at me, Adrian," she commanded and stood in front of him.

Adrian obediently looked at the agitated woman standing in front of him. She had removed her coat when the room had started to warm and now stood with her hands on slim hips encased in what he believed was called a pencil-line skirt which reached her knees. The skirt showed off to excellent advantage her trim waist, femininely curved hips, and shapely legs. Her stilettos made her legs extra shapely, Adrian decided, and would have been the reason she came up to his shoulders when she was standing next to him. Without them, she'd be at about chest height. Not that he minded short women. In fact, Adrian thought, warming to this theme, I rather like them that way.

His gaze traveled upwards to her close-fitting cream blouse, which buttoned up tightly to her throat and ended in a rounded collar. The blouse clung to her lovely, full breasts, which he itched to touch again. He decided he approved wholeheartedly of current women's fashions.

He looked up further to admire her pretty, oval-shaped face. She had a creamy complexion and an adorable straight, little nose. Her lovely blonde hair curled up from her forehead and fell in waves to her shoulders. Her full lips, at the moment a vibrant shade of red to match the gloves and hat that she had earlier removed, were perfect for kissing. He looked into her large, dark blue eyes, and grinned.

"Thank you very much for your invitation. Other than seeing that that you look very beautiful, was there anything else that you wanted me to notice?"

Helen stamped her foot. "That is exactly what I wanted you to notice. Personally, I'd much prefer to be tall and willowy like Katharine Hepburn, instead of being short and having a bust that won't fit into anything, but men don't seem to mind. Why am I not being used to do something with my body? I volunteered when I came to London, but all the silly clerk said was that women were needed in the factories. Aren't there German spies I could be entrapping? Resistance movements that

need a woman? I can speak French perfectly—that's one thing I learned at school that may come in handy! I am so sick of making bloody guns. I want to do something more. Adrian, my brother died at Dunkirk, and I don't want to sit at home any more. I want to fight, too!"

At the mention of her brother, her eyes filled with tears, which rolled down her cheeks. She had cried often at the loss of Evan, but the pain never seemed to go away. Her voice broke, and she sat and sobbed. Adrian moved beside her, put his arms around her, and rocked her gently. She clung to him until her sobs began to subside.

Adrian had stiffened as soon as Helen had started her impassioned speech about entrapping spies, and, more particularly, of going to France for the Resistance. So her sweet, innocent act was an act after all. And she wanted to be a part of the Resistance, did she? Maybe she wanted to find out other things, as well. He thought of his current activities organizing the nucleus of an underground movement in Britain, in preparation for invasion. He himself was supposed to emerge as a country parson. He shuddered to think of the damage a traitor could cause.

Her act was just the same as Dominique's, right down to the tears and sobbing. Dominique had cried for her fallen country and pleaded to be allowed to go back as a resistance fighter. He was not going to be fooled again. And Helen had a brother who had been killed? Well, that was something different. Dominique hadn't thought of that one. But there was nothing to stop his taking advantage of this lovely little armful by pretending to believe her. Adrian tightened his arms around her, moved that tiny bit closer, and kissed her.

Chapter Four

Helen's mouth opened, and Adrian's exploring tongue caressed hers. He kissed her long and softly at first, and then his kiss became harder and more urgent. Helen began to feel again the delightful tightening between her thighs.

It had never been like this with her one previous lover, a skinny, spotty boy named Peter whom she had thought she loved, at least until his act of love had been quickly accomplished, and then she hadn't seen him again.

Helen easily pushed all thoughts of Peter out of her mind as Adrian's hands caressed her breasts through the silky material of her blouse. His breathing quickened as he started to undo her blouse's tiny buttons. That finicky job completed, it was a small matter to slide the silky material from her shoulders, and then remove her skirt, slip, and brassiere.

Her full, round breasts were exposed to Adrian's gaze. He looked at and then lightly touched each breast with the palm of his hand. He squeezed and rubbed her hardened nipples between his fingers and thumb, and she began to breathe harder too. He bent and licked her nipples, tickling their tips, nibbling and sucking. Helen thought she was going to explode. She could feel herself becoming tight and moist.

Adrian hooked his fingers into her panties and pulled them down towards her feet and dropped them to the floor. He gazed at her naked body. His hands stroked the curve of her hips and then moved down to

the blonde curls between her thighs. As his fingers caressed her curls, she moaned with pleasure and parted her legs in invitation. Adrian began to stroke, with feather-like touches, the little nub of sensation inside her folds. She cried out in pleasure.

There was a loud knock at the door.

Adrian swore, and Helen sat bolt upright, suddenly aware of her naked state and what had been about to happen.

"Oh, what was I doing?" she gasped, her face burning with embarrassment. She grabbed up her clothes and fled to the bedroom.

* * * * *

Adrian sat, breathing heavily for some seconds and waiting for his erection to subside. Who the hell was that knocking at the door? And what did she mean by "What was I doing?" and her blush? Going by his knowledge of Dominique and Marianne, the Germans didn't send out innocents to extract secrets from their victims.

There was another round of knocking. Adrian rose and opened the door to find Private Brown outside it, a large bag of groceries in his arms. "Colonel Donaldson's compliments, sir," he said as he walked inside towards the kitchen. "The colonel thought you might be a bit short of food, so he sent me round to his place at Knightsbridge to get some things from his kitchen."

"Thank you, John. Could you convey my appreciation to Colonel Donaldson?" Adrian escorted the soldier to the front door, where he suddenly thought of something. "John, that security check that Colonel Donaldson asked you to organize—there's a piece of information that might come in handy. Miss James said she had a brother who was killed at Dunkirk."

Adrian walked back into the living room, frowning. Was Helen who she said she was, after all? What if she was exactly as she appeared, a very lovely woman who wished Britain well? In that case, his determination to be the seducer rather than the seduced was a completely immoral strategy, especially since she was here more or less at the

invitation of His Majesty's Government and was going to undertake a dangerous assignment the next day.

There was also the impression she gave as she fled to her room that she had very little actual experience in the act of love. He might have to be much kinder.

He knocked on Helen's door. "Helen, we're alone again. Are you all right?"

She answered from the other side of the door. "Yes, I'm fine, thank you. You know, Adrian, after everything that has happened today, I think I am a bit tired. I might lie down for a little while—alone, I mean."

He smiled at her last remark, which hardly seemed the words of a scheming German spy. "That's fine, Helen. We've just had a delivery of groceries. I'll wake you when it's dinner time."

He went into the kitchen to unpack the bag of food from Colonel Donaldson's kitchen and to work out how it was supposed to be cooked.

Chapter Five

Helen lay for a long time after Adrian went away. What had come over her? Since her one past experience, she had been very careful of men, avoiding all dangerous scenarios such as going to dances and the cinema in their company. Peter's rejection had coincided with Evan's death last year, so it hadn't been that hard. Her desire for male company had been replaced by an obsession to try to be as brave as Evan had been.

She thought about Adrian. She knew, from the practiced way he had almost made love to her, that she should not trust him with her heart, but she could also sense the decent, strong man behind his amorous façade. He was a man who could love and protect a woman. Helen shook her head at her weakness, because she knew that she wanted to be that woman.

No, Helen, you have work to do. There is no time for love with Adrian.

She opened her eyes wide, as a thought occurred to her. She wasn't at all sure she was capable of seducing men and luring them to tell her their secrets. What if she started with Adrian? Adrian was kind and wouldn't hurt her if he guessed what she was doing. There had been no hint that there might be more work for her after tomorrow. She thought of going back to the factory. No. She had so much more to give.

It was settled, then. Adrian was to be her first assignment. She would seduce him with her body—no hardship there—with the proviso that he agree to help her become a spy. She felt a huge pang of guilt at the idea of using him in this way.

She stood up and, looking at herself sternly in the mirror, said out loud, "Helen, this country may be invaded. You will do whatever you have to do. People's feelings do not matter."

Realizing she was indeed very tired, she decided she would think about her rather frightening plan later. She lay down and went to sleep.

It was several hours later that Helen awoke to another knock on her door. Adrian's voice said, "Helen, dinner will be ready soon. Are you awake?"

The room was so dark. She must have slept for some time. She looked at the window and saw that the blackout curtains were already in place. No doubt Adrian had already fixed up the ones for the other rooms by now.

She called out, "Thank you Adrian, I'll be out in a moment." So formal, she laughed to herself, after what they had done earlier. She remembered what she had decided to do before she had gone to sleep. Could she really do it?

She stood and selected a change of clothing from her suitcase—as tight-fitting and severely cut as her previous outfit, but this one was powder blue and a dress. As she combed her hair, she looked at herself and practiced several seductive poses in the mirror, before laughing and deciding that they might frighten Adrian away, or worse, make him laugh too.

She opened the bedroom door to be greeted with the smell of burning and Adrian's agonized cry of "Bugger!" She ran into the kitchen to see clouds of smoke coming from the oven, and Adrian looking extremely harassed.

"Damnation!" he yelled, as he opened the oven to see the black and shriveled roast beef and potatoes which were to have been their dinner. He looked coldly at Helen as she started to giggle, but then he began to laugh too. They both inspected the damage. "How long are you supposed to cook a roast for? And what temperature is the oven supposed to be?" he demanded.

"I have no idea," said Helen, still giggling.

"Maybe I shouldn't have had the oven at its hottest, and maybe

three hours was a trifle too long,” said Adrian, in the manner of one who has just learned a sad but true fact of life.

“Maybe,” Helen agreed. “Although, as a non-cook myself, I think you were very brave to make the attempt. Um, I’m afraid you may have wasted an entire week’s worth of meat rations in your roast. Is there anything else to eat?”

“As a matter of fact, there are eggs and tomatoes—again courtesy of my mother. So, Miss James, if I can interrupt your merriment for a little while, perhaps you can assist me by hopping out of the kitchen while I attempt some more experimental cuisine.”

“No, Captain Carruthers,” said Helen, just as formally. “I suggest *you* set the table while I clear away this mess and make a second course. Fried eggs and tomatoes is something I can actually manage.”

As Helen brought the two plates out into the living room, she blinked at the elegance of the table with its crisp white tablecloth and sparkling champagne glasses. Adrian uncorked the champagne—another gift from Colonel Donaldson, he said—and they proceeded to have a very merry meal. Later, they sat once more on the sofa in front of the fire, sipping the cognac Adrian had unearthed from his father’s wine cellar. They were laughing over a shared memory of the chaos in the kitchen when Helen remembered her decision to seduce Adrian.

“So, Captain Carruthers, don’t you think it’s time you showed me the wonders of your bathtub?”

“By all means, Miss James, it is time you had your taste of bathtub heaven. May I escort you?”

“What I really want, my dear captain, is for you to join me.”

Adrian was delighted with Helen’s answer but also a little suspicious. What had happened to the little innocent? However, he’d been on his best behavior tonight. No one could accuse him of trying to seduce Helen or of trying to make love to her in any way. His conscience was clear.

Of course, it *had* occurred to him several times during the evening, especially when she curled up on the couch, that she was very, very pretty. As he had sat next to her to pour her cognac, it had seemed natural

to stay where he was, to smell her flowery perfume, and to want, very much, to take her into his arms and kiss her.

“My dear—I mean Helen—that is the best and most exciting suggestion I have heard in a long time. Allow me to escort you to the Tub of Delight.”

He took her arm and led her, as he would into a ballroom, to the bathroom. Once there, he bowed, bent to turn on the taps, and stood to face her. His eyes widened as she began to unbutton her dress. It fell apart, slid off her shoulders, and dropped to the ground. She lifted her slip over her head and, holding up the flimsy material with one finger, let it slither to the floor. He saw her smile, but he could not take his eyes off her stunning figure, attired only in a brassiere and panties.

“Captain Carruthers, if you wouldn’t mind,” murmured Helen, as she turned her back to Adrian, inviting him to undo her brassiere.

He did so eagerly, and would have reached around to cup and caress the breasts that had been hidden beneath the brassiere had not Helen stopped him by holding his hands and putting them down at his sides. She turned to face him, allowed each strap to fall to her shoulders, and then pulled the lacy material away, her large, white breasts wobbling slightly on their release.

He wanted nothing more than to step forward and cup the soft, delicious mounds in his hands and lick and suck their pink, hard tips, but she cupped and lifted them herself, squeezing them and rolling her nipples slowly between her thumb and fingers. Adrian’s erection pressed up hard against his trousers. He breathed faster. Helen moved her hands downwards, stroking her smooth flesh until she reached her waist, where her thumbs hooked and dragged the delicate material of her panties toward the floor. With a pointed toe, she kicked them away.

Adrian caught his breath at her naked loveliness. His fingers itched to stroke her, caress every part of her, but as he reached out, again she stopped him.

She unbuttoned his army shirt which she slid off over his shoulders by standing on her tiptoes, though he had to help her with the cuffs. Her hands stroked the muscles of his chest, lingering at the nipples, which she

circled with her fingertips. She slid her hands down further, past the taut muscles of his stomach, to undo his belt.

No! Adrian cried silently, as her hands traveled back to his chest, stroking his hard muscles. He laughed in relief as she stopped teasing him and moved her hands downwards again to unbutton his fly. She kneeled in front of him and firmly dragged his trousers, along with his underwear, to the floor. He quickly stepped out of them. Thank God he had removed his shoes earlier when he had sat with her on the couch.

She was level with his huge erect cock which had sprung joyously free from its irksome clothing. She kissed and licked its tip and caressed its length with her hands. Adrian was breathing hard now. God, how he wanted her.

Helen stood up, stepped back and smiled at him, an invitation in her eyes.

Adrian groaned with desire. He turned off the taps, and then both he and Helen stepped into the tub. He roughly grasped her naked body. Her beautiful breasts mashed against the muscles of his chest. They felt delicious. He held her buttocks and pulled her in closer, and let her feel his rock-hard erection pressing against her stomach. Then he sat in the warm water and drew her down to sit on his lap, facing him, her legs spread wide on either side of his hips. Part of him wanted to plunge into her right now, to assuage the urgent need she had built up inside him. But another part of him wanted to draw this out, to give her pleasure, too.

Adrian found the soap and began to caress her breasts with his slippery hands. Her nipples were hard as he rubbed them between his thumb and finger. He could hear her breathing faster. He traced a path down past her trim stomach. Everything between her thighs was now wide open as he gently stroked her delicate, inner flesh. One then two of his fingers entered her. Helen thrust against his fingers and moaned with pleasure.

"Is it safe for me to make love to you?" he murmured. "Or should I get a French letter from the bedroom?"

"It will be safe for a couple of days, Adrian," answered Helen, and then she gasped with delight as he began to push his fingers deep inside

her again and again.

He smiled and withdrew his fingers, then lifted her hips so that his thick, hard cock was at her entrance. He closed his eyes in anticipation of pushing himself into her warm, welcoming depths.

“Will you tell me how to become a spy, Adrian?” Helen whispered. “Will you show me what I have to do?”

Adrian opened his eyes and looked into her big blue ones, marveling at how she could look so sweet. So he had been right about her all along. Her terror when he abducted her, her charm and wit and delightful giggle, her tears about her “brother” — all an act, every bit of it.

God, she was good.

Chapter Six

Helen waited for Adrian's answer. She was playing a part and refused to break out of character, but in the depths of her mind, she was ashamed. She liked Adrian very much. She wanted to keep seeing him, but not like this, not selling her body to him in exchange for favors.

Adrian stared at her for several seconds then spoke with a coldness that chilled her.

"Helen—that *is* your name, isn't it? —I really admire you for trying, but I'm afraid I can't agree to teach you all about what we do. Did you really think I was fooled by you for one second?"

Helen struggled to her feet and stepped quickly out of the bathtub. "Adrian, what are you talking about?" She looked at him, aghast.

Adrian rose also, quickly followed her out of the tub and grabbed her by her shoulders. "You can stop the act now, Helen. You live close to Marianne, you look just like her. What was she—your sister? Do you really think we're simpletons?" He cupped her breast in his hand. "But why waste all your efforts that got me in this condition?" He glanced down at his erect penis. "You're very beautiful, Helen, and I still want to fuck you."

Helen pushed him so hard that he staggered. "You believe I'm working for the Germans?" She stared at him, her eyes showing her fury and her hurt. "You don't believe a word I've said all day, do you? You didn't believe me about my brother dying, did you? You pretended to comfort me, and then you kissed me, and all the while you thought I was

working for Germany?" With each question, her voice rose. "Oh!" she gasped. "You would have made love to me when I was crying about Evan if we hadn't been interrupted. My God, I have terrible taste in men. First there was Peter, who loved me for about two seconds, and now there's you! How did you get to be such a cold-hearted pig?"

She punched him. Adrian yelped, grasped her hands, and forced them behind her back. Helen stepped down hard on his instep and slipped away as he reacted to the excruciating pain. She grabbed a towel, ran into the bedroom, and locked the door. Seconds later, she unlocked the door to throw a pillow, a blanket and a pair of pajamas at him, then slammed and locked the door again.

* * * * *

Adrian stooped to pick up the pajamas, his erection quite gone. He dressed and then made up a bed in the hallway outside Helen's room, determined to prevent her from escaping. He'd probably ruined everything, but he was going to try to salvage the operation tomorrow, somehow. Even if he had to aim a gun at her head during the whole performance.

He lay down on the hard floor, but sleep was a long time coming. He could hear Helen crying inside her room until at last she was silent. He set his jaw, but memories of the hurt in her deep blue eyes kept flashing back unbidden. He wondered if he could have misjudged her, but then shook his head. She was very good. It was all an act. Just like Dominique.

Chapter Seven

Adrian woke to a knock at his front door, which he limped down the hall to answer. Private Brown stood on the doorstep with some papers under his arm.

"Good morning, sir. The security status of Miss James, as ordered, sir." He presented the dossier to Adrian and continued, "Very easy to track, she was, sir—what with her brother going to get a medal and all."

Adrian snatched up the dossier and flicked through its pages. "My God, what have I done?" he groaned. "I'm sorry, John. Thank you. Well done."

"Sir," continued the private, "what time would you like me to pick up you and Miss James, for when she has to pretend to be Marianne?"

Adrian looked at his watch. It was seven a.m. "Come back in two hours please, John," he said and closed the door, still frowning at the papers in his hand.

As he read about Helen's life, he remembered their day together. Everything she had said was true—the boarding school she talked about, her parents being dead. The death of her only brother was there, in great detail, as he was a hero it seemed.

There were photographs, too, of a younger Helen at her parents' funeral, and one of Helen and her brother at his Sandhurst graduation ceremony. When he remembered that he had tried to make love to Helen when she had been weeping over the lieutenant's death, Adrian groaned again.

He tried to rake up feelings of righteous anger over Dominique's betrayal and the untrustworthiness of women in general, but he knew he was being unfair. Helen was no traitor. He thought of her wit and intelligence. He smiled as he remembered some of her naive and funny remarks. He frowned.

What the hell was she about last night with that seductress act? And what did she mean about that bloke she mentioned—Peter, was it?

As he made breakfast, he thought about what had happened in the bathroom the previous night. Despite his guilt at the way he had treated Helen, memories of her slim, naked body, of the nipples of her breasts responding to his caress came back, and he started to harden. He looked down at his pajama pants, which now had a long stiff rod inside them poking outwards, and laughed.

I really am a—what did she call me in the car yesterday? A revolting pig, I think her words were. He laughed again, and waited until the effects of his bathtub memories had subsided, before he knocked on Helen's door.

* * * * *

Helen woke the next morning, feeling sick and empty. She remembered what had happened the night before. Adrian thought she was a traitor, an enemy agent. He had always thought so. And she had thought, like a silly romantic girl, that he might be the man for her—after knowing him for only one day.

Yet there had been such an instant attraction between the two of them.

Just then, there was a soft knock on her door. "Helen, could you get up please? We need to talk."

Sighing, she climbed out of bed, and put on the bathrobe she had packed. She didn't care now if Adrian thought she looked untidy and unkempt. She wouldn't even brush her hair.

She emerged from the bedroom to see Adrian standing at the doorway. He was still in his pajamas, his hair tousled and his face in need of a shave. He looked younger somehow, but just as handsome and

attractive as ever.

He said stiffly, "Good morning, Helen. Could you come into the living room, please? It's warmer there. I've made some tea and toast."

"Good morning, Adrian," Helen responded, just as stiffly. "That will be very nice." She followed him down the short hallway. On the small table in front of the sofa, she saw some papers with the title, "Miss Helen James." She sat and looked at Adrian.

He sat heavily beside her and picked up the dossier. He was so serious. What did the papers say about her?

"Private Brown was here early this morning. Our chaps have been very busy, but it seems you were easy to trace." He looked down at the papers in his hands. "It's all here, about your brother, Lieutenant Evan James, killed in action at Dunkirk. It says that it has been recommended he be awarded a posthumous medal for bravery."

There was a pause while Helen thought of her big brother, who had teased her all her life and whom she had loved.

"It talks also of your parents, Helen," continued Adrian. "It says they were Michael and Elizabeth James. I remember their deaths in that skiing accident because, when I was at Rugby, one of the boys in our year went to their funeral—he was a relative."

Helen nodded absently. "That would have been John Roachfield. He's our cousin."

Adrian ran his hand through his hair, and blurted, "Helen, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't trust you."

"Why *didn't* you trust me, Adrian? I know I look like Marianne, but that's all. Why were you so convinced that I was working for the Germans?"

"I wanted to believe you, Helen, and I did start to trust you—until last night, when you said you wanted me to tell you how to become a spy. A year ago, I met a girl. Her name was Dominique. She begged me to teach her everything I knew because she wanted to fight for France. I did, and because of me, fifteen good men died. Dominique betrayed them...and me. I just managed to get away. She was working for the Germans. Can you understand why I was suspicious when you said you

spoke French and that you wanted to work for the Resistance?”

Everything was clear now. She remembered how, just before she had wept about Evan’s death at Dunkirk, she had spoken about wanting to fight for the Resistance. And...

“And then I had the brilliant bathtub idea,” Helen said ruefully, “when *again* I wanted you to teach me about spying. Adrian, of course, I understand, and I’m so sorry about everything. I’m sorry I stamped on your foot—”

Smiling, Adrian interrupted, “I was well served for doubting you, wasn’t I? I’m still limping, you know.”

She hung her head in embarrassment. “Adrian, I am terribly sorry. I’m not usually that violent. I’m sorry about that whole silly striptease and seduction business that I did.”

Adrian grinned. “You mustn’t apologize—that bath with you was the most erotic thing that’s ever happened to me.”

She looked up at him, very pleased. “Did I look like I knew what I was doing, then?”

Adrian laughed at her obvious delight and said, “Yes, you looked very experienced. Which brings me to something that has been worrying me. You’re not experienced, are you Helen? You said something last night about a bloke called Peter, and it sounded like he’d been your only lover. Is that true?”

Helen felt herself flush and retorted, “Well, I don’t see that it’s any of your business, but since all my secrets seem to be coming out today, you may as well know that one, too. Yes. Peter was my only lover, if you can use that word for what he did to me. I was eighteen years old, and he said he loved me. We had sex once. It hurt a lot, and I never heard from him again. Maybe I was terrible or something.” Helen looked away, embarrassed at what she had revealed to Adrian and surprised that she could still be hurt by Peter’s actions.

“He sounds like a bloody little prat who needed his backside kicked!” Adrian took a breath before continuing, “I’m sorry to bring it up Helen, but it’s important. Don’t you see? You’re not cut out for this game. You’re too sweet.”

Helen opened her mouth to argue.

"Yes, you are, despite that incredibly sexy striptease. What if I'd hurt you when I thought you were trying to deceive me? There are many men who would."

"But that's why I picked you to be the first man I tried to seduce!" Helen protested. "I knew you wouldn't hurt me."

Adrian shouted with laughter but grew serious again. "You see what I mean? You have no idea what you're doing. You need to go back to making guns."

"But Adrian," Helen protested, "that isn't fair. I can learn! I can get more experience."

"No!" interrupted Adrian, sounding very angry. "You need to go back to the factory."

"I see," she said in a deceptively meek voice. There was still Colonel Donaldson in the picture, after all. There was something else on her mind, however, even more important than spying for Britain.

"Adrian, when we were in the bath last night, before I mentioned anything about spying, I think...I thought...you liked me." She felt her face burning, but she rushed on. "Whatever happens, do you think we might see each other again?"

Adrian took her hand. She knew, as she looked into his brown eyes, that she was going to be hurt. "I did—do—like you," he said, "very much. But I don't know where this war is going to take me. I'm sorry Helen, but I think we should finish today as friends." Adrian offered her his hand.

"I see," Helen said, keeping her voice steady. She shook his offered hand. "Friends, then." She gave herself a brisk mental shake. "Well, now we'd better just get this Marianne thing over with."

Chapter Eight

Helen sat on the bench in the park. She wondered where Adrian was but knew not to look around. Although there was coolness between them, she knew she could trust him to do his job. She opened her book and pretended to read, but then began to notice with fascination the parade of men and women in different uniforms from throughout the Commonwealth, for it was a fine day and the square was crowded with people enjoying the sunshine.

She saw, with pride, a soldier wearing the uniform of The Royal Sussex Regiment—her brother's regiment. A group of airmen walked past, all laughing at a joke one of them had made. All were so young, about Evan's age, and she noticed all were decorated with new medals. They were probably some of the "few," whom Mr. Churchill had referred to in his speech after the Battle of Britain.

A man suddenly appeared and sat next to her. She stared at him. This was Andrew Fisher, for whom she had been waiting. She knew something of his story. He had been seduced by Marianne into a torrid affair, and then blackmailed by her to give weekly accounts of what the War Office was doing or face having their affair revealed to his wife. He looked so nervous. Helen knew that his reward for passing this false information to her was a life sentence in prison rather than being hanged as a traitor.

"Quickly, take it," he whispered, giving Helen a piece of folded paper. He stood, looked furtively behind him, and scurried away. Helen

placed the paper between the pages of her book and walked towards Mimsie's Tea Rooms over the road from the park. She noticed Adrian sitting on a park bench, apparently absorbed in his newspaper. Neither of them acknowledged the other.

Helen sat at a table, noticing as she picked up the menu that Adrian selected a seat nearby and would be able to hear whatever was said to her. She put her book on the table and waited. From here, she was flying blind. All Andrew Fisher had been able to tell his interrogators was that Marianne always placed the papers he gave her inside a book and then went to Mimsie's Tea Rooms.

A waitress, in a black pinafore, with a white apron, appeared at Helen's table. "Good morning, Miss. We haven't seen you for a little while. You been quite a regular. 'Ave you been unwell?"

Helen knew her voice would be different from Marianne's, so she whispered, "Yes, I've been very ill. I can't speak, I'm sorry. Just a cup of tea, please." As she turned to leave, the waitress knocked the sauce bottle over, and some sauce smeared over Helen's book.

"I'm terribly sorry, Miss, I'll just take it in the kitchen and clean it up proper," said the waitress apologetically.

A short time later, she returned with Helen's tea and the book. "There you go Miss. Sorry again."

Helen opened the book. The papers given to her by Andrew Fisher were gone.

After finishing her tea and paying sixpence for it, Helen stood to leave. Adrian was not there. She went outside and walked in the direction of the tube station. As she turned the corner, a large, black car pulled up beside her and stopped. There were two men in it, one of whom leaned out and said urgently, "Marianne, get in quickly. We need to talk to you."

Helen froze. This wasn't part of the plan. But if she didn't do as she was asked, they would be suspicious and on their guard. She prayed that Adrian was somewhere nearby and got in. The car sped off down the road. Reflecting that she seemed to be making a habit of getting into strange cars, she felt she could do no better than last time and tried to memorize the route they were taking. She was sure they were heading

toward the East End. The men made no attempt to talk to her, for which she was grateful though suspicious. Why didn't they talk to her? Didn't they know Marianne? The car pulled up outside a partially destroyed warehouse on the banks of the Thames. The whole area had been heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe. There were few buildings left standing, and Helen could see no one about.

The man who had spoken to her first said, "This way, please."

Helen glanced around her, hoping to hear or see a car filled with burly British agents, but there was nothing. She straightened her shoulders, took a deep breath, and entered the building with her two escorts. Her heart seemed to stop as she heard the door shut behind her. The two men who had driven her to this place stood at the closed door, arms folded.

Three men stood in the center of the room. The largest of them moved up close to her. Helen had to lift her chin to look into his eyes, for he towered over her. An elegant brown suit hung on his large frame. He had thinning, blond hair, a round face pockmarked with acne scars, and wire-framed glasses which seemed to magnify his pale blue eyes. He smiled. Helen barely repressed a shiver. It was the coldest smile she had ever seen with not even a hint of it reaching his eyes.

"So my dear," he said, his voice that of a cultured, bored aristocrat. "Who are you?"

Helen frowned in confusion, and then whispered, "What do you mean? I'm Marianne. I've been sick—"

He slapped her hard across the face, twice. Tears sprang to Helen's eyes and she whimpered in fear.

"Now I'll ask you again—who are you?" He spoke in the same calm tone as before.

Helen swallowed and said in her own voice, "My name is Helen James."

"You know Miss James, you look remarkably like Marianne. I congratulate British Security on their efforts. Did they know Marianne was dead, I wonder?"

This horrible man seemed to know everything.

Helen couldn't see any point in lying to him. "Yes," she said, with a calmness she was very far from feeling.

"So clever of your security forces. Did they know that it was we who killed her?"

Helen's surprise must have registered on her face, as the man smiled, his eyes again so, so cold.

"Yes, Marianne's fiancé in Germany was stupid enough to tell her he'd found another woman. We feared she may develop a conscience after that, and so we just couldn't trust her.

"Now, Miss James," his voice changed slightly, "from your appearance in the park today, we can deduce that the British Home Office knows all about Marianne's and Mr. Fisher's activities. Of course, the papers he gave you today contained false information, but we are unsure about previous information given to us. What we want to know, Miss James, is this: for how long has Britain known about Marianne and Mr. Fisher?"

Helen's mouth went dry. "I—I don't know," she said and cried out in pain when he hit her again. She tasted blood inside her mouth.

One of the other men moved behind her and held her arms behind her back. She felt sick with fear, but struggled, scraped her stiletto heel down his shins, and stamped down hard on his foot. The big man flinched, but held her tight. Helen froze. Her interrogator had produced a long, sharp knife.

He placed the tip of the blade at her throat and ripped her dress, slip, and underwear in two from top to bottom. The man holding her pulled the material apart, smiling as he did so. Her interrogator fondled her breasts appreciatively with one hand. Without any haste, he cupped and squeezed her, and rolled and pinched her nipples between his fingers before he traced a line with the tip of his knife down to the triangle of golden curls between her legs. He smiled, and to Helen's sick fear, she saw that his smile was now reflected in his eyes. She saw cruel, eager lust.

He said, "You are so beautiful, Miss James. We are all going to get to know you so well, unless you can tell us what we need to know."

Suddenly the door flew open, and Adrian burst into the room,

followed by many other armed men. "Get down, Helen!" he shouted as the bullets began to fly.

Helen threw herself to the floor.

It was all over in seconds. The Germans were outnumbered and surrendered quickly. The only person hurt was Helen's interrogator, who lay screaming on the floor, clutching his shattered kneecap.

Adrian helped Helen to her feet. As he observed her swollen face and her exposed breasts, cried hoarsely, "Oh my God, Helen!"

She threw herself into his arms, sobbing in relief and shock. Adrian rocked her gently, murmuring into her ear, "I'm so sorry, Helen. Please say you are all right."

Helen began to breathe more quietly and smiled with joy at the tenderness of Adrian's hands stroking her back and smoothing her hair. "They didn't hurt me much Adrian. I'm all right." She smiled again as Adrian breathed a sigh of relief. He then kissed her softly and gently on her lips.

Chapter Nine

Helen was in the bath. She sighed in contentment. Adrian had brought her back to his flat. He'd kissed her once more and then left her to relax in the hot water. Several hours had elapsed since her experience at the warehouse. Her nerves had recovered, and her face, which had been slapped so hard by the German—his name was Eric Muller, she had found out, and he had acquired his English accent at Oxford, before the war—was not swollen any more. The operation had been a complete success, with the whole of the spy ring exposed. Colonel Donaldson had been delighted with her.

After several minutes of serious relaxing, Helen realized that something was wrong. "Adrian!" she called, "I'm lonely."

Adrian popped his head around the bathroom door, and asked hopefully, "Am I about to be seduced a second time?"

She grinned and answered, "I think that is definitely what I have in mind."

Adrian undressed, and Helen looked at him in admiration. His face was so handsome, his chest muscles so sleek and strong, his stomach so taut. He was already hardening as he looked at her. He stepped into the bathtub and slipped in behind her, so that he was cradling her in his arms. He began to caress her breasts as he kissed and nibbled her ear.

"You know, my dear—sorry, Helen," he said between nibbles, "before we start to become very well acquainted, there are some things we need to discuss."

"Mmmm?" she asked, not concentrating too well.

"Firstly..." Adrian stopped fondling her breasts and waited until Helen opened her eyes. "Will you marry me?"

Helen opened her eyes fully, turned around in the bath, wrapped her arms and legs around him, and kissed him. "Adrian, before I answer you, I have some questions to ask you."

"And what are they, my pretty one?" he asked, stroking the curves of her hips.

"What happened to being just friends? I thought you wanted to be free to go wherever the war took you?"

His hands stopped their roaming and he looked at her guiltily. "That wasn't the whole reason—or the real reason—I said that. When Dominique did what she did, I swore I'd not get involved with another woman while the war lasted. I had this idea that your sex couldn't be trusted. Silly of me, I know. I think you're the bravest, most trustworthy lady I have ever met." He circled her nipples with the tips of his fingers.

"Thank you," Helen said weakly, trying to ignore the tingle of arousal between her thighs.

"And then, when I saw you in the hands of those brutes, I wanted to kill them. I wanted to protect you and to keep on protecting you. I think that means I love you, Helen. So will you say you'll marry me so that I can get onto my second point?"

Helen giggled. "But I have a second question, before you get to your second point."

Adrian gave a long-suffering sigh but raised his eyebrows for her to continue. He was rolling and pinching her nipples now.

"Adrian, I think I love you too, but—ah," Helen gasped as his rolling and pinching sent an erotic, electric message down deep within her belly. "But we've only known each other for a couple of days. You don't think we should wait a little while?"

"No," answered Adrian without hesitation. "If this were peace time, then we could take this more slowly, get to know each other. But this is war time, and we don't *have* time. I meant it when I said I don't know where this war will take me. I want to be married to you. I want you to be

with me every moment we have left to us. People are meeting and marrying in the blink of an eye, all over Britain, for exactly the same reason. I understand why, and I'm hoping you do too." He placed a palm each side of her face and looked into her eyes. "So, Helen, will you marry me?"

Her heart sang. She laughed as she observed his worried expression. "Yes, Adrian, I'd love to marry you."

They kissed. Her lips parted to admit his demanding tongue, which explored her mouth with erotic thoroughness. She melted into his kiss as she stroked his broad, strong back, loving the hard maleness of him. Delicious heat burned into her, between her thighs.

He pulled away with obvious reluctance and cleared his throat. "Good, I'm glad that's settled. Now, back to my second point. Do you still want to be a spy, along the lines of what you did to me in the bathtub yesterday? Because I have to tell you that, as you will be my wife, I really don't like the idea of you seducing other men in order to pry their secrets out of them."

"You know, Adrian, I really am glad I was able to help catch the nest of spies, but, I have to confess, I have never been so terrified in my life. Will you think badly of me if I tell you that I don't think I want to be a spy anymore?"

Adrian grinned. "Good. I don't think you're cut out for it. Not that you weren't very brave, but that whole torture thing seemed to bother you. But, my pretty one, there are a couple of things you might like to do. While I'm still in Britain, you could be my driver. Private Brown will be leaving me shortly to go overseas. Er, can you drive?"

Helen laughed in delight. "Yes, my dear Adrian, I can, and I would love to be your driver."

"You'll have to join the ATS and do some training with them."

"I'll love it," Helen assured him. "But what's the other thing?"

"How good is your French, really?" Adrian asked her unexpectedly. "Because there are men and women from France living all over Britain, and we need to ask them things, like where the telephone exchange in a bacon factory in Lyons is, and where the points cross on a

certain section of line outside Orleans—that sort of thing. There may be times when it would be useful for you to pop over to France to ask the same sorts of questions. That would be up to you. Is your French up to it?”

“Yes. Part of our French curriculum at school was to live in France for a term,” she answered, and then laughed. “At last I can say that my school taught me something useful!”

“Excellent.” Adrian stood suddenly, pulling her in close to his chest. “Now my third and final point really needs to be discussed in the bedroom.”

* * * * *

They lay on the bed, close to each other, smiling.

Helen closed her eyes in anticipation as Adrian reached to her breasts, caressing, stroking, and tickling the pink tips with his fingers. He dipped his head and, with the tip of his tongue, softly licked her nipples. She felt them harden as he began to suck and tickle each one with a quick flickering of his tongue. He took one then the other between his teeth and nibbled softly, sucking and licking. Helen dug her fingers into his back, as she began to feel the delightful heat and tension building inside her, between her thighs.

As his tongue worked busily, one hand moved downwards, first stroking her hips, then further down until it reached the apex of her thighs. She parted her legs to receive his gently probing finger. He touched her with feather like brushes of his fingertips, touching her everywhere, from the delicate petals of her inner sex, to her entrance, to the hard little nub of her clitoris. Helen moaned at the jolt of pleasure she felt inside her.

Adrian bent his head further now, tracing a path with his tongue down to her tummy, down further still. He began to lick first her soft hair, and then he parted her with his tongue and burrowed to find the delicate folds underneath. He began to lick her clitoris, moving away and coming back in a way that made Helen begin to moan in frustration and pleasure.

He slid two fingers into her, as he continued with his wicked tongue. He pushed his long, stiff fingers into her, again and again.

Helen could stand no more. "Adrian," she whispered, "take me now. I want you inside me."

Adrian sat up and smiled at her. "Anything you want, my pretty one."

He lay on top of her and looked into her eyes. He smiled tenderly. Helen could feel his erection pressing into her tummy. It felt so long and hard and thick. She wanted it deep inside her now, right now. She spread her thighs wide and wrapped her legs around his hips—such lovely slim, manly hips. The tip of his cock was at her entrance. She whimpered and pushed her hips against him, trying to make him enter her. He looked down at her with a smile of pure mischief in his eyes. She smacked him on his bottom. He laughed and stopped teasing her.

With one stroke, he pushed himself deep inside her. She gasped in pleasure. Adrian moved slowly at first but began to thrust harder and deeper into her. Helen could feel the exquisite pleasure building, the delightful tension inside her mounting. Adrian plunged into her again and again, harder and deeper, until she felt an ecstatic throbbing release. With one last thrust, Adrian moaned and exploded deep within her.

He collapsed on top of her, his weight feeling precious and comforting to her. Their heart beats slowed. He looked down and, realizing he was squashing her, rolled away, taking her with him. She lay draped across his strong, hard body.

He caressed her soft, rounded bottom, smiled up at her, and said, "So, having seduced me very thoroughly, what information were you hoping to extract from me, my little spy?"

Helen chuckled, and nestled herself comfortably within Adrian's arms. "I want you to find me someone who can teach us how to cook!"

The End

Author Bio

Victoria Black lives in Australia. She is especially interested in the Second World War. She loves—admittedly from the safe distance of time—the inherent romance and danger of those days, when heroes and heroines pitted their wits and their bodies against a merciless and determined foe. When she's not writing, Victoria can be found in the kitchen, cooking. She loves fine food and wine, along with the occasional margarita. You can learn more about Victoria at:

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