

Jacqueline Kennison sat on a train heading to the big city of London. In her lap, she read over the acceptance letter she'd received from the renowned Dr. Benedict Morrow. A small smirk came to her lips. After months of ensuring her credentials were perfect, she'd accomplished her goal of getting into the Morrow Academy of Anatomy and Sciences.

*It is with great honour and pride that I extend my professional invitation to join the elite group of young men and women, whose sole purpose is to study in the field of surgery. Your credentials are outstanding, and I eagerly await your arrival, Miss Kennison.*

His beautiful cursive handwriting scrawled across the paper with his signature at the bottom. Attached to it were the materials needed for his class, addresses to the school and nearby boarding rooms for her to choose from. This being quite an accomplishment for Jacqueline, considering men outnumbered women by much in these academies. As she looked out at the passing scenery, she imagined what would happen when she arrived. Would he be like she'd imagined? Would she enjoy herself? Would she learn anything new? How would everyone treat her?

As the train sped past forestry that lined the tracks, she folded up the letter and placed it in the small handbag she carried with her. Up ahead she could see the nearing city, obvious by its structures and tall buildings. It began a new chapter in her life and one she was certain she would enjoy. Then again, she had ulterior motives for wanting to attend this academy.

Upon her arrival at the train station, she was greeted by a man who instructed her on where to go in order to catch a carriage going into the nearby villages.

"Clayton Bridge? I know the place. You'll need to see Zachariah with his black and white mare. He can take you there."

She bowed her head respectfully, "Thank you kindly, good sir. I shall find Mr. Zachariah." He smiled and took the two suitcases she had in her possession, leading her through the train station to where she needed to be.

He set her luggage down and turned to face her. "He will return shortly. Please, have a seat." Ushering her to the nearby bench to wait, she took his advice and took a seat. His hospitality was exceptional, and she was impressed with his service. Jacqueline looked around the room, taking in everything happening around her. Patrons bustled around while catching other trains. Those arriving and greeting their loved ones as they exited the train caused chatter to fill the room with the happiness of being reunited. It was quite a busy day. Jacqueline was

intrigued and couldn't help but watch the people interact with one another. The sounds drowned out her own rambling mind, distracting her from thinking over her reason for being here.

*“Jacqueline, me love? I feared ye would not meet me. I hear the townspeople are in an uproar. Three more found just yesterday morn.”*

*“I could never miss a chance to see yer face.”*

*“Do ye have it?”*

*“Tell me again. I need ta know why this is important.” She was hesitant, but her resolve crumbled around him and she trusted him completely.”*

*“For us ta be ta-gether forever...” And with those words, his lips met hers in a kiss so fervent it made her knees buckle.*

The train began to power up again for the next trip on its journey, the steam engine coming to life and roaring out a loud whistle. Clouds of smoke escaped through the chimney as the pistons moved up and down, inching the train forward. She blinked away the emotion from her eyes and peered out the window as the train readied to leave.

The conductor made the last call for boarding the train, “ALL ABOARD!” A few men jumped onto the train as it began to slowly roll out. Soon, it picked up pace and began down the tracks. Jacqueline pulled a literary book from her bag and began to read it to cure her boredom with having to wait. It had been written by a doctor from the 16th century and discussed old techniques for surgical procedures along with a few crude drawings. It was fascinating to her, and she was impressed by how procedures had been changed or modified over the centuries. Medical practices had left barbarism behind and entered a more civilized way of study. No one depended on witch craft, faith and medicine men anymore. Science was taking over medicine.

A few hours later, hooves hitting the cobblestone streets caught her attention. Jacqueline looked to see a carriage pulling up to the station, driven by a man matching the description of Zachariah. She stood and smiled as he met her eyes, receiving a wide smile from him in return. It wasn't unusual for men to treat her this way or get weak kneed around her. Her beauty had that effect on them. Her radiantly red hair and brilliant blue eyes looked stunning, and she definitely stood out among other women her age.

“Zachariah?” Her voice was melodic and soft and appeared to have him transfixed.

“Indeed. May I assist you, Miss?” He had a charming smile and his eyes stayed focused on her.

She nodded, "I am traveling to Clayton Bridge. I must find the Smith and Taylor boarding house to settle in before classes start at the Morrow Academy. Have you heard of it?"

Zachariah nodded, "I have. Some of my family is from round there. I'd be happy to take you. Have you a case or trunk?" Jacqueline saw how hard he tried to be a gentleman, even though his pulse was racing by the way his jugular bulged.