

Another rat, black as ink, scuttled past my foot and off to the shadows just beyond the prisoners' cots. I flinched as I sponged Lieutenant Christopher Martin's forehead.

The high fever had finally lost its grip on him. "Pardon the rats, Miss Floyd."

I determined to make light of the situation. "How are any of you expected to recover when you're forced to share these fine accommodations with the former tenants?"

He glanced toward the stone wall where water seeped in from the previous night's rain and vermin managed to come and go. "They must wonder what became of their old victuals."

The cramped room in Rhineland's Sugar House—now a prison for Continental soldiers—had forever lost its sweetness. Long empty of sugar and molasses, the odor of disease and urine permeated the air, burning my eyes.

I stood to fetch the pitcher of murky water and poured a bit more into the basin. In this room, where I wiped brows and held cups to parched lips, prisoners were deemed the fittest and thought least likely to succumb to their illnesses. If they recovered and were exchanged or paroled, would they go back to their regiments? Or would they recognize the futility of fighting a war they could never hope to win?

Returning to the lieutenant's cot, I studied his face in the dim light from the barred window near the ceiling. "With your fever down, your cheeks no longer match that neckerchief you insist on wearing."

He fingered the red scarf bearing the image of George Washington, the hope of the Patriots—or treasonous rebels, depending which side one took. Pride shone in his eyes. "They'd have to kill me for it, Miss Floyd."

"Please, shall we drop the formalities? You may call me Betty, for mercy's sake." I'd been at his side during the worst of the dysentery. That seemed enough reason to warrant his