This (Not so) Charming Man

by hollowlife

Summary

A mysterious spell from a mystical book sends Abbie and Ichabod back into Crane's own 18th century timeline. But the Ichabod Crane that Abbie knows so well is not the Crane she encounters in this timeline.

Now Abbie has to figure out a way to set things right and get back home, all while using her wits to fight off the advances of the most pompous, sleazy and slick version of Ichabod Crane that she has the misfortune to encounter.

*COMPLETED*

Notes

This is a story that I thought of a few weeks back, which started out fluffy but looked like it's going to swing between fluffy and serious. Honestly, I picture this fic unfolding like a single episode of the show. There is going to be some OOC Ichabod Crane, but its all related to the plot and has a purpose!

The entire story takes place over three days. This takes place in the near future, but of course have to ignore the final two episodes of the season. Everyone is alive and well.

Hope everyone enjoys and comments and suggestions greatly appreciated!
Chapter 1 - The Old Book

Sleepy Hollow, present day

"Here you go!" Jenny sauntered into the precinct archives and handed Abbie a small and ragged leather bound book from her knapsack. The dark brown cover was stained and heavily worn at the edges and a ratty thin leather wrap was wound a few times around the center, keeping the delicate tome tied shut.

"Where did you find this?" Abbie demanded. She and Crane had been searching for any evidence of this book for the last few weeks. She had only mentioned to Jenny the search for the odd book not three days ago in utter frustration. Jenny disappeared for two days afterward, claiming she had some important things to settle with her parole officer and would be difficult to reach.

Abbie was surprised and slightly irritated when Jenny turned up not a minute ago in the archives, a huge grin on her face and the coveted book in her backpack. "How did you find this?" she repeated.

"I've told you before. Corbin had me search for special artifacts. A lot of special artifacts. When you told me about this book, I remembered it was something that I - encountered - a while back." Jenny flashed Abbie a self-satisfied smile. "A friend of a friend may have helped me secure it."

"Your Patriot friends, maybe?"

"Maybe..." Jenny singsonged as her eyebrow arched a little. "Don't worry, Abbie. It'll never come back to me. Or you."

Abbie shook her head, but gave her sister a relieved smile and a strong hug. She knew that Jenny probably obtained the book in some illegal fashion. As a cop, she should care. As a Witness trying to save the world, she could - and would - easily let it go. God knows the type of people Jenny hung out with, whenever she was away from Abbie. It was clear that Jenny had low friends in low places, but for Abbie, times had changed. The more help she and Crane could get from these dubious friends of Jenny, the better for all of humanity.

"Next time, tell me if you and Crane are looking for something. Trust me, I can help. As you can see." Jenny emphasized with a small smirk.

"I don't want you to get hurt." Abbie said in a worried tone.

"Don't worry about me, Abbie. Worry about how you and British are going to be using this book."

"Ah, I see that Miss Jenny is here." The tall and lean form of Ichabod Crane had quietly appeared from behind one of the tall dusty bookshelves that stood in the far corner of the archives.

"Where did you come from?" Jenny asked in surprise.

"I've been here the entire time," he stated. "I needed to complete a translation." he held up a piece of paper, his elegant and antiquated script almost covering the entire sheet.
"And you don't even come out to say hi." Jenny said as she shook her head in mock annoyance.

"Maybe if you referred to me by my proper name, then I would have appeared to provide a proper hello."

"You know it's all in affection Crane. Right?"

Crane smiled. "I do, Miss Jenny. I just wanted to - how do you say it? - 'mess' with you."

"Right back at you." Jenny replied.

Abbie laughed at the two of them. She knew that her sister and Crane held a great deal of respect for each other. They sometimes took shots at each other, but it was always with an undercurrent of affection and understanding. Abbie liked watching them bait each other, just for the sheer amusement factor.

"Check this out, Crane. Look what my amazing sister found for us?" Abbie said as she held out the battered book towards him.

Ichabod carefully took the delicate tome in his hands, handling it with the utmost reverence. He slowly unwound the crumbling leather tie and carefully flipped through the first few pages. "*Illusio Magikos et Treatise Feend Magicus,*" he read out loud. "My word, Miss Jenny. How on earth did you find this?"

"I have my ways." She winked.

Crane’s eyebrow quirked but he didn’t press her. "Well, we are most appreciative of your efforts. This is most excellent." he marveled.

Abbie now took the book from Crane’s hand and studied the title. "That’s a strange name for a book. Sounds like a book for magicians or something."

"I think it is so named to hide the true intentions of the book, unless one knew what to search for. This really is quite a significant find, Miss Jenny." Ichabod looked up at Jenny and flashed an impressed smile and nod.

Jenny quirked her eyebrows up and grinned. "Anything to help out, English. Now you can tell me what’s so important about that book?"

"It is a book written during my era by a Mr. Ambrose Esau Beasley. He was a prominent and wealthy merchant at that time. He was especially helpful in assisting to supply the Colonials during the war with rare and special merchandise. This I was told from one of my superiors, Major Martin T. Pearson. During one of the supply missions, the Major was acting as guard to Mr. Beasley. The guard was ambushed and the shipment disappeared, along with this book."

"But why is this book so special?"

"It contains spells. Magical spells" Abbie answered, handing the book back to Crane. "Magic that can ward off certain kinds of demons but the trick is that anyone can use it. You don't have to be a witch to get the spells to work," she said, a bit of excitement now in her voice. "That’s the best part. We think it's going to help big time."

"I'd think so. Especially if you don’t need magical powers to do the spells. That's amazing. I'm glad I found it for you."
"And for that, we are most grateful." Crane replied.

Jenny now glanced at her watch. "Ah crap, gotta go. Somewhere I have to be." Jenny gave Abbie a quick hug and nodded to Crane. "See you." she said as she quickly headed towards the exit.

"Where are you going?" Abbie yelled out.

"Got to meet someone. Important business." Jenny trailed off.

Abbie sighed in frustration but didn't stop her sister. Jenny's methods were not the safest or most legal, but she got results. As long as Jenny didn't get hurt or caught, Abbie tried to not complain. "Be careful" She yelled out as Jenny hurried out of the archives.

"I will!" came the faint reply.

Abbie now turned to Crane, who was still carefully examining the delicate book in awe.

"What was the guys’ name - Ambrose what?" She grabbed a piece of paper to scribble down some notes.

"Ambrose Esau Beasley."

Abbie scribbled down the author's name. "Let me guess? Close friend of yours?"

"Oh no, not at all. I was just privy to stories about his exploits. The book was stolen by a band of raiders whom captured and dispersed Beasley's supplies and cargo."

"Any chance you remember the date the book was stolen?" Abbie asked.

"June 12, 1773." Crane replied while Abbie wrote the date down on her note sheet. "In that particular raid, gold, silver, pistols and powder were the majority of his cargo and most coveted. The book disappeared also at that time, but should have been of little interest to the thieves. The Major suspected that Beasley had spirited it away, but he adamantly denied it." Ichabod paused, clearly rehearsing out loud what his boss had told him. "Most believed him though. The book was of no value. Beasley lost a large cache of valuables - the book was of no significance for him."

Abbie remained silent for a while, reflecting on the story. It was actually interesting, she had to admit. *The piracy. The treasure. The slick criminal. Ambushing and stealing the loot.*

She wondered if Crane ever was involved in anything illegal like that in his own time. Though curious, she decided she would get some stories out of him at a later time.

Right now, the book was the most important thing to focus on.

Abbie flashed her partner a serious and determined look, "Well, now that we have the book, let's see what we can do with it."

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"Is that Greek? Wait, no, it looks like Latin." Abbie's eye narrowed onto the page, trying to make sense of any word on the page. She could not read either language, but hoped something would stick out. After a few minutes she gave up. "What does it say?"

"This is a very interesting. This is not solely Greek nor Latin. It is actually both."

"Both?"
"Yes, Miss Mills. The author has taken it upon himself to write this book using two languages. Each sentence uses a mix of Greek and Latin words. A select few Middle English words also appear periodically. Most strange."

"Why would they do that? Didn't most of the people in your time read both languages?"

Crane ran his index finger along the words slowly. "Not at all. Unless one was a scholar or priest or otherwise learned, one would not know either language. I suspect it was a bit of an attempt to make the text more difficult to read for the layman."

"But you can read it?"

"Yes, I can." Crane now started reading the text from the book out loud, a strange mix of sounds and words that didn't seem to flow smoothly. A few times he paused, trying to ensure the proper pronunciation, but overall he seemed to have no problem. Abbie had no idea what on earth he was saying, but his voice inflections rose and fell as he read, as though he were chanting, or to Abbie's untrained ear, properly invoking a spell.

Suddenly, Crane looked up at her as he spoke the last words. His eyes went wide in fear, he whispered Abbie and then everything went black.

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Chapter End Notes

The title of the fic is based on a Smiths song, "This Charming Man."
A/N For those who know Latin, I obviously do not. The title of the book is completely made up and probably makes no sense. Sorry.

Not beta'ed so apologies for any mistakes
(because I want a certain lovely beta to focus on her own work and update something on here sometime soon.....ahem...*grin*)
Chapter Notes

After blacking out, Abbie finds herself in an unknown forest and Crane nowhere to be found....

Please enjoy!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2 – The Forest

Somewhere, Summertime...

Abbie opened her eyes and found that she was lying flat on her back on the rough ground of the forest floor, twigs and pine needles digging into her body. The sun was shining overhead, high in the sky, its bright white intensity almost blinding her. The air felt warm and breezy, the temperature comfortable, just like a perfect summer's day.

She sat up quickly, rubbed her eyes and took in her surroundings. She was in a small clearing, tall trees and low bushes sparsely populating the area. Looking around her, she saw that she was lying on some kind of hard packed dirt trail that seemed to run through the forest.

Abbie carefully stood up, a wave of dizziness causing her to sway a little as she did. Pressing her palms against her forehead, she rubbed hard to try to clear the quick stabbing pain that shot through her head. The feeling passed after about a minute, though a bit of a throbbing pain lingered right behind her eyes.

Is this a dream? God, this looks just like.... The thought trailed off as she took in more of the area. It seemed so familiar to her, reminiscent of when she and Jenny were lost in the woods and had seen the four white trees and Moloch rising from the ground...

A momentary panic hit her and she spun around quickly, moving in a tight circle, looking for those evil white trees or anything that would indicate something bad was around her.

There was nothing. Green leaves rustled lightly in the breeze around her, but there was nothing sinister in the area.

She looked down at her clothes. She was wearing the simple t-shirt and jeans combination that she had donned that morning. Her gun was secured in its holster and comfortably hanging from her hip. Not a flashback to her childhood, she guessed. Probably a dream though. She closed her eyes for a moment, the pounding in her head growing slightly stronger.

Where the hell was she? Where was he?

Abbie quickly dusted off any remaining leaves and debris that were stuck to her clothing, then frantically surveyed the area looking for Crane, her ears alert to any noise or creak or the sound of his voice calling out her own name. She sure as hell wasn't going to yell out his name. She had no idea where she was and who was lurking around.
"Okay, okay, what's the last thing I remember?" she whispered under her breath.

Her eyes continued scanning as she started wandering east along the roughly defined dirt trail, looking for any sign of her 18th century time-travelling partner.

She stopped in tracks when the memory came flooding back.

_The Magikos book…_

They had been in the archives, Crane reading out from the book and suddenly everything went black. _Did he actually manage to invoke a spell? Did he actually perform magic?_, she wondered.

If it wasn't for the fact that she was alone in some unknown wooded area and Crane was missing, she would almost be happy that he did perform magic. Just like they had thought, they could use the book to vanquish demons themselves.

She once again tampered the urge to call out for Crane. She had no clue where she was. The forest looked like, well, a forest, just like the ones she and Crane had fought various demons and all sorts of evil countless times before.

Abbie continued along the trail at a cautious pace, the dirt path framed by more tall trees and low lying bushes, her boots crunching over the pine cones scattered all over the ground. As she continued walking, she noticed some odd tracks on the dirt trail, but they didn't seem like footprints. She crouched down to examine them and saw that the imprints were half-moon shaped. They were horseshoe tracks.

_Headless Horseman horseshoe tracks?_ The thought sent chills through her and she steeled herself with a few deep breaths.

_Stop freaking yourself out, dammit_, she angrily chided herself. _Just find Crane._

Her best bet? Continue searching the area and find her partner. Her senses were on alert, desperate for any sound or glimpse of Crane or even a clue as to where she herself was.

_God she hated this. Why couldn't things go right for once? They had the book, Crane could read it, they could do some spells and kill off some demons. Why did everything always have to be so fucking complicated?_. Abbie let out an annoyed sigh as she stood up.

"Well, madam. We see that you are in need of assistance." A deep voice rang out and Abbie whipped around to see two men on horseback stopped not twenty feet behind her. On sight, Abbie's mouth dropped open in surprise.

The first man was thin, pale and sickly looking. He looked very young and Abbie guessed he was still a teenager. She didn't think he was older than sixteen. The second man, the one who spoke, was taller and stockier and presented with a fuller face. He was definitely the elder.

The men were on horseback, yes, but this wasn't what caused Abbie's mouth to drop open.

Both men were dressed almost identically. Both donned knee high black leather boots and wore formal looking dark grey waistcoats, two rows of shiny gold-coloured buttons vertically adorning the front. A simple red scarf was tied snugly around their necks. Both had their hair long, powdered greyish and tied back into a low ponytail. Capping their outfits were strange looking three pointed hats accented in gold thread and adorned with a single red feather. Both had long swords sheathed in leather scabbards hanging from their left side.
The stockier man spoke with a lilting English accent, formal just as Crane always was. "Madam, may we render assistance?"

Before she could stop herself, Abbie blurted out, "Is there a re-enactment around here?"

"Re-enactment, madam? I am not sure I understand your query?"

"Then why are you dressed like..." Abbie stopped herself, a shot of panic running through her.

Oh crap, oh crap, oh crap! Please tell me I'm not in the past. Please tell me I'm not in the past.

With an elegant motion, the older man dismounted his horse and cautiously moved toward Abbie. He studied her as he took a few steps forward and she immediately tensed up. Her hand instinctively moved to the gun at her side. As he approached, he suddenly bent down and snatched a piece of paper up from the ground.

Abbie inwardly groaned; she knew exactly what it was. It was the notes she had scribbled down about the *Magikos* book Jenny had found for her and Crane. Somehow the folded up scrap of paper must have fallen out of her pocket when she was examining the horseshoe tracks on the trail.

The man carefully read the note then looked up at her with a bit of surprise. "You are looking for a Mr. Beasley? And a Mr. Crane, yes?" His words lilted with a distinctive English accent. It didn't sound quite like Crane's to Abbie's ear, but it was English nonetheless.

*What the hell was she going to say?* Abbie willed her mind to work fast. She didn't even know these guys, who they were, what they wanted. She didn't even know for sure if she was in the past. *What the hell was she going to say?*

She decided to take a chance. She arched her shoulders back, stiffened her spine and put on her stolid cop face. She sure as hell wasn't going to look rattled or intimidated. *At all.* "Yeah, I'm looking for a man named Crane. Know him?"

The man took another step forward and held out the slip of paper for Abbie to take. "Mr. Ichabod Crane, perhaps?"

"Yes." she said, snatching the note from his hand. "That's him. It's important that I see him immediately."

"What business do you have with the esteemed Mr. Crane?"

Abbie narrowed her eyes and took a step forward. "That is my business." Quickly, she realized that she needed her voice to sound polite and not challenging. "That is my personal business, kind sir. But I would be most obliged is you would assist me in finding Mr. Crane." She smiled as she batted her eyelashes, hoping that she had done a decent job mimicking Crane's formal voice and words. She hoped to hell she sounded proper-like.

"And you are to meet with Mr. Beasley two days hence?"

*What the hell did that mean? Two days hence? Damn antiquated words.* She grumbled to herself, then realized that he meant in two days.

"What's the date today?" Abbie asked, ignoring his question. The date she had written on her notepaper was June 12, 1773. *If he's asking about two days later...*

"It is the tenth of June. A fine day for a Thursday." the man replied politely.
"The year...what's the year...?" her tone was impatient with a hint of apprehension.

"1773, madam. The year is 1773."

Abbie was speechless, her eyes widening as the man in turn studied her carefully for another moment. "Well, we are quite well acquainted with Mr. Crane. If you accompany us, we will bring you to him." The man now smiled kindly. "My name is Jacobson. Johnathan Jacobson. This is my son, William."

The kid tipped his head forward in polite greeting but didn't say a word.

"Please, madam, do not be alarmed. We will not hurt you. We are just intrigued, as Mr. Crane had not mentioned expecting a guest."

"Yeah, well, he doesn't know I'm here."

"Please, madam, this way." Jacobson held out his hand, indicating that she should step towards his horse. Abbie didn't like the situation but they knew Crane's name. The note only referred to Crane by his last name. That they knew his first name gave her some hope.

She glanced over at the teenager, who just sat on his horse in silence, his eyes moving between her and Jacobson, taking in everything but saying nothing. Abbie wasn't sure about this kid, but he didn't seem threatening at the moment.

Abbie inhaled deeply, willing herself to calm down. Her priority right now was to get to Crane. She had to find him and somehow figure out a way to get out of this mess. At least Crane would be there with her, to help her navigate the 18th century - 1773 for fucks sake! - and they could figure out a way back home.

Her hands once again deliberately brushed against the gun hanging off of her hip, giving her a burst of renewed reassurance. Jacobson's eyes also took in the weapon but made no comment. Thank god I have my gun, she thought. The clip was full - she had loaded it that morning. At least she had that advantage. And unlike the guns they had now, she could fire more than one round at a time. That fact alone gave Abbie a feeling of security. And right now, in this place - where ever she was - she desperately needed it.

In a very chivalrous manner, Jacobson extended his hand, offering to help her climb into the saddle of his horse. At her hesitation, he inquired, "Can you ride, madam?"

"No, sorry."

"I see. Then I will have to share your saddle. Please forgive me." he said, helping her up before easily mounting the horse to sit behind her. He was mindful to keep his hands from improperly touching her, holding the reins carefully yet securely on either side of Abbie's body. With a small tap of his boots, the trio set off at a slow trot along the narrow dirt path.

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"May I inquire as to your name, madam?"

Do I tell him my real name? Abbie asked herself. She decided she would, as once she reconnected with Crane, he would most likely refer to her by her real name before she could talk to him. "Abigail. Abigail Mills." She decided to go formal.

"Abigail. That is quite a lovely name. Pray tell, how did you end up in the forest alone? It is truly not
safe for a woman to be unprotected in these vast woods."

Think Abbie, think... "Uh, the people I was with - my travelling party - were ambushed and I ended up escaping. Hid behind some trees. I was looking for my people when you found me."

"That is fortunate you were able to escape. The ambush party did not include this Mr. Beasley, perhaps?" Jacobson clucked in sympathy.

"No. Just some men in masks. I didn't recognize them."

"Did they take your possessions?" he asked.

Abbie realized that he must have thought her clothing was completely strange and totally inappropriate. If she really were back in the 18th century, technically she should be wearing a dress. Dammit.

"Yes, they took all of my possessions. Everything." Abbie thought again to how Crane would respond to something like this using his typical word selections and language. "I only have the - attire - I was wearing during the unfortunate ambush. These are travel and work clothes." Did they even have the concept of travel and work clothes back then? Abbie wondered, but too late, she already committed herself.

"I see. The town of Sagamore is not 20 minutes from here. If you were looking for Mr. Beasley and know his path of travel, his destination - even his current travelling companions - you may find him, as he may be taking a rest stop." he noted.

Abbie inwardly sighed. She completely recognized the tactic. Under Jacobson's polite conversation, he was trying to extract information from her. Very slick, and most would not even realize what he was doing.

"I think I need to find Crane first. It's very important."

"As you wish, madam."

They continued on, Jacobson softly humming a tune, Abbie trying to memorize the surroundings but nothing stuck out. It was just tall trees and low bushes and more trees and bushes. It reminded her of the time that her and Crane were searching for the lost Roanoake colony. Everything was green and brown. Trees and bushes surrounded her. Everything looked the same. The path that the horses travelled on now was worn and slightly packed down, but still very wild and unmaintained.

Twenty minutes or so later, they came to a clearing in the trees, revealing the start of a wide dirt road with small buildings lining either side.

Jacobson halted his horse and pointed ahead. "We have arrived. Sagamore." With another light tap of his heel, they proceeded into the tiny town.

The dirt-packed road was the only road, well-worn yet uneven and dotted in places with small puddles of mud. Most of the buildings were one-level high, constructed of either thin wooden slats or large roughly hewn logs. Some of the houses were white-washed but most were a stark greyish-brown colour, having been faded by the sun. In the near distance, she could see a few two-story buildings and what looked like creaky wooden signs hanging in front. It reminded Abbie a little of the Old West towns portrayed in movies and on television, only this little town would have existed almost eighty years prior.

A few woman wearing long serviceable dresses and simple bonnets rushed through the streets and in
and out of the shops. As they passed, they each took a long look at the trio, faces pulling into barely contained surprise before rushing on.

*Dammit, this is not going to be fun,* she thought. In the back of her mind, Abbie knew her skin colour was going to be a problem in this time. Jacobson hadn't indicated anything yet, but the way the women were looking at her, *yeah, this was definitely going to be a problem.* She once again quickly touched the gun resting against her hip.

The two horses continued slowly plodding along the street, Abbie noting each building along the path. The street itself wasn't long, maybe a mile at the most. There was a blacksmith shop on the left, a slight plume of smoke emanating from the rear. A small one-level log cabin proclaimed itself a seller of dry goods. Another tiny log cabin, with thick iron bars set in the windows, had the words "Gaol" haphazardly painted in white above the entrance.

A small white-washed church - simply built with a narrow wooden spire - was visible at the very end of the road. The holy building seemed to loom over the tiny ramshackle town, a sole reminder it alone could offer refuge and absolution for the town residents.

After a few minutes, Jacobson halted the horse in front of a two-story well maintained building smack dab in the middle of town. The brightly painted sign in the front proclaimed this *The Rose Tavern.*

*A 18th century bar,* Abbie thought. *This should be interesting.*

Jacobson dismounted the horse and then offered his hand to Abbie. She politely declined, then swung her leg over the horse and easily jumped down. Jacobson looked impressed.

"William, you will watch the horses while I escort the lady inside."

The young boy just nodded, striking Abbie yet again as odd as he had not uttered a word the entire time.

Jacobson held out his hand again, indicating they should make their way to the front door. "This way, madam. I believe Mr. Crane will be found in one of the upper rooms."

Abbie's nerves were frayed, yet she felt a sense of relief. She found Crane and once they were together, they could figure out exactly what happened, set things right and get the hell out of this antiquated place.

Chapter End Notes

Serious A/N: I just wanted to make an important comment. Though this fic is intended to be a bit more light hearted with some interesting moments, there will be some adult and/or serious undertones here and there. One example obviously is the fact that since Abbie is in the 18th century, skin colour will obviously be an issue. I am going to take after the show and not ignore it, but not focus on it. This is not intended to be a serious fic and I leave it to better and more experienced writers to tackle these serious issues. I hope you understand.

Not-So-Serious A/N: As always, comments and kudos always welcome. It's like a drug, man!!
Chapter 3 – The Brothel

Abbie followed Jacobson up the stairs to the second floor of the tavern and headed towards the rooms located at the end of the hallway. As they moved down the dark wood paneled corridor, a door opened to the right and a young woman emerged, hair piled high yet bedraggled, eyes framed below with dark shadows. She was wearing a dark blue off the shoulder dress, her bosom pushed high and almost spilling out over the top. She was followed by a filthy, ragged looking man who was still in the process of snapping his trousers closed.

Abbie's stomach clenched and her heart broke for the woman. She now knew exactly the type of 'tavern' she currently found herself in. This was a brothel. An 18th century brothel.

What the hell was Crane doing in a place like this?

They reached the very last room at the end of the narrow hallway and Jacobson stood to the side, motioning for Abbie to enter.

"You first." she insisted in a stern voice. There was no way she was going to enter the room first and possibly be ambushed by Jacobson or whoever was behind the door. Jacobson had promised to take her to Crane, but that didn't mean Crane was truly in this room. She wasn't going to take any chances. Especially in this time period.

"I understand completely, madam." he replied knowingly, then opened the door and casually wandered in.

Abbie felt her body tense as she ensured her senses were on full alert. Slightly curling her fists, she mentally prepared herself for any potential attack. She didn't like being escorted into a small room with presumably only one way out. Granted, Jacobson had been polite, helpful and gentlemanly, she had to admit, but Abbie wasn't going to take the risk. With a quick yet stealthy motion, she flicked off the safety of her gun.

Her police defense training was going to be coming in very handy in about five seconds.

Entering the room cautiously, Abbie moved a few paces in and suddenly stopped in her tracks. For the second time in the hour, her eyes widened and her mouth dropped open in surprise. Standing in the middle of the room was Ichabod Crane.

But he wasn't alone.

In front of him stood a young blonde haired woman, her demeanour shy and submissive, her dark eyes downcast. She was wearing a similar shoulder bearing dress that Abbie spied in the hallway,
this one in emerald green. Crane's fingers were currently twined in the front ties of her bodice, slowly undoing the lacing.

"Crane! Visitor for you." Jacobson yelled out.

Crane snapped his head towards them. "Jacobson, really? You have to interrupt me at this moment?" His eyes locked with Abbie's and gave her a once over. Not a flicker of recognition was evident in his face.

"Thank you for the offer, my good man, but I already have my entertainment for the evening." Crane turned his attention back to the woman in front of him as his fingers continued to work.

"She's not here as entertainment." Jacobson replied, his voice gruff. "She is here also to meet with Mr. Beasley?"

"Really? Mr. Beasley?" he drawled out, his English accent considerably heavy. "Indeed, this is interesting news." Crane now abandoned his actions and moved towards Abbie, stopping not a foot in front of her. "You are to meet with him?" he demanded.

"Yeah. It's a long story, but yeah." Abbie searched his face, hoping to see anything that would indicate that he recognized her. "I'm Abbie. Abigail Mills. Miss Mills..." she emphasized. "And you're Ichabod Crane."

"Yes, that is my name." It was now Crane's turn to search her face. "How do you know of me?" he asked suspiciously. He did not remember seeing this woman before, yet something about her was very familiar.

Abbie grimaced. "We've worked together before, remember?" She said, again trying to get any reaction out of him, but there was nothing.

She flashed him a look of exasperation. How on earth could he not recognize her?

She quickly noted his clothing and appearance. His hair was exactly as he usually wore it. The long dark thick strands were gathered together and pulled back at the crown. A few stray hairs fell loose as they always did, gently framing his face.

Crane was dressed in his 'uniform', as Abbie always referred to his clothes in her head. Tall black leather boots, dark brown breeches, and his grey tie-front shirt. This is what he wore that morning in the archives and what he always wore, the result of his stubborn refusal to update his apparel. The only thing missing was his beloved navy blue coat. It would be found exactly where her own leather coat would be found; hanging over the back of a chair in the archives.

Abbie suddenly wondered if Crane was maybe putting on this act for Jacobson's benefit. If he was, then he was the most spectacular actor she had ever witnessed because right now, he had her completely convinced.

Dammit, Crane, Abbie thought, you have one hell of a poker face. She now repeated her words, “Actually, we've worked a lot together.”

Suddenly, the expression on his face switched from suspect and irritated to absolutely leering. "Oh, we have worked together, have we?" He reached out and slowly ran his index finger down her bare arm. "I must say that I am remiss that I do not remember you."

She slapped his hand away, causing him to smirk. "Not like that, you ass. I meant actually working together on an important, um, project." She straightened herself up, trying to gain some height
against Crane, but he still towered over her. "We need to talk. Alone. Now."

Crane studied her for a long moment, his fingers lightly stroking the bristles on his chin. He had to admit, he was already intrigued by this woman. She was strong, unintimidated, forceful, to the point. She did not cower in his presence. She did not even seem afraid. This amused him, as she was so tiny in comparison to himself. He imagined he could easily snatch her up and throw her over his shoulder with ease, but something told him she would confidently and effectively defend herself.

But there was something alluring about her. Something that seemed to draw him to her, and there was a familiarity that surprised him. Even her name seemed familiar in his mind. He just did not know what those thoughts laid bare.

"As you wish. Miss Abigail, is it? We shall...talk." Crane now addressed Jacobson. "Sir, would you take it upon yourself to entertain Miss Gwendolyn here. It seems that Abigail and I have important matters to discuss."

The burly man nodded and held out his hand. The blonde hesitantly moved towards Jacobson and took his offer, allowing herself to be led out of the room. She looked a bit scared and Abbie held back the urge to put a bullet into Jacobson, however gracious and kind he had been to her personally. "You better not hurt her." Abbie warned ominously as they exited the room.

The moment the door shut behind them, Abbie turned her attention back to her partner, addressing him in an angry hiss. "What the hell, Crane? A prostitute? Seriously? What the hell is wrong with you?" She hit him hard against his chest with the back of her hand.

"I am sorry my dear, but who are you to admonish me over my personal activities."

"You're still gonna pretend you don't recognize me? Come on." she snapped her fingers in front of his face, as though attempting to break him out of a trance.

"No, I do not."

"Think, dammit. We were in the archives. You were reading that Greek Latin text thing and the next thing I know, I'm waking up on the ground in the middle of the forest and you're gone. Don't you remember?"

"I assure you, I do not read Greek nor Latin."

"What are you talking about? Of course you do. You speak and read like a zillion languages. You have an amazing memory. You're like an encyclopedia!"

"My dear, I can barely remember last week, though I should rightly attribute that to the brandy and rum."

"Are you seriously telling me you can't even remember last week?" she said, now completely exasperated.

Ichabod laughed. "I would be much poorer in life if I had to remember each of my past activities with even a hint of clarity. I prefer to forgo, forget and move on." His eyes now drifted over her, moving slowly from head to toe. His hands suddenly moved to her waist and he lightly ran his fingertips along the inside hem of her jeans. "Now this is very unusual attire..." his voice was low, almost a seductive growl.

Abbie's mouth dropped open. What. The. Fuck. Was he flirting with her? Flirting! This wasn't flirting, this was a blatant come on. "What are you doing?"
"Getting to know you better, my dear."

She took a step back. "What the hell is wrong with you?" she shook her head in disbelief. "You're so not acting normal. A brothel? Jesus Christ, Crane. Seriously?"

She didn't know whether to feel disappointed in him or just plain disgusted.

"And what would you know about brothels?" Crane slid his body even closer to her, gazing down at her with heavy-lidded eyes, Abbie annoyingly noticing how blue and intense they looked.

He took another step forward and she responded by taking the same step distance back. His lips were mere inches from hers, his eyes so intense and wanting, yet Abbie knew that his gaze was one intended not only to seduce but to also control. He was trying to assert his power over her, show her who was in charge.

She had no idea why he was acting this way, or why he was being such a slick bastard right now, but if he thought she would even remotely cave, he had another thing coming.

There was no way she would give in to Crane, however irritatingly sexy his eyes might be at that moment. At every step backward, she kept her chin thrust up in anger and defiance, her eyes narrowed in barely contained fury, locked with his, silently letting him know that he would not win this battle. Granted, it brought her lips closer to his, but it didn't matter. What mattered was that she would not let him triumph.

She took in his expression, full of arrogance yet combined with lust. It was clear that he wanted her - she could see it smoldering in his eyes - but at the same time, he was trying to weaken her, make her succumb to his will and desires, and was being especially seductive and lascivious in his attempts to do so.

He one step forward, she one step back, a waltz of wills, as Crane continued to slowly move Abbie backward, his body delicately arching towards hers, as she moved backwards to prevent any contact.

Crane now flashed his most smug smile yet. "Will you yield to me?" he whispered delicately against her ear, his warm breath causing a small shiver to course through her body.

"Not on your life" Abbie huffed, an angry scowl on her face. Crane smiled knowingly, then forced her back one more foot. Her back collided with the hard surface of the wall, not even realizing it was right behind her, and she knew that she was trapped.

Crane raised his arms and rested his palms against the wall on either side of Abbie. His body completely surrounded her, entrapping her, his arms on either side of her shoulders caging her in and she knew she was caught.

"Are you sure you do not want to revise your answer?" he lowered his mouth almost to hers, only hovering a mere inch away, his eyes moving from her eyes to her lips and back. The loose strands of hair framing his face fell forward, almost brushing against her cheeks. He was so close, she could count the individual lashes lining his eyelids.

He was so going to kiss her and Abbie was trying to figure out why her stomach decided to release butterflies within it right at that moment.

This was not good. This was so not good. She needed to get control of the situation. She needed to put this sleazy acting Crane back in his place. Not ten minutes ago, she managed to find Crane and five minutes later, he somehow managed to get her into this awkward situation. Not one hour ago, he managed to get them both into this insane situation.
The last thing she needed was to have to deal with the fallout from this once they returned home, when Crane realized what he was doing and how inappropriate his current behaviour was. Granted, he seemed like he knew exactly what he was doing, but until Abbie figured out precisely what was going on and why he was behaving like a pompous ass, she certainly wasn't going to risk it.

Besides, his smug expression and smarmy behaviour just pissed her off.

A crazy idea flashed in her head. "Actually I will revise my answer. I think you should yield to me."

He pulled away from Abbie for a moment and let out a laugh. "Yield to a woman! And why would I do that?"

At this, Abbie quickly ducked under his arm, and spun around so that she was standing between him and the wall. Crane quickly turned around and Abbie decided to give him a little taste of his own medicine; she put both of her hands flat against his chest and shoved him hard against the wall.

"Because you want to, because I think deep down you remember me, know we have a connection." she stated plainly. "C'mon, Crane. It's me, Abbie." Her voice was almost pleading.

He studied her carefully for a moment, his eyes piercing and in deep contemplation, as though searching for the truth within her own dark eyes. "I think you are playing games with me, my dear."

"I'm not playing games, Crane. For some reason, I think you're messing with me right now, why this little act..." she waved her hand around in a circle, "...you feel you need to do, especially because Jacobson isn't even in this room now."

"You think I am lying about my identity?"

"No, not at all. You are Ichabod Crane. But what I don't know is why you are pretending to be such an obnoxious bastard? It’s not a good look on you, Crane.” She poked him lightly in the chest again as she rolled her eyes in exasperation.

"And if I surrender my will to you, my dear Abigail, what will I gain in return?" Though Abbie still had him pushed against the wall, the considerable height difference allowed him to loom over her small form. He slowly brought his mouth down to hers, his lips slightly parted, and gently brushed against hers only once before retreating. “What is my prize?"

Abbie felt dumbstruck for a moment, her mind reeling and lips tingling from his feather-light kiss. You did not just kiss me…Goddammit Crane!

She had him against the wall, but somehow he still seemed to have the advantage.

Abbie decided to switch tactics. In a bold display, she moved her hands to his hips, to the top most buttons of his fall front breeches. "I want you to think really hard about the last few days and tell me that you remember our partnership, our bond as Witnesses." she fiddled with the small metal disks, slipping them in and out of the buttonholes as she waited his response.

If Crane wanted to play the sleazy seducer, then Abbie could too, and she would - hopefully - throw him off of his game, get him to drop his guard. Maybe if she made him feel uncomfortable enough, while talking enough, he would remember something. One thing was for sure - he would not win.

He looked impressed at her forwardness and his eyebrow rose in appreciation. "I take it you've decided?"

"Mmm...You didn't answer my question?"
"I've told you the truth, my dear. I do not recognize you and I am sure we have never met. And we have no witnessed bond nor partnership," he paused, smirking little as he glanced down at her hands on his breeches. "But I think we may remedy that."

"I don't think you could handle me." she declared with a little of her own smugness.

"Oh, I think I shall have no issue." 

"I like my men submissive. I always like to be on top. In control." She flashed him a confident smile while giving him another little shove.

"I adore a challenge, especially one as feisty yet as beautiful as yourself." He paused for a moment, as he glanced down again at the location of her hands on his trousers. "However I am more than willing to submit to you…"

Crane's words were cut off when the door to the room opened and Jacobson strolled inside. At the sight of Abbie and Crane against the far wall, he stopped and grinned with relish.

Abbie dropped her hands from Crane's hips immediately with a **hrumph** and moved several feet away.

"I see the reunion has gone well." Jacobson said dryly.

"Indeed, it has."

"Crane, the Captain wanted me to remind you to join him for your turn at guard duty in one hours' time. He remembered the last time you were 'entertaining' and was displeased with your tardiness. I have come to give you a reminder to ensure you actually arrive on time."

"I shall be there." Crane replied, clearly put out, then narrowed his eyes in annoyance. "And tell the Captain that he was the one who procured that exceptional rum from the Barbadoes. What was I to do, leave it unattended?"

Jacobson laughed, "Yes, well, you were to guard it, not drink most of it with the fine ladies of the tavern." Jacobson eyes moved from Crane to Abbie and he flashed an amused smile towards her. "I shall take my leave," he said with a polite nod, then turned and left the room.

Crane turned his attention back to Abbie and gave her an approving grin." Well played, Miss Abigail. Well played." There was softness in his expression now, the earlier arrogance completely absent and he was once again studying her intently.

Abbie grimaced. **I almost had him. Dammit.**

She didn't understand what the hell happened. Crane had been trying to translate some old Greek/Latin text hybrid that was supposed to help them vanquish demons. He read some long weird sounding paragraph out loud and the next thing Abbie knew, everything went black and she was lying on the ground in the forest, Crane nowhere to be seen.

Two men find her and conveniently know Crane and bring her to this brothel. She could remember everything. Crane remembered nothing. Was this the same Crane or was this like those time-traveling paradoxes, where she currently inhabited one time thread in a series of possible unfolding time threads. She suddenly wished she had paid more attention to science fiction movies. And Star Trek.

She took note of Crane's facial expression. He was staring at her intently, not with a leering or arrogant expression, but one that belayed a little respect and with a hint of admiration.
He sauntered over to the small pane glass window opposite the door, brushed aside the thick linen curtain and stared down to the street below. "You claim that we have worked together before, correct? Yet, I have no recognition of you or these activities."

"I'm working on that."

“You claim we are partners, yes?"

“We are.”

"You must know me well, then?"

"I do."

He turned away from the window and focused back on Abbie. "So regale me about your loathsome Crane?" he drawled in a bored sounding tone. The self-satisfied vain expression had returned.

Abbie shook her head in annoyance. If anything, the man standing in front of the window was the loathsome one. "He's intelligent, well-read, curious, loves books, is quite proper..."

"Your Crane sounds a bore." he huffed.

"No, he's respectful and chivalrous and kind."

"Tedious and dull.

"My Crane is a Revolutionary War Soldier." she proclaimed, almost a bit proudly.

Ichabod laughed heartily. "Why on earth would I join the War? The longer the war goes on, the better for myself and my compatriots."

"What? I don't understand." Abbie was truly confused at his statement.

He studied her again for a minute. Against his better judgment, Crane felt compelled to be completely truthful and open with this unusual woman. "This so called war between England and the Colonies is perfect for our enterprise. The Crown sends supplies via ship to the Colonies to aid the Redcoats. France sends frigates to aid the Rebels. Supplies are then transported across country. We... intercept these ships or transports and help - divest - the men of their onerous burden."

"Wait a minute...you're a pirate?" she asked incredulously.

"I prefer the term opportunist."

"I don't believe this." Abbie could feel another headache quickly developing. "This is insane." She rubbed the space between her eyes hard with her forefingers, trying to ease the pain but also trying to make sense of this messed up situation.

Abbie rubbed her brow harder. She had the same appearance and same clothing that she wore that day. Crane did also. This had to be him, right?

What if…? What if this guy wasn’t her Crane? The thought flashed in her mind, causing her to shudder a little in a moment of fear. Was it possible that this was an alternate timeline and in this timeline Crane would have been a pirate?

What the hell….This is not happening…There has got to be another explanation...
She forced herself to think logically about the situation, speculating on all possibilities. So if this Crane belonged in this particular timeline, where was her own time jumping partner? Where had the 232-year old Revolutionary War soldier disappeared to? Were there actually two Ichabod Crane's floating around this place right now? Was he even here in the 18th century or was he still in the archives?

Was it possible that the spell Crane had performed transported only her and not Crane?

Abbie felt her head pound as the thoughts and speculations whirled in her head. She had no clue how she was going to get back to the present without the *Magikos* book. This version of Crane currently leering at her wouldn't help her, she was sure. Well, maybe he would for some kind of payment. But she suspected she would have to give him *herself* as that payment and she was so not going to do that, no matter how much she liked and respected her own incarnation of Ichabod Crane.

So what the hell *was* she going to do?

Abbie felt the pain in her forehead grow stronger. She was happy and relieved but for a moment because she had finally found Crane. She had landed in what she thought was Crane's era and by chance, happened to find him quickly. But timelines and time travel were a funny thing. She had found Ichabod Crane, alright. But this one was definitely not behaving like the person and partner that she knew and had bonded with so well.

Instead, Abbie just had to have the luck to run into the smarmy lecherous version of an 18th century Ichabod Crane.

*This was great. Just great*…

Chapter End Notes

A/N: I just desperately wanted to write Crane being such a bastard. He almost always is proper and respectful and chivalrous, I just thought it would be interesting to have a morally ambiguous version that poor Abbie gets to deal with.

We'll see what Abbie can do with him!!

Thank you for all of the positive comments!
Chapter Notes

Poor Abbie is going to be going through a lot more in the 18th century than she bargained for.

With Crane's lecherous behaviour and Jacobson deciding to interrogate her, Abbie has to keep her wits about her.

Oh, and Abbie's going to be swearing up a storm, because, well, she has every right to, considering....

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4 – The Accusation

Crane wandered over to the small dressing table in the room and pulled out a small gold pocket watch. He flipped open the intricately carved cover and checked the time.

"Alas, my dear, it seems that I must depart for my duties." he announced. "Jacobson will arrive in a minute or so to keep you company."

Abbie rubbed the space between her eyes and grumbled, "I don't need a babysitter."

"You are by no means a child. That is certain. But the Captain has ordered that you stay in our company," Crane walked up to Abbie and lightly touched her arm. "I am sorry." He smiled at her, the first genuine Crane-like smile from him since she had walked into the room not more than an hour ago.

As if on cue, Jacobson entered the room and announced, "It is time."

"Do take care of her, Johnathan. I quite like her. She is infinitely entertaining." Crane said, laughing a little.

"I can see that." Jacobson replied, while Abbie just stared at them in contempt while slowly shaking her head in irritation.

Crane left the room and was immediately replaced by William, who barely acknowledged Abbie. The teenager simply took a spot beside the door and propped a foot up behind him against the wall. Digging around his pockets, he pulled out a stick and a small knife and began to whittle.

"He doesn't say much, does he?" Abbie commented.

"Alas, no madam." Jacobson replied sadly. "He does not speak, but not by choice. He was born mute and therefore is unable to verbally communicate. I came upon his being a few years ago, in the employ of a brothel much like this." Jacobson now smiled a little, as though reliving a pleasant memory.

"I thought you said he was your son?"
"I have taken him under my wing, much like a son, yes."

"What happened to his mother?"

The smile disappeared from his face. "She was one of the ladies of the tavern whom I had come to know quite well. Lovely woman. Keen wit. Alas, she was fated to perish in childbirth."

Abbie looked at William with a pitiful expression on his face. "That's terrible." she murmured under her breath.

"Oh, there is no need for pity, madam. He is quite the crafty and resourceful boy, so we gladly brought him into our enterprise. He has want for nothing and would do far worse as an orphan boy."

William looked up at Abbie and gave her a small shrug of his shoulders before resuming his carving.

"Now, as to you, Miss Abigail. It seems that we have a slight problem."

Abbie felt a bit of fear suddenly pit in her stomach. Jacobson so far had treated her with respect and kindness and went so far as to help her reunite with Crane. But now she had been left alone with him and the kid for god knows how long, and she wasn't sure what his intentions were. His declaration that there was a 'slight problem' didn't help the matter.

Being alone with Crane was easy; though his behaviour was lecherous and just plain irritating, she knew she could handle him. Never once did she feel any fear or malice emanating from him. The only true threat she had to fight off was Crane's roving hands and lips.

Jacobson's demeanour and facial expression, on the other hand, was making her feel incredibly wary and uncomfortable.

"I have a bit of a conundrum, madam. When we first met, you claimed to know Mr. Crane. Yet upon your anticipated reunion, he seems to not know a whit of who you are or where you come from."

Abbie felt her shoulders tense and a chill run through her spine. She didn't like where his insinuations was heading.

He started pacing around the small room, walking around Abbie as though circling his prey. "Also, we have heard no reports of any ambush or lost travelling party, nor any indication that anyone is searching for a kidnapped woman, lost servant or pretty young lady." He stopped his pacing for a moment, shooting her a meaningful look "And I guarantee we know of every transport arrival and departure that occurs within this vicinity."

She knew she would have to encounter this fact sooner than later in this antiquated time period, and sooner came. Abbie didn't need to know much about 18th century history to know that a young black woman, wandering around a vast forest on her own with not a single possession in hand, was almost completely unheard of.

What if they thought I was an escaped slave? Christ, what if they think they have to return me? Christ, Abbie. Be calm....

She took a deep breath, trying not to think of the possibilities. She could feel her nerves start to fray, and she forced herself to tamper the uneasy feeling and remain cool and collected in the midst of Jacobson’s interrogation.

An involuntary shudder ran through her again as she realized that she couldn't even count on Crane to help her or protect her in this time. Abbie took another deep breath before she answered. "You
obviously think that I am a lost servant or something." Abbie's voice was firm yet her mouth had gone completely dry.

"I am not sure what I think yet. I find your situation curious. You seem to know our esteemed Crane well, and he obviously has taken an easy liking to you despite denying that he has ever met you." The circles that he was slowly pacing around Abbie seemed to be growing smaller and smaller. His movements seemed to corral her towards the empty metal basin that occupied the center of the room.

Abbie felt her back stiffen, her guard going way up. As stealthily as she could, she brushed her hand against the gun holster at her waist and her thumb unsnapped the safety, knowing that if she absolutely had to, Jacobson and William would be dead on the floor before she would allow anything detrimental to ever happen to her in this backwards time. She may have the mission as Witness to save humanity, but one or two humans were expendable in her current view.

Jacobson's eyes quickly glanced to her gun, then back up at Abbie, a thoughtful look on his face. He sighed with resignation. "No, I do not think you are a mere servant. I can see that you are educated, well spoken, quite resourceful and according to Crane, exceedingly willful." He stopped his pacing and glanced at William before continuing. "I do, however, believe that you may be a spy."

"A spy?" Abbie was taken aback by this. What on earth made them think she was a spy?

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"I think you do, madam. I think the circumstances indicate that you do."

"I was just looking for Crane...honestly I have no idea what the hell you mean." Abbie really didn't. The accusation that she was a spy was more shocking to her then the possibility of the men in this time considering her a slave or servant in the 18th century.

"Miss Abigail. You are in possession of a piece of paper that lists both the names 'Crane' and 'Beasley'. You had the fortune to be found by my good self in a lesser travelled forest trail. You claim to know Crane, yet he has no recollection of you, nor any past meeting or encounter. You are aware of the Beasley shipment schedule two days hence, yet this information has been quite difficult to acquire." He stopped his pacing and folded his arms across his chest now, as he studied her intently. "Either you are working for another raiding party, or you are working for the Redcoats. Either way, you are a spy." His voice now grew harsh. "So the question now becomes, whom do you belong to?" he demanded.

"I don't belong to anyone." She spit out, unable to hide the venomous tone in her voice.

"I do not believe you. Do you deny that you are interested in the Beasley shipment?" he asked pointedly. "You yourself indicated to me that you were to meet with this man, is that not correct?"

Abbie closed her eyes briefly as she inwardly sighed. That's right, I did say that. Crap....

Jacobson now resumed his pacing. "Understand my position, madam. We must be quite vigilant in whom we deal with and your situation inspires my least confidence."

Though Abbie was the one being interrogated, she couldn’t help but understand his concerns completely. If she were the one performing her own interrogation on a suspect with the same dubious situation, she would be just as suspicious and wary as Jacobson. These were people who were essentially committing grand theft with deadly consequences. The punishment for crimes like this was usually death. The last thing they wanted was to be caught. She understood completely why he was suspicious. She just wished those concerns weren't currently focused directly on her.
Abbie knew that the shipment was filled with gold and silver and that's what Crane and the others were here for. She just wanted that damn book.

"You want the honest truth. Here it is. The shipment that you guys want has gold and silver, yeah I know. But I don't care about that. The guy is also going to be carrying a book with him. I just want that book."

"A book?" Jacobson snorted in derision, causing William to glance up at him with a bit of amusement. "And what is so valuable about this book?"

Abbie willed her mind to work fast, and her fast-talking skills to kick into high gear.

If she ever was to sell a convoluted and crazy-ass made up story, it would be right now.

"It's a family heirloom."

"A family heirloom? Really?"

"Yes. My brother - uh, Frank - lost it in a card game. He was playing cards in some seedy bar a few weeks ago and lost my family's precious heirloom in a bet." Abbie herself now started pacing.

C'mon Abbie, think...what was Jacobson's 'evidence'. Her fists clenched and unclenched lightly at her side. "The guy he was playing with? It was that Beasley person. I know about the shipment because Beasley was really drunk and told Frank all about it and he told me. The paper? I wrote down his name to remember it. Why was I in the forest? Because Beasley told my brother about the path of the shipment. We were in the area, hoping to come across him to get our book back." Abbie now lowered her head and pretended to wipe a tear from her eye.

"Mr. Jacobson, I just really want my families' heirloom returned. It means so much to us. To me." She wiped at another crocodile tear, pouted a little, then turned away from him, pretending to be choked up.

Abbie took a deep breath, hoping to God that bullshit she just spouted sounded legitimate.

"And you know Ichabod Crane how?" he asked warily.

"We met a few weeks ago. A different bar. He doesn't remember me because - well, you know... she shrugged her shoulders woefully. "...the rum. I was hoping he could help me get my book back." She let out a long suffering sigh. "That's why you found us like that. I was trying to remind him of our time together...."

The room was silent for a long minute, the only sound the faint scratching of a knife blade against wood.

Abbie turned back to face Jacobson, ensuring her demeanour was dejected and her eyes downcast.

The burly man just stared at her, trying to read her expression, when he suddenly slapped his knee and burst out laughing. "A book! All of this rigmarole for a bloody book!" he slapped his other knee now, as though Abbie just told the funniest joke in the world.

"Well, do not inform my dear friend Ichabod your interest is only in retrieving this family heirloom. He's quite taken with you and I feel it may damage his fragile soul." He continued howling in mirth.

"It really is important to my family." she reiterated sadly. "It is all that we have."
"I daresay it is. You will forgive me my behaviour. We have to be very careful in whom we trust."

"I understand, Mr. Jacobson." Abbie just nodded solemnly, the feeling of instant relief silently washing over her as though she had just stepped into an ice cold shower.

"I do apologize, Miss Abigail. I can see from your countenance that I did frighten you. My humblest apologies. I still do not entirely believe you, but that will come to light in the next two days. I will inform you that we have revealed your situation to our good Captain in its entirety. He has deemed you important to our mission and as such, you will be our guest for the next two days. However, you will not be able to leave this room unless under guard. Captain's orders. You will meet with him tomorrow to discuss the finalities of our mission. Do you understand?"

Abbie nodded slowly then moved over to the chair and table situated in front of the window. She took her seat slowly, her bones feeling as though she were one hundred years old. She exhaled slowly, a feeling of immense relief spreading through her.

Two more days, Abbie. Just two more days....

…………………………

For the next half an hour, not a word was spoken. William had slipped out of the room almost unnoticed, while Jacobson dozed lightly on the bed. Abbie staying seated in the tall backed wooden chair, spine straight, on edge, eyes focused on the door, formulating potential plan after plan in her head.

She knew she had to get the *Magikos* book. There was no question. She needed to stick around this gang, needed to ensure she herself retrieved that book. She also needed to keep Crane close by. Once she got the book, she'd find a way to get her and Crane alone, read out the spell and get back home. If reading the spell brought them here, it stood to reason that reading it again would bring them home.

She hoped.

All she had to do was stay on her toes for those two days, continue convincing the rest of this pirate gang she was no threat. She had to convince them that she was more than willing to help them with their mission. But once she got the book, all bets were off.

Her restless thoughts were interrupted by Jacobson letting out a loud snore just as Crane entered the room. He quickly looked around and took in the sight of Abbie seated next to the window and Jacobson passed out on the bed.

"You lazy cur!" Crane yelled out. "Here you are to stand guard over this lovely lady, and yet you behave like a useless corpse!"

The large man woke with a start and instinctively drew his gun. He quickly looked around the room to ensure Abbie was still present and then let out a small grunt. "Crane, you bastard. Why are you interrupting my slumber? Has it been three hours yet?" he sat up on the bed and rubbed his eyes with his thumb and forefinger.

"Unfortunately not. Only an hour’s time has passed. A new shipment of spirits has arrived and the Captain thought it would be most prudent to release me from my duties." Crane replied.

"Wise man," Jacobson gruffed.

"Yes, well now you are to take my place."
Jacobson groaned again, then slowly pulled himself off of the bed and pulled on his tall boots. "Verily Crane, I will imitate your same drunken actions and hopefully the Captain will leave me be as he has left you." He staggered towards the door, still half asleep.

"Did you share your concerns with Miss Abigail?" Crane now asked.

"I did. I do feel more comfortable of her presence herein."

"It is as I told you, my good man. For some unexplainable reason, I feel she is trustworthy."

"Well, that's comforting...to you. But if you are wrong." Jacobson cautioned.

"I am not wrong, Johnathan."

Jacobson tapped Crane on the shoulder. "I admire you faith, Ichabod. I hope for our sake, you are correct."

Crane now changed the subject. “My good man, would you be kind enough to send up some repast for this lovely lady and myself. It has been hours and I presume she must be quite famished.” Abbie saw that Crane had flashed a meaningful look to Jacobson, who just tipped his head once in acknowledgment.

Jacobson quickly motioned to William. "Come, my boy. Let us acquire a meal for our friends, then off to guard some spirits. Maybe this time, the Captain will allow you to partake in a dram or two."

William merely nodded and followed Jacobson out the door, leaving Abbie once again alone with Crane.

Abbie took in Crane's appearance and noticed that he had changed his clothing. He was dressed in what she would jokingly call movie pirate wear. His black leather boots were the same but the clothes were not. Instead, he was clad in black breeches and a billowing black linen shirt. The thin shirt ties were half undone and hanging loose, leaving the neck gaping wide open. His shoulder length dark wavy hair - now devoid of its customary leather tie - hung loose and curled around his face. She had to admit the dark clothes and hair suited him, making Crane look quite roguish.

“Nice outfit” she quipped.

“Are you mocking my attire?”

In spite of herself, she grinned in amusement. “It’s very theatrical.” She wished she had her camera on her because she would so love a picture of Pirate Crane just for kicks. The mocking she would lay on him would be priceless.

“Theatrical? That is an interesting comment. And how would you describe your current attire?”

“Practical.”

Crane’s eyes roved her over for a moment, before his eyebrow arched slightly in response. “Indeed.”

Crane now laid down on the bed, and folding his hands behind his head, stretched out his long limbs with a long groan. He closed his eyes now and started lightly humming. A moment later, he opened his eyes to peer at her quickly, and he patted the bedcover lightly. “Would you care to join me?”

Abbie rolled her eyes and shook her head slowly, shooting him a look of scorn and disgust.

“No? How unfortunate.” Crane said as he closed his eyes again and resumed his humming.
This guy, man. This guy. She had to give him props though. This Crane was quite persistent, just like her own. She once again questioned if this Crane was her Witness partner or an alternate timeline Crane. The fact that he was behaving like a shameless bastard? Alternate timeline Crane.

She desperately needed to find out.

As Abbie was lost in her thoughts, trying to decide the best way to confirm Crane’s identity, a harsh kick at the door sounded out.

Crane didn’t bother moving from the bed or even open his eyes. "Ah, William has returned with some repast." he announced. "My dear, you may answer the door, if you wish.

Abbie wasn’t sure if by repast he meant food, but she rose from her chair anyway and headed over to the entrance, suddenly realizing how hungry she truly was. She had not eaten breakfast that morning and the sun had already set. She was starving and right now, any 18th century food seemed remotely palatable. She glanced over at Crane for a moment. He hadn’t shifted an inch and his eyes remained closed.

Abbie opened the door to find William holding a covered plate in one hand and a pewter tankard in the other. He pointed his chin out, indicating for Abbie to take the food. He handed over the tankard and plate to her, then turned and left the room.

“Eat, my dear. You must be starving.” Crane still had not moved from the bed.

She moved back to the small table and upon removing the cover, sighed in hungry relief to see that the plate contained some roast meat, carrots and potatoes, all smothered with brown gravy. The scent of heavenly and Abbie’s stomach grumbled in appreciated, eliciting a small guffaw from Crane. She ignored him and took a sip of the tankard, realizing that it contained beer. With a sigh, she flopped down in the chair and tucked into the meal with gleeful relish. The simple hearty dish was absolutely delicious.

………………

Abbie drained the last of her beer from the tankard and let out a contented sigh. She leaned back in the chair and rested her hand on her belly, feeling absolutely stuffed from the heavy meal and drink. Glancing over at Crane, he appeared to be fast asleep. She stretched her arms up over her head and yawned, her muscles sore from sitting so stiff and tense for so long. She rose from her chair and stretched again.

“If you wish to take a nap after your fine meal, I would gladly offer you a place by my side.” Crane spoke up, and she realized that he wasn’t sleeping but just had his eyes closed. She peered over at her lanky partner.

“Nice try.” Abbie was about to drill him with some questions, to figure out if this truly was her long buried partner when she was startled by another kick at the door.

“Ah, that should be my own meal, it seems.” Crane said. “Would you be a dear and receive it for me.”

“I’m not your maid.” She grumbled but headed for the door anyway, as an excuse to stretch her legs. Crane popped out of the bed instantly and trailed close behind her.

She opened the door and William pushed his way in, another plate in hand, this time uncovered. In a strange motion, as though he tripped over his feet, he lurched a bit and tipped the plate forward,
spilling meat and gravy all over the front of her white T-shirt and jeans. At the same time, she felt a hand pull her gun from the holster hanging at her hip.

She whipped around, and saw Crane standing there holding her Glock, a mischievous grin spreading across his face.

"Give me back my damn gun!" Abbie swiped at his hand, missing completely as he raised his arm up in the air, in a deliberate taunting motion.

"This is a very interesting weapon. I've taken quite a liking to it. I think I shall keep it."

"You've got to be fucking kidding me!" Abbie cursed furiously as she now looked down at her clothes in complete exasperation. She held her hands out at her sides, trying not the touch any of the food that ran down her front.

_Goddammit, could this day get any worse. They have to pull this bullshit just to get my gun._ She would almost rather have had them point their own guns at her and demand she hand over her weapon instead of this. She was completely filthy now and would have to be like this the next two days.

Abbie took an angry step forward then suddenly realized the trigger safety on her gun was unlocked, from when she had unsnapped it during Jacobson’s questioning. The last thing she needed right now was for these ignorant 18th century pirates to wave her gun around the room and have it accidently go off.

"Crane, you need to be careful with that." she warned now, managing a surprisingly calm voice.

He looked up at her curiously, then back down at the gun, examining it carefully. The gun lay flat in his open palm, and he ran a finger delicately along the barrel.

Crane glanced up at Abbie for a moment, a dark shadow passing over his face, before looking back at the steel in his palm. He cocked his head a little, as though recollecting something.

With a quick flick, he snapped the safety lock closed, shaking his head slightly as he did. He looked back up at her and a hint of confusion flashed over his face.

_Oh my god, he remembered the safety!_ Abbie was shocked. Weeks earlier, she had given Crane a lesson on how to use her own weapon, including the required gun safety lessons. She wanted him to be comfortable with the weapon in case he ever needed to use her own gun. One thing she remembered stressing was the trigger lock. The flintlock guns he was used to had nothing of the sort and she didn't want Crane accidentally shooting his leg or just shooting her.

So this _had_ to be her 200 plus year-old partner, right? _Right?_

Abbie felt her fury escalate. _How on earth could Crane not remember a single fucking thing about his life, not remember anything about her, yet he remembers the fucking safety of her gun._ She pressed the tips of her fingers hard into her hair at her forehead, trying to calm herself down. It took all of her willpower not to go ballistic in frustration.

Crane now headed over to the tallboy in the corner and laid the gun at the very far back of the cabinet top. Because was so tall, he merely fully extended his arm to place the gun. Abbie pursed her lips. If she was to retrieve it, she would have to drag over a chair and leap up to reach. At least she knew where the gun was. She glanced over at William, who leaned against the wall next to the door, a small look of amused on his face.
She willed herself to breathe deeply in an effort to calm down.

*Two more days, Abbie. Just two more days....*

She repeated these words to herself yet again, like a mantra that was the only thing keeping her sane.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: On writing the next chapters, I realized that there are going to be sections that will be more serious and potentially threatening, especially to Abbie, but considering her being in the 18th century, it is to be expected. So yeah, fluff and not-so-fluff. It's a mix.

Thanks to everyone reading and enjoying!
The Scar

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone reading and enjoying this story!
And a shout-out to Dame_Birdie for her awesome comment!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Scar

Ichabod reclined against the wooden chair as he dramatically propped his leather boot-clad feet onto the tabletop. He leaned back even further, balancing the chair on the back two legs while never taking his eyes off of Abbie the entire time. Instead, he flashed Abbie a smug smile that utterly infuriating her.

"What an unfortunately situation." He tsked while feigning concern. He quirked his eyebrow while a small smirk twitched at the side of his mouth. "William can be quite clumsy at times."

Abbie looked down at her clothes, annoyed with herself that she had chosen today to wear light coloured blue jeans and a white T-shirt. Her black leather coat was currently draped over a chair in the archives that existed 200 plus years in the future. She sighed at that thought as she bemoaned the state of her clothing. Her T-shirt and upper part of her jeans were stained reddish brown from the meat and gravy that the kid spilled on her.

"It'll wash out." she replied grumpily.

"You cannot expect to meet with Mr. Beasley looking and smelling as you currently do. It is quite inappropriate. You will need to bathe."

Abbie started. "You want me to what now? Bathe? You've got to be kidding me?" She said as she crossed her arms in defiance. She now realized why William spilled the plate of food on her. It was both a distraction to steal her gun and for Crane to force her into shedding her clothing.

If the situation wasn't so infuriating, she could almost laugh at how utterly ludicrous and ridiculous this entire scenario was.

She glanced over at the empty tub sitting in the middle of the room, then back at Crane, daggers in her eyes. "No friggin' way." Right now, she was so thoroughly annoyed she could shoot someone. Anyone. If only she still had her gun. The tall, skinny and currently smug form of Ichabod Crane would definitely be her first victim.

"William, go inform the head mistress that we will need to prepare a bath." The slight teen simply nodded in reply and left the room. Ichabod now rose from his chair and strode over to Abbie, positioning himself mere inches from her body, and looked down at her with immense amusement.

"My dear, you cannot go traipsing around in this filthy attire. Though its shape is quite appealing, I would have to say." He leaned back a bit so that his sparkling blue eyes could give her a slow once-over.
Abbie took a step back and shook her head angrily. "Absolutely not." There is no way I'm giving up my jeans buddy, so too bad.

Crane seemed to read her mind.

"May I remind you that it is illegal for a woman to attire herself in breeches or any sort of male hosiery, trouser or stocking. It is fortunate that we found you first. Anyone else and you would surely have been thrown into jail. Or worse. You will bathe to wash this grime off, and you will dress as a proper lady."

"And what if I refuse?" Abbie said, tilting her chin up in contempt. She was on her last nerve.

"Are you resisting my orders again?"

"Maybe." she replied, glaring straight into his eyes. Her mouth was pursed, her arms folded across her chest.

"Do not test me." he whispered low in her ear, hovering over her small form, trying once again to intimidate her.

Instead of shrinking from his looming presence, Abbie took one small step closer to him, narrowing the gap to barely two inches. She stared defiantly up at him, never breaking eye contact, her mouth pursed, jaw firm, nostrils flaring a little. Her patience was gone and she had absolutely zero tolerance for any of Crane's bullshit right now.

After a minute long stare-off, she spied that the corners of his mouth had curled a little into a smirk. Once again, Abbie thought for sure there was almost a look of respect on his face.

He remained silent, instead simply straightening up. As he did, Abbie finally broke eye contact. She rolled her eyes in disgust, her sight instead settling onto the center of his chest.

The half-untied loose neck of his black linen shirt had fallen slightly open to reveal the familiar vicious scar slashing across his chest. Without thinking, she reached out and quickly ran her hand over the gnarled skin, then looked up at Crane, eyes wide in surprise.

"How did you get this scar?" she demanded.

"Do you see something you like." he leered as his brow arched, then the expression on his face shifted. In a softer, surprisingly sadder voice, "Or does this offend you?"

"No, it doesn't offend me, idiot. How the hell did you get that scar?" Abbie had no time for his stupid games. She yanked the other side of his shirt neck down and spied a thin, two inch long scar on his upper left side. She ran her index finger over the area for reassurance. The scar had healed smooth and straight but still had a slight tinge of red. This was the scar he received from the fun house mirror shard when they had fought off the Golem just a few weeks ago.

Again, his face betrayed confusion at her actions and responses. "In battle."

"Battle? Where in battle?" she demanded again.

He hesitated for a moment then spoke haltingly. "It was on a rebel ship. We were commandeering the vessel. One of the crew and I engaged in a vicious sword fight. This was the result."

Abbie looked up into Cranes' eyes again. "No. No! That is not where you got that scar. Her hand slid back to the large pectoral scar, her fingers impatiently running along the raised edges. "That's not.
The Horseman gave that to you."

"I assure you, I did not receive this wound from any horse mounted rider."

"No, not some guy on a horse. The Horseman. The Headless Horseman." She thumped him hard on the chest. "C’mon Crane, think! Are you telling me you still don't remember anything?"

The self-satisfied look on Crane's face had completely vanished. Instead, he was looking at Abbie strangely but with surprising concern. "Are you well, Miss Abigail?"

"Of course I'm fine." Abbie snapped, her mind turning over the situation. There was no way that his scar was from a sword. The deep slash that angled across the left side of his chest was from the Horseman. She was one hundred percent sure of it.

The odds that the Ichabod Crane in this timeline would have that distinct scar marking him was improbable. That this Crane also bore the exact same scar from the mirror shard? Impossible.

This was her Ichabod Crane, but why didn't he remember like she did? Nothing had changed for her? So why him?

"Dammit Crane, you need to remember!"

"Remember what?" he asked, almost exasperated.

"Remember what?" Abbie was incredulous. "That you were an 18th century Revolutionary War soldier fighting in George Washington's army and you were almost killed in battle and you were put under a spell by your wife to keep you alive and you met me in the 21st century and we are the Two Witnesses and we are fighting together to stop the Apocalypse and we were trying to decipher some old texts before we ended up here and..."


Jacobson now returned to the room. "Bath will be here in a few minutes. Head mistress says there is a fine garment that she will provide, gratis, on account that we are such good customers." By customers, Abbie knew that Jacobson was referring to the many ladies of the house whose company he and his fellows had enjoyed.

"Excellent."

"Crane, the Captain desires us to do a little reconnaissance work. A British Major and Corporal have arrived into town with a small Section as accompaniment. Says he wants you to stay here and guard her," his thumb pointed to Abbie, "since we require her for the meeting with Beasley. Acceptable?"

Ichabod sighed. "It will have to be."

"Good. I brought you this. Spirited it away from the shipment. I expect you may need it." Jacobson glanced at Abbie as he handed over a bottle of rum that was hidden in his jacket. "This is payment for saving my arse last week." Flashing a grin, Jacobson patted Ichabod on the arm now in camaraderie. "Be wary. You will have no other guard, so be mindful of her actions. She is quite the worthy adversary. We will return after sunrise." Jacobson bowed his head quickly and left the room.

"Well well, my dear. It seems that we will be alone for the evening."
Abbie shot an annoyed look towards Crane, but she was secretly pleased. This was perfect. Now that she knew for sure this was her Crane, she had the rest of the evening to try to convince him of who he really was, to get him to remember his true life and true purpose. It would not be easy, but Abbie was stubborn and determined. She would break him and find a way to get them both back to the 21st century.

Crane wasn't going to get the better of her.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Yeah, poor Abbie is going to be put in even more of a compromising situation, but trust me, she can handle herself!
The Bath

Chapter Notes

Okay, a nice little fluffy chapter for everyone and yes, of course I make the poor girl have to take a bath. What could go wrong??
Thank you to everyone for your awesome comments - I really get a kick out of them - you guys are great!

Please read and enjoy! Oh, and Happy Easter Everyone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 6 - The Bath

The sun was setting and Crane went about the room, lighting the many tallow candles hanging from the wall and sitting on the table. The candles gave the room an ethereal, romantic glow.

Which was the last thing Abbie needed to think about, what with Crane's seductive self lurking about the room.

Twenty minutes after sunset, four maids from the brothel house had finished filling the tub with steaming hot water. Several soft towels and wash cloths were stacked on a chair next to the large basin. Two articles of clothing had been laid out flat on the bed. The first looked like a thin white A-line dress. The other was a simple yet lovely red diamond-patterned dress with accompanying white petticoats and other cloth garments that Abbie had no clue was for. Or how to wear. She noted with relief that the shoulders of the dress were nowhere near as open as the ones she had spied on the other 'ladies of the tavern.'

Abbie was modern and could flash skin with ease, but she sure as hell wasn't going to run around in the 18th century with her breasts almost dangling out for everyone to see.

The maids quickly left the room, all eyes downcast, leaving Abbie once again alone with Crane. He made sure that the door was securely locked then moved swiftly to her side.

"You expect me to wear that?" Abbie pointed to the nightgown. It was made of what seemed like thick fabric, eggshell white in colour. The neck was quite open and wide and a drawstring encircled the fabric edge, allowing it to be cinched tightly around at the front. Abbie fingered the fabric and sighed with relief. The soft cotton material, though white, was thick and not see-through at all.

"Yes. That is a shift. An undergarment, if you will. Unfortunately, we could not find anything less scandalous for you." he flashed her a devious smile. "Lucky for me."

Abbie ignored Crane's comment and chuckled a bit in spite of herself. This so called scandalous shift was the equivalent of a knee length white A-line dress. This one though, nipped in slightly at the waist and the sleeves were three-quarter length. Sexy lingerie, this was not, to her immense relief.

"And this dress?"

"That is for the morrow."
Abbie now took in the large metal tub that was full of steaming water. Despite her predicament, she was actually looking forward to a long hot bath. It had been many months since she indulged in that activity herself in her own home. Her muscles ached from the tension of the situation and she was covered in what felt like several layers of dust and dirt from the earlier horse ride and the food that William conveniently spilled on her in the attempt to get her gun.

*Maybe this wasn't such a bad idea after all.*

"You will take your bath now. The water is losing its temperature, my dear." Ichabod commented. "The maids have worked diligently at preparing the basin. I do not wish to waste the most precious time of the lovely ladies of this establishment."

*Precious time, my ass,* she thought as she rolled her eyes. "Yeah, yeah, fine, I'll take the bath. Now get out so I can."

"No, I do not think I will get out."

"Excuse me?" She said, glaring at him. 'If you think that I'm going to take a bath with you in this room watching, you're delusional."

Ichabod grinned, his eyes glittering, head cocked to the left. "If you think that I will leave you unguarded and allow you to escape, you are delusional."

"I'm not having you in here while I am in there." She growled, pointing at the steaming tub.

"You have no choice."

Abbie puffed out her chest in annoyance, staring Crane down for what seemed like the hundredth time that day, though she was always technically looking up. The ongoing battle of wills was starting to exhaust her. Her mouth curled in anger. "Crane, I swear to god, when we get back to our time, I am going to kill you."

Her words just seemed to spur Crane on more.

He leaned down and whispered almost seductively against her ear, "Do as I say, my dear, or I will slowly undress you and put you into the bath myself." he paused as his tongue delicately brushed against her lobe. Goosebumps traveled along her spine as his lips caressed the join of her neck and shoulder before moving back up to her ear. "And I will savour every moment."

She closed her eyes and clenched her jaw in annoyance, desperately trying to ignore the fact that she may have felt slightly turned on by his actions.

*Only slightly.*

*Dammit.*

She was so going to murder this sleezy, pompous, lewd version of Ichabod Crane if it was the last thing she did. If they ever got back to their time, she was going to make him truly suffer.

Abbie demanded that he turn around while she undressed. Surprisingly, he obliged her with a polite and formal bow, before turning and facing the window. For a moment, Abbie thought that a bit of her respectful Crane broke through but then quickly realized that the lone mirror hanging on the far
wall perfectly reflected the view of the tub. Abbie stomped over and yanked the mirror from the wall, livid over the amusement on Crane's face.

_He was so a dead man_, she vowed to herself.

Content that he was not watching by any means, Abbie put the towels close to the tub side, quickly shed her clothes and stepping in, sinking deep into the hot water which came up to the top of her shoulders. A small groan emanated from her lips.

As though he had eyes at the back of his head, the moment she settled in and grabbed the rough cake of soap, Crane moved toward the dressing table and grabbed the bottle of rum and an empty glass. Abbie sunk lower into the water, drawing her legs up quickly and wrapping her arms around her knees to cover herself from his gaze. There was no bubble bath foam in this century, so Crane could probably see everything through the clear water.

He now pulled a chair over to the left side of the tub, sat down and plopped his feet up onto a second chair with flourish. Crane had angled himself so that he was opposite to Abbie but slightly shifted. If he looked straight ahead, he would look right past her. She would only be visible from a small turn of his head to the right or out of the corner of his eye. Without a word, he poured some rum into the glass and held the small tumbler out towards Abbie.

"What are you doing?" she demanded, her arms hugging tighter around her knees. She looked at the glass in his hand, flashing back to the rum drink they had shared in the archives a few weeks ago.

"Ensuring that you do not escape."

"I think being naked in a tub would make it kind of hard to escape."

"Hmm..... So it would." An amused smirk appeared on his lips. He took a quick swig of the rum straight from the bottle while continuing to stare straight ahead.

"You really are a piece of work in this timeline, you know that, Crane?" she snarled.

Grabbing two of the towels next to the tub, Abbie unfolded them and spread them out across the top of the tub walls, draping the towel ends over the sides, covering most of the open top of the tub. Now only her shoulders and head would be visible. With a satisfied smile, she snatched the rum filled glass from his outstretched hand and leaned back into the deliciously soothing hot water.

Now _this_ was more like it. Crane wasn't going to ruin her bath. Her plan? Relax, scrub off the dirt, figure out how to get Crane to remember, figure out how to get back to their own time.

"Crap."

"Hmm....?"

"I forgot to tie my hair up." Abbie mumbled as she cursed herself for the oversight. There was no way she was going to get out of the water just to find something to tie her hair up. She would just have to let it get soaked and allow it to curl and knot into an impossible mess that she would have to deal with tomorrow.

Without a word, Crane rose from his chair and headed to the small dressing table beside the bed. He pulled some hair pins from the drawer then returned to Abbie's side, never allowing his eyes to fall upon her form. Instead, he yanked the chair around so that he was sitting behind her. The lip of the tub was low enough that he had full access to her neck and upper shoulders.
As Abbie looked down intently, tugging the draped towels to ensure they still hid her from view, she felt Crane's fingers slowly and gently move into her hair at the base of her neck. Goosebumps traveled down her spine as he weaved his long fingers delicately into the hair at the nape. Gently gathering her thick hair in his hands, he wound the strands tightly together and up, using several pins to secure the twist. The entire time Abbie didn't say a word and didn't move. She just sat perfectly still, eyes wide open, shoulders tense as he worked.

Once he was done, she felt his warm fingers travel slowly from the nape of her neck, caressing down and along the slope of her shoulders, massaging her a bit. "Your skin is most exquisite," he murmured low against her earlobe "You are most exquisite..." A second later, she felt his lips brush along her neck, then slowly follow the path his hands had just taken. She felt sparks travel down her spine, the area below her belly tighten.

In spite of herself, Abbie closed her eyes at his touch. She couldn't deny it; his hands and mouth felt absolutely wonderful, just like before. It felt so erotic and sensual. The combination of his soft lips and rough beard made her feel weak in the knees. She always melted when a lover kissed her neck and shoulders. It was totally her erogenous zone, her weak spot, her absolute undoing. And Crane now found it and was taking full advantage while she was completely vulnerable in his presence.

She let her head drop forward, enjoying the sensations of his warm yet firm mouth sliding against her naked skin. His teeth and lips grazed over her neck and ear lobe, every once in a while gently nipping and teasing, his tongue drawing lazy patterns. She let out a low moan in pleasure....she did not want this to stop...

He brought his fingers forward and resting under her chin, he gently tilted her head back. He leaned forward and his mouth moved from her ear lobe and up her cheek. He brushed her lips with his thumb, before moving his own lips along her jaw, then back down to her neck.

The sensations were incredible and she couldn't help but moan his name. "Oh god, god...Crane..."

The luscious warmth of his mouth was replaced with a gust of cold air. Suddenly, Crane shifted away from her and Abbie heard him mutter something unintelligible under his breath.

The chair legs scraped against the floor and when she raised her head and opened her eyes, she saw that he was striding purposely towards for the door. He stopped in front as he rested his hand on the door handle and turned to her, an odd expression on his face as he stared hard at Abbie.

Bewilderment mixed with a hint of - what - recognition?

Wait, what? Did he recognize her?

Abbie opened her mouth to call his name but something held her back. She could see that he was breathing heavily. Though he was the one seducing her, his own cheeks and ears were flushed red. She saw his mouth curl in anger. A second later, he slammed the door with the flat of his palm in frustration.

"I will return in twenty minutes time. Ensure you are clothed." he spat out harshly, then exited the room without another word.

Abbie was mystified. She had been fighting off his lecherous, leering, pompous self all evening. But then she gave in. Willingly gave in. Allowed his hands and lips and tongue to intimately touch her neck and shoulders, and just like that, he left the room in a fury.

Sliding down a little into the water, Abbie leaned against the tub wall and closed her eyes again, letting out a long sigh. She didn't want to admit to herself that she enjoyed the way Crane had
touched her. She liked how his soft lips and firm tongue and strong hands felt on her skin. The sensations were amazing.

_Dammit, girl. Get a grip on yourself. It's Crane, for gods’ sake._

_The way he freaked out, though?_ Abbie now knew for sure this was a reaction that she would expect from her staid stuffy Witness partner. Why he ended up here, with these pirates, with what seemed to be like another persona, Abbie had no clue.

But that didn't matter now. Crane could act all leering and lascivious and seductive all he wanted for the time being. She'd play along, because she needed him close to her. She needed him to be right by her side when she got the magic book back and ensured the two of them got the hell back home.

Abbie finished her bath, toweled off quickly and slipped on the white shift that was provided for her. The cotton was thick and a bit rough, but overall was comfortable and warm. She pulled the drawstring around the neck tight to ensure her cleavage was covered as much as possible.

The thought of Crane's earlier comment, that this shift was considered scandalous made her chuckle to herself again. Abbie guessed that in the 18th century, having exposed arms and legs would be considered daring. The cotton shift fit loose on her, the hem of the dress hitting her below the knees.

If only these men could see the people wandering around downtown Sleepy Hollow in the middle of a hot summer afternoon. Their eyes would probably implode.

Abbie decided to make use of the now lukewarm bath water to wash her clothes and lingerie in the tub. The soap seemed to get out most of the gravy from her white T-shirt and blue jeans, but there was still a hint of stain marring the front.

She squeezed the water out of her clothes as hard as she could several times before hanging them over the chair and bedpost to dry. Never before had she been so incredibly grateful for the reality that washers and dryers existed in her life.

She didn't know how Crane could tolerate hand washing his clothes every day, but then she guessed he was used to it. However, she did finally understand his attachment to his own clothing in the 21st century. She missed her jeans and simple T-shirt desperately. Her own clothes felt proper and made her feel at ease. She could finally see why Crane was so attached to his own clothes; it made him feel whole.

Abbie figured that more than an hour had passed since Crane had stormed out of the room. He was supposed to be back by now, and Abbie was surprised that he would leave her alone for so long. He and Jacobson seemed so concerned about her sticking around for whatever this mission was, that leaving her unguarded, they were taking a risk that she would slip out the window or somehow sneak out of the room and out of the brothel.

The bath had made her feel a bit drowsy, and she decided to crawl into the narrow bed. It creaked oddly when she did, and she swore she could smell a faint odour of straw and musty wool. She wrinkled her nose at this, remembering that metal spring mattresses hadn't been invented yet. The covers were warm and heavy and included a thin linen sheet between two heavy blankets. It was definitely sleepable.

She tucked her legs under the covers and leaned against the headboard of the bed, looked around the room. Her eyes travelled over to the tallboy and she reminded herself again that her gun was sitting at
the very top far corner of the wooden cabinet.

She decided she would not bother retrieving it; to do so would break the little trust she managed to wring out of these guys. No, she would ensure that they trusted her for the day or so she had to remain in their company. She'd figure out a way to get her gun back later.

Abbie shifted her legs a bit under the heavy woolen covers when the door slowly opened to the room and Crane cautiously entered.

He took a few steps in, and stopped when he spied Abbie lying in the bed. She was waiting for some smarmy leering remark about joining her under the covers. Instead, his demeanour was noticeably complacent, regretful even."You did not leave?" he said softly.

"I had nowhere to go. Besides, I told you, I am here to meet up with Beasley. With you. This is something we are supposed to do together."

He nodded solemnly and proceeded to move around the room, blowing out the many tallow candles that had illuminated the small space. Abbie pulled the blankets a little higher up around her torso and just watched him in silence.

"I remembered...some things." He said now, his voice low, almost apologetic. He moved over to the small table by the window and sat down in one of the tall backed wooden chairs. Unlike before, when he had carelessly flopped his feet onto the table, he remained stiff-backed and rigid, boot heels flat on the floor. This was the body language of the Ichabod Crane that she knew so well.

Abbie slid down under the covers and rolled over onto her side, facing towards him. He was almost invisible in the room now, hidden in the dark corner next to the window. The lone candle that sat in the middle of the table was still lit, providing the room's only illumination. The tiny flickering flame cast dark shadows over Crane's solemn expression.

It was clear that something was breaking through for him. She decided not to force the issue; his reserved body language seemed to indicate that something had triggered in him and she wanted to just let him be.

She flashed him a quick smile. "I'm going to sleep now, okay?" The exhaustion of the day had finally overwhelmed her. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight, Miss Abigail."

Under his piercing gaze, she closed her eyes and fell into a dreamless sleep.

..........................

Abbie tugged at the woolen blankets trying to pull them tighter around her shoulders, but they seemed to be stuck. She rolled over onto her side, opened her eyes and came face to face with a sleeping Ichabod Crane. He was also lying on his side, on top of the blankets, hands resting up near his head, seemingly in a deep sleep.

His fingers were twitching and Abbie could see his eyes moving rapidly around under his eyelids. He periodically let out a distressed moan, and she could tell that he was having a bad dream.

Abbie just watched him intently as he dreamt; the movement of his hands almost looked like he was trying to claw at something. After a long minute, his eyes slowly opened and briefly flitted around before focusing directly on hers.
Neither said a word to each other; they just stared at each other in silence, sympathetic brown on distressed blue.

Jacobson now entered the room, banging the door against the wall as he did, a small metal jug and bowl in hand.

Jacobson spied the pair in bed and sighed as he set the bowl and jug on the small dressing table. "Crane, will you leave the lady be. She has had enough sight of your ill-mannered and unbecoming countenance."

"She seems to be quite taken with my countenance, it seems." Crane countered, his mood suddenly shifting. He flashed Abbie a grin as he rolled out of the bed. "We have obviously spent the night together, can you not see that Johnathan?" The arrogant expression and tone had returned.

"You keep thinking that Crane," Abbie said sarcastically as she sat up in the bed. "And maybe it'll come true."

Jacobson turned to Abbie and gave her a wink. "Madam, I am simply here to announce that the Captain will arrive shortly to discuss our mission. If you please, dress and be ready in roughly twenty minutes time. Unfortunately, this man of perpetual falsehoods must remain behind as watch. My apologies."

Of course Crane would remain in the room while she got dressed.

Abbie sighed heavily as she crawled out of bed. "Yeah, I'll be ready then."

At least she was going to finally meet this Captain guy and know what the hell this mission was all about and why they were so secretive about it. And why they insisted on holding her here.

_It can’t be so bad, she thought to herself. It’s just a simple ambush, right?_

Chapter End Notes

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A/N: Hope everyone liked it and comments and kudos always loved and appreciated. :')

This is the shift that I pictured Abbie wearing, which is apparently what woman wore underneath their dresses, etc. as underwear.
http://www.history.org/history/clothing/women/images/shift1.jpg

Next chapter is going to swing into more serious territory but there is no avoiding the fact that she is in the 18th century so race will be addressed.
The Plan

Chapter Notes

Abbie finally meets the Captain and learns of what the ambush plan is, and she isn't too happy about it. Long chapter, serious in nature and Abbie is emotionally run through the ringer.

I just wanted to point out some information here and at the end of the chapter for clarification:

--> The British Monarch at the time was King George III, who was British ruler throughout the entire Revolutionary War.
--> I use the terms the Crown, Redcoats and British Military interchangably. All refer to the British military and their leader (King George) who is the head of that military.
--> I used the terms Patriots and Rebels interchangably. These both refer to the Washington's Continental Army and the military units who fought for Independence.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 7 – The Plan

It took Abbie almost fifteen minutes to simply figure out how she was to wear the dress and skirts and other clothing items that they had sent up the night before. There was the shift that she currently wore, three long white skirts that apparently were called petticoats, something that looked like a corset, a pair of thick white stockings – wait, no garter belt with it? Ugh - and the red silk overdress. Abbie had not noticed it before, but the skirt of the red dress was split widely at the waist, leaving the front almost entirely open and exposed. She would have to wear one of the long white skirts underneath.

She was waiting for Crane to provide some snarky remarks, but he merely stood by the window, arms crossed against his chest, watching in what seemed like immense interest.

"What, no sleazy comment from you at all? That's a surprise."

"Alas, my dear, I only wish to remove your clothing. The opposite is vastly unappealing to me." he smiled slyly.

Of course that's how he would respond....

Upon examining the clothes, Abbie realized that she wanted to be mobile and be able to move fast during the ambush of the shipment. Layers and layers of heavy material were not going to cut it. As she ran her fingers along the hard narrow bones vertically lining the corset, she realized that she needed to be able to breathe also. Having a constricting corset and layers of skirts dragging her down was so not an option. When this ambush went off, she needed to be quick. Her undergarment solution? Her own bra and underwear, now nicely washed and perfectly dry.

"Crane, turn around and face the window."

"And why would I do that?"
She sighed. "Because you are going to be a gentleman and do what I say."

His eyes moved down to her hand touching the corset. "I was truly hoping to assist you with that particular item." he said with a mock regretful sigh. "I have much experience, you know."

"I bet you do. Now turn around."

Surprisingly, he did as told, leaning his shoulder and head against the wall next to the window frame and simply stared down to the street below, almost with a hint of melancholy.

She grabbed her bra and underwear and pulled them on underneath the shift. The bra was hard to fasten with the shift overtop, but she did it in record time, all the while glancing at Crane every two seconds or so to see if he was sneaking a peak. His eyes remained set towards the street.

*Okay, so what am I going to wear out of this mess of stuff? Hmmm...* She pondered the most comfortable and unrestrictive combinations. *Okay, forget the corset, screw the stockings...god who wants to wear those? Forget the three skirts. I'll just wear one of them.*

Over her shift, she pulled on one of the skirts whose fabric was similar to her shift and fastened the front ties. Finally, she slipped into the full length red silk dress.

It was surprisingly light and comfortable, the combination of skirt and dress, but of course she wasn't wearing the restricting corset, stockings and three other layers this outfit apparently required. The dress fit a little too loose over her shift, but the front bodice was not too low or revealing. The skin on her shoulders was exposed, but nothing more than what her typical T-shirts revealed. *This was tolerable,* she thought. *This is good.*

She laced up her own black leather boots, happy that they would actually somewhat go with the dress.

Now she just had to tighten the silk ties at the back of the dress. Abbie reached behind her to grab the ends of the ties to pull tight, and for the life of her could not reach. She kept groping at her back, trying desperately to grab the laces, but the strings were too high up on her back to reach.

"Cmon, where's are they?* She already knew she was going to regret asking him.

"Crane?"

"Yes, my dear?"

"Need your help."

"Really?" he drawled out as he turned his attention back to her.

"Just shut up and get over here."

He did as told and moved to her side, his eyes widening, brow raised a little as he took in her dress. She could only hear a low moan of approval from him.

She turned around so her back would be facing him. "I need you to do this thing up. I can't reach." She was so going to regret asking him this.

She felt his hands now rest lightly atop her shoulders and let out an exasperated sigh. "Crane, you need to tie the back, not touch the rest."

"Do you require my help or not?" he replied sternly.
"Yeah, but..."

"I must make sure the lines of the dress are aligned correctly. Now do not interfere and hold your arms out to your sides."

She did as told, and she felt Crane's fingers run along the top of her shoulders again as he slightly adjusted the sleeves of the dress.

He must have taken a step forward because she suddenly felt his warm breath on the exposed skin of her neck and his rough beard had lightly skimmed against her shoulder. She inhaled a little, trying to ignore the tingle that ran down her spine.

His warm hands now ran down along her sides, and he paused partway, shifting the bodice slightly. She swore his fingers deliberately skimmed the soft curve along the side of her breasts, his fingertips barely brushing against the skin as he did.

"Crane..." she warned.

"I am merely adjusting the fabric; your shift is bunched at the sides. Now be still." he demanded. With an irritated grumble, Abbie realized that he was right. After a few more second, his hands moved down and encircled her waist.

She looked down and was amazed that his large hands and long fingers were almost able to span more than half of her waist. He once again shifted the fabric a little, then slowly slid the flat of his palms firmly down and along the curve of her waist and hips, as though smoothing the edges of the silk fabric downward. After a few moments, he twined his fingers in the laces and pulled them taut.

"Not too tight, I need to breath."

He chuckled a bit as he pulled a little more. "How is this?"

Abbie inhaled deeply a few times to be sure she could breathe comfortably. She could. "Okay, that's good."

She felt his fingers flit around her back as he tied up the laces. She turned to face him. "Thank you, Crane." she flashed him a genuine smile. She had to admit she was a bit surprised that he seemed to have behaved himself.

For the most part.

She ignored the sparks from his fingers barely brushing along her breasts. *Yup, just ignore that, Abbie.*

He stared at her for a long moment, studying her appearance intently when the ever-revolving door to the room opened. Jacobson entered first, followed by a shorter, stockier man a few steps behind. He was slender yet muscular, his shoulders broad, arms well-defined. His black hair was much longer than Crane’s and neatly tied back with a black silk ribbon. Unlike Crane, he sported only a two day growth of stubble on his face. He was dressed in a simple billowy white linen shirt, dark brown linen pants and black leather shoes each set with a large silver metal buckle.

He looked so much like her college Criminology 101 Professor that Abbie had to do a double-take.

He flashed Abbie a Cheshire cat grin as he stopped in front of her. "Well, you look absolutely lovely, I would have to say."
Jacobson cleared his throat. "Miss Abigail Mills, let me present to you Mr. Matthew Mason Marcheford, or as we affectionately refer to this rogue, *the Captain.*"

With a flourish, Matthew took Abbie's hand in his and placed a light kiss on the top of her palm. "A pleasure, Miss Mills." he said grandly, a big smile on his face. "May I call you Abigail?"

"Of course. Finally nice to meet you, by the way." A hint of sarcasm edged into her voice. "So you’re a military Captain?" she asked.

All three men chuckled a bit. "Oh no, far from it. I definitely do not belong in any military service. I fear the discipline would soon unhinge my moderately sound mind."

"So it's just a nickname?"

"It is. I prefer you call me Matthew, however. Now, let's have a look at you." Matthew gently took Abbie's two hands in his own and extended her arms outwards to get a good look at her outfit. He then released one of her hands and slowly yet carefully twirled her around once to get a full look. "This is absolutely perfect." he declared, his voice almost giddy.

"Perfect? What's perfect?" She wasn't sure she liked how he seemed to be judging her as a prize or object.

"Ah yes, you are not aware of our mission." He let go of her other hand now, then turned his attention to Crane and Jacobson. "I am holding you to your word that she is trustworthy."

"I feel certain she is." Jacobson replied confidently.

"And you Crane?"

"I have already given you my opinion last evening. Yes, I fully trust her. In fact, I feel that I would easily trust her with my life."

She looked at Crane and gave him a small smile, which he acknowledged with a small nod. His current demeanour seemed serious and his eyes intense and Abbie was a bit surprised. Crane’s bearing was such a contrast to the currently smiling and cheerful Matthew. If it wasn’t for his leering comments ten minutes ago, she would think that Crane was back to normal.

"I will first tender my apologies to you, for holding you as such. As Jacobson well mentioned, we feared that you may have been acting as a spy for the British. I have used my considerable resources to soundly dispel this theory."

"Of course I'm not a spy. I told you, I'm just here to get back my family's heirloom."

Matthew snorted as he shook his head. "You do not truly think we believed that little tale, did you?"

Abbie raised her head a little and looked him straight in the eye, her expression commanding and her demeanour confident. "I did not lie, Captain. Like I told Jacobson here, I only want that book. Everything else is irrelevant."

"Matthew, if you please, Abigail. And yes, with the extensive intelligence I have gathered, I can say with confidence that I now believe you."

"Well, that's good." Abbie rolled her eyes a little, but still felt a bit of relief flood her body.

"So now I ask that you consider assisting us on our mission. You desire to retrieve this precious
book, we desire the gold and silver booty. Will you help?"

"Of course I'll help." It wasn’t even an option for her; she and Crane needed the *Magikos* book to get home.

"This is excellent!" Matthew excitedly declared as he took Abbie’s hand in his again, and twirling her around twice in delight. Abbie didn’t know what to think. This guy seemed larger than life and was almost excitable and giddy like a school boy. If she were to guess which man would be commanding these pirates, Matthew wouldn’t have been her first or even fifth choice.

Abbie turned her attention to Crane, expecting a snarky response. Instead, he was staring at her gloomily and did not say a word. His expression and silence suddenly made her a bit uneasy. She figured that Crane would know the plan for ambush by now, and his reserved and serious demeanour didn’t inspire any confidence about the mission. A quick glance at Jacobson and she saw the same reserved expression on his face. It was a complete opposite to Matthew’s joyful demeanour.

*God, I hope this plan isn’t totally messed up.* She started to feel a bit of nervousness creep into the pit of her stomach but her impatience won over. “Okay, so you can trust me. We’ve established that. Now, what’s the plan?”

“As you know, the Beasley shipment is expected to arrive in this area tomorrow. Within its hold, a good quantity of gold and silver. This shipment is destined for Washington's Rebel army and its booty is our intended prize. As you have mentioned, the book you are seeking is also included, yes?"

Abbie just nodded.

"Well, Abigail, since you are assisting us, you may partake in a small cut of the gold and silver, if you so desire. It is only fair and it will assist you on your travels once the mission is completely."

"I just want the damn book."

"Abigail, you are truly a rarity.” Matthew laughed heartily at his shook his head in disbelief. “Nonetheless, in order for us to get close to the shipment, we must ensure that we are not waylaid prior. I have it on good authority that a special delivery is to be made to this shipment en route."

"Special delivery?"

"Yes, a very special delivery destined for a high status British General.” Abbie could now see a bit of apprehension behind his cheerful expression. “That delivery shall be you."

"Me? What do you mean me?" She narrowed her eyes as it took her a moment to understand the implications of what he was saying. The somber expressions on Crane and Jacobson’s face seemed to confirm her suspicions. "You mean this is a slave delivery? No way, absolutely not!" Abbie immediately wrapped her arms around her torso, her stomach clenching at the realization.

"No, no way I'm doing that." her voice pitched high in anger.

"Oh no, Abigail! Please, it is not as you think it is." Matthew replied, his voice taken aback at her reaction. "Please, just hear me out."

"Oh really, it's not? You're just going to pass me over like some damn property. I am not property! No goddamn way." she shook her head violently, rage threatening to overwhelm her.
She realized now why Matthew had taken the time to check out her dress. He wanted to be sure she was ‘presentable’. She moved over to the window, needing to physically remove herself from his presence. Her hands curled into fists and her jaw clenched as she struggled to try and calm herself down. Her eyes moved to each man in succession. She could see in their faces that her reaction was completely expected and they were doing their best not to alarm or freak her out.

"Abbie, it's not what you think. Please, hear the Captain out." Crane gently pleaded with her as he started moving to her side.

"The hell it isn't." she growled, taking a step away from him. "Stay the hell away from me, Crane."

He did as told, stopping immediately in his tracks.

She stepped back further away from the men, looking around for something - anything - in which to defend herself. Her whole body started involuntarily shaking.

Matthew held up his hands in a show of peace. "Please Abigail, let me continue to explain. This is not as you believe. There is much to explain." He took a step towards her and she shifted back further into the room. She reached the table next to the window and grabbed the half empty rum bottle that Crane had left from the night before.

She looked back over at Crane, who was standing closest to her, only a few feet away. His eyes were absolutely pleading with her to listen. “Please, Abbie. I beg of you, hear the Captain’s words.” His voice was barely a whisper.

Abbie’s mouth curled in anger as she turned her attention back to Matthew. “Fine. Speak.”

Matthew now looked absolutely relieved. “I understand you fear, Abigail, but you must understand the situation. First, I must begin by stating that I am a silent partner of three taverns in this county, including this fine establishment. These taverns are much frequented by Redcoats and Rebels alike, all with the desire for good ale and the comfort of a beautiful woman to draw away their troubles. It is in these circumstances that many secrets are thus revealed. These are highly coveted secrets that would greatly influence the decisions and outcomes of this war.”

Abbie glared at him as she wrapped her arms around her torso, while still holding the bottle in her right hand. Curiosity got the better of her. "Okay, continue."

"A fortnight ago, a Redcoat General paid visit to one of my humble establishments. He of course indulged in too much ale and partook in the services of one of my ladies. As I alluded to, loose lips are borne of ale and woman. This man revealed that his superior - a Major General - was expecting a special visit from a comfort woman. But this woman was not intending to deliver pleasure. She was tasked with delivering a secret message."

Abbie's ears and eyes now perked a little. "Wait, so you're telling me that this British military guy hired a prostitute, but the intention was for her to deliver a secret message?"

"A very important message, as it seems. Information obtained that reveals some vital secrets of Washington's Army and his intended troop movements."

"So why don't you just intercept the woman herself?"

"We would, if we knew who she was."

"She's not one of your employees?" Abbie couldn't hide the slight contempt in her voice.
Fortunately not.

Fortunately? Something didn't quite make sense. "Okay, but this information is intended for the British Military, right? What does it have to do with the Beasley shipment? I thought that the Patriots were guarding it?"

"They are. Intelligence was received three days ago that this delivery woman had been captured by a Rebel scouting party. She is to be turned over as a prisoner to Washington's regiment for interrogation."

Now she understood why he used the word fortunately. None of the girls Matthew employed was the prisoner of the Patriots. She paused as her stomach turned over at the thought of how this poor woman might be interrogated in this time. She tried to push the thought from her mind.

Focus, Abbie. She felt the tension in her body ease a little, her curiosity slightly overshadowing her anger. "Okay, so she's captured and going to be turned over to the Rebels. Again, what does it have to do with the shipment?"

Matthew grinned at her now, happy that she seemed to have calmed and was asking so many questions. "The scouting party managed to capture this woman only twenty miles from this location. Those men, four in number, will now meet up with the twenty men who are guarding the shipment, two days hence."

Oh, okay, that makes sense. Abbie thought. The poor woman was going to be turned over to the men guarding the shipment. "So what is my role in all of this? Are we going to try and rescue her at the same time?"

Matthew shot Jacobson and Crane an almost hesitant look. He cleared his throat before speaking. "It is known that the Major General had a bit of a preference for the woman he enjoys." Here, Matthew cleared his voice again and was suddenly unable to look Abbie in the eye. "He prefers the more exotic variety."

Abbie narrowed her eyes in confusion. Exotic? What the hell did that mean? She looked over at Crane, who looked utterly sullen. Exotic? The realization dawned on her quickly. "Wait, the woman who was going to deliver the message to the Redcoats? She's a black woman."

"Yes she is. It seemed that this British General had a specific preference when choosing his ladies. In his view, these women were less likely to aid the Rebels and could be more trusted. It is well known that the Crown does not desire to permit slavery, yet the Patriots are not so eager to do likewise. There are even rumblings that King George may soon grant freedom to any black man willing to fight for the Crown."

The realization hit Abbie like a ton of bricks. "You want me to take her place?"

Matthew now grinned as his clapped his hands together once in glee. "The unit guarding the shipment has received a most timely message, sending word that the scouting party has made excellent travel time. They will arrive one day ahead of schedule." He gave her a wink. "That message just happened to be sent by us. The scouting party also received a urgent message, that the shipment has been delayed due to a damaged wagon and that they will have to delay their meeting one day. Again, a message sent courtesy of us."

“So the soldiers in the scouting party think they are supposed to meet a day later then they were supposed to and the shipment is expecting the scouts one day sooner.”
Matthew nodded excitedly. "Exactly! The men guarding the shipment have no idea the identities of the four men. In order for us to get close to this shipment, we will pose as soldiers of this Rebel regiment delivering the captured prisoner. Crane, Jacobson and two other of my men will pose as part of that military unit. I and ten other of my men will be as local citizens and will aid the ambush."

"So let me get this straight. You're plan is to get close to this shipment by pretending to deliver me - a Redcoat spy taken prisoner - to that unit because they are expecting it, and before anything can happen, you basically ambush."

"Precisely. There are guards patrolling the forests at all times and will detain any and all whom travel without permit or cause. We only desire to get close enough before we attack and commandeer the booty." Matthew paused a moment and taking a deep breath. "Abigail, we have done this many, many times before. This tactic is the most sound and most effective."

Jacobson piped up now. "Madam, you have my word and the word of all of the Captain’s fine gentleman, that we will not let anything happen to you during this mission. It is my promise to you."

His sincere and concerned tone threw Abbie a little.

Could she trust these men though? Could she even trust Crane? She didn't like the situation at all. At all. As a cop, she had been in countless hostage situations and none of them ever put such fear in her as this one did. True, like in a hostage situation, she had her gun and she had backup officers, but this situation was so not right.

So not right.

Anything could go wrong at any time. One whiff of something unusual and the men guarding the shipment could open fire and capture or kill them all. She knew though, that her modern weapon could wipe out the lot of them in less than a minute.

What if you get caught, Abbie? She knew damn well that these men may not behave very chivalrous to a black woman. Wait, no, make that a black ‘prostitute spy’? If there was anything that could piss off a bunch of pro-slavery sexist white men fighting in a nasty war, it would be a black female spy.

Okay, don’t stereotype, Abbie. Not every man in the 18th century is like that. Crane’s not like that, she chided herself. Yeah, but some of those men are like that. And it only takes one.

Jesus Christ, this is such a messed up situation. Goddamn this…

There wasn’t enough swear words in the English language that could adequately describe her complete frustration.

Her eyes now locked with Crane. "You think this is a good idea?" she demanded.

He slowly nodded. "Abbie, I promise you I will ensure your safety. I will not let you out of my sight, nor allow any harm to come to you. In fact, I have already decreed to the Captain that I will remain with you at all times and not leave your side. Ever. This I vow to you, on my honour and on my life." His blue eyes shone deeply and she knew in her heart that he was being completely honest. He looked stricken over her role in this heist; so much like she would normally expected him to be.

Her arms finally loosening their grip around her body but she still clutched the rum bottle. "I don’t like this." she grumbled.

"Do you think that I do?" Matthew replied, for the first time his manner completely serious. "There is a risk of being captured or killed, yes, and it is not just a risk for you alone. It is for everyone
involved. We are risking death every time, for we are all wanted men."

"Wanted men? What do you mean?"

"By his Majesty's Royal Decree, Ichabod Crane is currently wanted for high treason, theft and illicit relations with the daughter of the New York Magistrate.

"She was fully amenable to those relations, until the father untimely discovery." Crane retorted with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Johnathan Jacobson is currently wanted for high treason, theft and sedition. Two of my other men are wanted for murder, as am I." Matthew paused thoughtfully. "Abigail, these serious crimes are punishable by death and there is many a man in these colonies or loyal to the Crown who would take great pleasure in seeing us hang."

"You're accused of murder?"

"Falsely accused, if you please. But that does not stop the Crown from declaring these crimes as true and valid."

Abbie looked at each man and the realization of how serious this ambush was to be almost overwhelmed her. If Crane or any of these men were caught, they would be most likely convicted and killed. Or hanged immediately from the nearest strong tree branch.

Christ, she felt like she was in some stupid western movie, only in this one, the mob or lynching parties would be wearing pretty white wigs and goofy knee-breeches.

Abbie felt her gut clench as her mind ran through the situation again, but her resolve to get both of them out of this mess was stronger. She would not let him get caught. God, if he was captured, how could she protect him? She needed that damn book and needed to get back to modern times and the only way to do that was participate in this crazy mission and make sure it went off without a hitch. Her thought that this little ambush would be a breeze was now completely turned on its head.

_Goddammit, could this get any worse...

Matthew now motioned to Jacobson. "If you please, the manacles."

"The what?" Panic immediately washed over Abbie. She knew exactly what they were. It was one of the first things Crane said to her after they met; to remove the handcuffs she had him in the first day she encountered him in jail.

They wanted to snap handcuffs on her right now? _No fucking way._

Jacobson pulled out a set of antique looking thin iron handcuffs from his coat pocket and handed them over to Matthew.

"Unfortunately, during our travel, you must appear as our prisoner. Therefore, you will be required to wear these to show that you are properly restrained."

"You are not putting those things on me!" The barely concealed rage from before, which had finally ebbed, immediately returned. "I am _not_ wearing those." She spit out in anger.

Matthew now let out a genuine guffaw. "Do you think I would let any of my charges be restrained without any method of escape? Ha! I should think not. What if the key were to be lost? What if that person could not be rescued? Oh no, I leave my fate to my own devices." He was grinning widely
now. "Please, observe." he motioned for her to move closer.

She did, very tentatively and slowly, keeping her eye on Matthew the entire time, bottle tight in hand.

"Come, come." Matthew motioned her forward again with a smile. "Oh, you have nothing to fear, Abigail. Trust me, I think you will appreciate this."

He laid the manacles in the flat of his palm and stretched his hand out towards her now so she could examine them. She hesitantly peered closer, as though at a venomous snake that was ready to strike.

"See this?" Matthew pointed to a pin that seemed to attach the connecting chain to a small ring welded into the individual wrist cuff.

"Yeah..."

"Watch carefully." He now snapped one of the cuffs around his own left wrist. As though he were demonstrating a magic trick, he used his right hand to pull hard against the cuff, showing her that the left was securely fastened. Then using his teeth, he pulled the pin out of the left wrist and pulled at the chain. The cuff around his left wrist immediately came free.

Abbie couldn't believe it. Matthew had just demonstrated handcuffs that she would expect a magician would show off in a magic show. She looked up at him, her momentary fear replaced by an impressed expression on her face. "Self-escaping cuffs. Very nice. I should call you Houdini."

Matthew looked at her strangely for a moment, but seemed pleased that she was a bit more relaxed. "My own design, I am quite proud to say."

Crane now stepped forward and held out both of his wrists. "Place them on me, Abbie, and remove the pin as a demonstration, if this would make you feel better. You will see."

Abbie took him up on his offer. Matthew placed the manacles in both of his hands and held them out to her like an offering. She tucked the rum bottle under her arm, then quickly plucked the handcuffs out of his hands. He immediately took a step back and she recognized it was all to gain her trust and not alarm her with any sudden movements.

She carefully examined how the pin was set. It was quite ingenious actually. The pin looked like it was two separate pin heads had been soldered into place and could not be easily removed.

She motioned for Crane to move a bit forward and he did, still holding out his wrists. She snapped the manacles around his wrists and checked that they were secure. They were. Once she was satisfied, she closely examined the pin connector. Again, she was impressed. With her thumb and index finger, she pulled out the pin at his right hand and the cuff came free from Crane’s wrist. She unsnapped the second cuff to be sure and once again, it easily came free.

"Okay, that’s very cool." She said, genuinely impressed. This she could handle. As long as she could escape on her own, this she could do.

"So what is your decision? Will you participate?" Matthew asked.

Abbie rubbed her hands over her face, just trying to make sense of the situation. She had to do it. As much as she hated the idea, she had little choice. The longer she stayed in this godforsaken time, the more of this she would encounter.

She almost felt like a child having a temper tantrum for candy or a toy. Instead, she wanted to whine and stomp her feet for her jeans and T-shirt and house and job and gun and security back home.
And she wanted her partner back.

"Alright, I'll do it." She sighed deeply.

Matthew grinned widely, then picked her up and happily spun her around. "Thank you, Abigail! You have no idea how I appreciate this."

"On one condition." she added dizzily, once Matthew placed her back down on the floor.

"Yes, anything."

"I want my gun back. Now." It was a demand, not a request.

"Of course! My word, I almost forgot about that. I would actually be much more comfortable that you will be carrying a weapon, however strange it is. Crane, would you oblige?"

Crane walked over to the tallboy cabinet and reached up to the top to pull out her gun. It was exactly where he had left it. He silently handed it over to Abbie, handle first. She instantly felt better having her gun in her hand.

"Now, we three must get ready before heading out to intercept this shipment. We will leave in about half an hour." Matthew announced.

Abbie sighed with relief. She needed to be left alone to gather her wits and calm herself down. The nervousness in her stomach was almost gone, but her nerves felt frayed to the core. The plan was so much riskier than she thought. She didn't believe she was going to do this, but felt as though there was little choice.

Pretending to be a captured spy and ambushing a military shipment with a bunch of wanted men with death sentences hanging over their heads?

_God, I just want to go home. We have to get home._

_And I need a vacation._

Abbie slumped down at the small table by the window and took a swig of rum straight from the half empty bottle. All the better to calm her nerves. The tight knot in her stomach loosened considerably. She inhaled deeply, the tension in her body slowly starting to seep away.

Then she thought of something. "I have one more request."

"Of course. Anything you desire."

"Bring a thin leather strap with you when you come back."

Chapter End Notes

_A/N: Some quick and dirty history here. When Matthew refers to King George offering freedom to black men who would fight for the British, the timing is off in my fic. The British DID offer freedom to blacks, starting in 1775, but black units were not as prevalent until closer to 1881, near the end of the war. Necessity breeds the mother of invention, or in this case, necessity breeds the mother of decision._
Like in the American Civil War, both sides were eventually running out of white guys to fight for the cause, and eventually decided to look for other resources. Around 1775, Washington did allow black men to fight in the army, but many colonial slave owners were against this (because they would have to free the men of course) and eventually Washington relented to the pressure and did not allow black men in his war. However there were units that did have "non-whites".

http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Autumn07/slaves.cfm
http://fas-history.rutgers.edu/clemens/AfricanAmericansRevolution.html

I am not a historian, just did some quick research.

--> I watched the most recent episode of AMC's TURN, and there are similarities from that show and in here - a bit. Seriously, this was written more than two weeks ago. The spy thing though, definitely influencing this fic.

--> This is the red silk dress that Abbie wears: Damask day dress, 1770, cotton, silk, Leeds Costume Collection.
http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/236x/ff/82/25/ff8225d03bdb73af45a09521195b0af3.jpg

Next chapter is much more light and fluffy with some sweet Ichabbie moments.
Chapter Notes

Sweet and cute and even sad chapter mostly between Crane and Abbie. Prepare for sugar overload - what have I done to my Ichabbie?

Abbie is going to need some serious therapy after all of this.
And there is a method to my madness..

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 8 – The Gift

Abbie sat at the small table for the next twenty minutes, fiddling with the manacles while absent-mindedly sipping rum straight from the bottle, pondering everything about the mission she, Crane and the others were about to embark on. She had demanded that the handcuffs be left in her possession before the others left the room to prepare. The last thing she needed was a different pair of cuffs to be substituted without her knowledge, especially ones she wouldn’t be able to free herself from.

With every pull, a slight amount of tension eased from her back and shoulders, and her mind slowly planned for the task she was to be set upon.

*C’mon girl, you can do this. This is nothing. Just a typical day at work*, she mumbled under her breath as she tried to reassure herself.

Except in a typical day at work, she had the control, the weapons and authority to deal with whatever criminal or illegal situation would decide to present itself. She had the badge, she had the gun and she wielded the power.

Here in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, however, she had nothing. No power, no authority, *hell*, no status for gods’ sake. She was a dual-prisoner; a ‘prisoner’ to assist in a bait and switch ambush, and a prisoner simply due to her skin colour and gender.

*C’mon Abbie, get it together. You’re going to make sure this plan goes off without a hitch, and you and Crane are going to make it back to the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. You are going to control this and you’ll make sure to get out of this mess in one piece and the others are going to protect you.*

She took a long drink and then let out an equally long sigh. How much could she really rely on Matthew, Jacobson and even Crane to protect her?

Jacobson and Matthew seemed trustworthy, honest and completely sincere in their declarations that they would ensure her safety. But the truth was they had but one goal; get the gold and silver. If Abbie were to be caught, or was a distraction or if anything happened that would interfere with their prize, would they still protect her?

She just didn’t know.

*And what about Crane?* What about her fate-entwined fellow Witness? He was very different in this
time, yet every once in a while, glimpses of her time-travelling partner broke through. Abbie knew that she was bonded to this Crane, but how much of a bond did he feel to her in this time? He vowed to protect her during the mission and not leave her side but…

No, Abbie. Take care of yourself. She thought. She would be the one to ensure her own safety. She would be the one to take charge and she would be the one to ensure that she and Crane made it home in one piece.

You’ve got this, Abbie. You make this happen.

Her temper evened a bit, the knot in her stomach finally dissipated and Abbie felt considerably less stressed. Her stubborn determination returned, along with the confidence that she knew she would succeed.

Just a walk in the park, Abbie, just a walk in the park...Nothing is going to rattle you now...

A small tap at the door was heard and a moment later Matthew entered.

“Abigail! How are you feeling?” His own mood was bright and cheerful.

Abbie had to laugh; they were about to go into a life and death situation, and he was acting like it was a fun day at an amusement park. Eccentric would be one apt word to describe this man. Crazy might be another.

She rose from her chair and approached Matthew. “I’m fine, Matthew, good actually. Ready for this.” She replied with her confidence in full form.

“Excellent! Ah, this quite pleases me.” He gushed as he gave her a quick hug. “And now I promise you again, my men and I will ensure your safety at all times. I give you my word as a gentleman.”

“I believe you.” She answered, but in her mind, she knew it would be she herself who would ensure her own safety.

“Wonderful! We are just waiting for Crane and Jacobson to arrive. They are just getting appropriately dressed.”

Abbie noted his outfit. He was wearing black breeches, a pale white linen shirt and tall black leather riding boots. Over the shirt, a plain brown vest and matching long brown overcoat. Abbie guessed this was supposed to be how the ‘regular’ men of the town would dress, as opposed to a military soldier.

“Well, tell them to hurry up. I just want to get this over with.” She grumbled.

Matthew chuckled a little. “Quite right, Abigail, quite right. I completely understand.” At his comment, Crane and Jacobson entered the room.

“Sorry for the delay.” Jacobson apologized in an exasperated voice. “Crane had a transaction to finalize and took his sweet time in doing so.”

“I wanted to be sure my transaction was a good one, thank you very much.” Crane retorted as he rolled his eyes.

Abbie took one look at the military outfits adorning the two men and put her hand over her mouth as though in distress. "Your coats..." she trailed off, her voice breaking a little.
Crane now stretched his arms out to his sides. "Is this not the appropriate long coat for a Captain of the Patriot army?" he asked.

"Of course it is." Jacobson grumbled in reply. "You know that shipment of Rebel uniforms was destined for Washington's regiment. It is a shame for those men that we intercepted it first." He now laughed heartily. "However I do think Lieutenant would have been a more suitable rank for you, Crane. Captain is just not believable for a man of your dubious integrity. Isn't that right, Madam?"

"Those uniforms were destined for Washington's army?" Abbie whispered, now completely in shock.

"37th regiment, I believe. Poor bastards will just have to remain inappropriately attired and chilled a little longer, I suppose." Matthew sniggered a little before he clarified. "As I mentioned, it will be much easier to approach the unit guarding the shipment without suspicion if we actually appear attired as Rebel soldiers.

Abbie just stood there in astonishment, her eyes wide and fixed on Crane as though she had seen a ghost.

Crane looked at Abbie curiously for a moment, before turning to Matthew. "Captain, I have one more item of business I must finalize before we leave. It will only take a few minutes. I will bring Miss Abigail to the horses once it is complete."

"You have too many transactions for your own good, Ichabod." Jacobson groused. "Try not to dally."

Matthew looked intently at Abbie then merely shrugged his shoulders and slapped Jacobson on the back. "Very well, we will meet you down by the stables." Matthew and Jacobson now headed out the room, leaving Abbie alone with Crane.

"Miss Abigail, you seem flustered by this uniform. Is there something the matter?"

Abbie moved over to Crane and without a word, raised her hands and slowly ran her fingers down the front of his coat, her fingertips brushing against the large metal buttons lining the lapels as she did. She moved her hands to his sleeves, running her palms along the length of his arms.

Abbie didn't know why, but she had to touch him, to feel his solid form under her fingers, to make her believe this was real. She was absolutely stunned. She had seen this coat countless times before, but never in such immaculate condition. Its battered and worn twin was currently hanging in the archives in the 21st century right at that moment.

This coat was pristine, almost in perfect condition. The wool was a nice deep navy blue, the wool itself brushed smooth. The metal buttons that lined the front edge and cuffs were polished and perfectly round; not a single one was tarnished or dented or scratched. No hint of fraying appeared on the edge of the collar, the sleeves or the hem of the coat.

She leaned back a bit to take in the rest of his military outfit. He was wearing a matching navy blue vest underneath the coat, and a dark blue scarf was tied securely around his neck. The brown of his breeches perfectly complimented the blue of the rest of his clothing, and Abbie knew exactly where she had seen these trousers before. She was positive that he was wearing a light grey high collared tie-front shirt underneath the vest. Crane's long dark hair was neatly tied back in a low ponytail. A long sword, sheathed in dark leather, hung from his waist and a small black leather messenger style bag hung from his shoulder.
As the realization hit her, Abbie felt her throat tighten and tears start to well up in her eyes. Both of her hands now covered her mouth. It was like being in a surreal dream.

*God, pull yourself together, Abbie...*

She couldn't explain it, but seeing Crane in his military uniform made her really upset. She would never have seen him like this. *Ever.* She could only try to picture what a Revolutionary War era Ichabod Crane would have looked like. There were no photographs; that technology wouldn't even be invented for another eighty odd years.

*He was a Captain in the war too...God, this is exactly what he would have worn on the battlefield...*

Now her Revolutionary War Crane was standing in front of her, live flesh and blood. With a sharp tug at her heart, Abbie realized that this was exactly how Crane would have appeared, right before the Headless Horseman dispatched him into an early grave, and ultimately into the 21st century.

And straight into her life.

*Oh god, this is what he looked like before he ‘died’.*

"Abbie, are you okay?" Crane was studying her with genuine concern on his face.

She hastily wiped at her eyes. "I'm fine, Crane. Really, I'm fine. You just...you just remind me of something."

Abbie moved her hands up to his shoulders and carefully smoothed the thick wool along the top. She smiled sadly as she now straightened his neckerchief. "You look good actually. Really good. It suits you."

"Did I dare detect a compliment?"

"Try not to let it go to your head." she replied, trying for some sarcasm, then shook her head in disbelief. "God, I never thought I would ever see you like this."

He looked at her a little funny. "In a uniform?"

"In this uniform."

Crane was silent for a moment as he seemed to consider her words. "You did earlier imply that I am truly a soldier in Washington's army. Well, here I am."

"Here you are." She gazed up at him, her eyes still wide and glistening with tears.

"Abbie, are you truly okay?"

She shook herself a little, trying to tamp down her emotions. "Yeah, I’m fine. Really.” She cleared her throat and avoided his eyes. “Look, are we ready to go? I just want this over with.” She said impatiently as Crane’s piercing gaze starting to unnerve her a bit.

He stroked his beard thoughtfully for a moment before answering. "May I make an observation?" he asked.

"Yeah, sure, go ahead."

"You look absolutely lovely." A sweet smile appeared on his face. "The colour highly suits you, but I do feel something is missing."
Abbie looked down at herself and shifted her skirts a little, glad that she could focus on something else. "Well, you know I'm not wearing that corset or the rest of those skirts, if that's what you mean. They're too heavy and uncomfortable."

Crane just laughed. "No, I did not mean the corset. No, I think something else is missing." He reached into the deep pocket of his coat, fumbled around a bit and pulled out a small object enclosed in his palm. "I think your attire is missing this item." he said as he opened his hand.

Abbie peered into his palm and let out a small gasp. Lying in his palm was one of the most beautiful cameos she had ever seen. The figure on the cameo was the gorgeous profile of a young woman with elegantly curled hair. The woman looked very Grecian in appearance and there was a hint of a helmet gracing her head. The intricately carved iridescent shell was set in a simple gold frame that had small delicate swirls decorating the edge. The cameo hung from a simple crimson red ribbon and matched her dress perfectly. Abbie thought the necklace was absolutely stunning.

Abbie looked up into Crane's sincere face. "That is so beautiful." she felt herself get choked up again.

Goddammit, I get stuck in a dress and now I keep crying like crazy. The rum she had consumed earlier wasn’t helping the matter.

"Its delicate beauty could never match your own.” he replied. "It is my gift to you and I pray you accept this."

"Gift to me? Oh Crane, I can’t accept this…” she trailed off before looking up at him with a sudden hint of wariness. “Wait a minute? You didn’t steal this, did you?” She immediately felt regretful for sounding so ungrateful.

He laughed good-naturedly though, unoffended by her accusation. "Alas, it seems the young Miss does not believe the honestly of a humble pirate. No, my beautiful lady, this is not stolen. I purchased this - an honest transaction - for you and you only."

Abbie realized that this was the transaction that Jacobson mentioned Crane had to finalize.

"This isn't an attempt to buy my affections, is it?" she said as she crossed her arms in front of her. Considering Crane's behaviour the last two days, she would not put it past him.

"Will I succeed?"

"No!"

"Then maybe one day I shall be worthy of your devotion.” He replied with a hint of teasing in his voice. “But I assure you that this is a genuine gift, whether I win your affections or not.”

Her eyes started to well up again. Goddammit...This stupid dress is making me so weepy...

She quickly dabbed at the corner of her eyes. “Crane, I don’t know what to say…”

“Say yes.”

She bit her lip and looked up into his earnest eyes. “Yes.” Her voice was a bare whisper.

"Would you oblige me?" he asked now, indicating the necklace. He wanted to place the cameo around her neck.
She nodded slowly, her throat still tight.

Crane gently touched her arm and directed her to the mirror set above the dressing room table.

“First, we must put up your hair.” He declared as he moved to stand right behind her.

Abbie’s hair was currently hanging loose; last night she had removed the pins that Crane had set in her hair before crawling into bed. The pile of pins sat on top of the dressing table and with everything going on that morning, she had forgotten to properly tie back her hair.

She watched him through the mirror, a small contented smile on her face. She had to laugh though; Crane was so much taller than she, the top of his shoulders were clearly visible in the reflection.

Like the night before, Crane gathered her hair in his hands and twisted it up into a neat updo at the back of her head. Like the night before, he neatly secured her hair in place using several pins. Unlike the night before, he did not try to kiss her neck or shoulders or attempt anything that she might consider inappropriate.

Once her hair was secure, he gently lowered the necklace around the front of her neck, allowing the cameo to settle within the hollow of her neck and then carefully fastened the clasp. Once he was done, he looked at her image in the mirror with an admiring look on his face.

"Do you approve?” he asked, as he lowered his head and gave her a light lingering kiss on her shoulder. She inhaled deeply, waiting for more, but he merely pulled back and stepped away, still gazing at her image in the glass.

Abbie lightly touched the cameo with her hand. Crane was right; it was a perfect addition with the dress. "It’s absolutely lovely.” she whispered, beaming at him through the mirror. "I mean this, Crane. Thank you.”

Abbie was struggling to not dissolve into a mess of tears when the sound of a pounding knock at the door caused both of them to jump.

"Ichabod! I told you already, let the lady be! Finish your business and let us leave sometime before the next century.” There was no mistaking Jacobson’s rough voice, though his tone was decidedly good natured. Another bang on the door rang out, followed by the sound of Jacobson’s loud humming slowly fading away as he moved down the hallway.

It was a welcome distraction and allowed Abbie a moment to gather herself. Seeing Crane in his Revolutionary War uniform and him presenting her such a stunning gift was doing nothing to calm the emotional rollercoaster Abbie was on.

"Well then. Jacobson has spoken. We should leave, my dear.”

Abbie inhaled deeply as she managed to quell her emotions with a bit of effort. They had to get going and Abbie glanced around the room, forcing herself to focus on making sure she had what she needed. She had earlier rolled up and tied her jeans and T-shirt into a small bundle to take with her. She was determined not to leave her own clothes behind.

Abbie now went over to the small table to grab the cuffs and her holstered gun and suddenly remembered. “Wait, you were supposed to bring me a leather strap.”

“Oh yes. My apologies, it seemed to have slipped my mind.” He pulled out a thin coiled strap of leather from his messenger bag and handed it to her, while she handed him the cuffs and her clothes for him to carry in the bag. "You requested this, for what purpose, I am not sure.”
She took the thin strap from his hands and gave him a small quirk of her eyebrow. “It’s for my gun.”

“Your gun? How do you intend to use that for your gun?” He was clearly curious.

Abbie decided to have a little fun with him to further lighten the mood. God knows she needed some levity. She knew that what she was about to do would probably explode Crane’s mind.

Under his rapt attention, Abbie demonstrated. She raised her right leg and rested her foot on the edge of the seat of the chair. She carefully hiked up her skirts, exposing her upper thigh and pointedly looked over to Crane, whose mouth had dropped open a little. She wrapped the long leather strap around her thigh a few times and then clipped her gun holster onto the strap. A few more winds of the leather, and she tied and knotted the ends tight.

She needed to be able to carry her gun, but by wearing a dress, there was no waistband or place for her to snap her holster onto. The leather strap was perfect and now she could also conveniently conceal her weapon.

“So? What do you think?” she asked Crane, a huge smirk on her face as her eyebrows twitched up again. She had not dropped her skirts yet.

“You deliberately aim to tantalize me, Miss Abigail. It is quite cruel.” His voice had dropped into a low growl and his eyes were still focused on her gun, or more specially, her thigh. He let out a small groan.

“I thought you’d like that.” She grinned as she lowered her skirts and foot to the floor. It felt a little uncomfortable, the leather digging a little into her skin, but she didn’t care. As long as she had a secure way of carrying her gun, that was all that mattered.

Crane was grinning at Abbie. The corner of his mouth quirked and a bit of his smarmy expression returned. His eyebrow had lifted with a hint of deviousness and his eyes quickly flitted to the bed. "You know, we do have a few minutes to spare."

Abbie put her hands on her hips in teasing disappointment. "Only a few minutes? C’mon Crane, I expect much longer than that. I thought you were supposed to be a regular Casanova?"

"Casanova? You have heard of the man? His exploits are legendary, yet I think even I would have trouble rivaling his illustrious conquests."

"Oh well...too bad." Her voice was playful and light.

Crane head shook slightly as his eyes twinkling in amusement. Abbie could tell he was getting a kick out of her flirty yet smartass responses. "You are the most formidable woman I have ever met. I think Casanova himself would have difficulty in seducing and fully pleasing you."

"Casanova, yes. You on the other hand....hmm..." she trailed off then turned and sashayed past Crane, towards the door.

"You enjoy teasing me far too much, Abbie." She could hear him let out another deep exhale.

"Just wait until when we get back home."

"Home?"

Abbie ignored his question, instead stopping to wait for him at the door. “We should get going. The others are waiting.” As she said this, a slight wave of fear suddenly ran through. She could not move
forward. She willed her legs to move, but it was as though an invisible force rooted her feet to the floor.

“Abbie?” Crane was standing right behind her waiting for her to open the door.

Abbie turned back towards Crane, leaned forward and lightly rested her arms and forehead against his chest. Her hands grasped at the front of his coat and she closed her eyes, just needing a minute of comfort and peace.

She felt his arms raise and rest lightly yet firmly on her back and against her hair, tenderly holding her in the moment.

It was comfort and she painfully needed it right now from her Witness partner. They were going into a dangerous situation and if all went as she desperately prayed, they would finally go home. If it didn’t, she didn’t even want to speculate on the consequences.

She now raised her head to look up at Crane, a fearful expression on her face.

“Abbie, I vow to protect you, I promise. We will be fine” He said reassuringly. "Besides, I have no choice but to ensure your safety. What other lady could I enjoy sparing with, who also likes to remind me of how undesirable I am.” he smiled at her, attempting a bit of levity.

Abbie didn’t know what possessed her right at that moment but she needed this from him. Lightly grasping the front lapels of his coat, she gently pulled him down towards her. As he leaned down, she rose on her tiptoes and gave him a light kiss on the lips. In a bold move, she let her tongue lightly brush against his bottom lip, and her mouth moved sensually against his.

He hesitated only a moment before responding, but he did not force the kiss, allowing her complete control, he bowing to her will. Abbie reveled in the feel of his soft lips and rough beard against her own skin.

With a low moan, she pulled back after a minute and gazed into his now deeply blue eyes, her own wide and serious.

"A farewell kiss before battle?” his voice was barely a whisper. "I pray you do not expect me to perish during this ambush."

"Not this time." she answered solemnly.

Crane cocked his head a bit as his face betrayed a hint of confusion. His eyes slowly lowered to his own chest, as though he were looking down at his scar. He looked back to Abbie and bit his lip thoughtfully.

"We should go." She said, before he could respond.

“"We should go."

Before anything else could stop her, she forced herself out of the room, Crane following close behind. If all went right, and luck was on their side, they would be home by dinnertime.

Chapter End Notes
A/N: Though I mentioned a uniform shipment to one of Washington’s regiments, in real life, the Continental army actually didn’t have a standard uniform issued to the soldiers. Washington knew that having his men wear similar outfits and colours would inspire camaraderie, but he never commissioned a set uniform. He only asked that the soldiers wear blue with red trim, to distinguish themselves from the Redcoats. Many of the men were volunteer militia and just wore their own clothes. However, in a lot of paintings of the time, it looks like there is a set uniform. In the show itself, when we saw Crane on the battlefield, the men were wearing similar uniforms, so I took liberty with that and for plot purposes, used the intercepted shipment to provide Crane with his outfit.

The Greek Goddess on the cameo is of Athena - Goddess of intelligence and skill, warfare, battle strategy and wisdom. Pretty appropriate for Abbie, don’t cha think?

Many cameos of this time were also made of seashells, not ivory. The one Crane gives to Abbie is one made of seashell, hence the iridescent sheen on it. No one wants to use actual ivory *grin*

Giacomo Casanova (1725 – 1798) is the person whom the meaning of the word “Casanova” comes from. The guy was a known partier and womanizer famous around some circles in Europe. In Crane’s time, it is possible that someone would have heard of the living Casanova and his licentious ways. However, the term “Casanova” didn’t come into use until 1852. Which is why I have Crane refer to the man himself, while Abbie uses the word as a noun.

Here is a nice recent picture of Crane wearing his military uniform. This is what he is wearing in this fic also.
Some sexy as a salve against the excessive saccharine.
http://24.media.tumblr.com/900f3d38027b87b264fda1258352dec6/tumblr_n3x4anHpwG1sqvy9eo1

Next chapter: Crane, Abbie and the others finally head out on the road to the ambush. Let's hope it goes well..... We'll also find out some of what Crane may have remembered...
Abbie, Crane and the rest of the Scouting party head on out to ambush the shipment. A little lighter and more conversational.

The chapter itself was really long, so I broke it up into two. This is more of a transitional chapter, followed by the culmination of their "situation". Please Enjoy.

Chapter 9 - The Journey

Abbie and Crane headed down the dimly lit hallway of the brothel. Unlike when she arrived more than a day ago, the halls were empty. Only the sound of female laughter and the occasional deep male voice filtered into the hallway. Every second or so, a muted thudding could be heard from the room closest to the stairs, like something pounding against the wooden walls of the nearest room.

Abbie gritted her teeth as she tried to ignore the noises emanating from that room. As she approached the end of the hall and the steps leading down to the main level, Crane gently grabbed her arm.

"This way." he indicated, motioning to his left. Abbie had not noticed it before, but a small narrow section of hallway was set ninety degrees off of the long main hallway at the top of the steps. It was short, maybe only three meters long. There were no rooms along this section; only a small half-door, set into the wall, was visible near the end. A large wooden barrier, almost six feet high, blocked the brothel patrons drinking on the main floor from seeing up to the second floor and spying the half-door.

It looked to Abbie like the entrance to a storage closet or something. The top frame of the door barely reached to her chin and was angled at the top. It looked rough and worn, dirt and what looked like knife marks staining and gouging the wooden slats. An empty barrel was positioned next to it, and Abbie wondering if this was where the brothel maybe stored some of its booze.

Crane moved ahead of her, crouching as he did and as he cautiously looking around, he gently pushed open the small door. It was almost pitch black inside, only a small quarter size beam of light barely illuminated the room. Abbie tried to make out any feature in the room as her eyes adjusted to the light.

"Secret escape passage. We do not want the patrons below to observe us exiting the brothel. We do not know who is currently occupying the bar at this moment and I am sorry to say, my dear, but you are quite visible." Crane explained, as he indicated the dark patch ahead.

She just shrugged her shoulders at his comment, knowing that in this time, he was dead right about her 'visibility'.

Once again, Abbie's senses went into high gear. Granted, it was only Crane with her, but dark rooms and unknown passage ways were an uncertainty she did not like.

The irony being she and Crane had been running through dark unknown passages countless times in
the last few months, while fighting the seemingly never ending evil in Sleepy Hollow. This was nothing new; almost a typical day in the life.

Abbie moved past Crane, ducked down and entered the small room. "Do you have a light or something?" she asked. She could barely see her feet in front of her.

Crane lightly held onto her arm to steady her. "No light. It makes it harder for pursuers to trail behind, if there ever was a need. There are ten stairs ahead of you and a hand rail to your right." he said.

Abbie reached out and groped wildly for the hand rail. Once she found it, she slowly moved down the steps, counting out each one in turn. As she descended, the narrow stream of light became lighter and lighter until finally, she could see a small door. There was a small gap in one of the slats of the wooden door; this was where the light was streaming in from. Carefully pushing the door open, she climbed out of the darkness and into what looked like a stable. Crane emerged from the exit seconds later.

"Dear god, you have finally arrived." Jacobson ground out. "Did you get lost looking for another bottle of rum?"

Abbie raised her hand, shielding her eyes from the sudden burst of light. As she squinted, she could just make out Jacobson's burly self, seated on a large chestnut coloured horse. Beside him, William was perched on his own dark brown horse, and a third person, roughly the same age and build as William, was mounted on a similar dark coloured horse. The two boys were sporting the same Patriot military outfit as Jacobson and Crane were.

A fourth horse, a beautiful white mare, stood riderless next to Jacobson. The mare was dressed with the bridle needed for riding, but did not have a saddle. Instead, a thick wool blanket was secured over the middle of the horse.

"Where's Matthew?" Abbie asked. She also wondered where the other men of Matthews' ambush party where.

"They have already made for the trail, madam. The Captain desired a head start to scout out the destination." Jacobson explained. "We will be your scouting party. William, I am sure you remember, and his young friend Thomas."

Abbie just nodded. She wasn't sure she liked that her escorting party consisted of two gangly looking teenagers. Jacobson and Crane, at least, were a formidable presence. She would also have liked to actually have seen the group of men who Matthew had declared would be her so-called protectors.

*Just take care of yourself, girl.*

Abbie realized that Jacobson was now grinning at her. "That is a lovely necklace, madam. Did the rogue at least present it to you properly?" he winked at Crane, a gruff yet teasing tone to his voice.

"He did nicely." Abbie replied with a genuine smile.

"I told you she would prefer something more elegant." Crane said pointedly to Jacobson.

Jacobson let out a *hrumph*, yet nodded his head approvingly. "Well, at least that is taken care of." He pulled a pocket watch out of his coat pocket and now clucked in disapproval. "We must set out on the trail. We are already minutes behind in schedule." He now reached into his own messenger bag and pulled on a small flint pistol. Without a word, he handed it over to Crane, who slid the gun into a small leather holster hanging on his side.
Abbie eyed the white horse carefully now. She had only gone riding once before in her life, during a required grade school outing when she was ten years old. It was a fun experience, but she distinctly remembered her legs and butt not being happy with her the next day.

"Miss Abigail, Jacobson had informed me that you do not know how to ride a horse."

Abbie looked at Crane. "Sorry. Yeah, I've only been on a horse once a long time ago," she shrugged her shoulders.

"No matter. Regardless, you will ride with me. It is safer." Crane extended his hand, indicating for Abbie to go stand by the large white horse. Abbie now noticed a small stool set by the side of the animal.

"There is no saddle on the horse." Abbie pointed out.

"Alas, madam, we could not find an appropriate side saddle for you, to place on this horse."

"Side saddle! Are you kidding me? I'm not riding side saddle." Abbie looked at Jacobson like he was crazy. There was no way that she was going to ride in such an uncomfortable and impractical manner. Abbie caught the smirk that passed between Crane and Jacobson and reiterated. "I'm riding like a normal person."

"I would expect no less. We also could not find a saddle to accommodate both of us." Crane said, then motioned for her to step onto the stool. He arched his eyebrows as she felt his hand rest on her waist. "For you to mount this horse, you must raise up your skirts. Do you require assistance?"

"Ha, ha, very funny." Abbie looked at the horse and tried to figure how on earth she was going to get up on this huge thing. It seemed massive and the stool was only about one foot high. Since there was no saddle, there wasn't any pummel for her to grab onto and hoist herself up. She really didn't want to grab onto the poor horses' mane to haul herself up either.

At though he read her mind, Crane walked over to the other side of the horse and held his hand outward. "Grasp my hand, Lieutenant, and pull yourself up onto the mare."

Abbie reached out to take his hand when suddenly it hit her. "What did you say?"

"I said, grasp my hand and pull yourself up."

"No, you called me Lieutenant." Oh my god, he didn't realize he called me Lieutenant...

She looked over at Jacobson, whose eyes had narrowed in curiosity. He too noticed that Crane had called her Lieutenant.

Crane looked confused for a moment, then nonchalantly shrugged his shoulders. "I guess I have military ranks colluding my brain. My apologizes."

"I told you that Captain is not suitable for you, Ichabod. Do make sure you remember that you are supposed to be a Captain if asked." Jacobson reminded Crane, rolling his eyes as he did.

"Yes, yes..." Crane seemed to brush off the mistake quickly but Abbie definitely did not.

"How long are we going to be riding for?" Abbie asked out of the blue.

"I daresay at least two hours." Jacobson answered.

Okay. This was good, Abbie thought. He's remembering more stuff. Immediately, she decided that
the time they spent travelling to the ambush, she would make it her goal to jog a little more of his memory.

*He called me Lieutenant, oh my god.... this is good...* she almost felt a little giddy at this fact.

"Are you going to mount the bloody horse or not?" Her thoughts were broken into by Jacobson's impatient voice.

"Oh, sorry." Using her right hand, Abbie yanked up her skirts on her right side, moving the fabric away from her legs. With her left, she grabbed Crane's still outstretched hand and pulled herself up onto the horse. Her technique worked perfectly. All Abbie had to do was pull her slightly bunched skirts out from underneath her, so she wasn't sitting on them. She pulled the fabric so that it hung down on either side of the horse, and shifted a little more to get comfortable.

Alright, this is good. I can do this. She gently patted the horses' neck, silently thanking it for being so calm and mellow.

"My god, the sun will have set before we leave." Jacobson complained. He lightly tapped his horse and headed towards the large barn door exit, the two teenagers following behind him. "Let us go, for god's sake." It was clear he was trying to urge them to get on the road.

Crane now moved to the right side of the horse. In a smooth motion, he quickly mounted the horse behind her. Abbie grumbled that he didn't even need the stool to do so. He easily settled in behind her, without any effort at all.

"I am sorry my dear, but you must wear these for the duration of the journey." Crane said, pulling out the cuffs from his messenger bag and holding them out in front for her to see.

"Yeah, yeah, I know." Abbie hated the idea of having to be restrained by these stupid things. Her only comfort came in knowing that she could easily get out of them, if need be.

She held out her wrists and allowed Crane to snap the cuffs on her. He was careful not to fasten them too tightly. In fact, they seemed loose enough that she thought she could simply slip them off of her hands.

Suddenly, she felt his arms snake around her, under her own arms, and wrap themselves around her waist. His hands grasped her hips and he nudged her back against his chest, so that she was nestled tight between his thighs. At the same time, he shifted a little forward so that he was snug against her. There wasn't an inch to spare between her and Crane. It was as though she slotted perfectly into his tall form and she was quite annoyed at this fact.

"What are you doing?"

"I must make sure the weight on the horse is sufficiently balanced." he replied, sounding perfectly logical and reasonable.

Abbie rolled her eyes in annoyance. She had a sneaking suspicion that the horse could manage perfectly fine with a slight weight imbalance. "You never stop trying, do you?"

"I told you once before. I am an opportunist." He murmured against her ear. She swore she could feel his lips curl into a sly smile.

Alright, if he wants to play, I'll play, she smirked to herself. She now shifted herself back a tiny amount, making sure to grind a little into him before saying lightly, "So, are we leaving?"
She swore he inhaled sharply and muttered 'Christ' under his breath. She couldn't hold back her smile. She leaned against his chest and tilted her head up, looking up at him with a huge grin on her face. She couldn't help it; it gave her a kick to tease and torment him a little.

He just shook his head at her actions. "You will be the death of me, I swear."

"I'm counting on it."

In spite of herself, she had to admit she felt secure and protected. When she rode with Jacobson after he found her in the forest, he was careful to be proper and not inadvertently touch her.

Crane of course, was another story. She felt as though she were almost melded into him. With his tall body almost enveloping her, he was like a human shield. It was another bit of comfort that she needed as they set out.

With the reins in his hand, Crane now lightly tapped his heels against the mare and they set off at a slow place.

.............

As they exited the town, Abbie realized that they were headed straight back towards the trail that Jacobson has discovered her on. Jacobson was in the lead, her and Crane following, with the two teenagers trailing a few lengths behind.

"Follow the movement of the horse. Allow your hips and legs to relax." Crane now admonished her. "You are fighting against the natural motion."

They had only been on the road for ten minutes and already, Abbie was feeling a bit of pain. Her thighs felt strained and she realized that she was inadvertently tensing against the gait of the horse. The jostling alone was irritating enough. Maybe it was the horse, since she didn't feel so out of sorts during her short ride with Jacobson. Maybe it was the dress. She figured it was most likely the lack of saddle on the horse.

"Sorry. It's just feels awkward. I'm not used to this."

"And you will not learn either if you fight too much. Here, let me show you." Crane now slipped his right arm across her shoulders and pulled her gently yet firmly against his chest. "Just relax and allow your body to move with mine. Feel my movements."

"Okay, now you're just messing with me."

"No, I am trying to help you." he answered sternly. "Now move your hips with mine, as though we are one." His tone indicated to her that he was actually trying to help her.

She let out a long exasperated exhale. Her cuffed hands rested in front of her, her back flat against his form and willed herself to relax, her hips rocking back and forth in time with his. After a few minutes, she realized he was absolutely right. Being on this horse was already infinitely more tolerable.

They rode in silence for another ten minutes, while Abbie allowed her mind to wander a bit as she took in the surroundings. What could she ask or say to help him remember? She decided to start simply.

"Crane?"
"Yes, my dear."

"You called me Lieutenant earlier. I was just wondering why?"

Crane took a moment to answer. "I am not sure, to be honest. It just slipped out. I do not know why either, since you are clearly not a Lieutenant."

*Not here in this time, no....*

"May I make a confession?" Crane now asked.

"Sure."

"If I admitted that this military uniform feels very...familiar, would that surprise you?" he asked sincerely. Abbie could tell he seemed a bit unsettled about this fact.

"No, not at all. I told you before that you really are a Revolutionary War soldier, remember? In fact, you told me that you were a Captain in Washington's 37th regiment." Abbie paused, amazed at the utterly convenient connection. "You guys stole those uniforms from the same regiment that you belonged to. What are the odds?"

"Indeed, what are the odds. But then you must explain why I do not remember this so-called previous life." Crane let out a long suffering sigh. "And why I do not remember a life with you." he pointedly added.

Abbie herself sighed. *I wish I knew.*

She felt the need to clarify. "We're not a couple in that other life, just so you know. In fact, we've barely known each other a year. An insane year, I'll admit."

"Then why do I feel such a strong connection and bond to you?" he asked.

Abbie thought about this for a minute. *Why did he feel such a strong connection, but didn’t remember anything else?* "I think it's because we are the two chosen Witnesses. From Revelation. That's probably why you think we have a special connection."

Crane was silent for a long while. Abbie could tell he was trying to digest this information; every once in a while he would let out a small sigh or mutter something under his breath.

Abbie now remembered something else. "When you woke up today, when we were lying in the bed, I could tell you were having a bad dream. It was like you were clawing at something. Any chance you remember what it was about?"

She felt his arm momentarily flex around her waist, as though flinching a little at some unpleasant thought. "You okay?" she asked. She gave him another minute to gather his thoughts.

"That dream that I had, it felt truly a living nightmare. I dreamt that I had been buried alive. I did not know how long I lay moldering, disposed and forgotten in a rotting wooden coffin. I opened my eyes, immediately panicked and desperately clawed my way out of the putrid earth. When I emerged, I realized that I was in a dank, dark cave, clothed only in rags. Only a small shaft of light pointed to the exit. I stumbled towards the light and then...nothing more. I woke and you were lying next to me."

Against her back, she felt him slightly shudder again.
The realization that his dream was actually reality made the hairs on her arms stand up on end.

He was remembering when he had finally awoken in the 21st century from his long 'sleep'.

This was why he was clawing in his sleep. He was clawing himself out of his grave, the two hundred year old burial site and grave that she had seen herself.

Should I tell him?

"Do you remember how we met?" she asked instead.

"Well, yes, you entered the room whilst I was with my blonde companion. I was quite upset and irritated, I'll have you know."

"Trust me, Crane, it's a good thing I stopped you in time. And no, that's not where we met. Do you remember being in a jail cell?"

"Not recently, no."

She chuckled at this. "A jail cell is where you first met me. And why you called me Lieutenant. I am a Lieutenant, of the Sleepy Hollow police department. In New York. You were - falsely - arrested for murder and we met for the first time then. Do you recall?"

"No."

They fell silent for another twenty minutes or so, Abbie just taking in the surroundings. At one point, she swore she recognized the open field where she had woken after the mis-invoked magicspell.

She turned her attention ahead to Jacobson, who was meandering along on his horse, only a few yards ahead. He was whistling a cheerful tune, every once in a while singing a word or two out loud. 'Brandy and rum' and ‘Scurvy cur’ seemed to be his favourites to periodically shout out.

From the clopping sounds behind her, she could tell that William and Thomas were following close behind.

The trees and bush lining the trail grew thicker and denser. She could barely see through the brush at times, the leaves and branches were so thick. Every once in a while, she couldn't help think of how easy it would be for one to hide within the dense brush.

Abbie, stop freaking yourself out. It's just the woods. She admonished herself. And I hate the friggin' woods. She decided to refocus on Crane. "Can I ask you another question?"

"Of course."

"You told me that you can't remember last week, right? What do you remember about growing up? How did you become a pirate? How did you meet Jacobson and the others? Hell, what do you remember about last week?" She wanted to see if she could pinpoint anything that would help make Crane remember.

"That is more than one question." He rightly pointed out.

"Now you’re just being a smartass."

He ignored her slight. "What do I remember about growing up?" he repeated her question. "I will be honest, my dear. It is all quite vague. I do not remember one set event, nor any one person I may
have associated with when I was a child, in any sort of detail. Only vague flashes and shadows.

"Seriously?" Abbie was surprised. She could clearly remember significant events of her childhood. The day Jenny was born, her 6th birthday party, her first day of school, the fact that Johnny Wilcox used to pull her hair on the playground, her winning an award for the highest grades, that day in the forest. It was all so clear to her, in perfect vivid detail.

"Seriously. If you were to ask me what activities I engaged in not a week ago, I could vaguely tell you, but I would have little detail to recall. Truly."

"So it's not just the brandy and rum, then?"

"The rum helps."

She laughed.

"Now may I ask you a question, my dear?" Crane said. "Why are you so adamant that I remember a different life? Maybe I belong here, in this life."

"Because I want things - and you - to go back to normal." Abbie answered honestly.

"Are you implying that I am not normal?"

"You are so far away from normal I can't even begin to describe it."

"Maybe this is a true reflection of my character." he challenged.

She laughed. "If this really was your true character, I would have shot you by now."

"Well then, I am pleased that I have not incurred your wrath...back home."

"Oh, don't think you've been exonerated, my friend. When we do get back home, there will be hell for you to pay, trust me." Despite her seemingly threatening words, she snuggled up against his chest, enjoying the relaxed banter.

Crane now bent down a little, lightly nipping her earlobe as he whispered, "I look forward to it."

They continued on, again in easy silence. At one point, Abbie closed her eyes, allowing herself to fully relax against Crane's body, dozing on and off as she did. She thought she fell asleep for a few minutes when she was startled awake by the sound of a single gunshot.

Abbie's eyes flew open and what she saw ahead on the trail made her stomach drop. Thirty men were racing around to take position in a row, completely blocking the trail ahead.

They were trapped; there was no where they could go.

A wave of panic flooded through her and she felt Crane tense immediately.

*What the hell were they going to do?*

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Since I have the room, just wanted to give a shout-out to marshmallowdeviant,
Avianna, Dame_Birdie, and Pretty. I love our mini comment conversations! They give me such joy and fun! Thank you!

Next chapter (which is already up): Thirty men with guns pointed straight at you. Another Day in the Life…..

Kudos and Comments are simply adored! Hope everyone is enjoying.
Chapter Notes

Conclusion of the previous chapter, in which Abbie, Crane and the others face off against thirty muskets and men.
Please enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 10 – The Ambush

<Somewhere along the trail>

Abbie's eyes flew open and what she saw ahead on the trail made her stomach drop. Thirty men were racing around to take position in a row, completely blocking the trail ahead.

Ten were on horseback, the rest standing in front, blocked the entire width of the trial, all with muskets aimed forward. Jacobson had already stopped a few meters ahead and yelled out "Halt!" to the rest.

Abbie looked over the men guarding the trail. This was a group of the filthiest people she had ever seen. They were covered in dirt and globs of mud, their hair long and unkempt. One of the older men grinned, his teeth rotting and coloured brown. Another one spit onto the ground with what looked like chewing tobacco and Abbie forced herself not to curl her mouth in disgust.

Cringing, she recognized one of the men standing in the front line; it was the dirty guy she saw emerging from one of the brothel rooms still buttoning his pants, when Jacobson was taking her to meet Crane.

Oh Christ...

This was not good, this was not good. Abbie couldn't believe her bad luck. She and the four ambushers just became the ambushees.

Abbie quickly glanced around the area. The trail itself was clear and open, but the trees and bushes lining the edge were not so open. It was so dense it would be difficult to break through the trees on horseback. Maybe they could make it on foot?

"Can we make a break for it?" Abbie whispered to Crane.

"We will be shot before we reach the trees." he whispered back, as though reading her mind. For some reason, he pulled the reins’ on the horse so that the mare moved around in a tight circle, as though distressed.

"What do you suggest, then?" she whispered urgently.

Crane ignored her question. "Abbie, listen to me very carefully. Do not look at them. Do not acknowledge them. You must not react or acknowledge my actions, no matter what they may be." His voice was low and stern. "Do you understand me?" He stated it so firmly and with such command, that Abbie didn't know what to make of it.
"Do you understand me?" he repeated again, his tone dead serious.

"Yeah, fine." she whispered, irritated. She did not like to merely sit by waiting for things to unfold. It would take her last ounce of willpower simple to not react.

Abbie now saw that William and Thomas were flanking them, while Jacobson was still stopped ahead.

"So what can we do for you fine gentlemen?" Jacobson asked, politely but loudly.

One of the men on horseback lowered his gun and grinned. Abbie guessed that he was the leader of this rag tag group of men.

"We require payment for crossing." He simply declared.

"This is not a valid checkpoint." Jacobson pointed out. "We are entitled to free passage."

The men just looked at each other with arrogant smirks on their faces. "Well, we declare that this is a checkpoint, and as such, we require payment for you to cross. No Rebel soldier shall pass nor circumvent this trail otherwise."

"And what if we decide we are not willing to make that payment?" Jacobson replied, clearly challenging the leader.

"Then you will not pass. And we will take our payment as we see fit." The man now spurred his horse forward and pointed his own gun at Jacobson. "Drop your pistols. Now! All of you." he demanded.

The other men all re-raised their muskets again, pointedly aiming them straight at the scouting party. Jacobson glanced back at Crane, and Abbie could see the hint of a nod, as though a signal to Crane.

"All right, boys, you heard the gentleman." Jacobson commanded. He slowly pulled his own pistol from the holster at his side and carefully dropped it to the ground.

By his movements, Abbie could tell Crane did the same, and his gun hit the ground to the left of the horse. Two more thuds were heard as the two teens dropped their own weapons to the dirt packed ground.

The leader now waved his hand once, and three of his men quickly shuffled forward and snatched the guns from the ground, retreating just as quickly.

Crane once again pulled on the reins and his horse moved around in another tight circle. The mare seemed a bit agitated and restless; Abbie thought it was such a contrast to how mellow the horse had been the entire ride.

The leader had turned to address his men. "Do you see this? Here we have yet another case of Washington's bloody Rebels wandering about our land without recourse." He made a dramatic gesture with his hands as he turned back. "You just had to incite war with England, didn't you? Now both armies take or destroy our crops, our land, our houses, our lively hoods. And for what?"

Another one of his man yelled out in contempt. "They claim it's for freedom!"

It was almost imperceptible, and she had no idea why, but Abbie thought she felt Crane carefully shifting the back of her skirts a little. She did not respond.
"Freedom!" the leader now bellowed as he continued his rant. "Freedom from what? From the so-called tyranny of the Crown? The only tyranny is you misguided Rebels disrupting this land and inconveniencing our lives." He paused, and gave a mock bow to the five of them. "And so now, we inconvenience you. Payment to cross, or you will be shot."

"If you think that we carry any gold, then you are sorely mistaken." Jacobson said angrily.

The leader laughed mirthlessly. "Well then, Washington's army is as poor as the rumours have indicated."

Crane once again circled the horse, this time catching the attention of the leader. "And what is this?" He urged his own horse forward, stopping not two meters from her and Crane. "What is she, a prisoner or a slave?"

"Neither. She happens to be our guest." Crane replied defiantly.

The men all laughed raucously. "A guest? Is this how Rebel gentlemen treat a guest?" He now addressed Abbie. "Come with us, darling, and we'll show you how we properly treat our guests." There was a slight leer in his tone that made Abbie involuntary shudder. Once again, she did not respond, though it took every fibre in her being to not grab her gun and shoot this guy.

There was more laughter by the men, and the leader spit out a large wad of chewing tobacco straight onto the ground next to them.

Abbie was utterly disgusted and creeped out by this group. She used every ounce of willpower to not respond and remain completely silent. She kept her eyes downcast as Crane requested, looking past the filthy man leering in front of her.

"Crane better know what he's doing," she grumbled to herself.

She couldn't even get to her gun in time, a fact that made her seethe inside. It would be difficult to even attempt to reach her gun without removing the cuffs, a face that irritated her even more. Even if she tried to remove the pin to release them, or even try to slip off the loose cuffs, these men were close enough to see and would quickly react.

And their reactions would be the thirty muskets pointed straight at their heads.

"Dammit...What the fuck where they going to do? What the hell could she do?"

Crane now smoothed out the skirt of her red silk dress, causing it to drape along either side of the horse. "What about this fine silk garment as payment?" He yelled out.

"Oh, you are not going to sell my clothes! Don't react, Abbie. Don't react..."

The leader let out a booming laugh. "A dress? You expect to make payment with a bloody dress? What am I to do with that, wear it?" He was incredulous. He now directed his horse back to the front of his line of men. Turning to face forward, he aimed his gun straight at them. "Payment is set; your pistols, which you have already graciously provided, and the girl. You have two minutes to decide."

For a second, Abbie swore she heard something rustling in the trees but with a shot of panic that they wanted her as payment, she barely paid attention to it.

"They had better not think of giving me up... I'm not some goddamn toll charge."

She clenched her jaw in anger while she carefully fingered the pin against the cuff, in case Crane did
decide to hand her over.

_God, it's going to be a slaughter if he doesn’t_, Abbie realized, fear now pitting in her stomach. _Thirty bullets and only five of us. They have no choice. They’ll have to give me up..._

She side-eyed the trees and bushes lining the trail. Could she make a break for it herself and run into the dense brush? There was no way she was going to let herself be given over. She’d rather risk getting shot.

_Goddammit, if only I could get my gun..._

It was as though he once again read her mind.

Crane circled the horse again as he whispered through gritted teeth, _"Do. Not. React."_ Then she felt it. She felt his right hand slip underneath her skirt and carefully slide down her upper right thigh. His fingertips moved slowly around her leg as he searched for her weapon. She sat stock still, not moving, and now Abbie realized why Crane had told her to not react at all. The last thing he needed was for her to alert the ambushers that she had a concealed weapon.

Finding the handle, he carefully slipped her gun out of the holster, back up from under her dress, and managed to hide it against her back, concealed under the slightly bunched hem. She had to admit, he was beautifully stealthy. The right side of her skirt did not move once.

Once again she thought she heard a faint rustling sound in the trees.

"Have you decided?" The leader now yelled out, while all thirty of his men cocked their weapons.

"Yes, we've decided." Crane called out haughtily. "Now!"

A second later, the area was filled with a deafening noise. Abbie looked up and saw that half the men on horseback all fell off their horses, while five more of the ambushers who were standing also collapsed to the ground. It was as though an invisible force hit them right in the chest, knocking them over. The area quickly filled with thick smoke and a second later, ten men came bursting through the trees, including Matthew.

Abbie realized that Matthew’s men just unleashed a hail of bullets against the ambushers. She could see Thomas and William sprinting for cover towards the trees, protected by another volley of bullets from Matthew and the others. Jacobson had picked up a musket from one of the dead men and was wielding the bayonet-tipped gun like a sword, fighting off two other ambushers at a time. A few of remaining men guarding the trail fired straight towards them and Abbie instinctively ducked. With a rush of utter relief and disbelief, Abbie realized they had missed her, Crane and their horse entirely.

Crane yanked the horses’ reins back with one hand, while his other hand forced Abbie's gun into her own bound hands. "Make your weapon count!" he yelled over the loud and violent commotion.

Though her hands were tied, she could easily fire her gun. She flicked off the safety and trained her weapon on the men still on their horses. She rapidly pulled the trigger four times and each went down immediately.

Another round of bangs rang out, and the area filled with even more smoke. Crane now urged the horse away from the scene and the utter pandemonium. There were the occasional scream or yell in the near distance, but it was hard to see. Thick smoke had wafted in and blanketed the area.

Crane spurred the horse further and faster away, and Abbie suddenly heard loud hoof beats closing in behind her.
Crane realized it also because he suddenly yelled out, "Abbie, bend forward!" while flinging himself over her at the same time, shielding her body with his own as the sound of a gun firing split the air. She heard the bullet whiz past, barely passing over the top of their heads.

At this, Crane hauled against the reins again, stopping the horse quickly then whirling the mare around to face their pursuer. The man on horseback was the leader, and he was fast approaching, charging at them with his musket, the attached bayonet pointed straight at Abbie's chest. Abbie extended her hands once again, aimed and pulled the trigger. The man went down immediately, tumbling off of his horse and slamming to the ground, as the horse itself continue to gallop past them, unharmed.

Abbie continued to be on alert, keenly watching in case another one of the ambushers came rushing out of the thick cloud of smoke. Instead, the area fell almost silent. No gun shots were heard in the distance. There were no blood curdling yells or screams. Only foglike smoke wafting over the trail ahead.

"Are you alright, Abbie?" Crane now asked, almost out of breath.

Abbie inhaled deeply as she collapsed back against Crane's chest in relief. "Well, that was not fun." she quipped dryly, equally as breathless.

"You are a remarkable shot." Crane said in awe. "And that is a remarkable gun." He was clearly amazed at the fact that her gun could rapidly fire more than one round at a time.

"Thanks. And nice work getting me my gun, by the way."

Crane laughed. "As I mentioned before, I take my opportunities." he paused then added, "I admit, I was heartily encouraged by the location of said weapon."

Crane now handed Abbie the reins and dismounted the horse. He cautiously approached the man who had fallen from the horse. His musket with fixed bayonet was lying a few meters from the body. Crane picked up the weapon and then moved to stand next to the man. Abbie could see that the leader was still alive. His eyes were wide open and he was struggling to sit up.

Crane now placed his boot heel firmly against the man's throat, pressing hard against the chin. The man's arms flailed as though he was choking, and he pushed wildly against Crane's leg, trying to free himself. Crane switched the gun to his left hand, and positioned the tip of the bayonet over the man's chest.

Abbie felt a sudden icy chill run through her at the expression on Crane's face. It was a mixture of anger, hatred and absolute contempt. "Crane...?" she trailed off, her voice filled with warning.

**What did he think he was doing?**

Abbie could see the man's eye's widening in fear, as he realized that Crane had pressed the tip of the sharp bayonet against his chest.

"*Here* is your payment." His voice was low and menacing. With a single downward thrust, he jammed the thin metal rod straight through the man's heart. The flailing limbs flopped to the ground a second later and he moved no more.

Abbie stared at Crane, absolutely aghast. The cold blooded manner in which Crane had just killed this man sent more chills through her. Okay, granted, she herself just shot five of the men, but she was slightly disturbed at the cold, calculated viciousness in which he dispatched the leader. It was a side of Crane she had never seen before.
He looked up to meet her eyes and she stared at him in disbelief. For a moment, she thought she could see a hint of regret on his expression. Abbie realized it wasn’t regret at killing the leader. It was regret that he may have disappointed her.

The smoke in the distance had now cleared enough that she could see the trail ahead and as Abbie surveyed the scene, she could make out bodies lying all over the ground.

She swore it was like she had just participated in some wartime mini battle. Like the ones she read about in history books and seen depicted on television, with the dead soldiers bleeding and dying all over the battlefield. This was on a much smaller scale, though. It was thirty men, not three thousand or thirty thousand, but the sight of the bodies littering the ground made her stomach clench.

The dissipating blanket of smoke cleared a little more and Abbie now saw Matthew and Jacobson calmly approaching on foot.

They were barely an hour into the ride and they couldn't even make it that far, without some bullshit disrupting the mission. Once again, Abbie realized how irritatingly dangerous this journey was going to be.

*What else could possibly go wrong?*

Chapter End Notes

A/N: No horses were hurt in the writing of this chapter.

Checkpoints? Yup, ripped off from TURN.

Crane stabbing the leader with the bayonet may seem out of character (even though he is a pirate) but don’t think that Soldier Crane wouldn’t have done this. This is an overall generalization, but the guns used were mostly single shot flint lock or powder muskets and smooth bore rifles. Only one bullet could be loaded at a time, and once you fired, it took time to reload. Experts could maybe reload in thirty seconds or a bit more, some took up to a minute. The problem is that in battle, your enemy can approach you in the time you were reloading – hence the bayonet. Most infantry would fire once, and if their enemy was too close, attack them with the bayonet. And I am sure that in some cases, any wounded of the losing side of a battle were mostly finished off with a quick stab to the heart. Granted, I’ve been influenced by American Revolutionary War and American Civil War battle depictions (written or visual), AND the pilot episode of TURN, but it is not unlikely that Crane himself wouldn’t have finished off some of the enemy during his time in Washington’s Army.

Also, smooth bore weapons were notoriously inaccurate. During the Rev. War, most of the guns with rifling were mostly used by snipers due to accuracy. Rifling is of course grooves carved into the barrel of a gun to help stabilize the motion of the bullet. Smooth bore guns – ones with no grooves carved inside the long barrel, would cause the bullet to bounce around inside the barrel, making it lose much of its accuracy. Rifling ensures the bullet stays spinning in a tight spiral, greatly increasing its accuracy to target. That’s why they managed to miss shooting Abbie and Crane and the horse.

Next chapter: We’ll learn what Crane remembered when he was putting up Abbie’s hair. The journey continues and the Scouting Party finally approaches the shipment.
Let’s hope nothing else happens in the meantime…. 
The Aftermath

Chapter Notes

Angsty and emotional chapter as they clean up after the ambush. We learn some of what Crane "remembers."
Abbie and Crane get into a fight.
So much for me originally envisioning this fic as being fluffy...not even close...It just wasn't appropriate considering the events and circumstance. Oh well.

Thank you to everyone reading and enjoy the next chapter.

Chapter 11 - The Aftermath

Matthew approached Abbie and helped her dismount from the white mare. Her hands were still bound which made it difficult to slide off of the horse. "Are you well, Abigail? That was quite the frightful situation." He sounded genuinely concerned about how she was doing.

Abbie looked over towards Crane, who had walked over to meet up with Jacobson, about ten meters away. He was hushedly but angrily exchanging words with the fellow pirate. She watched them for another ten seconds before replying. "I'm fine Matthew. No worries. Just glad it's over."

She freed her hands, unsnapping one of the cuffs with her teeth, glad that she could actually test out the release mechanism. It worked beautifully. She removed the second cuff and rubbed her wrists a little; the heavy iron was starting to chafe her skin.

She now checked her gun clip to see how many rounds she had left. She had used five; she had ten bullets left, giving her a nice sense of security and ease.

"That is an exceptional gun. You can fire more than one bullet at a time?"

"Yeah, it's a special kind of gun." Abbie didn't want to go into any detail about how her Glock worked. The first multi-round guns wouldn't pop up for another sixty years and hers was literally a futuristic piece of weaponry. "One of a kind." she lied.

"Hmm. Well, again I see why you were so adamant to retain possession of it." His own attention now turned to his two blue coated pirates. "Come, let us see why these two are quarreling." Matthew now grabbed the reins of her horse and headed towards Crane and Jacobson.

Abbie could see that they were having a heated disagreement. They kept their voices as low as possible, but both were gesticulating angrily. As they approached, Jacobson's voice rose a little. "We have a traitor in the midst, Crane. We cannot trust anyone!"

"What is the matter, gentlemen?" Matthew broke in, his own voice calm yet commanding.

"My apologies, Captain, but it seems that this ambush was not an accident. These bastards..." Jacobson all but spit on the ground as he said this, "...knew we were travelling along this path. This ambush was deliberate." He was clearly furious.
"Johnathan believes we have our own spy within our ranks." Crane clarified. "However, I disagree. I believe this was merely an unfortunate circumstance."

"How can you say that, Ichabod? For gods’ sake, man, there were thirty men!"

"This is a well-travelled pathway; they were expecting travellers to pass."

'This is not a well-travelled pathway. This was a deliberate ambush and we have a traitor in the midst."

Crane and Jacobson's voices grew louder as they continued arguing with each other.

"Enough!" Matthew now raised his voice, shutting the other two up immediately. "You will end this quarrel now." He turned to address Jacobson directly. "I do not believe there is a spy, Johnathan. There are periodic reports that the locals displeasure is rising and they have taken aims to express their anger. It is not unexpected that they would take up arms in retaliation."

He now turned to Crane, "However, Johnathan is quite right that there may be loose lips within our ranks. Thirty men seem quite a large number to merely behave as highwaymen for the day. We must be cautious as we continue on. In the meantime, I will investigate this incidence. Alone."

The emphasis on his final word was enough to declare the matter finished and resolved. Both Crane and Jacobson let out low grumbles in defeat. Abbie was amazed at how Matthew was able to shut their arguing down completely.

"Now, our task is to clean up this mess. Search the bodies for any valuables or papers. Make haste though, as the shipment is due to arrive quite soon." Without waiting for any response, Matthew handed the reins over to Abbie and simply walked away. For someone who seemed quite crazy at times, Abbie now could see why he was this gang’s leader. He had a way of making his men follow orders immediately and without question.

Jacobson now held out his hand to Crane and gruffed, "Truce."

Crane tipped his chin up in the air with a slight pompous air, then immediately smirked as he grasped the proffered hand. "Truce," he replied, giving his friend a quick pat on the shoulder.

Jacobson now turned to Abbie, a concerned look on his face. "Madam, are you well?"

"I'm good, thanks." Abbie gave him a reassuring nod. She could tell that he was exhausted from the ambush encounter.

"That pleases me. I must say, you would easily best Ichabod and myself on the firing range. Your prowess with a firearm is remarkable."

"Thank you." Abbie couldn’t hide the pride in her voice. "I may take you up on that offer."

Jacobson turned his attention back down the path, surveying the many bodies littering the trail. "I must find William and Thomas and ensure that they are ready to depart. Hopefully they will have found something of value amongst these bloody curs." He let out a scornful grumble as he shook his head. "Though I highly doubt it." He turned and headed back down towards the area where the majority of bodies lay sprawled on the ground.

"You knew Matthew and the others were tracking us, didn't you?" Abbie now addressed Crane, suddenly a little annoyed that he had decided to not share this information with her. He must have known.
"I was aware, yes." Crane headed back towards the ambush leader's body again as Abbie followed, gently leading the horse behind her.

"Then why didn't you tell me?" Her voice betrayed a bit of anger she didn't realize she felt.

"I did not want to further burden you." With a sharp tug, he yanked the bayonet tip out from the man's chest and threw the musket to the ground ahead of the body. Crouching down, Crane started fishing through the man's coat and vest pockets.

"Further burden me? With what, information? I can take care of myself. I just wish you would've told me about the others. It might have made me feel a bit better."

"Of course you can take care of yourself, of that I have no doubt. You alone dispatched five of those men." He paused a moment, now searching the inside of the coat for any hidden areas. "My apologies. I should have been more forthright."

"Damn right."

Crane pulled out some miscellaneous coins from an inner vest pocket and slipped them into his own coat. Rising, he turned to Abbie, studying her intently. The expression on her face must have spoken volumes. "You are displeased with me." he stated matter-of-factly.

"A little." She answered honestly. She couldn't explain it, but she still felt a little uneasy at how he had so easily dispatched the leader and that he had kept information from her.

Crane continued on to the next man, who was lying on his stomach only a few meters from the leader, as Abbie trailed close behind. Grabbing the arm, he rolled the man's dead body over, then once again began searching the pockets for any valuables. "Have you never taken a life before?" he asked, pausing now to look up at her with piercing eyes.

"In the line of duty, yes. But it was a necessity."

"If you are truly a Lieutenant, then you will understand this was a necessary action against the enemy."

"I already shot him."

"But you did not immediately kill him."

"Well, what can I say? I'm used to arresting the enemy and giving them a fair trial, not putting them down like a rabid dog." She couldn't help her words coming out a bit self-righteous.

"This is not a fantasy world, Lieutenant." The last word dripped with sarcasm.

Why the hell was he acting like such an ass right now? Why the hell was she picking a fight with him?

She was tired and her nerves were slightly on edge and maybe she was being irritable and argumentative because of it.

Crane continued. "And what if he had survived your bullet and escaped? He would have immediately notified others that a Rebel scouting party had attacked his own people. I cannot tell you how quickly reinforcements would arrive. We must be unknown and unseen."

She rolled her eyes at him scolding her like a little child. "All you care about is the gold anyway."
"Is that what you believe?"

"I don't know." Abbie rubbed her forehead with her fingers. She could feel a headache coming on. "I don't know. I guess I never really expected this from you."

"Then maybe I am not the man you believe I am." Crane answered coldly. They stared each other down for a few moments before he broke the eye contact. He focused his attention towards Jacobson, who was crouched over a body in the distance. "Let us see how the others are."

Abbie wasn't even sure why she was complaining? Did she really even know Crane well enough to not expect this from him? Maybe it was that for all of the encounters they had against various enemies, and for all of the accounts Crane had told her about his past, he always seemed so reticent about killing another man in cold blood.

For the life of her, she couldn't figure out why on earth was she was determined to pick a fight with him. If everything was to succeed in this mission so that they could get home, she needed him 100% on her side.

As they slowly wandered on, Abbie took notice of the few bodies that were sprawled on the ground. The ragged men of the ambush party were even more ragged and filthy in death. Each one had been brought down by a bullet, a knife or the sharp tip of a bayonet. Some were visibly stained with blood. Some were lying in strange positions, their limbs twisted and oddly askew.

The pirates continued rifling through the pockets of the fallen ambushers, pocketing all valuables before dragging the corpses into the dense bush. Abbie didn't know if they were going to bury them or just leave them out of sight, away from the open trail. It looked like every one of the thirty ambushers had been killed. It was a miracle that she and the others made it out alive.

She and Crane finally reached the others, and saw that Jacobson was kneeling over a small body, while Thomas and Matthew were standing behind him. They blocked the view of the person lying on the ground and Abbie wondering what was so interesting about this particular ambusher. As she neared, she heard a sob, and realized that the wiry form lying on the ground was wearing a blue coat, just like Crane and Jacobson were wearing.

She moved a little closer and with a jolt, realized who it was.

William was lying dead on the ground.

Oh my god…

Abbie dropped the reins and went over to kneel next to the lifeless teenager. His chin and neck area was wet and smeared with sticky thick blood and Abbie could see that a single bullet had pierced his neck, killing him immediately. His mouth gaped open and his eyes, a light hazel in colour, were staring lifelessly up to the sky.

Jesus, he was only a kid…

William couldn't have been more than sixteen years old, barely an adult with his whole life ahead of him. She barely knew him, but it didn’t matter. Abbie felt her throat tighten and tears well up in her eyes.

Reaching out, she gently closed William’s eyelids.
"I am so sorry, Johnathan." She whispered as she took his hand in hers. He let out another stifled sob as a lone tear rolled down his cheek. Jacobson had just lost the boy whom he had adopted and raised as his son. He was trying his damnedest to not seem weak in front of the others and failing miserably. Abbie now looked up at Matthew and Thomas, who were also visibly shaken. Each had his hand resting on Jacobsons' shoulder, trying to comfort him.

She looked behind her and found Crane staring down at the boy, his expression almost murderous. His eyes narrowed a bit as they locked with hers. "Are you still displeased that I killed that man?" He said, anger tinging his voice before turning and walking away.

Abbie just glared after Crane, watching him carelessly grab one of the picked over bodies and haul it towards the thick forest edge.

"Abigail, may I have a word?" Matthew asked.

Abbie rose from William's side and both moved out of earshot of the other two men before Matthew spoke. "I cannot spare another man, and none will fit into William's uniform. You will have to go on as a party of four, I am afraid."

Abbie just nodded with understanding. "You're still going to shadow us?"

"Of course. We will be doing this again once we make contact with the Beasley shipment. This was just an unfortunate exercise to test our fortitude."

*An exercise? Are you kidding me?*

To Abbie, this was one hell of an exercise. How many would be guarding the shipment itself? She thought she remembered Matthew saying about twenty men. The fact that they had just taken out thirty armed men with a modicum of ease gave her a bit of hope. The fact that William was a casualty made Abbie's stomach clench. But referring to this mini slaughter as an exercise?

Maybe this was Matthew's way of coping? Or maybe not...

She pushed the doubts and disturbing thoughts from her mind and forced herself to refocus.

"Is Jacobson going to be able to travel in his state?" She asked. From the little she knew of him, the surly man was also quite tough. But William was his adopted son and Jacobson was clearly devastated. Could he keep his wits about him when they finally made it to the shipment?

"Johnathan will have to be. Unfortunately, I cannot spare another. The four of you must continue on, the shipment is quite near. What say you, Abigail?"

She sighed in resignation. "We should definitely get going."

Matthew nodded. "Go fetch Ichabod and leave immediately. We are almost finished here and will follow shortly." He went over and shared a few hushed words with Thomas and Jacobson. Both were hanging their heads in absolute misery.

Abbie surveyed the area quickly and found Crane standing near the side of the trail, engrossed in reloading one of the pistols. She led the docile white mare over to him.

"I'm really sorry about William." She said when she reached his side. "Are you going to be okay?" Her voice was soft and comforting.

"Have you added murderer to my list of crimes." he huffed instead, ignoring her question.
"C'mon Crane, I know you're upset about this."

"Have you prepared a noose, my dear?"

"Okay, now you're just being an idiot."

His eyes locked with her and she was taken aback at how intense blue they were. She could see that his jaw was clenched and his nostrils flared a little. “An idiot who dares to eliminate the enemy, it seems.”

He was clearly upset over William’s death, but was also upset that she had admonished him over stabbing the ambush leader. He seemed offended that Abbie herself was offended by his actions.

‘C’mon Crane, you know that’s not what I meant. I was just surprised, okay? Can we call our own truce?’ She gave him a half-hearted smile.

"You are taking this far too lightly.” His voice rose as he angrily jammed the pistol into the holster at his hip. “Do you have any idea what those men would have done to you, had you entered into their custody? What if those men were aware that the others lay hiding in the forest?” He was absolutely livid.

Okay, so he was also pissed that they were almost captured. Angry that she was almost captured. She wasn't taking this seriously enough for his liking. And Abbie knew she should be. She knew damn well she should be fucking serious.

For some reason, the plan and all of its inherent uncertainties had scared her more than the actual confrontation. Once in the middle of the action, she felt surprisingly more calm and confident. She completely attributed this to her police training, experience and her overall demeanour. For as long as Abbie could remember, she always met adversity and stressful situations with a level head and a logical mind.

Calm under pressure. Calm under fire. It was her hallmark.

"Look Crane, I know. It's just...."

He cut her off. "No, you do not know. You have no concept of what these men are capable of. They are not merciful. They..." His voice cracked a little, he was so furious. "They are not worthy of your pity or compassion. And you should not waste a moments’ thought on them.”

Abbie just gaped at him. Seriously? Seriously?

Her formidable temper flared up immediately. “You honestly think I don’t know what those guys would do?” She dropped the reins and took a step towards him, her own demeanour now absolutely incensed. “I am a black woman in the 18th century, Crane. A. Black. Woman.” She emphasized each word, as though he didn’t understand English. “I’m a second class citizen times two in your goddamn world.”

“I am aware of that…” he started.

She stepped closer, cutting him off as she angrily poked him in the chest. “You’re aware. Really? When I showed up yesterday, what did you immediately think? That I was a prostitute. Don’t you dare deny it. So don’t even think of telling me that I have no concept of what men do in this time!”

“Are you comparing me to those men?” He was incredulous.
“Well, you certainly haven’t kept your hands to yourself, have you?”

A look of utter regret washed over his face. He seemed dumb stuck at her words and Abbie was sure she also caught a curious hint of rejection in his eyes.

Jacobson and Thomas now rode up to the pair, interrupting the argument.

"Crane, the Captain says we must resume our travels." Jacobson demeanour was completely dour and withdrawn. “The shipment is due soon.”

“Johnathan…”

“Leave me be, Ichabod. I beg of you.” It was clear he was hurting but didn’t want any more condolences or words of comfort. “We have no time to spare. We must go.”

“Then we must go.” He stared forlornly off into the distance for a moment, before turning his attention to Abbie. He motioned for her to stand next to the horse. This time, there was no stool for her to help herself up. Instead, he made a catch with his hand to help hoist her up onto the white mare.

Jacobson didn’t even wait for them, instead riding off, Thomas trailing behind him.

Crane now mounted easily behind her and grabbed the reins. Unlike before, he made no effort to place his arms around her waist, or try to pull her close to his chest. Instead, he merely spurred the mare towards the direction Jacobson’s had taken. Apparently balancing the weight on the mare was no longer an issue.

“Shouldn’t I be riding with those cuffs on?” She asked, remembering the iron manacles.

“Later.” He replied glumly.

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The four slowly continued along the hard dirt packed trail. Behind them, there was almost no evidence remaining that any ambush or slaughter had taken place. The bodies and muskets had all been spirited away into the dense thicket. The pirates were back hiding amongst the trees and the path ahead was completely clear. They were maybe about a half an hour or so away from intercepting the Beasley shipment.

Crane had directed their horse to lead along the trail this time. Abbie figured he was taking point, to give Jacobson some time to settle down and get control of his emotions.

They had been riding for about fifteen minutes but time seemed to be moving excruciating slow. To Abbie, it felt like they had been riding for over two hours. Crane’s demeanour was gloomy and distant. He was obviously upset over William, upset at her for judging him, but Abbie sensed that something else seemed to be bothering him.

He’s obviously upset over our argument. She decided to try and get him to talk.

"So for some reason you’re still mad at me.”

Crane just let out a bitter laugh. Abbie couldn’t help but be slightly amused; Crane was acting exactly like his typical self. He was almost sulking now, yet still intense and angry.

Abbie tried again, ensuring her voice was light and friendly. "So...if you're still mad at me, I wish
you would tell me."

There was a moment when she was sure he wouldn't actually respond. Then he did. "I am not angry with you. I am angry with myself." His voice was low and apologetic.

"I’d love to know why?"

She heard a sullen exhale, then, "I am angry at myself for having overstepped my bounds with you, and yet it is what I know to be."

_OKay, that was cryptic and...weird._ She wasn’t sure she understood what he meant. He seemed to be regretting getting all smarmy with her, but he felt he had act that way? Is that what he meant? Did he not feel like he had free will or something?

He fell back into silence. She happened to glance down and noticed his fingers twitch slightly around the leather reins every once in a while. After a couple of minutes, Abbie tried to prod him again. "Last night, you told me you remembered things. Tell me what you remember?"

"I don’t think this is the time."

"Crane, please. It’s important." She rubbed his knee, trying to encourage him to speak.

"You will think me mad."

"I promise you I won’t."

He let out a long sigh in defeat. "I told you before, that my memory is mere flashes and shadows. Whilst I was….putting up your hair, I experienced flashes and shadows that I could not make sense of."

Abbie was a bit surprised. For some reason, he couldn’t bring himself to say ‘kissing her neck’. Just like her Crane. "What do you see in the flashes?"

He cleared his throat before clarifying. "Vague images. Some move, some do not. On a battlefield, in a cabin, a dusty room filled with books, a bible, a woman with red hair...you."

She saw him tighten his hands around the reins before he continued. "Flashes of you, wearing those abominable trousers, wielding that weapon, laughing, teaching me, admonishing me..."

"Well, that sounds about right." She replied with a chuckle. A feeling of relief went through her; she managed to get him talking.

"I do not understand it. I barely remember anything at all, yet you arrive and suddenly I am cursed with unknown memories clouding my mind." He seemed frustrated. "And then, there is the voice."

_Wait, what? He’s hearing voices?_

"What do you mean by voice? Do you recognize it?" She asked, really curious now. Were magical forces somehow finding a way to communicate or was some sort of supernatural thing, like some angel or demon, talking to him?

_Please let it not be one of the ones we’ve faced before._

"Yes, I recognize the voice." He paused again, his fingers now twitching even more. "It was my own."
Abbie was a bit confused. “Well, that’s normal. Everyone has their own voice in their heads. It’s just your conscience.” She pointed out.

“No, this was very different. It felt… it felt as though I were two separate individuals. At that moment, I was having a heated argument with myself and each voice was quite clear, distinct and separate."

Wow… I did not expect that…

No wonder he was angry and irritable. His own voice was waging a battle with himself over who he truly was, how he should behave, what his purpose was, and maybe even what his relationship was with her. She wondered if the two versions of Crane were starting to mix and meld together; lascivious Pirate Crane and proper Witness/Soldier Crane.

Abbie suddenly realized something. After Crane had stormed out of the room, the level of lecherous and smarmy behaviour had dropped significantly. He was flirty and touchy, but nowhere near as bad as when he had her up against the wall in the room, or naked in the basin, or when his lips and tongue were moving down her neck. He even tried to make amends with a lovely gift. When she had kissed him, he did not try to take advantage of her at all. Instead, since then, he had been trying to provide Abbie with comfort and protection.

“Do you still have your other voice in your head now?” she asked.

“It comes and goes, but it grows stronger.” He let out another long-suffering sigh. “This is surely a descent into madness.”

Abbie thought was starting to get an idea of what was going on. Mulling over the events of the last two days, certain things were starting to piece together and make logical sense. Her Crane existed – and was seated right behind her - but somehow his personality and behaviour was being influenced by some other person’s life. Was it possible the closer in time and distance they were to the shipment - and the *Magikos* book itself - the more that her Crane broke through? His own voice battling with himself confirmed it for Abbie.

“I guarantee you that you are not going crazy.” She told him.

“How can you be so assured?”

“Because I know our situation and I know what you’ve gone through this past year and let me tell you, if there was anyone who should rightly go insane, it would be you. But you know what? You are really strong and stable and there is nothing wrong with you. Trust me.” She elbowed him lightly in the chest, in a joshing manner.

“I suppose I feel some comfort in those words, though I am not quite sure why.”

*Trust me.* She rubbed his knee again, trying to reassure him.

“My other voice tells me that I do trust you.”

Abbie couldn’t help chuckle at this. "And I'm sorry I judged you for the bayonet thing. I know you were just trying to protect me."

"Quite right.” He replied proudly, just like his normal quirky self.

She decided to attempt a little more peacemaking. "Crane?"
"Yes, my dear."

"Thank you for protecting me."

He didn't reply. Instead, he placed the reins in his right hand and his left hand slipped around her waist, pulling her gently towards him.

She allowed herself to lean back against his chest, her mouth curled into a small contented smile.

...............................

The trail now curved sharply left and as they came around the corner, Abbie looking up and spotted a large dust cloud in the distance. Abbie thought it could resemble a large wagon. She could only make out ten or so men, bedecked in vibrant blue and white, all mounted on horseback and surrounding the wagon. One of the blue coats was riding a few lengths ahead of the wagon, leading the way. She thought she could see two more men driving the wagon itself, both dressed in drab colours.

Abbie felt her heart speed up in anticipation and her nerves tense.

They had finally intercepted the Beasley shipment.

“Crane…” She tapped his leg to get his attention. “They’re here.”

“Well, my dear Abbie. It is time.” He declared solemnly, as he made to quickly cuff her hands. “Are you ready?”

“Let’s just get this over with.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Highwaymen were men (and sometimes woman) who would rob stagecoaches or carriages on trails, hence the term "highway." In the 18th century, this was a crime punishable by death.

"Taking point" is a modern military term that means taking the lead.

Next chapter - Abbie has to retrieve the book to get her and Crane home. Definitely will be lots of action.

Comments and kudos are always loved and worshipped!
The Shipment

Chapter Notes

This ended up being another long chapter that needed to be broken up into two. This chapter leads up to the insanity Crane and Abbie are about to experience. Both are up so please enjoy!

Some important military terminology to define before reading:

A company is a military unit that typically consists of 80-250 soldiers and is usually commanded by a Major or Captain.

A platoon is a military unit consisting of 24-64 soldiers, commanded by a platoon leader.

A section is a military unit of about 8-13 soldiers, commanded by a squad leader.

Chapter 12 - The Shipment

Crane gently brought the white mare to a halt, allowing the pair to observe the approaching wagon and the men guarding the gold, silver and Abbie's most coveted prize; the spell book that would get them home. A moment later, Jacobson and Thomas joined their side.

As Abbie surveyed the oncoming men, she was surprised at how much dust was lingering in the air, kicked up by the wagon and the few horseback mounted men who flanked it.

"So what am I supposed to do?" She asked.

"Behave as though a prisoner."

"Very funny, Crane."

"Miss Abigail, I do not jest. You must appear subdued and regretful of your actions. Speak as little as possible, and ensure your gaze submissive. It would be best to not antagonize these men. They intend to deliver their prisoner to Washington for interrogation, so they will be very reticent on causing any prisoner any harm."

"Well how nice of them not to harm their prisoners." Abbie grumbled sarcastically, not feeling reassured at all. She could feel her nerves start to tense and a knot forming in her stomach.

Jacobson now piped up. "Madam, you must endeavour to keep you wits about you during this encounter. As a prisoner, these men will not take likely to your formidable...voice."

"Don't worry, I'll behave." Abbie rolled her eyes in irritation. She took a deep breath, her mind running through how fast she would be able to retrieve the book and how fast she would be able to sneak Crane away and get him to actually repeat the spell. Knowing that this was her Witness partner, she banked on the fact that he would remember how to read the weird Greek/Latin hybrid words and reverse the spell, bringing them back to the 21st century.
As she continued to stare off into the distance and at the large dust cloud itself, a sudden jarring realization hit her.

*Oh, you have got to be kidding me...*

"Look!" Abbie raised her bound hands and pointed ahead. In their banter, they had not been paying close attention to what was approaching ahead. Abbie's heart almost stopped when she took in the sight.

The large dust cloud was not from the wagon or the few men acting as guard. Instead, Abbie thought it looked like a large group of men on foot, marching in perfect formation, trailing about thirty feet behind the shipment.

"Well, that is very unfortunate." Crane's voice sounded calm, but she could feel him tense up immediately.

"Bloody hell, Ichabod. That appears to be a small company or platoon trailing behind." Jacobson said, his voice betraying a slight bit of panic. "There must be eighty or more infantry. We will be outnumbered at least five to one."

Abbie now noticed that two of the men guarding the wagon had spotted them and were riding out to greet them. They couldn't even turn back or duck into the woods to escape without arousing suspicion.

"They're coming." She announced ominously.

"Can we turn and run?" Thomas asked.

"No!" Abbie would not abandon her chance to get the book and get home. *I need that goddamn book!*

"We cannot. Our actions would be considered suspicious and they will pursue. If we run, the others ensconced in the woods may also be discovered." Crane replied and Abbie knew he was absolutely right.

"Halt and prepare for approach!" One of the two men from the guard now yelled out to them as they neared. They have mere seconds to decide.

Abbie was adamant. "Can we find a way to separate the wagon from the others?" She asked in a low voice. There was no way she was going to leave her only chance to get her and her partner home.

"If we join them, we will only have a mere day before the true scouting party arrives." Jacobson pointed out.

Crane let out a sigh. "We have no choice. Ride along and see what opportunities may present."

Abbie couldn't believe their pathetic luck. They couldn't suddenly turn tail and run; they were already seen by two men guarding the shipment and they would possibly pursue. They couldn't go through with the ambush; they were over eighty men and would be severely outnumbered.

They had no choice. They would have to wait for the right opportunity. Abbie’s foolish hope of getting home by dinner time had just been completely turned on its head.

The two men finally caught up and stopped their horses in front of the four. Both were wearing similar blue Rebel coats, trimmed in red and embellished with silver thread. In the distance, Abbie
could see that the wagon and the other guard had stopped also. The dust cloud cleared a little more, and Abbie spied a deep wall of infantry soldiers standing in perfect formation. These men were the ones who had kicked up the massive dust cloud.

The older man now saluted. "Major James Whittingham, 37th regiment. This is Lieutenant Franklin Bonleigh."

"I am Captain Crane. I see that you received our communication?" Crane replied with an authoritative voice.

Abbie noticed that he didn't introduce the others, didn’t mention they were supposed to be from the scouting party and only used his last name. Luckily, the Major didn't seem to notice or seemed to care.

"Indeed I have. We have been expecting your arrival. You have done a great service for the Patriots and our noble cause."

"Thank you, Major." Crane reached into his pocket, pulled out a folded piece of paper and handed it to Whittingham. "Here is a copy of our orders, sir."

Abbie knew that the piece of paper had been written by Matthew, just as he had written the note sent a few days ago, informing the guard that the ‘scouts’ would arrive a day early.

Whittingham unfolded the piece of paper, nodding his head as he carefully read the contents. "So you have been ordered to remain as guard for the prisoner. No one else is to interrogate said prisoner and she will be delivered directly to Washington."

“That is correct, sir.”

Whittingham’s eyes now shifted to Abbie, his mouth pursing a little. "And this is the prisoner, I presume? Not much to be fearful of, I see."

"We only need to fear the information she keeps within her." Crane replied. "And the information she intended to divulge to the Redcoats."

"Yes well, that will be for Washington himself to extract." Whittingham gave Abbie a critical once over, his face showing he was clearly not impressed by her. "And she is currently employed as a lady of a brothel?" It seemed he was trying to use the most proper words possible.

"Yes, she is. A British General she was to meet with seems to favour woman such as...her." Jacobson replied with a well-timed shrug. "It is to this General that information was to be exchanged."

"Hmmm...I suppose she is appealing but well, not my preference, I would have to say. But to each his own." Whittingham now flicked his hand twice, dismissing her as though swatting a fly.

Abbie struggled hard to remain silent during the exchange of words, instead biting her bottom lip to stop herself from being riled up at the Major’s words and attitude. She really wanted to punch this guy in the face, but managed to keep herself subdued. She wasn’t sure if his dislike was due to her skin colour or due to her presumed illicit occupation, though she had a really good guess...

Jacobson now queried. "Major, may we inquire as to the need for a company to assist in guarding the Beasley shipment."

"Ah yes. We received reports that a large British platoon is possibly advancing through Sagamore, so
we are told. Washington has ordered that troops be deployed to aid in protecting this vital resource. We do not expect a skirmish, but simply as a precaution."

"I see." Jacobson replied. "It is a wise precaution." His tone, on the other hand, seemed to indicate he was thoroughly annoyed at this convenient precaution.

"Where is your fourth scout?" Bonleigh now questioned with a slight suspicious demeanour.

"He is currently in Sagamore as we speak, finalizing a business transaction. He indicated that he will wait for our arrival."

Both Bonleigh and Whittingham seemed to accept Crane’s explanation at face value.

"Well, as you are required to continue guard of the prisoner, you will ride as flank to the shipment. Captain Crane, you will take over driving duties, the soldier at the reins requires rest." The Major commanded.

"Yes sir." It seemed that Crane was trying to act as soldierly and obediently as possible.

Whittingham turned his attention to Abbie, a mild look of distaste on his expression. "She will ride upon the wagon, but keep her away from the other men. They have been on the march for months and news of the presence of a lady will greatly distract them." Whittingham paused, his hand now flapping up and down to indicate Abbie, "Even though she is, uh...you know..."

Once again, she wasn’t sure if he was indicating her darker skin colour or that she was a ‘prostitute’.

Whittingham and Bonleigh dismissed the men and headed back towards the rest of the military unit.

"Maybe we can steal the wagon somehow." Abbie said in a low voice, once the Bluecoats were out of earshot.

"It is possible, madam. Provide a distraction before riding off with it. There are only fifteen whom are mounted. If we separate the wagon from the infantry, we will only have to eliminate the men on horseback." Jacobson replied, his tone a bit more confident.

"What if we encounter soldiers of the Crown?" Thomas asked.

"It is a risk, but we have no choice but to attempt this. Agreed?" Crane replied back, his voice similarly low. The others all muttered 'agreed' under their breaths.

"The Major does not seem enamoured of you, madam." Jacobson now quipped, upon seeing the foul expression on Abbie’s face. “I daresay he is a fool.”

“I know he’s a fool. He’ll be even more of a fool when we end up stealing the gold.”

Despite the situation, Jacobson let out a hearty laugh. “I knew I liked you for a reason, madam.” Lightly spurring his horse, he and Thomas headed for the wooden transport.

Crane did not immediately follow. "Abbie, I feel I must warn you of this." His tone was quite serious.

"Yeah? Warn me about what?"

"Take care in lifting your skirts. You do not want to expose your ankle and calf to any of the soldiers."
Abbie thought this was a really strange request. "Why?"

"To expose your leg in such a manner is to offer your 'services' to a gentleman. As these men are most likely aware of your supposed occupation, it would not be wise to entice them."

"Wait, what! Really?" Abbie turned around to look at Crane, but her cuffed hands prevented her from twisting around enough to fully lock eyes with him. Her mind flashed to when she was teasing him by hiking up her skirts so she could secure her gun to her thigh. "So you're saying that when I showed you where I was going to hide my gun - that was an invitation - to you?"

"Very much so." Crane's voice was flecked with a hint of amusement.

"I really hate this goddamn century." she grumbled, shaking her head in irritation.

Crane's now whispered in her ear, "You have nothing to fear. I vowed to protect you, and I will, on my honour and on my life." As covertly as possible, he gave her a quick kiss on the back of her head.

"You're not allowed to leave my side, by the way." She reminded him, not in fear, but to ensure that once she finally managed to get possession of the book, she wouldn't have to waste time hunting him down.

"I promise."

Crane tapped his heels lightly against the side of the horse and as they rode up to the stationary wagon. Abbie surveyed the company of men. They had all stopped, and were standing about thirty feet back from the transport. It was like a wall of brown and blue coats, trimmed in white and red and black, dirty and dusty wool draping over these scraggly young men.

The wooden transport itself was the strangest looking wagon she had ever seen. The whole thing was rectangular in shape and seemed to be solely made up of long wooden slats, held together with iron. To Abbie, the whole thing looked like a ten foot long wooden box resting on four large spoked wheels. On the left side, three narrow iron strips made up the steps that led up to a seating area. It consisted of a narrow wooden bench seat bolted to the top front of the box. The top back edge of the bench was level with the roof of the wagon, such that the driver could turn around and see anything trailing behind them. The bench itself looked wide enough for three people, thought Abbie suspected it would be a considerably tight fit.

Was this seriously the 18th century version of an armed transport? The wooden slats looks slightly rotted and haphazardly thrown together. There were four large horses yoked to the box and Abbie wondered if its rough look wasn't a deliberate attempt to make robbers think nothing of value could possibly be transported in such a rickety looking monstrosity.

A prim looking yet insanely young soldier and a rotund man dressed in a silver trimmed green frock coat were currently occupying the bench seat. The man in green was clearly not military. He was giggling a little and Abbie saw him waving around a silver flask.

Bonleigh rode up to their side and addressed the soldier. "Private, Captain Crane here will take over driving duties. You are relieved of duty."

The young man looked grateful as he saluted, then hopped off the wagon, trying hard not to let his eyes wander towards Abbie.

Crane dismounted the horse and stretched out his arms to assist her. As she slid off the horse, he
placed his hands around her waist and slowly lowered her to the ground, careful that her skirt hem stayed in place and around her ankles.

Under Bonleigh's watchful eye, Crane now helped Abbie climb up the steps to the front seating area. The first iron step itself was almost two feet above the ground and her stupid skirts were not helping her easily hit that first step.

*Why does everything have to be so inconvenient for woman?* She grumbled under her breath as she lifted the hem slightly. As she took the next step, she swore she heard a few wolf whistles sound out in the distance. She didn’t react, but thought, *dammit, Crane is so dead on about the ankle thing.*

Abbie took a seat in the middle of the bench board and the green frocked man turned to her and grinned. "Hello, Miss. Are you joining us for this journey?" Abbie could smell the strong scent of whiskey on his breath and saw that he was swaying a little in his seat. "Ambrose Esau Beasley, little lady!" He enthusiastically introduced himself, holding out the hand not clutching his flask. He was all messy white hair, red-cheeks and utterly jolly.

"Abigail Mills." She replied, trying to shake his hand, though her own were cuffed.

"Well, isn't this wonderful! A lovely lady to share this tedious journey with me!" He grinned wildly as he offered the silver flask for her to drink from.

Abbie gratefully took it and took a long pull. "Cheers."

Beasley was now focusing on her wrists with great confused concentration. "Is that a new fashion for the ladies?" He slurred, now motioning to her handcuffs. "I have not seen it before."

"It is." Abbie couldn't help but chuckle to herself. The man was so completely wasted, he didn’t even realize that the ‘new fashion’ were actually a pair of handcuffs.

"Are we ready to depart, my dear prisoner...?" Crane whispered gruffly as he took a spot next to her on the bench seat and grabbed the reins.

"Sorry..." she muttered under her breath. Abbie knew this was Crane's terse way of reminding her to take this seriously and watch her behaviour under the eyes of the others.

They were about to set off, with Bonleigh and Whittingham leading the way. Ten men flanked the wagon while the company followed the yelled out orders, telling them to 'march'!

They set off back towards Sagamore, Abbie knowing it was about two hours away. She was racking her brain trying to figure out how they could get make a break for it with the wagon and the loot and not get shot in the process.

Abbie also didn't know when or if Matthew and his twenty men would be able to burst out from the bushes at the right time. She let out a deep sigh and turned her head towards Crane. She could see that his brow was furrowed and realized that similar thoughts and plans were running through his head.

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The drunken man had passed out about ten minutes ago, to Abbie’s great amusement.

"How on earth is this guy in charge of all of this gold and silver?" Abbie whispered to Crane. Beasley's chin was resting on his chest and he was drooling slightly while snoring heavily.
"Apparently he is a prominent and respected politician."

"This guy is a respected politician?" Abbie was surprised. The hard drinking man was not what she would expect someone in his position to be. But she figured like everything else in this stupid timeline, her logic and reason simply wouldn’t apply.

"We all have our vices, Miss Mills." He replied. "Even the most respected may succumb."

Abbie was about to snark a response when she suddenly realized how Crane referred to her. *Oh my god, he called me Miss Mills.* Abbie felt a flash of encouragement. She was confident that when the time came, he would have no problem reading the incantation and repeating the spell to get them home.

*This is good....This is good…*

Instead or alerting Crane or drawing attention to this, she simply replied, "I guess we do."

At this, Beasley woke up with a start and yelled out "Stop the bloody wagon!" Crane did as told, halting the four horses. The moment the motion ceased, Beasley tried to stand up on the wagon bench, wobbling a little as he did. Though her hands were bound, Abbie grabbed his arm to steady him as she was sure he was going to fall off and seriously injured himself.

Both Crane and Abbie had to stand to allow Beasley to pass, so he could descend the three steps on Crane’s left side. Abbie was amazed that he managed to make it to the ground without falling. "More whiskey for travel!" He yelled out as he stumbled to the back of the wagon.

The guard on horseback and the company itself also came to a halt.

"Crane, everyone is stopping. Maybe this is a good time to consider making a break for it, and you know, catch them off guard." Abbie suggested.

Whittingham and Bonleigh now appeared at the side of the wagon. "If I knew what a drunken sot Beasley would be," Whittingham groused, "I would have forced him to ride at the very back."

"Major, did you send out a scout?" Bonleigh asked as he pointed ahead. A slender young man in a blue coat with vibrant red trim was approaching ahead, at a fast gallop.

"No, I did not."

Abbie looked up at Crane with apprehension.

“Ah, it must be your fourth man.” Bonleigh commented without concern.

“Yes, it must be.” Crane replied as his eyes narrowed. Under his breath he said to Abbie. "The red trim on his coat is very disconcerting. Abbie, be prepared for us to flee."

Abbie glanced over to Thomas and Jacobson, both looking just as apprehensive. They knew what was going on, but couldn’t say anything, as the Major and Lieutenant would be able to hear them.

The young scout was completely out of breath as he managed to stop his horse in front of Whittingham. Both dismounted and moved a few steps away from the others.

“Crane, I don’t like this.” Abbie whispered as she felt her body tense. The scout was whispering animatedly to the Major. “We need to leave. Now.”

Crane didn’t reply, instead his hands tightened around the reins. He looked like he was waiting for
the right moment to snap the leather and take off. Jacobson moved closer to them and she saw Crane catch his eye.

Whittingham made some sort of motion with his hand and immediately, a few of the horseback mounted guard quickly moved to block the horses pulling the shipment.

“Crane…”

Whittingham now turned to address Crane. “Tell this gentleman what you have told me?"

The scout was still slightly breathless as he said, “We have knowledge that a group of pirates will attempt to steal the shipment. My fellow scouts and I heard this from some men in a local tavern, sir. We were to arrive tomorrow with a female prisoner who was to sell information to the Redcoats. But upon learning of the pirates, I was tasked with riding out to deliver this information promptly, sir!”

“Pirates, you say. And pray tell, what where their names?” Whittingham was completely calm as he took a step towards the wagon bench.

“I only know of one, sir. A name similar to Cain or Crane. A tall gentleman, as I have been told.”

Without a word, Whittingham and Bonleigh immediately pulled out their pistols and aimed their weapons directly at Crane.

*Oh crap, this is not happening…* Looking around her, Abbie saw that all of the guard on horseback were already pointing their own guns at them, Thomas and Jacobson.

Whittingham eyes narrowed as he glanced at Abbie. “So this is not your prisoner, correct?” He asked the scout, though it was clear he already knew the answer.

The young man looked confused. “Oh no, sir. We have her in our custody in Sagamore.”

Bonleigh quickly dismounted his horse and stepped up onto the wagon stairs. With a smirk, he said threateningly, “You will release the reins, pirate. Rise and surrender your weapon immediately.”

Crane did as told, cautiously rising with his hands in the air, the reins still resting in his right hand. With his left, he pulled his pistol from the holster at his hip and held it out for Bonleigh to take.

Both anger and fear equally rose in her. What the hell were they going to do? They were so close. Her prize was here, *right behind her*, hidden within some strips of wood. They had been discovered as frauds and were caught. How the hell were they going to get out of this mess? She knew there was no way that the pirates hiding in the bushes would be able to rescue them. They were severely outnumbered.

All she could hope was that Crane would still try to make a break for it. For once, something good had to happen….

Chapter End Notes

A/N: In 18th century London, prostitutes would stand on the streets and advertise their services to passing gentlemen by lifting their skirts and exposing bare ankles and more. This is why Crane tells Abbie to be careful how high she lifts her skirts.

Source: Dr. Johnson’s London by author Liza Picard. Excellent book detailing the day
to day lives of middle to lower class Londoners during the mid-18th century. She has a really good series that covers London in Elizabethan, Restoration, Victorian and 18th century time periods.
Chapter 13 - The Escape

Beasley now stumbled out to the front of the wagon and yelled out, “Pirates! What is this blasphemy of pirates! There will be no rogues here! No bastard dare steal my wares. I forbid it!”

He clumsily fired a warning shot straight in the air to make his point but he was standing too close to the horses. The loud explosion from his pistol immediately spooked the four animals. The two in the front reared high, and as their front legs came crashing down, the sound of splintering wood filled the air. The force from the rearing horses caused the wooden yoke hitching them to the wagon to badly crack.

In their fright, the horses immediately took off, dragging the wagon with them, the wooden beam of the yoke somehow managing to hold together. As the wagon lurched forward, Crane, who had been standing up, lost his balance and was thrown back onto the flat roof of the wagon. He lost the grip on his gun and the weapon clattered off of the roof to the ground below. Bonleigh, who had his feet on the steps, clutched onto the railing to hold on. As he attempted to brace himself, he too lost his grip on his pistol and it bounced against the iron steps, also falling onto the dirt trail.

The wagon and horses were running at top speed, Abbie turned towards Crane and saw Bonleigh scrambled up to the top of the wagon. The moment his foot hit the flat roof, he threw himself at the ground. Crane managed to dive out of the way, but the wagon lurched violently right, and both men lost their balance. Abbie’s heart dropped in horror as she watched Crane drop over the right side of the wagon.

“Crane!” Abbie yelled at the top of her lungs. Oh god, no…please no…In a panic, she scanned the open trail behind the wagon for any sign of Crane but there was only dust. He was not there.

Where was he?

Then she saw it, a pair of hands, long fingers clutching to the top lip. She whipped around and peered to the right side of the wagon and with absolute horror saw Crane clinging onto the edge, barely grasping onto the top edge of the rumbling wooden transport.

“Hold on!” Abbie yelled as she unsnapped the cuff from her right hand, then as she pulled at the left, the pin refused to dislodge.

C’mon, c’mon….Goddammit!

Not wasting another second, she braced herself against the back of the bench and leaned over to try to help.
“Grab my hand!” Abbie demanded. She stretched out her right arm and hand as far as she could, in a desperate attempt to reach him but to no avail. Her fingers were mere inches from his. She willed herself to stretch even more, but no matter what she did, Abbie just could not reach him.

He was so tall that his feet were slightly dragging on the hard packed ground as the wagon sped along, still at full speed. He kept pulling his legs up, lifting at the knees, trying to prevent his feet from dragging against the rough dirt while also attempting to get a foothold against the wooden slats.

*God, what am I going to do? Think!* She needed a rope or something — *anything* — to throw to him. She spun around in circles on the bench, almost losing her own balance several times and she tried to find anything that could help. Then she realized. *Handcuffs.*

The speeding wagon kept rumbling and shuddering along the trail. Every time Crane managed to get a precarious foothold against the wooden slats, the wagon would bounce and he would lose his footing. His long fingers were still curled over the roof lip, but Abbie knew he wouldn’t be able to hold on much longer. The muscles in his arms must have been screaming in agony.

*Hang on, hang on, oh god Crane, HANG ON….*

Abbie stretched out her left hand toward him, twisting her body to extend her reach. She had no idea how she was going to be able to pull him up with a cuff still locked around her wrist — he was almost twice her weight — but she had no choice. She braced herself and flung her left arm out, hoping that he could manage to reach the dangling iron ring and haul himself up.

“Crane, grab on!” She demanded again.

Instead of grabbing the cuff, Crane’s desperate eyes locked with Abbie’s, and a moment later, his face clenched in intense and focused determination. With a tremendous effort, Crane managed to pull himself up back onto the top of the wagon. He lay on the roof for a few moments, flat on his back as he tried to catch his breath, clearly exhausted.

Crane had but a few moments to recover, as Bonleigh, who Abbie now realized had been hanging off of the left side, also managed to pull himself onto the top of the wagon. The man immediately moved toward Crane.

“Behind you!” Abbie yelled. Crane jumped to his feet and Bonleigh carefully approached him, trying to keep himself steady. There was only so far Crane could move, and as he neared the front of the wagon, Bonleigh took a huge swing. Crane managed to duck in time, but both men once again almost lost their balance.

She had to stop this fucking wagon. Leaning forward Abbie tried to reach for the reins. The thin leather straps had caught on a curl of iron in front of her, but the rumbling and violently lurching transport made it insanely difficult for her to reach.

She grabbed onto the front iron rail to steady herself and tried again. Stretching her arm as far as she could, but once again, her fingertips were mere inches away from the leather. *Christ, c’mon!* She cursed angrily to herself. The wagon bounced and lurched as the horses continued to run top speed down the path and Abbie almost lost her balance. She clutched the rail to steady herself.

Abbie momentarily turned her focus back to Crane and saw Bonleigh take another huge swing. This time he connected, and Crane stumbled back a few steps.

*Oh my god!*

Crane managed to recover quickly, because he steadied himself and took one, two and a huge third
punch at Bonleigh, connecting each time. With each blow, the Rebel was forced backwards. With Crane’s third punch, Bonleigh was precariously wobbling close to the back edge. Abbie thought for sure he was going to lose his balance and fall off. His arms were flailing violently in the air, desperate in his attempts to keep his balance but it was futile.

At the last second, the man’s torso twisted oddly, his arm lunged forward and his fingers managed to curl around the leather strap that hung from Crane’s shoulder.

“NO!” Abbie screamed. Bonleigh finally lost his balance and tumbled off of the wagon, taking Crane with him. All Abbie could see were flashes of colour, blue and brown and black as both men crashed to the hard packed dirt, a tangle of limbs rolling and tumbling along in a dust covered heap.

*Oh my god, this was not happening!* Abbie felt a wave of panic crash over her. *Ichabod!*

She had no idea if he survived the impact, survived smashing into the ground so hard and so violently.

*God, what if he’s dead?* She would not allow herself to go there.

*Get a grip on yourself, Abbie. Focus! You will not think like this, for fuck’s sake!*

She turned to face forward, for another attempt at the reins. She had to stop the stupid wagon. As she took another swipe at the reins, one of the wheels hit a large boulder and the force of the impact caused the cracked yoke to completely snap.

The spooked horses were now free and continued at full speed straight ahead, but the impact had forced the wagon to veer sharply left, straight towards a thick copse of large trees and bushes. Abbie threw herself back against the bench, trying to stabilize herself.

She looked straight ahead and realized with horror…the wooden wagon and its heavy cargo of precious metal were about to go crashing into a dense lining of trees trunks, and *her* with it.

There was no choice.

She had to jump.

Abbie made one more quick attempt at removing the left handcuff. It refused to budge. *Fuck it…she thought, instead, she steadied herself as she quickly descended the three steps of the wagon, to be as close to the ground as possible. She tensed a little when she realised she was still over two feet above the hard packed ground.*

Wadding her skirts in her hand, Abbie took a deep breath.

*And leapt…*

She hit the ground hard, but forced herself into a roll. Tumbling violently a few times she came to a rattling stop right in the middle of some thick bushes.

She let out a long groan. Her body felt as though she had been hit by a car.

Mere seconds later, an ear splitting crack of splintering wood and twisting metal rang out. She looked up quickly and saw that the wagon had smashed into a thick tree trunk. The front had crumpled in, and the flimsy wagon had broken apart, spilling the contents of the shipment all over the ground around the trunk. The entire wagon was literally broken pieces of wood, shattered wheels and twisted metal.
Only two desperate thoughts ran through her head, over and over again.

_Crane....book....Crane......book_

It was as though time stopped. She didn’t even want to think of the fact that she had lost her witness parent. _Her Crane_. The way he had been pulled from the roof of the wagon, slamming into the ground from so high up...

_Focus, Abbie…focus…He’s fine….He’s fine…_ Tears threatened to well up in her eyes and she struggled to fight her emotions.

_I can’t lose him…I will not lose him…_

And then she heard it.

"Abbie! Where are you?” The voice were hoarse, but was no mistaking his distinctive English accent.

_Oh god, he’s okay!_ The elation was overwhelming. “Crane!” Against her better judgement, she yelled out as loudly as she could, praying that he would find her quickly. She tried to stand up and thanked her lucky stars that she was uninjured. She felt bruised and sore all over but otherwise nothing serious.

_Focus, Abbie, focus…_

"Crane, I’m over here.” She called out at the top of her lungs. Circling around quickly, she looked for any sign of him. There was nothing. She yelled his name again, then ran over to the shattered wagon and started rifling through the wreckage. _Where is this fucking thing?_

The faster that Crane found her and the faster she found the book, the faster they could get back home to safety and out of this 18th century mess.

"Abigail! Where are you?” She heard Crane yell out again, much louder than before. She could tell he was getting closer.

“Over here!” She called back and she continued to rummage through the haphazard mess. The wagon seemed to have been mostly empty. There were bars of gleaming gold and silver bars scattered all over the ground, interspersed with broken slats of wood and twisted iron. Abbie forced herself to dig through the wreckage, looking for any hint of a book or something that would hold a book...

Finally, she pulled a small locked box from the wreckage.

_And she knew._

_This was her prize. The top of the metal box was carved with a small symbol that was exactly like the symbol she had seen in an inner page of the magical book._

_This is it!_

Suddenly, out of the corner of her eye, she spied Crane slowly emerge out from the thick bushes, cautiously yet desperately searching the area for her.

Abbie didn’t know what came over her but she didn’t hesitate. Not a single moment. She ran towards Crane, dropping the metal box seconds before literally pouncing up onto his body. In spite
of her skirts, she managed to wrap her arms and legs around him in a strong hug and he staggered back a little, trying to keep his balance.

“Oh god, Crane! I thought… I thought you were…” She couldn’t finish her sentence, and her voice cracked in emotion; she didn’t want to let go. She could not bear the thought that she almost lost her fate entwined partner.

Crane gently lowered her to the ground and she now noticed how battered up he appeared. Dirt and dust were smeared on his clothes and face. His bottom lip was split and swollen and a few trickles of blood ran along the side of his mouth and nose. “Oh Crane…” She whispered, as her hand gingerly stroked the side of his face.

He smiled serenely, as though amused by her uncharacteristic reaction. “I promised you that I would never leave you.” He gently placed his hands along the sides of her face, eyeing her close to make sure she was okay. “Are you well?”

She couldn’t even describe the utter elation that flooded through her. "I'm good. Especially now." She grinned as she ran her fingers across his forehead and along his temple, carefully tucking his messy hair behind his ears. "I'm much tougher than you realize." She quipped as she pulled back.

"That I know, but Abbie, we must be careful. I managed to escape into the woods and evade Bonleigh, but he and the others are most likely searching for us.

“What happened to Jacobson and Thomas?” She asked.

“I caught sight of them entering the woods. I believe they have safely escaped.”

“What about Matthew and the others?”

“Nowhere to be seen.”

Abbie sighed with relief, Thank god. It looked like everyone managed to get the hell out of the area.

“Abbie, we cannot remain here amongst the wreckage. The Rebels are searching for us and will easily spot the wagon.”

“Then we don’t have much time.” She said in a confident voice. Her focus and determination came roaring back. She pointed to the metal box on the ground and added. “Luckily I found what I wanted.”

Now that Crane was safe and by her side, Abbie allowed her mind to shift and fully focus on her next task. She crouched down, set the box on the ground and pulled a couple of hairpins that still remained in her updo. She was determined to pick the lock as fast as possible. "Keep watch." She demanded.

“Abbie, we must leave this area.” His voice was urgent. He crouched down ahead of her, peering through the bushes for anyone lurking in the area. “I have no weapon to defend us with.”

“No way. Not until I do this.” Abbie started fiddling with the lock, trying to get it to pop open. She figured the antiquated lock was simply designed and would be easy to pick, but the somewhat rusty piece of iron wouldn't budge. She broke one of the pins at one point, and yanked another one from her hair in frustration.

"Abbie….” Crane cautioned in a low voice. Abbie stopped and looked up at him. He was scanning the area to his right quickly. “There is movement in the far trees. Flashes of blue.”
Abbie’s eyes widened and she worked faster, grumbling under her breath. The damn lock was refusing to opening. It didn’t take long but her frustration peaked. "Screw this." She mumbled under her breath as she pulled out the gun strapped to her thigh. “Stand back.”

"What are you doing?” Crane whispered.

"Shooting the lock off."

"What?”

Before he could stop her, she carefully took aim and fired one shot. The iron lock shattered into pieces and flew off of the box. Abbie now hurriedly removed the book from the metal container. Crane moved next to her and they both looked down at the book in awe.

Abbie never felt so relieved in her life. She finally had it. It was in her hands. The key to returning home was literally resting in her palms. Crane reached out and ran his fingers over the cover. There was a thin strand of gold and semi-precious stones lying on top of the leather-bound volume. He carefully picked up the necklace, studied it for a moment and then slipped the piece into his coat pocket.

Abbie knew that her gun would immediately give away their hiding place but it didn’t matter. Not when they were so close. They were almost home. Just minutes from being safe and sound. Abbie quickly flipped it open to the pages of the spell. "Okay Crane, time to do some reading."

"Miss Abigail, this is not the time for entertainment."

"This is not entertainment, Crane. This is incredibly important. Just read this, okay." She pointed to a paragraph in the middle of the page.

A voice suddenly rang out. "We know you are hiding within these bushes. You are completely surrounded. Come out, surrender and you will come to no harm!” Crane peered through the leaves to his right again and sighed. "It is Bonleigh."

“Look, we’re surrounded, right? We can’t run, we can’t hide. But you have to trust me. I know this will save us.” Her demeanour was confident yet determined. She pushed the open book into his hands.

“How can a mere book save us?” He was looking at her as though she were insane.

“Trust me.”

Crane glared down at the pages and shook his head in frustration. "My dear, I have no clue as to this language or to these words."

"Listen to me carefully. This is some Latin and Greek mix or something. You can read this! I know you can. I’ve seen you do it. " Abbie yanked at his sleeve insistently. "Trust your other voice."

"Abbie, I cannot!” He peered back through the trees at the men and tensed further.

"Yes. You. Can.” In a sudden move, she snapped the cuff hanging from her left hand onto his right wrist.

"What are you doing?” He was incredulous. She had just literally cuffed herself to him.

"You are not leaving me." She demanded. "You are going to read this part. Now!” Her voice pitched
higher in anger and determination. She knew he could easily get out of the cuffs, but she wanted to do something symbolic.

"Abbie...!"

"Read it."

He gritted his teeth, finally relenting. Peering down at the intricate script on the vellum page, he cocked his head as he mumbled in irritation, “It is familiar…”

The disembodied voice now repeated its demand. "We know you are within these bushes. Surrender and no harm shall come to you."

Crane took a deep breath and tried to start reading the text. He was mumbling under his breath, trying to sound out the words. He rapidly repeated the few sentences over again and again, and to Abbie’s ear, it sounded more and more like what she remembered him reading out loud before.

"You are surrounded, pirate! You have one minute to surrender. Then we will open fire!"

"Crane...." She warned. Please be able to read this…please be able to read this…

The anticipation was so intense, she could feel her heart beating strong and her pulse pounding in her ears.

He continued to mumble under his breath, the words growing louder and louder as he started properly pronouncing the words.

Abbie swore the entire minute had passed when he looked at her with revelation in his eyes; his expression told her exactly what she knew; he would be able to invoke the spell.

At this, the soldier hidden amongst the brush yelled out. "Your time is almost expired. Surrender immediately!"

"Crane, read the whole paragraph! Now!" She demanded.

Crane did as told, his voice loud, confident and clear. As he spoke the final two words, someone yelled out the word fire!, sound ceased, everything went black and there was no more.

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The headache was almost unbearable. Abbie opened her eyes, her head pounding, and found that she was lying on a hard cold stone floor. Her eyes came into focus and she spotted the familiar mural of Washington Crossing the Delaware beautifully and colourfully decorating the upper wall of the Archives. She squinted against the sunlight streaming into the room and the familiar wall of thick wooden shelves, stacked with precious old books, came into focus.

Abbie slowly rose into a sitting position and realized that something had caught her left wrist, prevented her from lifting her arm. Glancing down at her hand, she saw a heavy iron cuff and that the second cuff was attached to a larger light skinned wrist.

"Crane." She whispered. Her voice was raw and rough and her head pounded immensely.

She leaned over to the left and she found Crane lying flat on his back, right next to her. His eyes were closed and he wasn't moving. Abbie unsnapped the pin from her wrist - annoyed that now the stupid thing decided to release properly - then leaned over her partner and shook him a little. "Crane!
Wake up. We're home."

He didn't stir. There was fresh blood smeared on the corner of his mouth and around his nose. She brushed his hair away from his face and repeated louder. "Crane! Wake up, please."

She heard a light groan rumble from the back of his throat and his head rolled back and forth a little, as thought he was in pain. "Are you okay?" She asked, as she once again tried to get a response.

"Where the hell have you been?" A furious voice demanded. Abbie whipped her head around to see Jenny standing in front of them. Her hands were angrily perched on her waist and she was clearly pissed off. "We have been looking for you for two friggin' days. Where the hell have you two been?"

Abbie sighed with immense relief. "Jenny! God, you have no idea how glad I am to see you."

"Irving has half the force out looking for you. We thought you'd been kidnapped by Hessians or something." Jenny's mouth was pursed, her face displaying a clearly annoyed expression. She folded her arms across her chest and glared down at the scene in front of her.

Crane now moaned and slowly opened his eyes, looking around somewhat confused, his eyelids flickering as he apparently tried to focus. It appeared that the bright burst of light caused him even more pain, because he raised his head a little, groaned loudly, then closed his eyes and carefully lowered his head back to the floor. Abbie guessed that like her, he had a massive headache pounding at the back of his eyes.

Jenny now shook her head in disappointment. "Nice dress." She said sarcastically. "So what is this, some kinky sex role-playing thing?" Her chin jutted forward and it took Abbie a moment to realize what she was talking about.

All Jenny could see was Abbie and Crane, lying on the ground right next to each other, he wearing a full military soldier outfit, she is a tight bodice and cleavage bearing dress and handcuffed together.

Yeah, it probably didn't look good. At all.

Abbie now noticed that the Magikos book was lying on the floor, next to her feet.

"If I told you where we were for the last two days, I doubt you would believe me."

"Try me."

She rubbed her forehead a little before saying to her sister. "We travelled back in time to the 18th century. I found Crane in a brothel; he didn't remember anything and thought he was a pirate. I had to pretend to be a prostitute who was a spy. We ended up with some other pirates, stole a shipment of gold, silver and that book, and we were almost caught by some soldiers from Washington’s army."

To Abbie’s ears the story couldn’t have been more messed up, if she hadn’t personally experienced it.

"You’re right. I don’t believe you." Jenny replied matter-of-factly.

"It’s the truth. Seriously. Here, help me with him."

Jenny was staring at her sister like she was absolutely insane.

"It's a long story, Jenny." Abbie sighed.
Crane was once again struggling to rise from the floor. Jenny quickly moved and knelt at his side and both Mills sisters’ gingerly helped him to sit up.

“Hey Crane. How are you feeling? Are you okay?” Abbie asked softly.

Her partner looked absolutely terrible. He had smears of blood and dirt on his face and his hair was a knotted mess. His clothes were covered in a thin layer of dust and streaks of dirt. He looked utterly exhausted. He slowly took in the room and let out a small dozy smile. “Miss Mills, we find ourselves in the Archives…” he commented nonchalantly then, “Ah, Miss Jenny. It is nice to see you.” He seemed a little out of it.

“Hey Crane.” Jenny replied soothingly yet sarcastically. “Abbie tells me that you guys apparently had an interesting little adventure.”

“Indeed.” He swayed a little, as though he were slightly woozy.

Abbie now rubbed his back. “We made it home. Back to the 21st century.” She glanced at Jenny, who was clearly still confused about what was going on.

Thank god he recognized Jenny. Thank god he recognized the Archives. He actually called her Miss Mills. Abbie guessed – no desperately hoped - that the spell must have restored his memories and his own self. She felt certain that he was back to normal.

“How are you feeling?” Abbie asked, rubbing his arm a little to get his attention.

“As though trampled by every demon and Horseman of the Apocalypse…repeatedly.” Crane replied with a groan.

Abbie chuckled at his response. “What do you remember?”

It took a minute, but she watched intently as his expression slowly shifted from confusion to recollection, to realization then absolute regret. His cheeks and the tips of his ears flushed deeply red. His eyes widened and locked with Abbie’s as he whispered in horror. “Oh god…I remember…everything.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: The inspiration for the fight scene between Crane and Bonleigh on top of the moving wagon? Raiders of the Lost Ark - when Indiana Jones is fighting some Nazi’s on the moving military truck transporting the ark. Gotta steal from the best.

One more chapter to go, which will finally explain and wrap up everything. Whew, what a journey!

Thank you to everyone for reading, enjoying, and giving me the most amazing comments ever.
Important A/N – Please Read: I have mentioned this a few times earlier, that when I first came up with this story idea, I thought it would be a short fluffy fic. I knew generally how I wanted to get from point A to B to C, knew certain things I wanted to include, had already written certain scenes and knew how I wanted it to end. But once I started writing the story, I realized that this story couldn’t be a mere puff piece. If it was simply fluff, I would be doing an injustice to the timeline, Crane and especially Abbie, considering what adversity she would have to face in the 18th century. That is why the story shifted from fluff to some dead serious material and became quite long.

The same applied to how I originally wanted the story the end. It just wasn’t “proper” and I thought would be more out of character for my version of Abbie and Crane (however in character I hopefully managed to write them).

So – I offer you this. The chapter called “The Explanation” is how – in my opinion – I think this story should rightfully end. It is how I believe – again if I am staying true to my Abbie and Crane – it would unfold and how I think Crane and Abbie would be.

However I am also going to upload an “Alternate Ending”– which is what my original idea was for the ending of this story.

The chapter “The Explanation” is LONG. I didn’t want to break this one up into two separate chapters. It is much more serious in areas, there is much more dialogue, banter and information within. It has also been edited to death.

The chapter “The Alternate” – my original ending/alternate ending – is shorter in length, is lighter and has less banter. There are some parts that are identical, some parts slightly modified and some parts completely different. Same with the dialogue. Also, this one is not edited to death.

So I would love it if you would please read the final chapter “The Explanation” first, then if you so desire, comment on your thoughts – then read the alternate ending and comment on that. I’m curious to see what people’s opinions are for each chapter.

So please read and enjoy.

And to quote the most awesome Tom Mison (via his twitter): It’s time to burn this disco down.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 14 - The Explanation

It had been over 24 hours since Abbie and Crane had woken up in the Archives and safely back in the modern times.

Jenny had remained unconvinced about her sisters’ story, but Abbie was too tired to force the issue.
She and Crane were both utterly exhausted from their insane 18th century adventure. Abbie just wanted to go home and sleep.

Hopefully for days.

Jenny offered to drop Crane off at the cabin, allowing Abbie to drive straight home in her SUV. Once in the safety of her 21st century space, she reveled in the feeling of a hot shower, microwaved lasagna and her warm and comfortable bed.

*God, I am so glad to be home.* As Abbie crawled under her down comforter, her bruised and exhausted body groaned in relief. She expected to pass out into an immediate deep sleep, but her mind was unable to quiet itself. She lay on her back, staring up at the ceiling, as the events of the last three days would not stop whirling about in her head.

Instead of relaxing in bed, Abbie started having a two-sided conversation with herself in her head.

*I don’t know how Crane is going to deal with this? He’s married. He’s reserved. He’s old-school.*

*Yeah, but he didn’t seem that reserved with you. In fact he was quite unreserved and…*

*Dammit Abbie… don’t overthink this. Crane was obviously a different person. You just have to figure out why.*

*But what if that’s how he really is? Maybe he isn’t so proper after all…*

*C’mon, girl, you know better.*

His obvious desire for her and his ease at physical contact was something she herself needed to process. She knew that most of his actions were due to pirate Crane. But how much of soldier Crane influenced his actions?

*Soldier Crane did not influence anything, Abbie. Let it go…*

But she knew that some of his behaviour had been influenced by her partner. The closer they got to the shipment and retrieving the book, the more and more ‘Crane-like’ he appeared to be.

Her mind drifted to the man himself and she pictured him sitting in the cabin alone, over-thinking everything just as she now was. Abbie knew that he was probably seriously freaked out. Most likely ashamed. Definitely regretful. He was technically ‘married’, hopelessly devoted to his wife, so he must be feeling absolutely awful.

*And what about you, Abbie? What did you feel?*

She had to admit, when she first found him, she was initially shocked and completely caught off guard at his lascivious behaviour; his seductive self was so unlike him. So different than what she was used to.

Maybe it was her close bond with her Witness partner. Maybe it was because she knew him so well. Maybe it was that she never felt threatened by him. Once Abbie managed to get over the shock of his actions, she knew she could handle him.

Handling Crane had been a breeze.

Deep down, she had to admit to herself - and she could admit this, now that she was safe and sound in the 21st century – the whole adventure had actually been kind of fun. Granted, she could have
done without some of the heart-stopping near-death experiences and the whole skin colour and second class citizen reality, but everything else had been surprisingly enjoyable.

*Okay, your interactions with Crane were fun. Just admit it...You loved it...*

Abbie grinned to herself. She got such a kick out of toying with Crane; bantering with him, teasing him, flirting with him and his responses to her were priceless. She liked the laid back manner of her partner, laughing to herself now as she recalled his lazy swagger, smug confidence and devious wit. On top of that, Crane’s own underlying charm, loyalty and chivalry had still been in full force.

She knew that she would also miss the physical contact. There were moments of comfort and closeness that seemed completely natural. It just felt good and she didn’t want it to go away.

She rolled onto her side as her mind finally started to settle. She realized that she would have to confront Crane sooner than later. Make sure that he didn’t let their little adventure affect their relationship or how he treated her. She had to remind herself that he was still the crazy 18th century transplant who sometimes drove her up the wall.

*Don’t worry Crane, you didn’t do anything wrong.*

She finally managed to drift off into a deep sleep as Crane’s distinctive voice echoed in her head.

*I...remember...everything...*

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Abbie slept for almost twelve hours, finally dragging herself out of bed after eleven in the morning.

The first thing she did was check her messages. There were two from that morning; one from Captain Irving telling her to take the next two days off, and one from Jenny, checking up on how she was doing.

Nothing from Crane.

She pushed aside the slight twinge of disappointment, instead deciding to give Crane a little space.

Though Irving had given her time off, Abbie dragged herself to the Archives, slinking in through the underground tunnels and entering through the hidden back door that Crane had revealed existed months ago. She wanted to avoid all contact from anyone in the precinct. She needed answers not questions; answers to why Crane had lost his memory, why he was behaving in quite a different manner. What she didn't need were countless people in the police station grilling her on her and her strange partners' activities for the last three days.

It only took a couple of hours of rifling through some musty old books before a salient theory came together.

*This makes sense. This makes perfect sense,* she thought to herself as she flipped the dusty book shut.

She checked her phone for any new messages. Still nothing from her partner. She had not heard from Crane all day and now she was starting to worry.

Abbie decided she would go pay him a visit. He was probably avoiding her, avoiding facing the reality of the situation and in turn facing the consequences of his own actions.

*Okay, I can see that. He of the 18th century propriety and chivalry and such.*
Though Abbie had to admit that the men she had encountered during her little 18th century adventure didn't exactly behave as respectable and as chivalrous as the romance novels always seemed to indicate.

Still, she wanted him to know that she was not upset or mad at him or even fazed. He stood by her, protected her, and even doted on her, even though she was technically somewhat of a stranger to him.

Abbie needed him to know that his behaviour would not damage their relationship and partnership. She needed him to know that he had nothing to be ashamed about. They had an interesting adventure, one that in all likelihood, would probably repeat somehow in the coming years as they faced off against the coming Apocalypse.

Abbie wanted to be sure that he was okay, but also to provide him with the answers she knew he so desperately needed.

Crane needed to know why his actions were so…*unusual for him.*

She left the Archives at around seven that evening, the old leather tome tucked under her arm, and headed straight for Crane's cabin.

He would just have to get over it.

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Before she even knocked, Abbie peered through the window of the cabin's front door. She immediately spotted Crane, or at least the back of his head, seated on the couch and staring off into the fireplace. She could see the grey collar of his ever-present tie-front shirt and as always, his hair was tied back in a half-ponytail.

He was just sitting there, unmoving, as though lost in thought, mesmerized by the flickering flames.

She tapped lightly on the door window to announce her arrival and entered a second later, not bothering to wait for him to open it.

At her entrance, Crane had turned his head towards her, a look of remorse appearing on his face when he saw her.

"Hey." She said softly.

"Hello Miss Mills." He looked withdrawn and tired.

"How are you doing?" She asked as she took a step in.

"As well as can be, considering the circumstances." There was a noticeable sullenness in his tone.

Abbie just nodded knowingly. She took a few steps in and noticed the coat rack standing near the door. There were two almost identical navy blue military frockcoats hanging off the wooden hooks. One was in battered condition; wool pilled, collar ragged and metal buttons tarnished and dented. The second was in almost perfect condition; the hem, collar and lapels unflawed and the buttons spotless and undamaged.

It looked like Crane had made the effort to clean the wool of the dust and dirt he managed to acquire from their rough and tumble activities of the 18th century. His ‘new coat’ looked like it should belong in a museum.
"Well, at least you got a nice jacket out of this." Abbie quipped, pointing her thumb at the rack. "Good for fancy evenings, special occasions, you know."

Crane let out a little smile but there was no joy behind it.

"Did you sleep?" She asked.

"No, I have not. My mind has been consumed with trying to make sense of the last few days." He glanced down at the floor for a moment before adding "I do not know even where to start. I cannot reconcile…” He shook his head quickly, suddenly appearing distressed and upset.

Abbie cautiously moved over to the couch and stood right in front of Crane. She noted that he was sitting cross-legged on the couch. On his left, there were two books lying open, as though he had been reading and set the books aside for a moment. One Abbie recognized as the *Magikos* book, the other, a Revolutionary War history book. A half empty bottle of rum was on the couch, resting securely against his right hip, giving Abbie a little chuckle. She could see that his cheeks were slightly flushed. Her partner sure did like his rum.

In her presence, he uncurled from his cross-legged position, straightening out his long legs and setting his feet on the floor, trying to sit in a more formal manner. He did this gingerly, trying not to move too fast and Abbie felt truly bad for him. His slow and deliberate movements told her that his limbs were stiff all over.

She knew he must feel as physically pained as she was; battered, bruised and sore all over. Abbie realized Crane would be even worse. He was the one in a fist fight and he was the one dangling off the side of a moving wagon and he was the one who had violently slammed into the hard packed dirt trail from high above the ground.

Abbie was surprised he could move at all.

"Crane…” She started hesitantly but he shook his head, as though begging to speak first.

“I have overstepped my bounds.” He let out a pitiful sigh. “I do not even know how I will make amends. I do not even know if I can ever make amends. My behaviour towards you was indefensible, appalling…”

Crane leaned forward, setting his elbows on his knees and rested his forehead against his palms. Abbie had never seen him so distraught before. Usually he met challenges with a stiff upper lip, focused passion and intense determination. Right now, he seemed absolutely destroyed.

Abbie took a deep breath. She knew this was coming. She figured his sense of propriety and rigid nature were rebelling against his behaviour the last few days. Once he stated that he remembered everything, she knew this was not going to be fun conversation to have.

However, she didn’t think he would be anywhere near as messed up as this.

“Crane, I know what you are thinking, that you offended me or acted inappropriate or something because you weren’t a proper gentleman, but you really didn’t behave that badly. Maybe right when I first found you. But I was able to get the upper hand, I think.” She laughed a little, trying to lighten his mood.

“What if…” His voice cracked a little as he tried to speak. “What if...*God help me*, what if I had tried to force myself upon you?” He looked up at her in anguish, his eyes intense and vibrant blue. He dropped his head again, his palms rubbing hard against his brow in agitation. Abbie could see that he was slightly shaking.
Abbie now understood why he was so visibly upset. His behaviour had been quite forward and pretty sleazy, sure. Even when she rejected his advances, he was quite insistent. His arms had wrapped around her, pulling her close, his hands and lips intimately touching her body. Hell, he had crowded her up against the wall and kissed her, for gods’ sake.

So she expected that he would be upset or regretful.

But this? Abbie did not expect this. *God, Crane. You don’t really think that, do you?*

She had no idea that he would work himself up into such a tormented state. Abbie understood this was Crane recognizing how much taller and bigger he was compared to her. He must have thought she would be physically vulnerable, that he could potentially overpower and have his way with her.

Well, she would have to fix him of that notion. She would also have to clear his mind of his unwarranted concern.

Abbie reached out and lightly touched his shoulder. “First of all, you didn’t do anything too bad. A little forward, yes, but trust me, it’s nothing I haven’t encountered in bars before.” Her voice was soft and comforting. “Honestly, Crane, if I felt even remotely threatened by you, I would have just shot you.”

He looked up at her again, his jaw tight and Abbie was surprised to see a wet sheen in his eyes.

She continued on, her tone shifting to serious and authoritative. “Second – and you need to understand this - I am a trained police officer. I have extensive self-defence training and experience. It is part of the job. I am able to physically take down criminals and also protect myself from attack. This does not mean only women who are five feet tall. It includes big and tall guys like you.” She tapped his shoulder to reinforce her point.

“You would have been able to protect yourself had I become too… *forceful*?” He asked, almost hopefully.

“Absolutely. Without a doubt. I am quite capable. And I would not have hesitated. *Trust* me on this.” She smiled at him, a confident yet reassuring look on her face. “In fact, tomorrow we’ll go to the precinct’s gym and I will show you just how I can kick your ass and take you down.”

Crane straightened up and leaned back against the couch, closing his eyes for a moment. She could see that her words had calmed him a little, but he still seemed a bit agitated. “This so-called ass-kicking demonstration, as you term it, I most assuredly deserve it.”

“You do deserve it. And I definitely look forward to giving it.” Abbie replied matter-of-factly. “I was never at any risk from you, Crane.” She declared. “And I want you to know that I’m not upset with you at all. We’re good, okay?”

“These thoughts have consumed me all day and all of the night.” He whispered. “Scenarios flood my mind and I feel ill each and every time over what I could have done to you.”

“Crane, you have to believe me when I say that I was never frightened or fearful of you at all. Irritated and surprised, yes. But never once did I feel scared, okay? Scared over other stuff, I’ll admit. But you? Please.” She flicked her hand lightly, dismissing his concerns. “Was I afraid of you the first day we met? When you were arrested?”

“No.” His voice was glum.
“Was I afraid of you when I took you to my cop car to take you to Tarrytown, and we made the detour to where you were buried? You could have tried to overpower me then or at least tried to escape.”

“True.”

“So there’s your answer. I didn’t even know you then. But I know you now and I know that you are a good man and definitely would never be a threat to me.”

“I do feel comfort at your words, Lieutenant. I could not think I could go on otherwise.”

“Well you should. Do you feel a bit better?”

“Very much so.”

Crane was clearly relieved and Abbie could see that his overall body language had considerable improved. She hoped that any lingering doubts he had would disappear sooner than later.

“Good. Now don’t let this consume you any more, okay? No worries. And tomorrow you’ll see just how much of your skinny ass I can kick. It won’t be pretty.” She joked.

In spite of himself, he chuckled softly at her words.

Abbie now took a seat to his right, shifting herself at a 90 degree angle to him and tucking her foot under the opposite thigh. She took in his expression and now noticed the bruising. There were tinges of black and blue around the sides of his face and he had dark shadows under his eyes. A reddish brown scab split his lower lip in two places.

She made to raise her hand and gently stroke his face, but thought better of it. “So, what have you been researching?” She asked, indicating the open books instead.

“I have been trying to make sense of this situation, our situation, if I could ascertain my memory loss, why we ended up in my time, and why my behaviour was so…ill mannered.”

Abbie now tapped the book resting in her lap. "I've been doing the same. I think I have an idea of what happened to us. Just a theory, but it almost makes sense.”

Crane's demeanour perked up even more.

Abbie shifted a little forward and flipped open the book at the bookmark. She rotated the book so he could read it and indicated a picture on the left page. "Recognize him? You should."

Crane peered closer as Abbie pointed to an image on the page. It was a painted portrait of a man standing at the edge of a forest, a sword in his outstretched hand pointing ahead, as though about to attack. He was entirely clad in black; his outfit consisted of a simply billowing linen shirt, breeches and knee-high leather boots.

Abbie now moved her finger to the short paragraph below the picture. Crane read the text out loud.

_Wm. Franklin Bonleigh (1746-1773). Pirate and highwayman during the American Revolutionary War. Known for repeat ambushes of British and Continental Army gold shipments. A notorious womanizer and frequent brothel patron noted for several high profile dalliances with prominent wives of high-ranking military officials._

Crane's mouth dropped open as he looked up at Abbie, his eyes wide in surprise. "That is Lieutenant
Bonleigh, who was the Major's second in command. It was he whom I fought with upon the wagon." Crane voice was soft, almost in shock.

"Yup, that's him. The outfit's familiar too, isn't it?" Abbie pointed out. "You were wearing that exact outfit two days ago, remember? I even commented on it."

"I do remember. You told me that it was theatrical, I believe." He paused for a moment, shaking his head. "I don't understand. How did I take his place?"

"Well, that's part of my theory." Abbie said as she grabbed the rum bottle. "When you were part of Washington's army, did you ever escort a gold shipment? Perhaps around early June, 1773? Maybe you even knew it was called the Beasley shipment?"

Crane's brow furrowed a little. "Yes I did but it was not referred to as such. I was a Lieutenant in the 37\textsuperscript{th} and was called upon to escort a shipment of gold and silver to assist in funding the war. But it was only once and we were never ambushed nor attacked in any manner. I do not even recall a man by the name of Beasley."

"Were you supposed to maybe take possession of a prisoner at that time?"

Crane's brow furrowed even more, as though he was trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Abbie smiled at this: her partner was ever the information gatherer. "We were told of a possible prisoner transfer, but it never materialized. I was privy to very little information, as I was a mere Lieutenant."

"Do you want to hear my theory?"

"Very much so, Miss Mills. I am truly at a loss."

She took a swig of rum, the handed the bottle over to him. "Now this is just my theory mind you, but this is what I think happened. Technically, you belong in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. So I think that when we ended up in that time, you naturally slotted into someone's life. And I think that Bonleigh himself ended up being slotted into your original 18\textsuperscript{th} century existence."

"What, are you saying that this man was living my life? That I was essentially confronting and fighting myself?"

Abbie nodded. "In a way, yes. Originally, you were the Lieutenant guarding the shipment and Bonleigh was the pirate. Instead, you took over his life, and became the pirate that was supposed to attack the same shipment you originally were supposed to be guarding. Bonleigh in turn, took over your life."

"Well, that is a most interesting theory. It would explain my memory loss and feeling as though two separate persons inhabited my mind."

"Exactly. The behaviour, memories and personality of Bonleigh coupled with your own original self."

Crane rubbed his chin thoughtfully at this. "But how does that explain your presence?"

"Well, since I don't technically belong in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, there was no life for me to take over. I was just an extra person roaming around in your time."

"That does make sense. But then, how were we able to cross paths so easily? And why did I take
over that man’s life and not naturally resume my own?"

Abbie took the bottle out of his hands and took another swig. "I think it’s two-fold. One, the spell book bound us together. We were destined to cross paths so we could find it and reverse the spell to get back home. Basically, to restore order in the universe, I guess. The Beasley shipment was the direct link to the book. I think Jacobson was destined to find me quickly and he was the direct link to Bonleigh. However, our paths needed to quickly cross. The only way that would happen was if you took over Bonleigh’s life.”

Crane continued pulling at his chin, deep in thought for a moment before adding. "But there is more of a connection than mere convenience. We are also bonded together as Witnesses. We have an undeniable link unlike any other. Our fates are entwined deeply and our bond strong, ensuring that we will always be together or brought together, no matter the circumstances."

"You got it." Abbie grinned at Crane now, who was nodding his head as he continued to digest and accept this information.

"What you are proposing is quite logical."

Abbie bit in lip thoughtfully. "The only thing I haven't figured out is why the spell didn't work the first time, but the second time it did."

"I believe I have an answer to that particular conundrum." Crane slowly pushed himself off of the couch, his joints creaking a little as he did. He really looked like an old man, what with moving so gingerly and carefully. His entire body must have been an absolute wreck.

Crane moved over to the coat rack and fiddled around in one of the pockets of his ‘good’ coat. Reminding Abbie of when he had presented her with the cameo, he removed his hand and pulled out the gold necklace that they found lying on top of the magical spell book.

"I believe that in order to properly invoke a spell, the spellcaster must have this trinket on his or her person."

"Really?" Abbie said in a surprised tone.

"The first time I read the words, we were not in possession of this artifact. The second time, yes. I had slipped it into my coat pocket. When I read the spell, it obviously - and luckily - executed properly."

"Well, that also makes perfect sense."

Crane resumed his place on the couch, again slowly and stiffly lowering himself down into the seat. Surprising to Abbie, he then mirrored her seating position, folding his right leg up on the couch and shifting himself so that he was facing her. She had never seen him sit so casual before.

Abbie cleared her throat a little. She wasn't sure how he would take this next question, but it was something she had been wondering about all day. "I need to ask you something personal." She could see Crane's upper body go a little rigid, though in his banged up state, it took a bit of effort.

"I'm not sure how long you were with the other pirates before I showed up in the brothel room." She drummed her fingers against her leg, trying to think of the best way to ask. "Did you...you know...do anything with one of those ladies?"

Crane expression went immediately to shock. "No. God No! I did nothing of the sort!" He was taken aback and Abbie saw that his fingers twitch rapidly for a moment.
Abbie was careful to keep her voice neutral. "Well, when I walked in, you were, you know, undressing the blonde woman. Remember? Just wondering if she was the only one?"

Crane rubbed his forehead again in frustration. Abbie could sense he wanted to be open with her, but at the same time, was mortified by the revelations. "I woke up in the room, alone, on the bed. I did not remember anything, even the previous night. My head was pounding quite fiercely. Jacobson had wandered in and commented on my consumption of a large quantity of whiskey the previous evening. I just assumed that was why I was afflicted with the headache and did not remember anything." He let out a long sigh and Abbie spied his fingers twitching a little again, "Two hours later, that lady arrived. I had apparently requested her for the evening. I felt…felt compelled to have relations with her...." He trailed off as his jaw clenched for a moment, "Then you arrived minutes later."

"And then you felt compelled to have relations with me." Abbie pointed out. "To try and seduce me."

"Yes." Crane grimaced a little. He was clearly embarrassed. He would not look at her now, instead his eyes focusing on the couch space between them. "It just seemed - a natural action." He shook his head at his words.

Abbie understood this. If Bonleigh was originally supposed to be some notorious womanizer, then Crane's behaviour made sense. He was just doing what the original pirate would normally have done.

"I cannot tell you how utterly regretful and mortified I am by my behaviour. I pray I did not offend you." He grabbed the rum bottle from her hands and took a long drink. "How can I make this up to you?"

Abbie couldn't help but grin. He truly looked embarrassed. "Well, you’re not quite exonerated." She pointed out. "I believe I told you there would be hell to pay."

"And I will be rightly paying that debt for a long time, I suspect."

"Not as long as you think."

His eyes locked with hers now and he took her hands in his, an action that surprised her. "You are certain that I was never a threat to you?"

"I'm 100% certain."

"You are truly well after your ordeal?" He was searching her face as though trying to determine if she was hiding her true feelings. "I’m perfectly fine, Crane."

"You are not cross with me?"

"Maybe a little bit cross."

He sighed deeply, half in relief, half in regret. "Then you must tell me how I can make amends. I truly am sorry for putting you in such an awkward position."

"Or positions." She chuckled.

"Now you are making light of this." He said, dropping her hands in frustration at her response.
"Well, let's face it. You were definitely a bit of a sleazy bastard. Definitely an ass. But I think I handled you pretty well. Besides, I am going to give you the benefit of the doubt and assume that most of your actions were influenced by the 'other guy'."

Crane gazed at Abbie for a few seconds before tilting his head a little. “Are you so sure?” He said quietly.

Abbie leaned back against the armrest of the couch, casually propping her elbow up against the side. She noted his relaxed expression before flashing an amused grin. "Honestly, I never thought you had it in you."

"Had what?"

"I don’t know, I guess the flirty, seductive vibe. It was quite a change from your normal snarky reserved self. You know…propriety and all of that."

“I am not as reserved as you believe me to be.” Crane quirked his eyebrow a little and there was a hint of teasing within his tone.

“Maybe you’re more like Bonleigh than you realize?”

“Maybe…”

They locked eyes for a long minute, silently reading each other’s expression. It was only a moment, barely a glimmer, but as she studied his face, she suddenly saw it. It was just a flash - a mere hint of a roguish smile - exactly like when she first encountered pirate Crane.

Abbie cocked her head as the realization hit, a smirk slowly spreading across her face. "You bastard..." Her voice was barely a whisper. Her head shook a little as she let out a knowing laugh. "You enjoyed flirting with me, didn't you?"

Crane expression changed immediately. "Miss Mills, I would never do anything to undermine your honour. I cannot believe you would even consider it." He seemed genuinely appalled.

"That's not what I mean." she said, still grinning in amusement. "I think you enjoyed it. Enjoyed the hunt. Enjoyed the flirtation and my response. Don't deny it."

"This is an attack on my good character." He stated lightly, with a hint of pride in his voice. He was trying to come off as offended, but Abbie saw right through it. "You know I would never treat you with such impudence."

"Not unless you’re a natural tease. I've seen you be a little flirty with women before. You know it, too."

Abbie was getting such a kick out of this. Her 18th century partner - he who always seemed so stiff and proper and full of unwavering propriety - was a total brazen tease.

She stared him down, a smirk on her face as he tried to avoid her eyes. But once again, there is was. Under her penetrating gaze, he cracked again. His blue eyes glittered just a little and the corner of his mouth tweaked ever so slightly in a sly smile. He just couldn't help it.

She folded her arms across her chest as she shook her head in mock disappointment. "Unbelievable. Just unbelievable. Here I am thinking your 18th century morals are all offended and you're reveling in the last three days."
He raised his eyes again and locked with hers, a sheepish smile on his face. "I am sorry."

“Not so innocent now, are we? I’ve got to say though, I didn’t mind being called ‘beautiful lady’. You even called me Abbie a few times. You can continue that if you want, I’m not complaining.” She shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly.

Crane flashed Abbie an affectionate smile and his eyes seemed to sparkle. “I will admit this. I do not regret presenting you with that necklace, nor my words of endearment, and even our adventure together. We did share some truly enjoyable moments.”

“Yeah, we did. I don’t think I’ll ever look at horseback riding the same way again.”

“Need I remind you that it was you who felt the need to lie against my chest whilst we were riding?” He was needling her now, a devious smirk on his face.

“That’s only because you kept putting your arms around my waist and pulling me closer to you. Nice try, though.” She retorted. “Besides, we needed to keep the weight on the horse balanced, isn’t that what you said?”

He let out a laugh. They both knew it was the bullshit excuse that pirate Crane had made up, so that he could intimately hold her close.

“True…but it is not my fault that you had strapped your gun against your bare thigh,” Crane pointed out, then added, “and took great pains to demonstrate the location in the first place!”

“I had to put it somewhere. And I seem to remember you quite enjoyed that demonstration. Besides, you’re the one who was fishing under my skirt for my gun.”

“I was only trying to retrieve your gun. That action saved our lives, if I am not mistaken.”

“That’s true. But don’t forget, buddy, you’re the one who kissed me first.”

“And do you blame me? My word. You truly underestimate your beauty and appeal. And for the record, you were the one who kissed me without provocation. Do you remember? By the door, whilst I was wearing my uniform.”

“Without provocation? Are you kidding me? I was so provoked. I mean, you show up in that damn military outfit. That uniform really upset me, you know? Besides, I was worried and needed some comfort.”

“You literally leapt onto my body after the wagon crashed!” His eyes twinkled as he feigned incredulousness.

“That’s because I thought you were dead! You still might end up dead, if you don’t make amends.”

Crane laughed again and Abbie was pleased that he seemed almost completely back to normal. She could tell from his demeanour and body language that he felt Abbie had forgiven him.

“Besides, Crane, you’re the one who planned to spill food on my clothes. Do you know how annoying and irritating that was?”

“You have a point there. But we needed to convince you to change and we needed to divest you of your gun. It seemed the only unforceful way of doing this.” Crane paused, smiling shyly at her now. “Besides, I thought you looked quite lovely in your gown.” He paused again, clearing his throat and added a bit hesitantly. “My dear.” He looked slightly embarrassed as he searching her face looking
for confirmation from her that she wouldn’t take offense at his words.

Abbie had to laugh. The words didn’t flow as naturally as they had from his alter-ego, but she still got a kick from it.

She couldn’t believe this though. Here she was, bantering with Crane as though nothing unusual had happened. Yet there was casualness and a comfort level between them that she realized they didn’t have before.

As strange as the last few days had been, the results were positive. Instead of their little adventure putting up walls and causing a feeling of tension between them, things opened up. It was out there – not in definitive words – but they both knew they were attracted to each other. That was obvious.

There was a shift in their dynamic, a new found openness and ease. They didn’t have to walk on eggshells around each other, worry about saying the wrong thing or perhaps being too physical and causing each other offense.

Abbie realized that they could probably flirt, tease and be comfortable with some physicality, but nothing more would happen – for now. Crane was, after all, technically a married man.

She locked eyes with him again and saw calmness within the azure. Crane truly seemed at peace.

She cleared her throat before playfully slapping his knee, “Look, as much as I love our banter, I have to get going. We’ll talk about the rest of what happened tomorrow.”

“Will you not stay a while?” His voice was low yet soft.

Abbie was a little caught off guard. His eyes seemed to be begging her to stay. “Uh, no, I can’t. I think you need to get some sleep and so do I.” She slowly rose from the couch and heading to the front door, her partner following close behind.

“Thank you…Abbie.” He said, once they reached the front door. Again, her name didn’t come out as smoothly, but at least he tried. “My mind is much at ease and I am so grateful that our bond is not tarnished, and is as strong as before.”

“Not a problem.” She said, her hand resting on the door handle. “You still have amends to make, don’t forget.”

“I know.”

“Alright, I’ll see you tomorrow, Crane.” She opened the door to leave just as a devious idea popped into her head. She knew exactly how she was going to start giving him a little hell. She turned to face him, a mischievous expression on her face. ”You shower in the mornings, right?”

He looked at her strangely, confused by her question. ”Yes...”

"Around seven am?"

His brow furrowed a little. He wasn’t sure what she was asking. ”Yes, around that time.”

"Good to know.” She turned a little in the doorframe, before turning back to him and said, ”You know I have a key to the cabin, right?”

His eyes widened and his mouth fell slightly open.

She gave him an evil smile. ”Don’t be surprised if I drop in the morning, you know, just to see how
you are..." She trailed off, flashing him the most devilish grin. "I might pop by, you know, unannounced."

The look on his face was priceless. He looked like a deer caught in the headlights.

*Got you! I am so going to make you suffer...*

This was going to be stage one of her revenge. Just as he made the effort to watch her bathe, she was going to do the same to him. She would watch him when he was least expecting it, or at least make him *think* she was going to surprise him in the shower. Maybe she’d even take pictures, just to torment him. She wanted to keep him on his toes and apprehensive over what she would do.

*You wanted to make amends buddy...*

Before he could protest, she airily declared, "See you later, Crane." then sauntered out of the cabin.

Abbie chuckled to herself as she walked down the long path to her car.

*His expression!* He seemed genuinely worried over what she would do, but there was more, something she couldn’t quite place. It was as though he didn’t want her spying on him, yet wouldn’t necessarily mind it if she did.

*Well, that’s new...*

Abbie couldn’t help but think to herself...

The way Crane was now behaving and responding to her made their entire 18th century adventure completely worthwhile.

............

*The End*

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Did I just get Crane a nice shiny new version of his own coat! I did. Excellent!

Wm. is a written short form for the name William.

Regarding Crane and Abbie, I've never been one of those people who thinks he's someone who is naive, innocent and sexually reserved. Far from it. In my opinion, he's more likely to rant about civil injustice and preconceived slights against his founding father friends, than to react and behave prudishly. I just don't see him "clutching his pearls", so to speak, however, I have Abbie initially think that he would react that way. Also, I think TV Crane is quite a bit of a flirt and tease - we've seen him do it many times in the first season. I also don't see Abbie is someone so easily offended and "repressed." I see her as laid back and with a good sense of humour about things. That's just me.

Again, I would love it if you guys would comment on this ending before moving onto the next one. However, I have a sneaking suspicion I know which one most of you might prefer...
Thank you to everyone who took the time and effort to leave kudos and comments. You guys really made this writing experience so enjoyable and rewarding! THANK YOU!
The Alternate

Chapter Notes

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, here is the Alternate Ending for this story. It is how I originally thought this fic would end but as I mentioned in the previous chapter, didn't think it properly fit.

The chapter is shorter, lighter and less talky. Some major changes, some things similar and some the same in this chapter.

If you didn't read the previous chapter and accompanying note - please do!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 14 - The Alternate Explanation

It had been over 24 hours since Abbie and Crane had woken up in the Archives and safely back in the modern times.

Jenny had remained unconvinced about her sisters’ story, but Abbie was too tired to force the issue. She and Crane were both utterly exhausted from their insane 18th century adventure. Abbie just wanted to go home and sleep.

Hopefully for days.

Jenny offered to drop Crane off at the cabin, allowing Abbie to drive straight home in her SUV. Once in the safety of her 21st century space, she reveled in the feeling of a hot shower, microwaved lasagna and her warm and comfortable bed.

*God, I am so glad to be home.* As Abbie crawled under her down comforter, her bruised and exhausted body groaned in relief. She expected to pass out into an immediate deep sleep, but her mind was unable to quiet itself. She lay on her back, staring up at the ceiling, as the events of the last three days would not stop whirling about in her head.

His obvious desire for her and his ease at physical contact was something she herself needed to process. She knew that most of his actions were due to pirate Crane. But how much of soldier Crane influenced his actions?

*Soldier Crane did not influence anything, Abbie. Let it go…*

But she knew that some of his behaviour *had* been influenced by her partner. The closer they got to the shipment and retrieving the book, the more and more ‘Crane-like’ he appeared to be.

Her mind drifted to the man himself and she pictured him sitting in the cabin alone, over-thinking everything just as she now was. Abbie knew that he was probably seriously freaked out. Most likely ashamed. Definitely regretful. He was technically ‘married’, hopelessly devoted to his wife, so he must be feeling absolutely awful.

*And what about you, Abbie? What did you feel?*
She had to admit, when she first found him, she was initially shocked and completely caught off guard at his lascivious behaviour; his seductive self was so unlike him. So different than what she was used to.

Maybe it was her close bond with her Witness partner. Maybe it was that she knew him so well. Maybe it was that she never felt threatened by him. Once Abbie managed to get over the shock of his actions, she knew she could handle him.

Handling Crane had been a breeze.

Deep down, she had to admit to herself - and she could admit this, now that she was safe and sound in the 21st century – the whole adventure had actually been kind of fun. Granted, she could have done without some of the heart-stopping near-death experiences and the whole skin colour and second class citizen reality, but everything else had been surprisingly enjoyable.

*Okay, your interactions with Crane were fun. Just admit it…You loved it…*

Abbie grinned to herself. She got such a kick out of toying with Crane; bantering with him, teasing him, flirting with him and his responses to her were priceless. She liked the laid back manner of her partner, laughing to herself now as she recalled his lazy swagger, smug confidence and devious wit. On top of that, Crane’s own underlying charm, loyalty and chivalry had still been in full force.

She knew that she would also miss the physical contact. There were moments of comfort and closeness that seemed completely natural. It just felt good and she didn’t want it to go away.

She rolled onto her side as her mind finally started to settle. She realized that she would have to confront Crane sooner than later. Make sure that he didn’t let their little adventure affect their relationship or how he treated her. She had to remind herself that he was still the crazy 18th century transplant who sometimes drove her up the wall.

*Don’t worry Crane, you didn’t do anything wrong.*

She finally managed to drift off into a deep sleep as Crane’s distinctive voice echoed in her head.

*I…remember…everything…*

………

Abbie slept for almost twelve hours, finally dragging herself out of bed after eleven in the morning.

The first thing she did was check her messages. There were two from that morning; one from Captain Irving telling her to take the next two days off, and one from Jenny, checking up on how she was doing.

Nothing from Crane.

She pushed aside the slight twinge of disappointment, instead deciding to give Crane a little space.

Though Irving had given her time off, Abbie dragged herself to the Archives, slinking in through the underground tunnels and entering through the hidden back door that Crane had revealed existed months ago. She wanted to avoid all contact from anyone in the precinct. She needed answers not questions; answers to why Crane had lost his memory, why he was behaving in quite a different manner. What she didn't need were countless people in the police station grilling her on her and her strange partners' activities for the last three days.
It only took a couple of hours of rifling through some musty old books before a salient theory came together.

*This makes sense. This makes perfect sense,* she thought to herself as she flipped the dusty book shut.

She checked her phone for any new messages. Still nothing from her partner. She had not heard from Crane all day and now she was starting to worry.

Abbie decided she would go pay him a visit. He was probably avoiding her, avoiding facing the reality of the situation and in turn facing the consequences of his own actions.

*Okay, I can see that. He of the 18th century propriety and chivalry and such.*

Though Abbie had to admit that the men she had encountered during her little 18th century adventure didn't exactly behave as respectable and as chivalrous as the romance novels always seemed to indicate.

Still, she wanted him to know that she was not upset or mad at him or even fazed. He stood by her, protected her, and even doted on her, even though she was technically somewhat of a stranger to him.

Abbie needed him to know that his behaviour would not damage their relationship and partnership. She needed him to know that he had nothing to be ashamed about. They had an interesting adventure, one that in all likelihood, would probably repeat somehow in the coming years as they faced off against the coming Apocalypse.

Abbie wanted to be sure that he was okay, but also to provide him with the answers she knew he so desperately needed.

Crane needed to know why his actions were so...*unusual for him.*

She left the Archives at around seven that evening, the old leather tome tucked under her arm, and headed straight for Crane's cabin.

He would just have to get over it.

..............

Before she even knocked, Abbie peered through the window of the cabin's front door. She immediately spotted Crane, or at least the back of his head, seated on the couch and staring off into the fireplace. She could see the grey collar of his ever-present tie-front shirt and as always, his hair was tied back in a half-ponytail.

He was just sitting there, unmoving, as though lost in thought, mesmerized by the flickering flames.

She tapped lightly on the door to announce her arrival and entered a second later, not bothering to wait for him to open it.

At her entrance, Crane had turned his head towards her, a small smile appearing on his face when he realized who was at the door.

"Hey." She said softly.

"Hello, Miss Mills." He looked withdrawn and tired.
"How are you doing?" She asked as she took a step in.

"As well as can be, considering the circumstances." There was a noticeable sullenness in his tone.

Abbie just nodded knowingly. She took a few steps in and noticed the coat rack standing near the door. There were two almost identical navy blue military frockcoats hanging off the wooden hooks. One was in battered condition; wool pilled, collar ragged and metal buttons dented and tarnished. The second was in almost perfect condition; the hem, collar and lapels unflawed and the buttons spotless and undamaged.

It looked like Crane had made the effort to clean off the dust and dirt he managed to acquire from their rough and tumbler activities of the 18th century. His ‘new coat’ looked like it should belong in a museum.

"Well, at least you got a nice jacket out of this." Abbie quipped, pointing her thumb at the rack. "Good for fancy evenings, special occasions, you know."

Crane let out a little smile but there was no joy behind it.

"Did you sleep?" She asked.

"No, I have not. My mind has been consumed with trying to make sense of the last few days." He glanced down at the floor for a moment, adding "I do not know even where to start. I cannot reconcile…” He trailed off, his demeanour withdrawn and upset.

Abbie cautiously moved over to the couch and stood right in front of Crane. She noted that he was sitting cross-legged on the couch. On his left, there were two books lying open, as though he had been reading and put the books aside for a moment. One Abbie recognized as the Magikos book, the other, a Revolutionary War history book. A half empty bottle of rum was on the couch, resting securely against his right hip, giving Abbie a little chuckle. She could see that his cheeks were slightly flushed. Her partner sure did like his rum.

In her presence, he uncurled from his cross-legged position, straightened his long legs out and set his feet on the floor, trying to sit in a more proper manner. He did this slowly and gingerly, apparently trying not to move too fast. Abbie felt bad for him. The way he moved, she could tell his limbs were stiff all over.

She knew he must feel as physically pained as she did; battered, bruised and sore all over. Abbie realized Crane would be even worse. He was the one in a fist fight and he was the one dangling off the side of a moving wagon and he was the one who had violently slammed into the hard packed dirt trail from over several feet above the ground.

Abbie was surprised he could move at all.

"Crane…” She started cautiously but he shook his head, as though begging to speak first.

“I have overstepped my bounds.” He let out a pitiful sigh. “I do not even know how I will make amends. I do not even know if I can ever make amends. My behaviour towards you was indefensible, appalling.”

Crane leaned forward, set his elbows on his knees and rested his forehead in his palms. Abbie had never seen him so affected before. Usually he met challenges with a stiff upper lip and focused determination. Right now, he seemed really upset.

Abbie inhaled deeply. She knew this was coming. His sense of propriety and rigid nature were
rebelling against his behaviour the last few days. Once he stated that he remembered everything, she knew this was not going to be fun to deal with.

“Crane, I know what you are thinking, that you offended me or something because you weren’t a proper gentleman, but you really didn’t behave that badly. Maybe right when I first found you. But I was able to get the upper hand, I think.” She laughed a little, trying to lighten his mood.

Crane straightened up and leaned back against the couch, closing his eyes for a moment. She could see that her words had calmed him a little, but he was still a bit agitated.

Abbie continued on, hoping to allay his concerns. “I was never offended or affronted by your behaviour, Crane.” Abbie said matter-of-factly. “And I want you to know we are good, okay?”

“These thoughts have consumed me all day and all of the night.” He whispered. “I feel so utterly regretful over how inappropriately I have behaved towards you. You know I hold you in the utmost regard and if I…if I have hurt you in any manner…” He couldn’t finish his sentence.

Abbie sighed. She knew she would have to clear his mind of his concerns. Her voice was soft and comforting. “First of all, you didn’t do anything too bad. A little forward, yes, but trust me, it’s nothing I haven’t dealt with before, with guys trying to pick me up in bars before. So believe me when I say that you did not offend me.” She flicked her hand lightly now, dismissing his concerns.

“You are certain?” His eyes locked with hers now, his expression remorseful. “My behaviour was most inappropriate, Lieutenant. You know that.”

“Definitely certain. I’m a lot tougher than that, Crane. I think you know that. Like I said, we’re fine. Really, I’m not upset at all.” She smiled reassuringly at him.

He let out a long sigh, as though a heavy weight had been lifted off of his shoulders.

Crane was clearly relieved and Abbie could see that his overall body language had considerable improved. She hoped that any lingering doubts he had would disappear sooner than later.

Abbie now took a seat to his right, shifting herself at a 90 degree angle to him and tucking her foot under the opposite thigh. She took in his expression and now noticed the bruising. There were tinges of black and blue around the sides of his face and he had dark shadows under his eyes. A reddish brown scab split his lower lip in two places.

She made to raise her hand and gently stroke his face, but thought better of it. “So, what have you been researching?” She asked, indicating the open books instead.

"I have been trying to make sense of this situation, our situation, if I could maybe figure out my memory loss, and why we ended up in the 18th century in the first place."

Abbie now tapped the book resting in her lap. "I've been doing the same. I think I have an idea of what happened to us. Just a theory, but it almost makes sense."

Crane's demeanour perked up even more.

Abbie shifted a little forward and flipped open the book at the bookmark. She turned the book so he could read it and pointed to the lone figure on the left page. "Recognize him? You should."

Crane peered closer down. Abbie index finger pointed to the page showing an image of a painted portrait. It was of a man standing at the edge of a forest, a sword in his outstretched hand pointing ahead, as though about to attack. He was clad entirely in black; his outfit consisted of a simply
billowing linen shirt, breeches and knee-high leather boots.

Abbie now moved her index finger to the small paragraph below the picture. Crane read the text out loud.

**Wm. Franklin Bonleigh (1746-1773). Pirate and highwayman during the American Revolutionary War. Known for repeat ambushes of British and Continental Army gold shipments. A notorious womanizer and frequent brothel patron noted for several high profile dalliances with prominent wives of high-ranking military officials.**

Crane's mouth dropped open as he looked up at Abbie, his eyes wide in surprise. "That is Lieutenant Bonleigh, who was the Major's second in command. It was he whom I fought with upon the wagon." Crane voice was soft, almost in shock.

"Yup, that's him. The outfit's familiar too, isn't it?" Abbie pointed out. "You were wearing that exact outfit two days ago, remember? I even commented on it."

"I do remember. You told me that it was theatrical, I believe." He paused for a moment, shaking his head. "I don't understand. How did I take his place?"

"Well, that's part of my theory." Abbie said as she grabbed the rum bottle. "When you were part of Washington's army, did you ever escort a gold shipment? Perhaps around early June, 1773? Maybe you even knew it was called the Beasley shipment?"

Crane's brow furrowed a little. "Yes I did but it was not referred to as such. I was a Lieutenant in the 37th and was called upon to escort a shipment of gold and silver to assist in funding the war. But it was only once and we were never ambushed nor attacked in any manner. I do not even recall a man by the name of Beasley."

"Were you supposed to maybe take possession of a prisoner at that time?"

Crane's brow furrowed even more, as though he was trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Abbie smiled at his, her partner was ever the information gatherer. "We were told of a possible prisoner transfer, but it never materialized. I was told very little, as I was a mere Lieutenant."

"Do you want to hear my theory?"

"Very much so, Miss Mills. I am truly at a loss."

She took a swig of rum, the handed the bottle over to him. "Now this is just my theory mind you, but this is what I think happened. Technically, you belong in the 18th century. So I think that when we ended up in that time, you naturally slotted into someone's life. And I think that Bonleigh himself ended up being slotted into your original 18th century existence."

"What, are you saying that this man was living my life? That I was essentially fighting myself?"

Abbie nodded. "In a way, yes. Originally, you were supposed to be the Lieutenant guarding the shipment but Bonleigh took your place. You took over his life, and became the pirate that was supposed to attack the same shipment you originally were supposed to be guarding."

"Well, that is an interesting theory. It would explain the memory loss and feeling as though two separate persons inhabited my mind."

"Exactly. The behaviour, memories and personality of Bonleigh coupled with your own original
Crane rubbed his chin thoughtfully at this. "But how does that explain your presence?"

"Well, since I don't technically belong in the 18th century, there was no life for me to take over. I was just an extra person roaming around that time."

"That does make sense. But then, how were we able to cross paths so easily? And why did I take over that man’s life and not naturally resume my own?"

Abbie took the bottle out of his hands and took another swig. "I think it's two-fold. One, the spell book bound us together. We were destined to cross paths so we could find it and reverse the spell to get back home. Basically, to restore order in the universe, I guess. The Beasley shipment was the direct link to the book. I think Jacobson was destined to find me quickly and he was the direct link to Bonleigh. However, our paths needed to quickly cross. The only way that would happen was if you took over Bonleighs’ life."

Crane continued pulling at his chin, deep in thought for a moment before adding. "But there is more of a connection than mere convenience. We are also bonded together as Witnesses. We have an undeniable link unlike any other. Our fates are entwined deeply and our bond strong, ensuring that we will always be together or brought together, no matter the circumstances."

"You got it." Abbie grinned at Crane now, who was nodding his head as he continued to digest and accept this information.

"What you are proposing is quite logical."

Abbie bit in lip thoughtfully. "The only thing I haven't figured out the why the spell didn't work the first time, but the second time it did."

"I believe I have an answer to that particular conundrum." Crane slowly pushed himself off of the couch, his joints creaking a little as he did. He really looked like an old man, what with moving so gingerly and carefully. His entire body must have been an absolute wreck.

Crane moved over to the coat rack and fiddled around in one of the pockets of his ‘good’ coat. Reminding Abbie of when he had presented her with the cameo, he removed his hand and pulled out the gold necklace that they found lying on top of the magical spell book.

"I believe that in order to properly invoke a spell, the spellcaster must have this trinket on his or her person."

"Really?" Abbie said, surprised.

"The first time I read the words, we were not in possession of this artifact. The second time, yes. I had slipped it into my coat pocket. When I read the spell, it obviously - and luckily - executed properly."

"Well, that also makes perfect sense." Abbie replied.

Crane resumed his place on the couch, again slowly and stiffly lowering himself down into the seat.

Abbie cleared her throat a little. She wasn't sure how he would take this next question, but it was something she had been wondering about all day. "I need to ask you something personal." She could see Crane's upper body go rigid, though in his banged up state, it took a bit of effort.
"I'm not sure how long you were with the other pirates before I showed up in the brothel room." She drummed her fingers against her leg, trying to think of the best way to ask. "Did you...you know...do anything with one of those ladies."

Crane expression went immediately to shock. "No. God No! I did nothing of the sort!" He was taken aback and Abbie saw that his fingers twitch rapidly for a moment.

Abbie was careful to keep her voice neutral. "Well, when I walked in, you were, you know, undressing the blonde woman. Remember? Just wondering if she was the only one?"

Crane rubbed his forehead again in frustration. Abbie could sense he wanted to be open with her, but at the same time, was mortified by the revelations. "I woke up in the room, alone, on the bed. I did not remember anything, even the previous night. My head was pounding quite fiercely. Jacobson had wandered in and commented on my having consumed a large quantity of whiskey the previous evening. I just assumed that was why I was afflicted with the headache and did not remember anything." He let out a long sigh and Abbie spied his fingers twitching a little again, "Two hours later, that lady arrived. I had apparently requested her for the evening. I felt...felt compelled to have relations with her...." He trailed off, "Then you arrived minutes later."

"And then you felt compelled to have relations with me." Abbie pointed out. "To try and seduce me."

"Yes." Crane grimaced a little. He was clearly embarrassed and angry with himself. He would not look at her, instead staring off into the fireplace. "I will admit it. You are very beautiful, exquisitely lovely. Those words were not a lie. But surely I am not the first man to comment on this. I am merely pointing out the obvious." Abbie could tell he was trying to state things neutrally, logically, to not divulge any of his potential own true feelings.

If Bonleigh was originally supposed to be some notorious womanizer, then Crane's behaviour made sense to her. He was just doing what the original pirate would normally have done.

"Miss Mills, once again, I cannot tell you how utterly regretful and mortified I am by my behaviour towards you." He grabbed the rum bottle from her hands and took a long drink. "Tell me how I can make this up to you?"

Abbie couldn't help but smile at this a little. He truly looked embarrassed. "Well, you're not quite exonerated." Abbie pointed out with a grin. "I believe I told you there would be hell to pay."

"And I will be rightly paying that debt for a long time, I suspect."

He turned to face her now and took her hands in his, an action that surprised her a little. "You must tell me how I can make amends. I truly am sorry for putting in such an awkward position."

"Or positions." She joked.

"Now you are making light of this." He said in frustration.

"Well, let's face it. You were definitely a bit of a sleazy bastard. But I think I handled you pretty well. Besides, I am going to assume that most of your actions were influenced by the 'other guy'."

"Please, Lieutenant. How can I redeem myself in your eyes?"

"Oh, I'll find a way." She teased, wiggling her eyebrows a little. She took a swig of the rum straight from the bottle, as a sudden boldness swept through her.
Abbie slowly rose from her seated position and straddled Crane, lowering herself carefully onto his lap, a smug and determined expression on her face. She wrapped her arms around his neck, gazing at him with seductive yet challenging eyes. It was the exact same expression he had given to her, when she first encountered his leering self in the brothel.

"Miss Mills..." Crane was clearly taken aback. She saw him swallow hard, his Adam's apple bobbing nervously against his slender throat. He could not make eye contact with her. Instead, he was staring over her shoulder towards the floor, trying to control himself.

She leaned closer to him, and with her fingers, gently moved aside his shirt collar, exposing his neck and a bit of shoulder. With her fingers, she brushed his dark shoulder-length hair to the side, exposing even more skin.

"Abbie...." He said softly, as though terrified as to what she would do next. She leaned forward and brushed her lips against his skin, alternating between the rough area under his jaw and the smooth skin on his neck. She so wanted Crane to feel uncomfortable, to retaliate for his 18th century sleazy behaviour.

"Do you remember when you did this?" she whispered, as she kissed his ear and lobe, running her tongue along the length. There was no verbal response; instead she could feel him swallow hard again and his breathing speed up.

No? Fine...she thought, a wicked smile growing on her lips. She now grazed her teeth along his neck, moving from his earlobe to the join of his neck, as much as his shirt would allow. She was doing exactly what he did to her, while he was putting up her hair in the bathtub.

She wanted her revenge and dammit, she was going to get it.

Crane inhaled sharply as she bit down slightly, then gently sucked at his warm skin, her tongue slowly teasing and licking. She could feel the hot pulse in his neck grow even stronger.

She now moved back up to his earlobe, biting and nipping a little before whispering sensuously, "Remember this?"

She barely heard his response, his voice was so low. "Yes...yes...oh god...I..." he trailed off as he closed his eyes and inhaled deeply, unable to articulate at all.

“And what about this?” She whispered seductively as she moved her lips slowly along his jawline to his mouth, kissing along the way. When her lips reached his, she teased his mouth open with her tongue. She kissed him long and slow and hard, her tongue caressing his - god, he was responding! – and her hips grinding against his –Was he ever responding… – then she pulled back slowly, her own swollen lips gently pulling on his lower lip as she did.

Abbie now leaned back against her thighs and looked him straight in the eyes, a self-satisfied expression on her face. "Good!" She declared with an annoyed voice. "You deserve it. I told you I was going to make you suffer. Remember the bathtub thing. And the bed thing. And the against the wall thing?"

She had not removed her arms though, her wrists gently resting on his shoulders as she stared into his eyes with a superior and determined expression on her face.

She couldn't help but almost feel bad for him. His ears and cheeks were incredibly flushed and red. He looked utterly remorseful yet incredibly turned on.
"You know you deserve this, right?" She asked pointedly.

"I know." He whispered. His chest was rising and falling rapidly, as though he was trying to control his breathing.

"And you know why I'm doing this?"

"I do." He replied, raising his eyes to hers. "You have no idea how regretful I feel."

They locked eyes for more than a minute, silently reading each other’s expression. It was only a moment, barely a flash, but as she studied his expression, she saw it. Just a hint of a smarmy smile – no, a slight curl at the corners of his mouth - exactly like when she first met pirate Crane.

She cocked her head as the realization hit, a smirk slowly spreading across her face. "You bastard..." Her voice was barely a whisper. Her head shook a little as she let out a knowing laugh. "You enjoyed trying to seduce me, didn't you?" She now lowered her arms to her lap.

Crane expression changed immediately. "Miss Mills, I would never ever do anything to cause you harm. I cannot believe you would even consider it." He was genuinely appalled and offended.

"That's not what I meant." she said, still grinning in amusement. "I think you enjoyed it. Enjoyed the hunt and the flirtation itself. Maybe even the response. Don't deny it."

Abbie herself didn't feel offended or angry or appalled. She got an absolute kick out of this. Her 18th century partner - he who always seemed so stiff and proper and full of unwavering propriety - was a total flirt.

She stared at him, and he once again could not meet her eyes. But then she saw it again. Just a hint, but there it was. His blue eyes glittering just a little and the corner of his mouth tweaked ever so slightly in a slight smile. He just couldn't help it.

She folded her arms across her chest as she shook her head in amusement. "Unbelievable. Just unbelievable. Here I am trying to get you back, and you're reveling in the last three days."

He raised his eyes again and locked with hers, a sheepish smile on his face. "I am sorry."

"Not so innocent now, are we?"

"Miss Mills, I pray you accept my apologies. I honestly would not have...." he trailed off again, unable to complete his sentence. "If I knew..."

It took her a moment to realize that she was still straddling him. She slowly slid off of his lap and rose off of the couch. "Well, I think I got some of my revenge – for now."

Crane could only slowly nod.

Abbie had to laugh. It seemed her ‘revenge’ totally incapacitated her Witness partner. “I’m going to get going.” She declared.

“Will you not stay?"

She gave him a knowing smile. “I don’t think that would be a good idea.” She looked down at him with a bit of satisfaction. “You still have amends to make, by the way.”

“I know.” He replied softly.
She walked towards the door to leave just as a devious idea popped into her head. She knew exactly how she was going to give Crane a little more hell. She turned to face him, a mischievous expression on her face. "You shower in the mornings, right?" She asked.

He looked at her strangely, confused by her question. "Yes..."

"Around seven am?"

His eyes narrowed a little. He was not sure what she was asking. "Yes, around that time."

"Good to know." She turned a little in the doorframe, before turning back to him and said, "You know I have a key to the cabin, right?"

His eyes now widened and his mouth slightly dropped open.

She smiled. "Don't be surprised if I drop in the morning, you know, just to see how you are..." She trailed off, flashing him the most devilish grin. "I might pop by, you know, unannounced."

His mouth dropped open even more.

*I got him.* The look on his face was priceless. She was so going to get him back.

This was going to be her revenge. Just as he made the effort to watch her bathe, she was going to do the same to him. She would watch him when he was least expecting it, or at least make him think she was going to surprise him in the shower. He wouldn't know when, but he would have to be on his toes and on guard in anticipation.

Before he could protest, she airily declared, "See you later, Crane." and then sauntered out of the cabin.

The look on Crane's face made their entire 18th century adventure worthwhile.

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The /Alternate/ End

Chapter End Notes

*A/N:* This chapter has more of a "pearl-clutching" Crane, but as I mentioned, I don't think that's really him. But I didn't want to include some of the more heavier elements of the "True" ending, because it didn't fit.

Hope you enjoyed and THANK YOU for the comments and kudos!!!

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