

Wages and War

By Charlotte

Chapter I

Abraham and Mercy Foster had been struggling to feed their family for a long time. Unable to obtain a job with a strong income, Abraham had decided to open a family store in hopes that plenty of people would purchase almost all things in stock, giving him and his family plenty of money. Unfortunately, as his children began to grow, and prices began to rise, he found it harder and harder to care and provide for them. Unable to accept the fact that they needed help, both Abraham and his wife ignored the forever-lingering stress of money—until they could ignore its giant presence no longer.

~~~~~

It was July 25, 1914. The summer sun was boiling down on the city of Providence, Rhode Island. It sizzled on the roof of the shop, heating up the rows of fake jewelry lined up on black cloth and candles placed neatly on high shelves. Pots and pans clanked in the small breeze coming through the rusted screen. Providence was in an oven with a shut door, and the Foster children found almost no way to escape the heat. Jane Foster's younger brother and sister, Christopher and Georgiana, weren't old enough to watch the store when their mama and papa were gone. So they left their eldest sibling to the store, from 7am to 5pm everyday except on Sunday and alternate Saturdays. While she would be attending the three or four customers that came in, Christopher and Georgiana would run down to the docks to catch their friend Mary Collins before she left on her sailboat with her father. They got to ride around the harbor for almost the whole day, eating lunch out and enjoying the breeze. Jane would have the whole building to herself, except for the old lady in the back looking at bonnets and broaches.

The store wasn't a very handsome building. It was a brick two-story, with five windows in the front. A sign titled "The Foster's" hung on chains from a post extending from the side of the wall. The door was old and wooden, with flaking red paint and an old brass doorknob with specks of dirt splattered all over it. It was the run-down building on 311 Wickenden St., the one that people tried to avoid unless they knew what to buy on the inside. The interior was small, the first floor being the shop and the second being the apartment where the Fosters lived. There were three rooms upstairs: the main room, Mr. and Mrs. Fosters' room, and the spare room where the Foster children slept. The store was small, and had a backroom where they kept the old boxes and containers. The building in whole was old and run down, but it was all Jane's parents could afford. All that mattered to them was that they could run the store and still have a roof over their heads, *not* that there were more leaks in the roof for every year they were there.

Jane was just dozing off on the stool when she heard the familiar ding of the bell. She forced open one eye to see her close friend, Anastasia Bourgh, walk into the store before closing it with a smirk.

"If your parents come home, you'll be in an awful lot of trouble," giggled Anastasia, "You know they can't stand it when employees '*slack off*'."

"I'm sorry to say that isn't true for me, Ana. Firstly," sighed Jane, "my parents are never home before supper. Secondly, you could never truly understand *how* mad they would be, and thirdly!" she said, pausing for effect, "I am not an employee. I am their daughter, and I never get to see a penny at the end of the week like the rest of the working children in this God-forsaken city."

Anastasia hopped onto the high counter, dangling her feet over the worn wooden floor. Her long hair had come undone from her bun, forming a clump of blond tangles at the base of her neck. She was wearing a new summer dress, probably bought at some fancy store in a richer part of town. It was bright blue, with a white sash and little yellow seashells. Anastasia had a matching necklace, with a golden shell hanging from a thin chain. Jane tried not to feel anything other than disinterested, though she choked as jealousy clogged up her throat.

"So, do you want to go down to the docks? I heard that Georgiana and Christopher were already down there with Mary. Maybe we can see if Caroline's busy... you know, Caroline Lucas? Caroline and I go to the park almost every Wednesday... you would both get along wonderfully! I wonder if we could borrow her father's boat... imagine how jealous that would make Mary! She is the jealous type, isn't she?" Anastasia laughed, playing with a strand of hair that had come loose from the clump. She hopped down from the counter, strolling over to a glass jar filled with sand from the beach. Jane had arranged it in a way that you could see all the different colors and rocks in the bottle. Her friend clasped her hands behind her back, bending over until her breath fogged up the glass. She pulled one hand forward, tapping on the jar with a devious look in her dark brown eyes.

"If you even shake that jar a little, I swear I will cut off your hand and feed it to the fish!"

"Fish don't *eat* hands. In fact, Caroline told me that they don't eat anything except for old shoelaces and sea grass. I wonder why people love fish so much... If I ever ate anything that once had shoelaces in its stomach, I would die."

Though Jane knew Anastasia was wrong, she said nothing of it and they continued to bicker till Anastasia decided that she would much rather go down to the docks and wait for Mary and the younger Fosters. Jane watched her go, and once again closed her eyes until she no longer felt hot and could dream of the sea and water... or anything other than bright blue dresses that she would never be able to even think of buying.

~~~~~

Hours later, after a supper of broth and bread, Jane and her younger siblings were sent to bed. The room was hot and muggy, making the air feel thick. Christopher had fallen asleep quickly, but Georgiana and her older sister lay next to each other in silence, sticking

their legs out the side of the bed to cool off just a little. But the heat trapped them, and it wasn't long before Georgiana sat up.

"Janie?" she whispered. "Janie, are you asleep?"

"Georgie, how many times do I have to tell you to call me *Jane*?"

"And how many times do I have to tell you to call me *Georgiana*?"

"Just go to sleep, *Georgie*. We have to get up early tomorrow to get down to the docks before we have to go visit the Collins to apologize for continuing to take up space on their boat." And with a huff, Jane turned over and closed her eyes. Georgiana did the same, but it wasn't long before she was out of bed and pacing the middle of the room.

"Janie... don't you see the light coming from under the door? Mama and papa are still awake. They are never up this late! Want to hear what they're talking about?" Georgiana whispered across the room. Christopher stirred, and Georgiana asked him to listen with her. Christopher, though not fully awake, obeyed and went to join her by the door. They pressed their ears against the wood and listened. Jane remained in bed.

"Abraham, that's nonsense!" said their mother. "You can't let them stay! We barely have enough room as it is, without your brother *and* his wife coming here."

"What am I supposed to do, leave them to die in the war? You know there will be a war. They've been sending letter after letter talking of the tensions. Then what happens? I can't say no to them... they have it as bad as we do."

Christopher looked wide-eyed at Georgiana. They quickly ran over to the side of Jane's bed, pulling her to her feet. In hushed tones, they told her that they were talking about their aunt and uncle in England. Apparently they thought there was some *war*. Jane immediately dismissed this as nonsense, but with more coaxing from Georgiana and Christopher, she leaned her head against the door.

"I suppose you're right. But how are we ever going to pay for their food? Can't we at least wait until it's certain... until it's necessary? I don't want you to have to work anymore than you should. And the children shouldn't have to run the store as they do." Their mother sounded uncommonly upset and worried, something that they've never heard in her before.

"Oh Mercy, you know that Jane is old enough to run the store alone during the day! She's near fourteen now. And Christopher is a strong boy! Sailing has made him strong and determined. Georgiana doesn't have any known talent yet, but she will grow into something useful. Besides, maybe with Tom and Louisa coming here, they could help us earn something? Perhaps the war won't be as bad as they say—it'll probably be over in a few months. By then I would have a real working job in some factory making clothing or bullets for soldiers, and we can move away from Wickenden St., and get a house on the water...you've always wanted a house on the water."

"Now, don't you dare tempt me. You're trying to make something good out of this mess and I won't have it."

Their parents were now silent, and after a few moments the light was blown out and the door to Mr. and Mrs. Foster's room was shut. The siblings returned to their beds quickly, and tried to fall asleep. That night, Christopher and Georgiana dreamt of all the things they could buy when their father got a job with lots of money. But all that was on Jane's mind were the thoughts of destruction and ruin.

Chapter 2

The next day was nearly over, and Jane never heard the end of her parent's conversation. The children had spoken in hushed tones the whole walk to the Collins', and the entire way back. They let their parents walk on ahead, and were never comfortable talking on the subject until Mr. and Mrs. Foster went around the bend. Jane would relax into her own thoughts and wouldn't really listen while her younger brother and sister chattered away, until they too had nothing else to say. Occasionally, something in a store window would catch Georgiana's eye and Christopher and Jane would have to pull her reaching fingers away from the door.

There was one necklace in particular that a stubborn ten-year-old could not be parted with, and her siblings, after trying everything, simply walked away and left her standing in the doorway unsure if she should go in or not. But it was never long before they heard Georgiana's light footsteps running up the hot pavement to join them.

"Jane, don't you have any money? Someone as old as you—someone with a job especially—should have *some* money!" Georgiana whined, tugging on her sister's sleeve. Jane shook her off.

"You're being ridiculous. Why in the world would mama and papa pay me? I'm not someone they hired; I'm their child! I don't get a check at the end of the week, and I certainly have more hours than any person would ever work for, no matter what the cost! And it's not like you ever help me, so why would I pay for some little trinket when I could be helping mama and papa pay for the food that you continue to complain about every day? That feeds you even though you say it's barely enough to fill your stomach? But it's enough, and you aren't sensitive to the fact that we are *poor*. Not everything in life can be given to you, because we don't have enough money. If you want the necklace, buy it yourself. Oh wait... you don't have any money either." Jane snapped, turning around in the street. Christopher stared uncomfortably at the ground, unsure whether to tell his older sister to not be so hard, or to help them both reach an agreement.

"While Christopher is collecting his thoughts, (hopefully finding me a good reason to slap you), I can only say that I have every right to complain. If they would only ask for some help! You heard what papa said last night, that our aunt and uncle have it just as hard as we do? How in the world could they travel here if it was so! They have plenty of money, and I think that our parents, if they cared for us at all, would ask, if not for our sake for theirs. Or are you just as proud as they, refusing to seek help while *I* suffer... and Christopher too, of course."

Now both Jane and her stared at their sister in stunned silence. They had never heard her speak in such a way, so unfeeling and insensible that she would disgust both of them. Turning away, they continued up the street leaving Georgiana standing in the road.

“It’s alright Jane! No need to feel bad—just apologize, all will be forgiven. I’m certain you agree with me,” Georgiana called after them, pausing for a reply, “I mean, it’s always terrible when an older sister is wrong... especially about something so grown up as money! But sometimes you just have to face the truth. Papa and mama need money but are too proud to ask for help, even with our aunt and uncle coming to help. Simple as that! Surely you must have something to say when I speak of them in that way? Anything. Or we can just forget about it... want to go down to the docks? Or maybe down to the beach? It’s just around the corner...”

But her siblings did not turn back, and only once they were out of sight did Georgiana realize they weren’t coming back at all.

~~~~~

Jane was heartbroken. She had always thought of Georgiana as the perfect little sister she always wanted. She was normally very tolerable, and even sweet at times. But after seeing how she truly felt, Jane wasn’t sure that Georgiana was the little girl she always made her out to be. Maybe after overhearing that conversation a few nights ago, or seeing the letters from Uncle Tom and Aunt Louisa made her uneasy. It was very probable, and Jane considered it carefully. After deciding to forgive and forget, she left the crummy store to go see if she could find Georgiana at the docks.

The walk was short, and Jane didn’t feel at all hot. The sun was covered by dark clouds, making the heat not as intense as she had feared and she was able to walk a mile or two with ease. The sky was a dark grey, and the wind hit her face with a slap. But she continued on, and after a while finally made it to the shoreline. She could see many ships, and a particular passenger ship caught her eye. It was from across the ocean, she could tell. There were so many people coming off the ramp that at first she didn’t see the mess of brown hair and the patched up yellow dress. *Georgiana*, thought Jane. She jogged down the ramp onto the old wooden docks rocking on the rough sea. Georgiana kept moving forward, towards the ship at a quick speed.

“Georgiana! Georgiana, please stop running away, there’s no place to go! Georgiana!” Jane called out to her younger sister, but the wind carried her voice back to the shore. She saw her youngest sibling stop behind two passengers from the ship. The couple turned, and Jane was suddenly filled with joy and curiousness.

“Jane!” cried her Aunt Louisa, “Jane, my darling, over here! Jannnne!” Uncle Tom waved madly, holding onto his hat with his other hand. Georgiana hugged them both. Jane ran towards them, and picked up one of the suitcases.

“What in the world are you doing here, Aunt Louisa?” questioned Jane. “Papa never told us you were coming.”

“He didn’t? I asked him to tell you right after he had written me back. But he was always an independent mind! No one could ever tell him what to do, except your mother... of course.” Aunt Louisa sighed.

Uncle Tom took the suitcase back from Jane and smiled. Georgiana giggled, grabbing onto Aunt Louisa’s jacket. Jane remembered when her papa’s sister was married, almost ten years before. Uncle Tom was strange and wild then, but with Louisa’s guidance he became the image of sophistication. The two were both very different, one once being reckless, but now quiet and pleasing. The other was capable of making the room look brighter just by uttering a word. But they both got along wonderfully, and the Fosters were always happy to see them both.

The walk back to the store was spent talking of their countryside home in England. Uncle Tom had told them that he had purchased a new foal, a tiny thing with a gorgeous golden coat and a black mane.

“What in the world is a foal?” asked Georgiana.

“A foal’s a baby horse,” answered Aunt Louisa.

“I’m afraid you’re wrong!” shouted her young niece. “A baby horse is called a pony!”

Jane rolled her eyes, smiling at her uncle. Aunt Louisa assured her that a pony was, in fact, *not* a baby horse. Georgiana tried to convince her confident aunt that she was mistaken. They bickered like sisters until they arrived at The Foster’s store, and continued to argue until Jane’s parents came to greet them.

~~~~~

“Louisa! Tom! What a surprise this is!” exclaimed Mrs. Foster as she flew down the stairs, with Mr. Foster not far behind. He slapped his brother on the back, smiling as he did so. Then he turned to his sister-in-law, warmly shaking her hand. For a moment they exchanged smiles and compliments, inquiring about each other’s health and home. Christopher had joined his sisters, asking them why their aunt and uncle were in the United States.

“I haven’t not the slightest idea,” sighed Georgiana, “but I don’t suppose it matters much. All that I can think about is the fact that we’ll have to sleep in the storage room while they’re here! You know how small it is—we’ll be on top of each other all night!”

Christopher laughed, but Jane looked at her sister in disappointment. It was the second time today that Georgiana was disrespectful and her older sister, after giving her a second chance, tried to pull her aside to remind her that she should still have manners. But Georgiana simply waved her off, and turned back to her aunt and uncle, impatient to be apart of the conversation. Jane was indignant, but after Christopher asked her to help set the table, she quickly forgot why she was angry.

Christopher pulled the red checked tablecloth out of the cupboard above the stove. Jane arranged the candles once it was laid out, then quickly grabbed forks and knives from the drawer. His brow furrowed, and he told Jane that they didn’t have enough napkins for

everyone. Jane quickly ran downstairs to “borrow” some from the store. She bumped into her aunt on the stairs.

“Goodness Jane! What’s the rush?” laughed Aunt Louisa.

“Sorry, I was just going downstairs to get the napkins. But the table isn’t fully set yet, so I have to hurry to finish quickly. The soup has been cooking for a good hour, so it’ll be ready soon and we want the table set by then.”

Jane squeezed around her, and continued down the stairs until her feet were planted firmly on the wooden floor. She searched the racks and found the cream cotton napkins, then returned to the main parlor upstairs to find Christopher placing all seven napkins down.

“I found extras!” he smiled, and Jane sighed, and returned the cloths to the shelf.

~~~~~

That night, the Fosters ate chicken soup, with real vegetables and meat. The children felt as if they had never been full before, and the parents remembered how good soup could taste. Louisa and Tom rambled about their farm, and only stopped when the blueberry pie was served at the end. Mrs. Foster never told them that the Collins had given it to them as a gift only a half hour before.

Soon the sky was dark, and the children were sent to bed. Jane and her brother left willingly, drained by the excitement of the day. But Georgiana complained and argued until her father nearly pushed her into the storage room. Her older brother was already ready for bed, climbing onto the mattress laid out on the floor. Her older sister was just getting out her sleep clothes, laying them on the bed and stretching to untie the bow in her hair dark brown hair. Georgiana sat on the worn floor, hitting the wooden boards with the palms of her hands.

“Georgie, would you please stop. Christopher is trying to get to sleep,” Jane hissed through the darkness.

“But I’m so bored! Do you think I could go upstairs and get a glass of water? I’ll be quiet. They won’t even know I’m there, I promise.”

Jane knew that Georgiana was incapable of being anything other than loud, so she said she would get her a glass. Rising from the ground, Jane pushed past her sister and shut the door behind her. She waited until she heard sheets move and her sister climb under the quilt before she continued up the stairs.

~~~~~

There was a light on in her parents’ room, and she heard mumbling coming from the other side of the wall. Jane tiptoed to the cupboard, searching for one of the big glass mugs. But it was dark, and took long time before she located them. Filling up the glass with cool water, Jane listened to her parents talk with her aunt and uncle.

“But Louisa, that can’t be true!” exclaimed Mrs. Foster.

“I’m afraid it is. War was declared on July 28, 1914. That was only two days ago! Some French duke, France Ferdinand, was killed! (At least I think he was French). We’re lucky that we were allowed out of the country. Tom would’ve had to stay behind! We can’t tell you how grateful we are—I know how crowded you are here!”

“Oh, it’s perfectly alright. But, do you have a plan for the future? We’re running on fumes with just the five of us—seven people to feed is a lot. Maybe Tom could help Abraham find a better paying job, and you and I could help Jane run the store. Then, once we save enough, we could buy a bigger apartment, and rent this one out for a different family. Then we could raise a few more dollars, and you could get your own place in town. Once the war’s over, of course.”

“That’s a wonderful idea! Tom, Abraham, what do you think? Don’t you agree Mercy has the most wonderful plan? I think so. Well, what do you—”

At that moment, Jane’s father coughed loudly. Aunt Louisa fell silent, and Jane heard footsteps coming closer to the door.

“I just need a drink,” said Abraham. The doorknob twisted, and Jane turned back to filling the cup before he entered the room.

“Jane? What are you doing up so late?” scolded her father, walking over to stand by her.

“Georgiana wanted a glass of water, but I didn’t want her up longer than she should be so I decided that I could get the water myself for her.”

Jane turned the faucet, and the water stopped flowing, but continued to drip into the bottom of the sink. She held the mug to her chest, tapping on the cool glass with her fingers. Mr. Foster didn’t say anything, but moved so that she could get to the stairwell. Before her foot was placed on the last step, she heard the faint mumbling of grown ups talking again. Though Jane would usually get closer to hear more, she didn’t want to hear about anything having to do with war.

Chapter 3

Georgiana woke Jane early the next morning. Christopher was done putting away some of the pillows, but he needed Jane to get up for him to get the rest. She rolled back over, pulling the blanket over her head. Georgiana snatched it, pulling it off and exposing Jane to the cold summer morning.

“Jane. *Jane*, Christopher needs you to get up. Jane, listen to me. I’ll go and get mama if you don’t! And don’t you think I won’t!”

Christopher laughed, and Jane quickly scrambled to her feet.

“Have you noticed how cold it is, Jane? It’s cold. Isn’t that just lovely?” Her brother snickered, his blue eyes gleaming with love and humor. Jane sighed, and looking down realized she had fallen asleep in her clothes. She brushed out the wrinkles, and decided she needed to leave before seeing her aunt and uncle that morning. It sounded silly in her head... they had just gotten here! But their news of war was making her uneasy, and Jane thought that maybe visiting Anastasia would calm her nerves. She left without telling her siblings where she was going.

The walk through Providence seemed to take forever. She took time thinking of the people living on the busy streets, wondering if they had any relatives or friends in Europe. Jane kicked rocks down the hill, her head down deep in thought. She was just about to turn the corner when she walked into someone else.

“Jane! You should really watch where you’re going. You almost stepped on my new shoes! Aren’t they just the cutest things you’ve ever seen?” Anastasia bragged, putting one foot forward, showing off the bows and ribbons, the sparkle and the shine. Shoes had always drawn Jane in—the comfort of walking on air, without having to use cardboard to fix holes.

Jane looked up at Anastasia. Her friend was shifting her weight from side to side, her hands on her hips and her mouth pouted. Jane sighed, sitting down on the corner of the street. Anastasia, after smoothing down her skirt and rearranging her headband, sat down next to her. Jane put her head in her hands, counting the rocks scattered on the side of the road.

“So Jane. How are your aunt and uncle? I heard they got in yesterday,” her friend questioned, poking at the fleshy part of Jane’s upper arm. Jane brushed Anastasia’s hand away, and continued to count the rocks. Only she began to realize she was beginning to only count *one* over and over again.

“They’re okay, I guess. They miss their farm, but they’re very happy to be here.”

“Well that’s good. How is everything else? Is Georgiana behaving herself? Don’t you remember when she threw that egg at poor Mary? Oh, I thought I would of died of laughter! That was only a few weeks ago, am I right?”

Jane looked up from the ground, looking into Anastasia’s laughing eyes. She could tell that her friend was trying to engage her in some conversation that always led to red faces and loud giggles that could be heard all over Providence – but Jane didn’t feel like laughing today. She was starting to regret coming to visit her friend. Looking back at the ground, she began counting rocks again. *One. One. One... one.*

Anastasia grabbed Jane’s sweaty hand, and they sat there like that until they lost track of time. The only thing that connected Jane to the earth was the rocks, millions and millions turning into just one, and Anastasia’s worried grip tightening with every minute of silence. The first rock crawling in front of her eyes, like the first words of war and the chilling realization that things would never be the same.

~~~~~

The months seemed to race by while Jane watched from behind a cloud of mist. It was a blur, and she didn't know what to make of it. Her father and uncle had both gotten jobs at the old mills that were now put to use making clothing and blankets for soldiers. Her aunt and her mother would run the store with her, but Jane was sometimes overcome with fear and had to sit down away from her aunt. Louisa and Tom were, after all, only there because of the war. It was a cold September morning when her father and Uncle Tom quickly ran in, closing the door with a bang. Jane was upstairs with her aunt making ham sandwiches for lunch, and her mother was busy dusting the floor in her bedroom.

"Mercy! Louisa! Come down, come down, we know you're up there! Jane, you come down as well... Christopher and Georgiana, make sure you're ready to be mind-blown!"

Mr. Foster hollered up the stairs, surprising an old customer so much that she dropped the bowl. Uncle Tom quickly told her that she could leave without paying for the broken dish, and turn to smile at his brother. Mrs. Foster and Aunt Louisa flew down the stairs, the children on their heels, frightening the old woman even more. She left the store without a backwards glance at the broken china on the ground.

Jane came down more slowly than her siblings. She lingered at the bottom of the stairs, wondering if it would be something about the war. Jane had begun to distance herself from any conversation involving war. But the smiles on her father and uncle's faces drew her in, and it wasn't long before she went to stand by Christopher.

"Well?" asked Mrs. Foster, looking at her husband and brother-in-law. The men looked at each other, and then Mr. Foster stepped forward to put his arm around Georgiana's shoulders.

"You all know that the mill pays well. And with Tom and I both working, we've had a good load of money coming in. Now, Jane, Mercy, and Louisa have made the store run better than ever! We've been living like kings every night—chicken and turkey! But Tom and I have had a breakthrough. I've been looking at some houses, and—"

"Papa, what are you getting at?" questioned Georgiana, tugging at the hem of his shirtsleeve. He patted her head, and told her not to interrupt. Then he continued.

"—We've found one. It's a small thing, but it has two floors, a real kitchen, a living room, a dining room, a bathroom, and three bedrooms!"

The entire room seemed to shake as the loud voices of Georgiana mixed with the excitement of her aunt and mother, as well as the quiet exclamations made by Christopher. But Jane stood in stunned silence, relief filling her chest and joy pushing out all the worry that had made a home in her heart for many months. She felt the tears begin to sting her eyes, and she made her way over to Uncle Tom. He smiled down at her, and they hugged for the first time in what felt like forever. She was no longer afraid of war, and she would never despair at the thought of her aunt and uncle living with them.

It took half an hour for the women and younger children to settle. Christopher and Georgiana demanded that Mr. Foster took them down to see the house at once, but Mrs. Foster wanted to talk about the cost and the location. The grown ups overruled the children,

but their father gave the address. It was farther down Wickenden St., and it took some time to find it. But once Jane spotted it, they couldn't help but gape.

The house looked small on the outside, but they could tell it extended farther back. They could just catch a glimpse of a tiny yard behind a white fence. The roof was slanted, with rough black shingles. There were white boards on the front of the building, with a fresh coat of paint that shone in the sun. There were violets lined up in rows in front of the house, and other bright flowers in window boxes. The door was green, with two big windows instead of panels in the middle of the door.

Christopher leaned on the fence, staring at the stone path that led to the front door. Georgiana, usually disgusted by public affection, grasped her older sister's hand in silence. The Foster children looked at their new home, so inviting and warm that they couldn't breathe. But when Georgiana made a move to open the gate, Jane told her that they couldn't go in until their father let them. Jane waited for Georgiana to argue, but instead her younger sister surprised her by saying that waiting was probably the right thing to do. Christopher smiled, taking hold of Georgiana's open hand. Together, they all turned back up Wickenden St. to the store where the adults would tell them if they were really going to live in that house of desire.

## **Epilogue**

The war lasted for four more years, the United States joining in 1917. Mr. Abraham Foster and Tom Foster were never drafted into the war, and neither was Christopher, who was only a year under the age limit. The Fosters had moved into their new home about a year after their aunt and uncle had come from England. Tom and his wife, Louisa, had moved into the apartment above the store, which they rented and later bought from Mercy and Abraham. Jane and her siblings spent their time gardening and playing in the yard outside, until Jane was old enough, and left for college. With the extra money saved from working in the mills, she was able to get the best education she could afford and went on to become a teacher. Christopher grew up to become a sea captain, and would usually be away from home on a trip across the ocean. Georgiana, who had begun to admire her older sister very much, followed in Jane's footsteps, becoming a teacher as well. But only after many years, when each had families and children of their own, did the Jane, Christopher, and Georgiana realize that because of the work in the mills, including profits from the store and aunt and uncle, were they able to be what they were and become the people they wanted to be.

Jane inherited the house on Wickenden St., but by then she was married to a Mr. Harry Perkins, another teacher from the Providence public school. They lived on Wickenden St. happily, her siblings constant visitors (unless Christopher was away). Jane would sometimes tell her children about her aunt and uncle coming from England, and the hectic first months of war. The Perkins would occasionally go back to "The Foster's" farther up Wickenden St., which was now owned by a friend of Louisa. But the name stuck, so that made Jane's storytelling much easier.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Perkins lived in the Foster House for over sixty-five years, the house later inherited by their eldest son, Fitz. Fitz made sure that every successor was a

descendant of the original owners—Mercy and Abraham Foster. The Foster house is still passed down through the generations, the story of the Great War told over and over again until it was memorized. How Jane and her siblings went through dramatic changes in their lives, and how they were able to move out of the dingy apartment above “The Foster’s” store.