

THE SOUTHOLD CHRONICLES + BOOK 3

# TO FOLLOW HER HEART

A NOVEL



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Rebecca DeMarino, *To Follow Her Heart*  
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This book is a work of historical fiction based on the lives of real people set during real events. However, details that cannot be historically verified, as well as some characters and events, are purely products of the author's imagination.

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Dedicated to  
Tom DeMarino,  
my husband and my true North Star



In loving memory of  
Lory DeMarino,  
my mother-in-law,  
who left a legacy of faith and love—  
1925 to 2015

# 1



July 16, 1664  
Southold, Long Island

“Did you hear me?”

Patience Terry stood silent, her mind awhirl. Had she not guarded her heart against this day? Against this pain that ripped through her like a thunderbolt? She looked into Mary Horton’s teary hazel-blue eyes. *The Swallow* had shipwrecked off the coast of Barbados, tattered and abandoned. No survivors. Captain Jeremy Horton and his crew lost at sea. Some bodies recovered, but no survivors.

Her mouth opened, but no words came out. Her lungs ached, so bereft were they of any air, she of any hope. As her legs gave way, she fell to the pillowed bench in front of the hat display and buried her face in the folds of her blue silk skirt. Her shoulders heaved with each silent sob.

Her friend knelt and drew her into her arms. “That’s good, dear. Cry. Let the tears fall.”

Patience could no longer hold back as torrents of tears soaked Mary’s shoulder. Her friend’s gentle hands patted her back to

comfort, but her temples pulsed with each new thought. Would she never be able to look up and see Jeremy's form framed in the doorway again? Or could he lie hurt somewhere? She'd begged him at his last visit to give up the sailing, to make a home here in Southold. One she dreamt would include her.

"What if he's not dead? What if he needs me?" She'd always prayed he would come to know he needed her in his life, but Lord, this was not how she'd envisioned it.

"You mustn't think like that. The ship has sunk. There was such a storm. And if survivors were able to make land at all, they would have landed on the shores of Barbados. Nathaniel Sylvester brought the news himself. He's just returned from his meetings there. 'Tis such a shock to know both of Barney's brothers are gone. It was so difficult when Thomas died. And now Jeremy. He was more than a friend to me, he was a dear brother." Mary's voice trailed as Patience's sobs began anew.

The door blew open as hurricane-strength wind and summer rain swept in with Lizzie Fanning's arrival, nearly lifting one of her own hat creations from her silvery curls. Mary's older sister and Patience's business partner, Lizzie looked in control as she slid the burgundy wool from her head, gave it a good shake, and settled it on a hat stand. "Mary told me on her way over here. I'm so sorry." She enveloped her friend in a hug, her own tears trickling from violet eyes. She looked up at Mary. "I came immediately after I got my loaves out of the oven. Zeke is on his way to your house."

Patience did not try to hide her pain as tears escaped in rivulets down her cheeks. She'd never told them in so many words of her love for Jeremy, but the two sisters had pulled her into their family long ago, and matters of the heart were understood rather than spoken.

Her sobs subsided into soft hiccups, and she drew in a breath. “What now?” was all she could whisper.

Mary reached out to smooth Patience’s locks. “Barnabas said he would talk to Reverend Youngs about a service for Jeremy. We should have a dinner.” She looked at her sister.

Lizzie nodded. “He shall not be forgotten.”

Patience shook her head. “We don’t know that he’s dead, though. Why would he not listen to me when I begged him to stop sailing? To stay here? Why could he not see that this would happen?”

“He was doing what he loved.” Mary didn’t look Patience in the eye as she uttered the sentence.

“You don’t believe your own words. Why do people always say such things? It does not help. I just want him back. Happy or not, I want him here.”

Mary blinked. “I know, I know. We all loved him. But I know for you ’tis especially difficult. He loved you. I know he did.” She pulled a fresh handkerchief from her apron pocket and mopped Patience’s cheeks.

“I treasured the time we spent together. But it wasn’t enough, was it? Why could he not love me enough to stay by my side and be my husband?” She took the embroidered cloth from Mary and delicately blew her nose, then turned to Lizzie. “I cannot work with you today. I’m sorry. I should like to spend the day by myself.” She looked from one to the other. “I love you both dearly, but I need time alone.”

Lizzie wrapped her arms around Patience’s shoulders. “Of course. But allow us to bring you a crock of soup or some tea and biscuits. You must eat.” She turned to Mary. “Could you help her upstairs?”

“Of course. Come, Patience.” Mary led her to the staircase.

“Let me build you a small fire while you change into a robe. It shall bring some comfort to the room.”



Mary padded down the stairs. She sniffed. A savory scent filled the house. “That smells good. Patience is sleeping now. I should go home to see how Barney is faring. He and Jeremy were so close—I fear he is taking this very hard. Will you be all right?”

Lizzie stirred the simmering soup, then tasted the broth. “I have enough work here to keep me busy while she rests. I need to take stock of my supplies. When Heather Flower came last, she brought two large bags of beads.” She nodded toward the shelves Ben had built for her.

Mary stood on tiptoe and peered into one of the bags. “Beautiful. She is amazing, and she’s never forgotten to come back and visit.” Heather Flower was the daughter of the Montaukett sachem—a princess to the English—and had almost married Mary’s son Ben. In a strange turn of events, she instead married a Dutch lieutenant from New Amsterdam. But she remained loyal to her English friends, too, and Dirk had kept his promise to bring her back often.

Mary took her cape from the peg and slipped into it. “Very well, then. I’m off. Thank you for staying with Patience.”

“She will be all right. There’s much to keep me busy in the hat shop. Tell Barnabas I am so sorry.”

“I shall.” She opened the door to the wind whipping outside and hurried down the lane, pulling her hood close against the slanted rain. She paused at the parsonage and cemetery on the left and thought once more of poor Jeremy before she crossed over to her home.

In the foyer, she brushed the raindrops from her cape and hung it near the hearth. It was still early and the house quiet. Barney would be in the back kitchen, having his devotions and stirring up the fire—perhaps putting the first loaves in the oven.

She mounted the stairs and stood quietly as she watched her daughters. Hannah, her firstborn daughter and quite the little mother, brushed and braided Mercy's hair. At four years old, Mercy was the youngest of their nine children and loved the attention her siblings bestowed. Mary smiled as Sarah, eleven, smoothed and aired out the bedclothes, while young Mary—her namesake—helped Abbey's daughter, Misha, change the wash water in the basins.

Abbey was like a daughter to Mary. The eldest child of Winnie, a Corchaug woman, and Mary's dear friend, she'd come to live with the Hortons when she was fourteen. She helped Mary in birthing and raising her children, and learned to read and write and bake in an English kitchen.

Mary came down the stairs and moved toward the back of the large house. The lively voices of her sons carried down the hall from the kitchen. It was amazing to her that her youngest boys, Caleb, Joshua, and Jonathan, were grown men. Well, Jonathan was almost a man. At sixteen he was also the tallest of the Horton men, save Jeremy. Her brow wrinkled at the reminder that her brother-in-law was gone.

As she drew close, she heard Barney telling them the tale of Mary and Jeremy working together to bring his blue slate over from England with the epitaph he'd written engraved on the slab. They'd heard the story hundreds of times, had they not? Yet each time they thrilled at the tale, and today the story was particularly poignant.

Mary entered the kitchen and slid in next to Barney at the



table. She squeezed his hand. “I’m thinking we need to get a stone for Jeremy. It won’t be a blue slate, but do you think we could get a piece of marble? Something nice so he shall not be forgotten?”

“Aye. I don’t know if we can come by marble easily. We might be able to find a nice slab of granite. The reverend is preparing a sermon in his memory, and if we had a church dinner between services, then we could set the stone in the cemetery and have a prayer service afterward.”

Caleb stood up and fetched a platter of ginger cakes, offering his mother one before setting them on the old oak table. “Are you sure Uncle Jeremy died? Is it not strange to have a funeral for someone when you don’t know where they are?”

Tears sprang to Mary’s eyes. “Patience said the same thing.”

“He died a watery death, I fear. The service will be for your uncle, but even more for those he left behind. We who loved him.” Barnabas ran his fingers through his thick, white hair. He was every bit as dashing as he’d been the day Mary had met him at the Webbs’ store so many years ago in Mowsley, England.

Jeremy was nine years younger than Barnabas. The image of her brother-in-law leading her around his ship the day they left England played in her mind. He’d been so young and exuberant and full of life. The last time she’d seen him, he hadn’t changed a whit. Not a gray hair on his head, his tanned skin emphasizing the green of his eyes, the burnished gold of his hair, the scent of the sea that clung to his clothes. “He was too young to die.” She set the uneaten ginger cake on the table and tipped her face into Barney’s shoulder.

“I know, my sweet. But God knows the plans He has for each of us.” His eyelids sagged, and he leaned his forehead against hers. “Jeremy included. We must put our faith in that

knowledge. Would you like to accompany me out to see John Corey? He might have a suitable stone. He came back from Gloucester last year with several.”

She pulled back. “Yes, if we take the wagon and Stargazer.”

“Of course.” He gave a nod to Joshua, who promptly departed to the barn.

Half an hour later, Mary watched Joshua lead Stargazer around to the front of the house with the wagon. She wanted the best for Jeremy. He’d done so much for her and Barney.



Lizzie busied herself with work in the kitchen and the hat shop, only stopping when Barnabas and Mary brought their girls over, along with two barrels of dried apples from the orchard. The harvest the year before had been a bumper crop, and Lizzie loved that she could still make apple butter and pies throughout the summer, especially on a stormy day such as this.

Barnabas rolled in the last barrel and heaved it upright. “The wind out there is fierce. We might be in for a real storm, a hurricane.” His shoulders drooped. “How is Patience?”

“She has not stirred, poor dear. I think the news has drained her.”

“’Tis good she sleeps. She needs to build strength to get through the coming days.”

After Barnabas and Mary left in search of a stone for Jeremy, Lizzie set the older girls to simmer the dried apple slices in cider while she and Abbey let little Mercy help them mix flour and lard for pippin tarts.

Patience woke but remained in her chamber, refusing the trays of tea and soup Lizzie brought to her.

As the tarts baked, the rest of the apples went into the large

copper pot over the fire, and Abbey helped the girls take turns stirring them with cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves using a large wooden paddle. The apples simmered down to a dark golden sauce. The storm blew outside, and the sweet smell of fall scented the house. The girls worked together to ladle the thick apple butter into crocks, and when they were done, Abbey and Hannah scrubbed the kitchen.

The stairs creaked as Lizzie climbed up to Patience's room once again, a tray arranged with sage tea and warm pippin tarts in her hands. "Here now, Patience. This should be just what you need."

Patience looked up, her blue eyes puffy but dry. "You may leave it, Lizzie. Thank you."

"I'll set it here." She carefully lowered the tray onto the table before she sat on the edge of the feather bed. "Would you feel better if you came down to the kitchen? Mary's girls are here."

Her voice faltered with regret. "No, I shall stay here. Tell them Auntie Patience is not feeling well."

Lizzie pressed her arms around Patience in a gentle hug, then rose. She looked back at her friend as she quietly closed the door.

Darkness came early due to the storm, and Lizzie lit candles in the kitchen below. The wind abated, but a gentle patter of rain on the shingled roof added coziness to the house while the girls waited for Mary and Barnabas to return with the wagon.

For the tenth time that day, Lizzie wandered into the hat shop and fussed with her displays, turning a hat on a stand one way and then moving it back to its original spot. She checked her inventory for the third time. Nothing had changed. She picked up one of the bags of beads Heather Flower had brought her and several of the glass vials Jeremy kept her and Doctor Smith supplied with and took them to the kitchen. "We can sort these beads, if you girls don't mind."

They chattered as they admired the different shapes and colors, and Hannah told the younger girls what she remembered of Heather Flower and Dirk's wedding. Lizzie's curls bounced as she shook her head. What turns life could take.

"Uncle Jeremy was here when they got married," she heard Hannah say. "He officiated because he was a ship captain."

Lizzie smiled. "Yes, he was. And such a good man."

They heard the clop of Stargazer's hoofs, and Lizzie went to open the door for Mary and Barnabas. They came in shaking the wetness from their cloaks and went to warm themselves in the kitchen.

Lizzie loaded several baskets with tarts and crocks of apple butter. "I'll bring more to you on the morrow, Mary, but these you can put in the bakeshop first thing in the morning."

"Oh my, they look delicious!" She gazed around the table at her daughters. "You have all been busy today."

Their faces lit up as Mary and Lizzie gushed over the girls' abilities in the kitchen. But it caused Lizzie to recall Mary's youthful attempts at the womanly arts of hearth and home. Lizzie had been patient as she attempted to teach her, but it was Barnabas who truly brought out the domestic side of Mary. Memories of growing up in Mowsley rushed in. What a shock it had been to learn that Jeremy planned a voyage to the New World and intended to take Mary and Barnabas with him.

Lizzie turned to her nieces. "Get your cloaks, girls, and help us carry these out to the wagon."

Mary helped Mercy lift her hood over her hair. "We found a beautiful stone for Jeremy. Mr. Corey says he can carve a proper epitaph on it. Barney is going to write it." Her eyes became moist as she spoke, and she leaned into her husband's arms. "We'll wait for the service for Jeremy until the headstone is ready."

“Yes, of course,” Barnabas murmured.

As he opened the door, Patience came down the staircase and paused just before the landing. “Mary? I thought I heard you.”

Mary rushed to her. “I didn’t want to disturb you. Are you all right?”

Patience’s straight blond hair hung loose about her shoulders, and she pulled it around to the side, twisting it like rope. “Yes. I think. Did I hear you say you bought a stone for Jeremy?”

“Yes, dear. Reverend Youngs will say a sermon for him on Sunday, and then we’ll gather in the cemetery in a few weeks when the stone is ready and have a small remembrance service.”

Lizzie could sense the tension, like the prickle on one’s skin just before a lightning strike.

“How can you do that? You don’t know he’s dead!” The words pounced from Patience, and everyone stood silent, mouths agape.

Mary bit her lip, and Barnabas stepped up to wrap his arm about her shoulder. “Patience, we all grieve. Prithee, do not make this more difficult. We must bring some closure to Jeremy’s life. We owe him that, do we not?”

She lowered herself to a staircase and buried her face in her robe. Lizzie rushed to join Mary and the two pulled Patience into their arms.

“Oh, dearest. We all feel the same way you do. Truly we do.” Mary looked at her sister. “Right, Lizzie?” She pressed her cheek to Patience’s. “But the water has given up nothing but a bit of wreckage and some of the bodies. Most of the crew is simply swallowed by the sea, and we must face that with courage.”

Barnabas gathered the girls by the door, picking up Mercy as she began to whimper.

Lizzie drew Patience closer. “I shall take her back to her

room, Mary. You go with Barnabas and the girls. I'll stay here tonight and come to you on the morrow. Patience needs time. Let me take care of her.”

Mary's eyes glistened as she left them and followed her family out the door.

Lizzie put her arm around Patience in a gentle hug and led her up the stairs. She tucked her friend under a thick quilt. The room was already dark, with not a candle lit. Lizzie sank into a chair near the bed, and in a moment she drifted into fitful dreams.



Patience lay awake, fingering the edge of her quilt. Her eyes were wide, as if they were propped open by her lashes, stiff with dried tears. Sleep would not come. Nor did she want it to. She needed to think of a way to find Jeremy. He couldn't be dead. She would know it if he were. And even if she could not be certain, she would not give up on him. No, never. She could not.