

# THE SECRET LIFE OF MISS ANNA MARSH

by Ella Quinn

## EXCERPT

Anna had never before been so thankful for country hours. Rutherford had joined them for dinner and tea, and she was still in her room by nine o'clock. Lizzy helped her out of her evening gown and in to bed until she had to dress again. The few months before Christmas were always the busiest for her smugglers.

She woke two hours later, scrambled into her habit, and slipped down the back stairs through the side door to the stables.

Humphrey's head was swathed in bandages. "Did the doctor remove it?"

"Yes, miss, he took out two. Warned me not to wait so long the next time. Said there was a woman he saw that let it go so long she died of the infection. Right glad I am you made me see him, miss. I'll be good enough tomorrow or the next day."

"You need to rest. There is no reason at all for you to worry about me."

"Master Harry . . ."

Anna sighed. "Humphrey, Master Harry is no longer here. I'll be fine."

Anna led Thunderer to the mounting block. Once on the large gelding's back, she turned him toward the meadow and the sea. After changing at the cottage, Anna arrived at the cliff with time to spare. She descended to the beach to wait.

Kev was the first to arrive. "We're going to be later than usual. Got word of a patrol."

"How'd that happen?"

"One of our men was in a tavern in Dover. He heard talk." Anna could just make out his grin. "They expect to be back in by midnight."

That was a relief. Harry had given her a contact in the event they were ever caught, but she'd never had to use it and didn't want to now. "Good. That won't put us off by much."

"I sent word to Lizzy that you'd be late."

Anna nodded. "Have you received the information for the next few shipments?"

"Yes, Mr. Arnold." Kev gave the dates for the next couple of weeks.

Once the men were assembled and the delivery signal given, Anna climbed back up the path.