THE SPINSTER, THE REBEL & THE GOVERNOR

by Charlene Bell Dietz

EXCERPT

“Maryland provokes my ill manners.” Fulke paced the kitchen floor as he talked. “We need women who are willing to marry. There are no wives to be had.”

“Take heart, brother,” Giles said, “maybe the next ship will bring some pretty ladies for us.”

Hesitant to speak, but then doing so, Margaret said, “Fulke, if it’s not beneath your standards, Mary and I would release any of our four maids from their servitude, any of which I am certain would agree to marry you.”

Fulke shook his head. “None are well born. These types of marriages only bring strife.”

Mary leaned over to him. “Sweet brother, our city has a couple of widows. Have you thought about courting them?”

“Like the Widow Hawley?” He glowered at her. “I would never choose her to be your sister-in-law—let alone live with that woman.”

His brother laughed and said, “Patience, Fulke. There’s still hope.”

“Giles, didn’t you listen to what our sisters said about the indentures becoming freemen? These young kids of four years ago are about to become freemen of age—looking for wives. They already outnumber their masters, who also want wives. I’m too old for all this waiting around. I need a loving wife who will bear me children.”

“Hold fast.” Giles said, “See what the next ship brings. Imagine some golden-haired beauty with a winsome smile strolling down the gangplank. Think of her pretty little shoes, stepping daintily onto our Maryland’s soil. When she looks around the gathered crowd to find a husband and sees your handsome face, she will swoon into your arms. A ship from England will arrive any day now.”

“Good.” Fulke strode to the door.

Then he swung around and pointed his finger at Margaret.

“Why Father thought I needed protect you, Margaret, I have no idea. It’s not you who need protection. Anyone you judge to be on the wrong side of right—they need protection. I shall leave on the next ship back to England.”