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D-Girl Project
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Call The Midwife Biographical Sketches
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JENNY LEE

Jenny Lee was born fortunate. She came into the world just as England's economy and culture were recovering from their exhaustion during the first World War. As the general public began to both have disposable income and feel the security necessary to dispose of it, her father's textile business woke up from its War-induced hibernation. Shortly before Jenny's birth, her parents, Thomas and Margaret, and her three-year-old brother Neal were able to move from central London to the up-and-coming suburb of Surrey. They were never so wealthy as to be free of worry, but her parents were able to shield her from some of life's seedier elements. She only attended the finest schools; she learned piano, violin, and how to ride a horse. Thomas inherited a garment shop from his father, but he significantly expanded it. His father had been a craftsman, but Thomas transitioned from craftsman to manager as the business grew. It dominated his life, and by extension, Jenny's. He was a loving father when he was present, but his work responsibilities turned him into a benevolent half-phantom in her life. He showed his love from a distance, by making sure his children would never want for adequate food, clothes, shelter or education.

From an early age, he groomed Neal to follow in his footsteps. Jenny was given less direction. She was the apple of her daddy's eye, and was never expected to be much more. As kind as her father was, he was still a product of his times, and in those times, there was no place in business for a woman.

Jenny couldn't simply stay Daddy's little girl and nothing but, though. As she entered her teens it became clear that England was moving towards establishing the organization that would become the National Health Service. As so many other women just starting out did at the time, she began to study to earn her nursing certification. As she neared the end of her program, she received word Thomas had suffered a massive heart attack. He'd provided for his family in his will, and Neal immediately took over the business. Jenny returned home for the funeral, and went on hiatus from her studies for a season.

When she finally completed her schooling, she found placement as a nurse at the Royal Victoria Hospital. A little more than a year into her tenure there, she helped care for a woman named Helen, who had been admitted with TB. Jenny struck up a friendship with Helen's concerned husband, Gerald. Thanks to a relatively new regimen of antibiotics, Helen ultimately recovered, although she was left weak and in a permanent state of semi-convalescence. Gerald and Jenny, however, stayed in contact even after she had been discharged. At first he stopped by to thank her for the level of care she provided. Jenny found him sweet, and was moved by the

level of devotion he showed to his wife. He was a professor of European history, a man of education and sophistication; he'd published books. He had a calm authority that she found comforting. He would stop by the hospital when he was in the neighborhood and take her on walks, give her updates on Helen, quote works of literature or poetry to her. Jenny found herself, against her better judgment, falling quite in love with him. She knew from the beginning he could never leave Helen, but she was flattered by the attention, and Gerald did nothing to dissuade her affections. They carried on their affair for several months. Jenny finally cut off communication after a missed period scared her badly enough to bring her back to her senses. The episode led her to what would prove to be her escape route from the mess in which she found herself growing increasingly entangled. Well-treated by the midwives at Royal Victoria, she was inspired to begin her own midwife training, which would allow her to transfer far away from Gerald and all the confusing feelings he stirred in her. While Nonnatus House was just on the other side of London, it was in a completely different world from the one that Gerald, her brother, and her mother inhabited. She was a desperate astronaut, touching down on alien soil, with no plans to ever return home.

MONICA JOAN

Sister Monica Joan has always been a rebellious spirit. She joined the order of St. Raymond Nonnatus at the age of 16 against the wishes of her parents. The choice caused a permanent rift between them, but even as a teenager she knew she wasn't suited to the nuts and bolts of the workaday world. Joining the nunnery gave her the opportunity for education, reflection and introspection that she never could have managed had she pursued what most women would have considered a "normal" life at the time: marriage, children, housework. It wasn't that she was afraid of the work involved, she just didn't see the point. None of the trappings of a material life seemed important to her.

When Monica Joan had been barely a teenager, an aunt who had gone abroad as a missionary in India returned with a number of esoteric texts, including the Bhagavad Gita. The tome sparked an interest in the young girl for Eastern religion and philosophy. Her frequent excursions to the library were looked on by many at the time as damaging to her prospects with potential suitors, but she really couldn't have given a flying fuck. She took particular delight in her study of Zen koans, riddles with no answer intended to so confound the conscious mind as to render it useless, allowing the unconscious to take over. As someone in their formative years who was beginning to take great pleasure in flouting the restrictive conventions of the time, she appreciated the impish undertones presented by the koan form. She developed a habit of tweaking the sensibilities of anyone around her who took themselves too seriously. Although initially used as a bit of a passive-aggressive way to establish her identity, the tendency to find refuge in humor eventually became an essential coping mechanism for her in trying times. It also doubled as a litmus test for new acquaintances, to see if they were patient or good-humored enough to be allowed to develop into friends.

Her interest in other systems of belief also led her to study astrology and the Mystic poets. She's the only nun in London who owns a Tarot deck. Of course, life as a nun and midwife is more than just study. Over the course of her career, she has delivered babies under every imaginable condition. As a missionary, she was afforded the opportunity to travel to India and Africa, places she never would have been able to go had she not taken her vows. Her desire to stray from the proverbial beaten path led her to a wider world of experience than her parents ever could have imagined.

Now in her dotage, her playful approach to her reality makes it trickier than ever to keep track of what's real. Sadly, her greatest strength and the core of her being, her ability to slip back and forth between the humdrum of everyday existence and the ephemeral beauty of pure philosophy, is becoming her undoing as the bridge between the two slicks over with the ice of senility.

EVANGELINA

Sister Evangelina is the only member of the staff at Nonnatus House who grew up on the streets of Poplar. The oldest of eight children, she became the de facto house mother of her childhood home after her actual mother succumbed to tuberculosis around the turn of the century. With her father out of the house trying to earn enough money as a pipefitter at the London Hydraulic Power Company's power station in Wapping to provide for the family, young Melody Cobbler was left to manage her six younger brothers and one sister. She cooked, cleaned, wiped noses and butts, soothed fevers, calmed tantrums, drew baths, bandaged all manner of cuts, scrapes and bruises, and even learned to splint broken bones. There was never time for recreation. For the young woman who would take the name Evangelina, life was charging headfirst from one task to the next.

As her siblings grew up, she helped with homework, dealt with school bullies, and chased away boys who came calling for her little sister. By the time the first World War rolled around, the youngest of them was on the verge of adolescence. Melody knew her only chance to expand her skills and earn some money was to go into the medical service. Her ability to keep her wits about her and her mind on the task at hand served her well in her role as a nurse in a field hospital in Loos, in Northern France. Two of her brothers were lost in the carnage at Verdun, while a third lost his legs. When the news of her brothers' passing reached her, it wrecked her. Never one for big displays of emotion, she didn't rend her clothes or pull her hair and wail; she threw herself into her work even more than before. She stopped eating. She barely spoke. Even though she was their sister, she had all but raised them herself. A piece of her had died with them. The only thing that got her through that dark time was her daily routine. Chores weren't just work. They were her lifeline. Concentrating on the simple, straightforward facts of what needed to get done kept her from focusing on the things she could never undo.

When the War finally ended, Melody tried to move on and start her own life, her own family. She married a fisherman, a man she'd first met when they were children. After two years of trying to have children of their own, they sought medical advice and discovered that the

problem was a congenital defect in her fallopian tubes. She left him not long after. She had cared for people her entire life. She didn't know how to do anything else. She decided to expand on the skills she'd learned in the war and work toward her nursing certification. But without formal schooling, no nursing program would take her. So she turned to the nuns. It turned out to be a perfect fit. She'd held too many hands as the life drained from them; now she would guide life into the world, rather than out of it. And in the years after the War, as the men came home, there was no shortage of need for midwives. Her brothers and sisters didn't need her help anymore, but she felt a kinship the women of Nonnatus House. Between them and the people of Poplar, she found a new family to care for. The simple, practical routines of the Order brought order to her life again. But she never lost the chip on her shoulder that came from being thrust into adult responsibilities long before she came of age.

JULIENNE

Sister Julianne began her life happy and comfortable, but it didn't last long. She was born Madeline Pritchard to a loving mother and a doting father who was a decorated sergeant in the English army. He was killed in the Second Boer War when she was just four years old. She and her mother, Elizabeth, fell on hard times. Elizabeth went to work as a maid, but couldn't make enough to pay the bills or keep food on the table. A woman of great pride and dignity, she refused to take anyone's charity. The experience of those lean years would come to shape young Madeline's experience of, and approach, to the world for the rest of her life. She learned the value of perseverance, but also that there was no shame in asking for help when it was truly needed.

The owner of one of the homes Madeline's mother tended to, George Rutherford, had lost his wife the previous year. He worked as an accountant at a London bank. He wasn't wealthy, but he was more than comfortable. He and Elizabeth began a friendship that slowly blossomed into romance. After a few months, they married, and Madeline and her mother moved into his well-appointed home in Stepney. It was a huge adjustment. Neither of them felt comfortable finishing a meal for over a year. They would always leave a few bites on the plate out of habit, so they would still have something leftover for their next meal. Eventually, though, they became accustomed to their new lifestyle, but they never forgot the hard times. Elizabeth became involved with charity organizations through the Church of England, reaching out to the poor and indigent, providing clothes and food whenever possible. And little Madeline was there by her side, forever grateful for the comforts that so many take for granted.

As she entered adolescence, the girl who would grow up to become Sister Julianne made two promises to herself: she would dedicate herself to service, helping those who needed help in order to pay back what she saw as a kind of karmic debt for her good fortune, and she would do everything in her power to keep herself from ever being put in the situation her mother had to face after her father's death. She wanted the ability to be independent. That meant earning an income. That, in turn, meant education. So, when she was old enough, she entered Oxford

University as a member of one of the first classes of women who would go on to be able to matriculate. Women had attended classes since the 1870s, but were not permitted to receive the degrees to which those studies should have entitled them until 1920.

Halfway through her studies, she met a young man named Oliver in her classic literature class. He was well-read, charming, and a regular volunteer with the Red Cross. He seemed kind and upstanding, but quickly removed himself from her life as soon as she told him that he'd gotten her pregnant. Ashamed to show her face as an unmarried mother-to-be on campus, she was forced to drop out. She sought the counsel of nuns at the Order of St. Raymond Nonnatus, who helped her through the pregnancy and eventually through the process of giving the baby up for adoption. Her mother and stepfather were furious and cut off communication and support. But the nuns had never been anything but kind and caring, considerate of her situation. Again, the overwhelming feeling that Madeline took from the experience was one of gratitude. As she had once been grateful to her stepfather for offering her and her mother a second chance, now she was grateful to have the support of the Nonnatus nuns. It inspired her, and led her to seek certification as a midwife, and, ultimately, to take her vows and change her name. Her intelligence, resilience and compassion allowed her to quickly assume extra responsibilities within the Order, and when Monica Joan stepped down as the principle midwife at the Poplar house, Julianne jumped at the opportunity to serve London's least fortunate in the most need, and to pay back some of the kindness that had been shown her in her own life.

TRIXIE

As a little girl, Patricia Franklin followed her two older brothers into whatever mischief they managed to find for themselves. Much to the horror of her devoutly Catholic mother, she'd come back with them from the creek with her pink skirt torn and mud-spattered, carrying a frog or salamander in her hands. Her father would beat her with a belt for ruining the clothes they spent good money on, and then turn on her brothers for getting her into trouble. The family attended Mass every Sunday, never ate meat on Friday, and generally followed Catholic doctrine. But young Patricia could never square the teachings of Christ with her mother's uptight attitude or her father's approach to discipline. Her parents' disapproval of her tomboyish nature and lack of respect did nothing to discourage her trajectory. It just made her have to work harder to hide her illicit doings.

As she grew up, she found that she was far from the only one in her community with secrets. After all, wasn't that what Confession was all about? She became addicted to tawdry rumors, always hungry for whatever dirt she could turn up on someone in the parish. It legitimized her own covert life. She could tell herself either that everybody else was doing things they shouldn't, or that at least her own activities weren't as bad as someone else's. Not that anything she did was that bad. She snuck Scotch from her father's liquor cabinet. Bummed cigarettes off her brothers. Played doctor with a neighbor boy. Threw rocks at the windows of an abandoned factory. Copied homework. Cheated on tests. Wore pants. But she knew that her

parents, and, she assumed, God, would never forgive her those trespasses. But that wasn't about to stop her. She was having too much fun.

When she was 8, on a family trip to the beach at Dorset, a bout of roughhousing with her brother Henry ended with him tossing her into a tidepool. Her ankle became wedged in an underwater crevasse as the tide began to come in. Henry panicked and ran. It was Patricia's father who finally got her free. It took three days for her to clean the fish smell out of her hair. But it took three weeks for Henry's bruises to heal from their father's beating. It was a terrible experience all around. The family never went back to Dorset.

Patricia stopped being Patricia at age 15, at least to her friends and brothers. Trixie was something a friend at school had called her, and she took a liking to it. Her teen years were marked by a waning interest in mucking about in creeks, and an increased interest in make-up, perfume, liquor, and boys. In order to avoid consequences at home, however, she became an expert at maintaining her grades and the *appearance* of decorum. This skill would serve her well during her training as a nurse. She was able to approach her studies seriously and still cut way loose when she was on her own time. The compartmentalization helped her deal with other aspects of her job as well -- and other aspects of her life. The forward, direct manner that she'd gotten from growing up with brothers was sometimes misconstrued by those who didn't know her. She seemed more worldly than many wilting feminine flowers of the day. For those so inclined, that forthrightness read as promiscuity. One such individual managed to hide that inclination well enough to earn a date with Trixie. But when she wouldn't acquiesce to his lascivious overtures, he took offense. And then he took her. She never told anyone. Far from the experience cowing her adventurous side, however, she needed her escapes more than ever, and she doubled down on her hard-partying ways.

Her interest in nursing stemmed from her friendship with the boy she had first played "doctor" with. He succumbed to scarlet fever when they were both ten. She had always wished she would have been able to help more. But the fear of the disease being communicated was palpable in the community, and that dread was something she carried with her. So when the time came to choose a specialty, she was drawn to midwifery, where she could still use her healing skills, but the risk of coming in contact with infectious disease would be at a minimum.

CYNTHIA

Cynthia Miller was born fifty years old. And not just any fifty. *English* fifty. For her, comforting and thrilling are synonymous. Nothing could be more alluring to her than sitting in a huge plush recliner with a hot cup of tea, paging through a good book.

Her quiet, largely uneventful upbringing is probably largely responsible for her appreciation for the more subdued pursuits in life. Her parents were never well-off, but the bills were always paid, and there was always food on the table for her and her younger sister, Samantha. Her father worked as a baker, as he had since his 18th birthday. It wasn't glamorous work, but it was steady. The early hours allowed him to spend more time at home with his girls,

something that brought him true joy. Cynthia is the only member of the Nonnatus crew with a medical lineage: her mother was a pediatric nurse at Great Ormond Street Hospital, the institution to which J.M. Barrie willed the royalties from his book *Peter Pan* on his death in 1929. It was the first book Cynthia ever read on her own and became the foundation of a lifelong love of literature that eventually led her to Shakespeare. For a brief period, she considered veering off her mother's path and pursuing an acting career, largely as a result of the insight and inspiration that found in The Bard's writings. A combination of her timidity and her parents' innate British practicality quelled those hopes quickly. But she never lost her soft spot for the theater, and enjoys attending plays whenever possible. She's too reserved by nature to indulge grand feelings in her everyday life, but theater and literature allow her to be vicariously dramatic. She keeps journals of ideas she's had for her own stories that she hopes one day to fully flesh out.

She believes in Romantic ideals: big, pure notions in a world that is often small-minded and muddled. She believes that literature offers a window into how things could be, and yet she never shies away from the world as it is. She knows from her mother how harsh life can be, even, and perhaps especially, for those who are most vulnerable. So she dedicated herself to ensuring that as many people as possible began their lives with the best care she could provide and became a midwife. She landed at Nonnatus House because that's where the need was greatest.

As someone who is internally passionate but externally shy, it's always been hard for Cynthia to forge lasting connections. She's simply not a very social person. She and her sister Sam were inseparable for most of their childhoods. But Sam always just had an easier time talking to people. When Sam reached adolescence, her social circle grew far larger than her sister's. She made friends easily and was often invited out. Cynthia harbored no ill will around this development; she was simply too mild-mannered to hold her sister's social acceptance against her. But it did leave her home alone with their parents quite often as she moved through her teenage years, reinforcing her conviction that she was destined for small things. Satisfying things, but small nonetheless. Well-schooled in the British tradition of stiff-upper-lip-ism, rather than complain, or get hurt or angry at her lot in life, she found the silver lining and made the best of it, and plunged even further into her reading, both for study and enjoyment.

CHUMMY

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BERNADETTE

While Sister Bernadette is young for a Nonnatus nun, she's not new to the Order. She was raised by strict Lutheran parents in a farmhouse on the eastern edge of Western Essex county, where the wealthier cities fueled by the electronics and banking industries gave way to more agricultural areas. While she and her parents lived a simple life, she was always aware that there was a busy, bustling, advancing world, just a handful of miles away. Her father, Roger, in particular turned his nose up at "city" culture.

From a young age, Bernadette was fascinated by the larger world. On her way to school, she would pass by commuters headed into London, and wonder what it must be like to live that life. She was hungry for knowledge and experience. She was the only girl in her fifth grade class who read the newspaper every day. At school, she would gorge herself on as many books as she could find - world history, social studies, anything that would give her a taste of life beyond home. There was never much time for reading on the farm; there were always chores to be done. Her father didn't much see the point in it. He felt the only book worth studying was the Bible.

Her studiousness and enthusiasm for learning did not escape her teachers' notice. She excelled in nearly every subject. Her classmates noticed as well. Nearsighted from the age of 6, her oversized glasses, propensity for intellectual pursuits, and favor from the teachers made her the object of ridicule and bullying. But education was her escape route, so the cruelty of other kids never soured her on the fundamental premise of school. Instead, she just plunged deeper into her studies, requested extra credit assignments...anything to limit the time she had to spend around other kids. She dreamed of one day pursuing a career in journalism, reporting on interesting people and dramatic happenings in exotic locales. But she was startled awake from that reverie when an uncle came to pick her up from school one day when she was 15 and told her that her mother had a stroke.

Her mother survived, but the stroke took its toll. Her father pulled her out of school. Her mother needed help around the house, and he needed help on the farm. Bernadette's spirit was crushed. She and her father took out their immense frustrations on each other. Resentment turned to bitterness, and snide comments turned into screaming matches. Finally, one night Roger lost his temper and punched her in the eye. Right then and there, she made up her mind to run away. That night, under cover of darkness, she packed a bag and started walking until she was able to hitch a ride into London. Months earlier, her favorite teacher, a Mrs. Greenwald, had seen her being made of fun of by her classmates. She offered Bernadette her home phone number to call if she ever needed a sympathetic ear. It was this number Bernadette dialed from a callbox in the West End after she got dropped off.

She stayed the night at Mrs. Greenwald's, who listened patiently as Bernadette poured out her overwrought adolescent soul, bursting into tears more than once. Greenwald's son, Charlie, brought them scones and tea late into the night before Bernadette, exhausted, finally gave in to sleep. In the light of day, Mrs. Greenwald returned Bernadette to her worrysick parents. That night, her father beat her for scaring him and her mother so badly. Bernadette never

went back to school. But she had found a new escape, one that she sought out at every available opportunity: Charlie.

The two met clandestinely for several weeks. Prudish, somber people by nature, Bernadette's parents had never educated her about sex. She knew what she'd read in biology textbooks. But Charlie taught her so much more. As spring turned to summer, she suddenly realized how long it had been since she'd had a period. Her skirts didn't fit as well as they used to, either. She hid it as long as she could. Her mother was the first to notice. And while she was heartbroken and distraught, she still dug through her closets to find loose clothing for her daughter in an effort to keep the pregnancy secret from Roger as long as possible. When he did find out, his reaction was swift. He drove her to a nunnery and made it clear that she had shamed herself and the family. She was no longer welcome in their home.

The nuns of the Order of St. Raymond Nonnatus took her in, helped her through her pregnancy, and arranged for the adoption of the baby when it was born. A spindly sixteen-year-old, Bernadette had nowhere else to go and no prospects. So she donned the habit of those who had shown her a year of kindness and understanding. What no one ever expected was how exemplary a nun she would turn out to be. Her natural intelligence, studiousness and work ethic helped her rise to a high level of responsibility within the Order quite quickly. She was placed in Poplar at the age of 18, and rapidly became Sister Julienne's deputy. Within three years, Julienne began entrusting the affairs of the house to Bernadette whenever she had to travel.

Bernadette found her calling at Nonnatus House. But a piece of her still yearned for the life that might have been. While there is nowhere else she'd rather be, it didn't escape her that there was also nowhere else she could go. Huge pieces of the life she'd planned for herself had been preempted by a series of unlucky happenstances and bad decisions. The Nonnatus nuns were the only family she had left, but she was the only one of their number there by necessity, not by choice. And she longed to once again have the freedom of her own choices.

FRED

Fred's father was a fisherman. He'd disappear for days or weeks at a time, leaving his wife to tend to their five kids, of whom Fred was the youngest, and, until nearly the end of his adolescence, the smallest. As an easy target at school - the short, pudgy kid - Fred was picked on frequently. He didn't have the size to fight back, so he learned to talk his way out of fight. Sometimes he would manage to reschedule ("Not here, the schoolmaster comes by this way on his smoke break and if he catches you, you'll be done in.") and sometimes he would negotiate his safety by offering something more attractive than his own hide. Cigarettes, cigars and liquor were popular. Not easy to come by, but Fred found that most things he wanted could be had for a price. Often, that price was labor. If he offered to wash the market's windows, or take out the trash, or mop the floors, he could earn his way out of schoolyard beatings. He was never very bright, but he found he had a certain skill for dealmaking.

So much of the family's livelihood depended on his father's catch that all the boys began working as soon as they were able to supplement the family's income for times when the nets didn't come back full. Fred picked up odd jobs all over London. He delivered papers and parcels, mucked stables, swept chimneys. Whatever he could to earn a few shillings here and there. There was never much emphasis on education. There were bills to pay. With life a seeming never-ending series of menial tasks, and with no true prospects to climb any social or professional ladder, Fred set about planning his escape from the underclass, searching for any underserved niche that he might be able to exploit to lift his standing in life. But none really worked, or at least, worked for long. This non-progress was paused during the first World War, where Fred served, but again only in a menial capacity, cleaning latrines. After the war, he was able to put his wide-ranging experience to use as a general handy man in Poplar, with Nonnatus House as one of his most regular clients. Having irregular, but steady employment afforded him time to continue trying out his multitude of get-rich-quick schemes.

PETER

No one Peter Noakes went to school with would have figured he'd end up a police constable. He was a shy child who avoided confrontation. At times it seemed like he avoided any kind of excitement altogether. He had an overwhelming fear of heights. He would even become anxious about the potential for bodily harm when racing bikes with boyhood friends. But in fact, his well-honed sense of what he felt he needed to do to keep himself safe made him a perfect candidate to watch out for the safety others. Over time, his dislike for confrontation transformed him into a peacemaker, able to deescalate tense situations. And the respect accorded him as a constable gave him confidence. His friends and family saw the difference in him even as soon as he made the decision to pursue the job. He took great pride in being of service to his community. He took the law and his role as an upholder of it very seriously, but he also works to maintain a positive relationship in the community. He likes being liked, and sometimes required bending the rules - giving an offender a warning before arresting them outright, for instance.

He comes from a small family, just his parents and a brother. They never had much, but they had enough to get by. In their little world, becoming a policeman was about the highest ambition any of them could muster.

DR. TURNER

Dr. Daniel Turner is the epitome of booksmart over streetmart. While an enormously intelligent man with a great aptitude for obstetric medicine, he has a hard time connecting with people. He has faith in the predictability of medicine: there are diagnosable conditions for which there are predetermined treatments. If the heart beats too slow, or if the blood pressure is too high, it could mean X,Y, or Z, but it will never mean 1,2, or 3. Human feelings are far more slippery. There's no telling what causes or cures them. The only son of a surgeon and a painter,

he's always been drawn to and comforted by the relative immutability of the hard science practiced by his father. But it was the intuitive spirit of his mother's pursuits that inspired him to take the job in Poplar. No science could tell her exactly where to place her next brushstroke, she just needed to feel what was missing from the painting and then supply it. Her gift was empathy. Daniel is self-aware enough to understand that his own lack of empathy, or at least his lack of ability to properly communicate that empathy, not only makes him an awkward person to be around, but that it actually makes him a poorer physician. He positioned himself in the East End both to provide an underserved community with obstetric expertise and to work on overcoming his professional weaknesses.

JIMMY

For Jimmy, Jenny was always the girl next door. She lived at the end of his block, but he never let little things like reality stand in his way. He couldn't say when he met her. They'd just always known each other, just like the rest of the kids in the neighborhood. In the summers they'd run through the streets and fields all together, one teeming mass of childhood, playing pickup games of football and stickball. In the winters, they'd sled together down the hill three streets over and go over to each other's houses for cocoa. He remembered for sure the moment he fell in love with her, though. It was simple. He'd gone over to her house to play, as he'd done a hundred times before. But this time, as they climbed the stairs, her just one step ahead of him, she'd reached back and taken his hand, led him. Her soft skin, her delicate fingers. He learned early on the effect he could have on women, and he wasn't shy about using it. But she was the only one who affected him.

It wasn't just women Jimmy found he could charm. Because of his good manners and fresh look, he found it easy talk his way out of trouble or into a good deal. People are always inclined to believe a friendly face. He came to rely on his charisma more than any actual training or skill. The few times he tried to pursue studies and learn a trade, he quickly grew bored with the banal necessities required to excel in higher education. He much preferred to live by his wits, rather than by his smarts. But that meant relying on the generosity of others. He found, as he went on, that charity is not limitless. He would use people until they refused to be used anymore. Then he'd simply move on to his next resource. Through it all, he kept working his way back to Jenny at every opportunity. She was never far from his mind, and he made an effort to never be far from her.

The semester he camped out at her nursing school was a singularly high point in his nomadic life. It had been like they were children again, breaking the rules and praying that mummy and daddy didn't find out. It was a thrill. But finally, Jenny too had enough, and couldn't allow him to interfere with her studies anymore. So he moved on. He tried to forget her. He even got engaged, to a beautiful young woman named Miriam. But when the big day came, she was the only one who showed up. He returned to Jenny's nursing school and chatted up the

registrar until he learned where she'd been placed. Then he made his way to Nonnatus House, where he found that time hadn't yet softened the hard heart of Jenny Lee.