

THE
Life and Death
OF
Jane Shore,

CONCUBINE TO EDWARD IV.

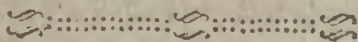
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A Genuine Letter from JANE to the KING.

ALSO
A Short Account of FAIR ROSAMOND,
Concubine to HENRY II.



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THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
MRS. JANE SHORE.



C H A P. I.

*Of her Birth and Parentage; together
with a description of her person when
full grown.*

MRS. JANE SHORE was daughter to Mr. Thomas Wainsted, a citizen of good repute, who lived in Cheapside, by trade a mercer. She being the only child of her parents, was brought up with all the care and tenderness imaginable; not wanting any education that was proper for her; and her natural temper, which was very airy, being joined to her education, and that degree of pride, which, as it is natural, some make necessary for the female sex, helped to set her off to the best advantage. Fine feathers always make fine birds; and if the birds are fine without them; doubtless they make them so doubly.

This lovely woman was the delight of her father, who clothed her richly, adorned her with jewels; and his trade lying among the court ladies, he often carried her with him to shew her the pastimes which were made frequently here to divert the Queen, &c. which gave her an early longing after a greater gentility than she had ever yet attained to or her city breeding was to produce.

When she grew to the age of fifteen her competent stock of beauty and good carriage, caused many to fall in love with her, and some great Lords fixed their eyes upon her, and to get her for a mistress, which her father perceiving sent her to his sisters at Northampton, where she remained about a year, till he supposed the enquiry after her was over, and that she might return without any hazard of being any further tempted to lewdness. Yet she was no sooner returned, but a plot was laid one night to have her carried away by Lord Hastings, who after the death of King Edward took her for his concubine, as will appear in this history: but the maid he had bribed with gold to get her abroad, repenting such treachery to her master, gave timely notice, and so prevented it.

C H A P. II.

Of her Marriage with Mr. SHORE.

HER father perceiving that unless he took some speedy course, her great stock of Beauty would be her ruin, resolved to marry her, so that having surrendered her virginity, and being in the arms of of a husband, those that sought to crop her virgin rose, would not regard her, but give over their pursuit.

And among those that courted, and earnestly sought her in way of marriage, was one Matthew Shore, a rich goldsmith in Lombard Street, whom her father pitched upon as a right husband, and acquainted his fair daughter with his intention to marry her to him, but she appeared very averse to it, alledging sometimes disproportion of years, he being above thirty; and at other times his being much disfigured with the small-pox, and many other exceptions she made. However, her father's positive commands, and the rich presents her lover made her, won her consent, or seemingly she yielded to the match, and so married they were, in great pomp, many of the court, as well as the city, being invited to the wedding, which was kept with great feasting many days.

C H A P. III.

Of her being Courted by Lord HASTINGS, who being refused by her, praised her to the King, who went to visit her.

THE wedding being over, and the bridegroom enjoying his charming bride, grew exceedingly fond of her, even to doating; which sickened and pauled her love towards him, and he perceiving it strove to wind himself more into her affections; and to this end he cloathed her very rich, and adorned her with jewels, denying her nothing she desired, or that he thought would tend to her satisfaction or delight.

It was not long before Lord Hastings heard the unwelcome news, that his fair Jane was married; which however did not make him give over his purpose of enjoying her fair body; so that often he resorted to see her, treating at home, and her husband abroad; often inviting them both to court; and took his opportunities to pour out many amorous discourses, endeavouring by all means to make her defile the marriage bed. At one time, intending to try his utmost efforts, he threw her on a bed when they were alone; but she got from him, and ran to her husband, telling him plainly how rude Lord

Hastings had been; which angering Shore, he modestly rebuked him, forbidding him his house, which made him sling away in a great heat, resolving to be revenged.

This Lord being chamberlain to Edward the Fourth, having frequently his ear, and finding he was much inclined to fine women, though he was married to Lady Elizabeth Grey, took an opportunity to tell him of Jane's beauty, extolling her wit above her features, which made the King hearken to this new adventure, and he resolved to go to Shore's shop in disguise to see her.

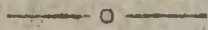
The King whose thoughts still run on his intended mistress, delayed not long to pay her a visit; and in order to it attired himself like a merchant, and withdrew privately from the court, only attended by a page. And coming in to Shore's shop, then the richest in Lombard-Street, he found the good man employed in his business; and waiting till he was a little at leisure, he desired to see some plate, which being shewn him, he, under a pretence of carrying it beyond sea, soon agreed for a considerable quantity. But yet no wife appeared, which made him delay the time with discourse, of what was then transacting in England and places abroad, where he said he had travelled.

The delighted Shore mightily, so that he ordered his man to fetch up a bottle of wine, and they drank merrily, the good man beginning with a health to the king, which the king pledged him in. So when some other healths had passed, the king asked if there was not a mistress to so fair a house? otherwise he could help him to a wife, rich, young and beautiful.

For this offer Shore thanked him, but told him he was already married to such a one as he described, whom he loved entirely. This discourse made the king more desirous to see her before he departed, and asked if he could not have a sight of her. Shore little thinking what was intended for his ruin, and proud of his wife's beauty; soon yielded to his request, and ordered her to be called down, who came attired in a sky-coloured morning gown, flowered with gold, embroidered with pearls and spangles, her head attired with curious lace, under which her hair flowed wantonly, and her blushes made her appear still more beautiful.

The king no sooner saw her, but he stepped forth and saluted her soft coral lips, impressing on them many balmy kisses. Then she, by her husband's desire, sat down, and the king drank to her, she pledged him, and passed it to her husband. Then much discourse ensued, in which

she appeared so witty, that the king resolved to have her at any rate; and so presented her with some curious things, he paid for his plate, which the good man would have sent home, but, he refused it, ordering his page to carry it; and with many kisses he took leave of the charming fair for that time.



CHAP. IV.

Of her going to Court, and what happened there.

THE king was no sooner departed, but Jane asked her husband, who that gentleman was that had been so liberal to her? He told her, he said he was a merchant, but he knew him not, Ah! said she I rather take him for some Lord in disguise; therefore, sweet husband, if he should come again, tell him I am sick, or any thing that you can feign, to disappoint him.

Mr Shore was greatly pleased at her conduct, and more discourse had passed, but people coming into the shop about business, she retired.

The king soon arrived at court, where he had been missed by his nobles, soon changed his apparel, and came amongst them with a cheprful countenance, and tho' others were ignorant, Hastings well

perceived where he had been, and the satisfaction he had received; and no sooner were they in private, but the king said, "Well; Hastings, thou hast good judgement in fine women; I have seen Shore's wife, and she excells the praises you gave me of her; I like her well, and must enjoy her, but how must I bring it about; to court her in her husbands' presence as a private person, I shall be served as you was; and do it as a king will look too low for me. I will not force her from his arms, for that would cause a murmuring among my subjects, who would fear the like by their wives and daughters; but I must have her, and with her own consent.

Hastings smiling, immediately said, take no care, for this shall be easy to your Highness; there is one Mrs. Blague your lace woman, who has a house pretty near Shore's, and is very intimate with his wife. This woman is very fond of money, to such a degree that it would make her do any thing. Her will I engage in this matter, and trust me she will soon bring it to pass to your satisfaction. The King liked this device, and it was agreed that he should see her at this Mrs. Blague's, and have freedom to court her, but she should not know that he was the King, until he thought proper to have it discovered.

Lord Hastings was not idle in promoting his master's happiness, and with gifts and large promises soon made the lace woman pliable, so that many meetings were made at her house, the King coming in disguise as her friend; and though Mrs. Blague often left them alone, and the King courted her with all the rhetorick he was ever possible of, yet she appeared averse to his love, and very often reprov'd him sharply for persuading her to defile the bed; and then she went to chide Mrs. Blague for suffering such a rude man to come to her house, telling her the design he had on her chastity; she seem'd very surpris'd at it; but enreated her to be at ease, for she would not suffer him to come there any more.

This pacified her, but the plot was further laid for her ruin, and at Christmas time she got leave of Mr. Shore for his wife to accompany her to the court, to see the ball there, which he consented to with some unwillingness. And soon after she was introduced, a man of very comely port enter'd, with a mask on; and Mrs. Shore heard the Ladies whisper, That's the king; who looking round, through his mask, fix'd his eyes upon her, immediately stepp'd to her seat, and took her out to dance, along with him. At this she blush'd, but not to be unmannerly,

she complied, and the dance being ended, he took her to a single light and pulling off his mask to salute her, she perceived it to be the same man whom she had seen at her own shop, and at Mrs. Blague's house, and putting a letter in her hand, he returned. Then coming to Mrs. Blague she desired to go home; to this she consented, and then read the letter; which was to this purpose:

“ My Lovely JANE,

“ Your beauty has enthralled my heart, 'tis a king sues you will be kind to him, and by a line tell him so to his comfort.”

When she read this letter, she left Mrs. Blague abruptly, judging she had a hand in the matter.

C H A P. V.

Of her leaving her Husband, and yielding to the King's desire.

ALL the next night the fair Jane was restless, her husband enquired the cause, but could not learn it. As soon as she was up she went to Mrs. Blague to consult what she must do in this strait, well knowing the king's humour.

Mrs. Blague seeing her thus pensive, said, Come, my dear, you must not be

coy, nor deny the king's request; You will glitter so near a throne, and enjoy a gallant bed-fellow. I find he is resolved to have you for a mistress; and therefore it is best for you willingly to submit to him.

At this discourse she trembled, yet considering from the many attempts her beauty had caused, that it was not made to be enjoyed by one; in a fatal hour she consented; and instead of writing an answer to the king's letter, it was agreed, that, that very night she should take her apparel, and put herself into the arms of the king. This being concluded, Mrs. Blague sent the King notice, who sent a chariot for them; and in the meantime her clothes were conveyed away to Mrs. Blague's. However, she supped with her husband, when on a sudden somebody came on a feigned errand; and said her mother was taken ill, and desired to speak with her. He would have gone with her, but she put it off; and giving him the last kiss he ever received from her, she left him. And coming where the chariot stood ready, she & Mrs. Blague got into it, and were conveyed into the King's secret apartment. where they found him in his closet. He welcomed them, but it being late Mrs. Blague departed, and they went to bed.

C H A P. VI.

Of the search made after her, she is found to be with the King; and the death of Shore.

MR. Shore sitting up late, and his wife not returning, was very much troubled, and went to his mother-in-law's, but they had not seen her, nor was her mother ill; so that her absence troubled the whole family. The next day was spent in seeking for her amongst her relations and friends, but found her not. Mrs. Blague protested she had not seen her, dropping some dissembling tears, so that her husband was almost distracted, at last he concluded she was taken away by some courtier; and in three days after, a lady informed them she was with the king. This added more to their grief, and they knew not what course to take; they knew if they went to cross the king it would be their ruin.

They made enquiry indeed if it was her voluntary act, and finding it was, and she, quite unwilling to leave her new lover, they lost all hopes of recovering her; so that Mr. Shore, growing melancholy, sold off all he had, and travelled into foreign countries; he practised clipping and filing gold coin to maintain himself, for which he suffered death, the latter end of Henry the VIII's reign.

C H A P VII.

Of her living in great pomp until the Death of King Edward; and of her being Concubine to Lord Hastings.

JANE Shore having surrendered up her chastity to the king, pleased with the glittering of a court, and endeared by a monarch's love, was admired by the vulgar; towards whom she behaved in a most courteous manner.

Her power was so great with the king that when his courtiers dared not intercede for the poor and miserable that lay under his displeasure, she with her wit, would so abate his anger, that she saved the lives of many, both poor and rich. And tho' she could in a manner do all with him, yet it was never known she used her influence to the prejudice of any. And both in London, and the progress she made in the country, she would cause poor people to be sought for, and relieve their necessities, inducing and persuading others who expected any good offices from the king by her means, to do the same, never failing her favours; and by her ready wit she baffled the court ladies, who so envied her, saying that they found themselves unable to repartee. And tho' the king had another mistress before her, namely

Lady Bessley, yet he preferred our heroine much above her, and would often merrily say, I have two mistresses of quite different tempers, one of the most religious, and the other the merriest in England: and indeed she was had in great favour all the reign of this king, having crouds of petetioners waiting at her chamber door, or at the chariot side, when she was to ride abroad, whose suits to the utmost of her power she preferred,—As for Mrs. Blague, who least deserved it of her, she procured of the king a stately house and manor worth 210l. per annum. The Romish priests were spighted at her, because she sheltered many from their rage and fury, after they had burned John Hall for a heretic.

As no worldly pomp nor greatness is of long continuance, so now her giory was ended, and her days of inexpressible misery began, for the king dying at Westminster, in the fortieth year of his age, no sooner was he buried in the chapel of his own founding at Windsor, but Crock-backed Richard his brother, who murdered Henry VI. and prince Henry his son, aspiring to the throne, tho' Edward had left two sons behind him viz. Edward and Richard, and several daughters, all lawfully begotten by the Queen, quarrelled with Lord Hastings, who after the death of the King

had taken Jane Shore for his concubine, as now free, because he would not assist him in his wicked project, of making away with his two newphews, whom he afterwards caused to be murdered in the Tower, alledging, that the Queen and Shore's wife had bewitched them: Shewing his withered arm, which all knew had been so from his cradle. And that Lord thinking to excuse her, said, If they have done so, they ought to be punished. Richard furiously replied, Thou traitor, dost thou serve me with Ifs and Ands? I say they have done so, and that will make good on thy body: wherefore; I arrest thee Lord Hastings of high treason. And soon after, he caused his head to be cut off in the Tower.

O

CHAP. VIII.

Jane Shore cheated of her Jewels by Mrs. Blague; of her doing Penance in the Streets; with the Punishment of a Baker for relieving her: and her Dying Lamentation.

JANE Shore had no sooner notice of the death of Lord Hastings her paramour, but she perceived, a storm was falling on her own head, and therefore she thought it necessary to provide in time, and so she carried her jewels to her old confident

Mrs. Blague, entreating her to conceal them for her. But she, like a faithless woman, when Jane came and asked for them, not only denied them, but giving any succour; when in the greatest need she came to crave alms, she thrust her out of doors, threatening to have her whipped for her impudence.

Richard, by means aforesaid, having got to the crown, and to make himself fair by other sins, though he was a monster of nature, publicly declaring his mother to be a whore, his brother and his children to be bastards, caused his queen to be imprisoned, and would have wedded his niece. He ordered our Jane Shore to be apprehended, stripped off all she had, and to do penance, by several times walking in a white sheet, and then walk bare-footed and bare-headed in her shift, before the procession with a cross and a wax taper in her hand, through Cheapside, which she did, looking so lovely in her bluihes, that many pitied her; and also stripping all her friends and relations of whatever they had, pretending they had got it by her means from the crown, in king Edward's reign; which with the disgrace their only daughter was fallen into, caused her parents death.

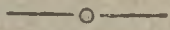
Richard, not content with this, put on a severe proclamation to this effect: That

on pain of death and confiscation of goods, no one should harbour her in their houses, or relieve them with food or raiment; so that she went wandering up and down to find her food on bushes and dunghills, where some friends she had raised would throw bones with more meat than ordinary, and crusts of stale bread in the places where she generally haunted. And a baker, who had been condemned to die for a riot in king Edward's reign, and saved by her means, as he saw her pass along, in gratitude for her kindness, trundled a penny loaf after her, which she thankfully took up and blessed him with tears in her eyes. But some malicious neighbour informing against him, he was taken up and hanged for disobeying king Richard's proclamation; which so terrified others, that they durst not relieve her with any thing, so that in miserable rags almost naked, she went about a most shocking spectacle, wringing her hands, and bemoaning her unhappy circumstances.

Thus she continued till the battle of Bosworth Field, wherein Richard was slain by Henry Earl of Richmond, who succeeded him by the name of Henry the Seventh; in which reign she hoped for better days; but fortune raised her another adversary, for he married Elizabeth, the eldest daughter to Edward the fourth,

and King Edward's Queen, who mortally hated her, then bearing a great sway, she procured another proclamation to the same effect; and so she wandered up and down in as poor and miserable a condition as before: till growing old, and utterly friendless, she finished her life in a ditch, which was from that time called Shore's ditch, adjoining to Bishopsgate Street.

Thus you may see the rise and fall of this once stately, and then unhappy woman, with whose dying Lamentation I shall now conclude.



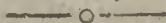
The Dying Lamentation of
Mrs JANE SHORE.

Good People,

THough by the rigour of the law you are forbid to give me any relief, yet you may pity my unhappy state, for the scripture saith, "That to the miserable pity should be shewn." I am now putting a period to a miserable life. A life that I have long been weary of: Nor would I desire to live in the splendour, pomp, and glory of Edward's court. No, I am happier now on the dunghill than ever I was in his arms; for O! It was an adulterous bed in seed. Oh! wretch! that I knew King Edward! that ever

I was betrayed by him! What floods of sorrows have my sins occasioned? Oh! learn from me, good people, to beware of vain delights; they promise fair, but leave bitter stings behind them. Alas! you think my punishment bitter in this world, and so it is; for I have endured a thousand deaths in one: But now my dying moments are come, I rejoyce. Sincere repentance has secured me happiness above: But Oh! where repentance is not given, what seas of torment rack the soul.—
 O happy dunghill, how do I embrace thee; from thee my pardoned soul shall soar to heaven, though here I leave this filthy carcase.

O that the name of Shore may be an antidote to stop the poisonous and foul contagion of lust for ever.



*A Genuine LETTER from JANE SHORE
 to KING EDWARD the Fourth, taken
 from a very ancient History of Jane
 Shore.*

May it please my King and Master,

*VOUCHSAFE to stayne thy royal couch
 with the poor inklings of thy servant and
 handmaid, whom natblesse thou hast most
 graciously daygned to raise unto thy royal
 couche, as Abraham did his handmaid Hagar;*

though I wishe not to share her misfortune,
and to be driven from my master's presence.

Could my unworthy pen give a decent
colouring to thy Jane's affection, then
might words, which be the painting of
thoughts in the true hearte, do justice to
the loyal love she beareth unto thy worthy
personne—But how can the black rivulet,
which my pen is eager to drinke, be worth-
ily enabled to express, in becomynge termes,
the ocean of love, that aboundeth in my
true heart.

Would to my Saviour, that this ocean of
love were not troubled with winds which
blows therein, and raise the waves of af-
fliction within my moody soul.

I am encompassed by three potent enemyes,
albeit not the flesh, the world, and the devil,
unless Lord Hastings be resembled to the
first, for he worketh to withdraw my love
from thee, and in thy absence to displace
thee from the throne, whercon the king is
established in my hearte.

The royal partner of thy bosome, the
queen, may indeed be likened unto the world,
for she encompasseth me round with spies,
who waicke out for my thoughtes. And
though I will not be so barsh in my thoughte
or deed, to say thy noble brother Gloucester
be in any shape like unto the devil; yet
I do verily believe he be more dangerouse,
than the other twain, though he beareth

*There be some, and divers some, who say
be wishest not well unto thy government;
nay, unto thy children.*

*Among the rest the noble Lord Hastings
douted very much, and wishest thee long to
reign, in order that thou mayest the better
survive to establish thy royal issue.*

*Believe what I write cometh from my
true heart's affection, and wish comfort
to the wounded spirit of thy loyal servant.*

JANE SHORE.

*****† † †*****

*A short account of Fair ROSAMOND
Concubine to King HENRY II.*

WHen as King Henry rul'd this land,
the second of that name;
Besides the queen, he loved dear,
a fair and comely dame.
Most peerless was her beauty found,
her favour and her face;
A sweeter creature in the world,
could never prince embrace.
Her crisped locks, like threads of gold,
appear'd to each man's sight,
Her comely eyes like orient pearl,
did cast a heavenly light.
The blood within her christal cheeks;
did such a colour drive,
As tho' the lilly and the rose.

Fair Rosamond; Fair Rosamond,
her name was called so,
To whom dame Eleanor our Queen,
was known a deadly foe.
The king therefore, for her defence,
against the furious queen,
At Woodstock builded such a bower,
the like was never seen.
Most curiously that bower was built,
of stone and timber strong,
An hundred and fifty doors,
did to this bower belong.
And they so cunningly contriv'd
with turnings round about,
That none without a clue or thread,
could enter in or out.
Now for his love and lady's sake,
who was both fair and bright,
The keeping of this bower he gave,
unto a valiant Knight.
But fortune that does often frown,
where it before did smile,
The king's delight, the lady's joy,
full soon she did beguile.
For why, the king's ungracious son,
whom he did high advance,
Against his father raised wars,
within the realms of France.
But yet before our gracious king,
the English land forsook,
Of Rosamond his lady fair,
his last farewell he took.

Teen said, Sir Thomas, whom I trust,
 to be my love's defence;
 Be careful of my gallant rose,
 when I am parted hence.
 And here withal he fetch'd a sigh,
 as tho' his heart would break,
 And Rosamond, for very grief,
 not one plain word could speak,
 And at their parting well they might,
 in heart be grieved sore,
 After that day Fair Rosamond,
 the king did see no more.
 But nothing could this furious queen,
 therewith appeas'd be,
 The cup of deadly poison strong,
 which she held on her knee.
 She gave this comely dame to drink,
 who took it from her hand,
 And from her bended knees arose,
 and on her feet did stand.
 When calling up her eyes to heav'n,
 she did for mercy call,
 And drinking up the poison strong,
 she lost her life with all.
 Her body then they did entomb,
 when life was fled away,
 At Woodstock, near to Oxford town
 as may be seen this day.

F I N I S.