

The Little Black Book

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Sarah Elizabeth Warren had just turned 21 years of age only two days ago. She was a petite young woman with long brown hair and matching eyes. Her smile would light up the world around her. Her intelligence and kindness were her strong suits, and she was loved by all those she met. Yet she did not have many friends and kept to herself.

On this particular day, Sarah set out on a special mission. Although not one to celebrate her entry into adulthood she decided to treat herself on this particular morning. Her goal was to purchase a new desk. Her tastes ran across antique, Queen Anne design and so this morning she searched her town for just such a shoppe. As she roamed through the town in its far corners nestled amongst tall pine trees away from the main street was the perfect candidate. It was a shoppe she did not recall seeing before but she knew this was the one. As she entered, she found the shoppe filled with many treasures but empty of patrons. Maybe it was too early or maybe all had shopped for their treasures already. As she walked deeper into the shoppe she encountered a small older man seated and writing profusely on a beautiful mahogany Queen Anne desk. She asked the man if this desk was for sale, but he did not reply. Nor did he look up to give a response. He continued to busily write and did not hear the voice so close by. Sarah repeated her question. The old man did indeed after her third try stop writing and looked up from his task. "Of course, this desk is for sale, do you not see the for-sale tag", he added. Sarah embarrassing replied, "yes". "This is exactly what I am looking for", she said. He looked at her

and said, "I know, I have been waiting for you to come". Sarah was surprised at this impedance. "How much", she asked. "Nothing," he responded. It is a gift for your birthday, there is no charge", gleefully answered the old man. "How could that be", she asked. "I do not know who would buy this desk for me". The old man pointed to the sale tag. On it written in dark black letters, was the following – Reserved for Sarah Elizabeth Warren for her 21st birthday. Sarah was startled at first and wondered who would have bought this desk for her. She had no living family and few friends, none of which could afford such a gift. Yet it was exactly what she was looking for, a Roll Secretary Desk. It was an unusual piece, an outstandingly beautiful, heirloom-quality piece circa 1880 English decor, as well as an exceptionally practical and functional writing desk. With convenient nooks, crannies, pigeonholes, and drawers for organizing correspondence, finished with elegant, durable, gloss and decorated with an elegant hand painted inlaid designs of gold flowers. The curved lift up pen and envelopes compartments had inlays of musical instruments. Sarah could not resist its perfection and beauty, and of course the price was not a deterrent. Sarah made arrangements with the older man for delivery that afternoon. The piece arrived as promised and Sarah had a special spot chosen in her bedroom for its new home. Sarah sat gazing at her new addition with awe. It was more beautiful than she could have ever imagined. It is the perfect birthday gift for me, she thought. She had errands to run later in the day and decided to return to the antique shoppe. I should buy something I can afford to offer this old man income, she exclaimed out loud. It is only right, she continued. So, at 4pm that afternoon she continued down the side street towards the shoppe. As she

approached the tall pine trees at the end of the street she stopped in confusion. The shoppe, the old man, was gone. It could not be but maybe it was the wrong side street, but the tall pines looked the same. It was a long day, and she must have been mistaken. She decided to return home and search for the shop the next day. For tonight she would write her 1st short story using her special desk. Sarah loved to write but only with the pen. Pen and paper were all she needed. As she sat at her new desk with paper and pen in hand, she reached for the pen compartment to add a few extra pens she would need. As she opened the pen drawer, a stylish, elegant pen sat in the center of the drawer. She picked up the pen thinking that the ink was dry by now and surprised at how readily and evenly the ink flowed. It was not a gel pen she was used to using, but a fountain pen with a small jar of ink sitting in the same drawer. Sarah took the pen and decided to use it for her stories. Yet, before beginning curiosity did overtake her. She wondered what other treasures she might find in this desk that seemed to find her. As she opened the envelope compartment, she found letters addressed but not opened tied together with a silk white ribbon. What a find she thought. Yet, behind the letters there appeared to be another compartment. A compartment within a compartment, as she opened it a small black book fell onto the desk and opened to the first page. My name is Sarah Elizabeth Warren, and the date is April 12th, 1910. Sarah could not understand for this was April 12th, 2021, and this was not her handwriting. Could the old man mistakenly had given this desk to her? Could this desk have belonged to another Sarah Elizabeth Warren that is now long gone? Was she a writer, too? Too many questions so Sarah decided to read this little black book for answers. Could she have been a member

of her family from time past? On the first page the writing implied it was written by a young lady of 20 years of age. She wrote about her young life. Her father had chosen on this day someone she was to marry that fit her current lifestyle and would secure her place in London Society. Her father was the well-recognized and respected Lord William James Warren, a barrister with much property including a summer estate in Brighton and in Kent, England, and an estate home in Kensington Gardens, London, and a rather large estate on the rugged Cornwall coast. It was the latter estate that was truly Sarah's most beloved home. Sarah was brought up with all the luxury her status afforded her, yet she did not wish to be a part of it. She wished to be a writer, a career not acceptable for a woman in high society. Like most aristocratic women, her life was defined from birth. She would enter London Society at the age of eighteen and be married to a Lord of her father's choosing by twenty-one. Beyond the age of 25 she would be considered an old maid and no longer marriageable. Sarah's father loved his four daughters as he did his two sons. He wanted the best for all of them. His daughters were to marry young men of character, wealth, but most of all property. His position in society was also important to sustain his daughters current place in society. His sons would join their father as barristers and members of Parliament. His daughters would bear sons and continue their family line. All was organized and all acceptable of their fate, except for Sarah. She wanted more not simply to exist as someone's wife. It was not enough. Her father and mother would not hear of her objection, and she was to marry Lord Jonathan Eddington on her 21st birthday on July 2nd, 1910. The Little Black Book was Sarah's journal describing her life and her dreams of another time and place.

For our modern Sarah, this life seemed so far away in so many ways. Women today had choices and the freedom to make those choices. She could not imagine such restrictions. Yet, she was intrigued by Sarah of the past and wished to tell her story, so she began to write. Her first chapter described Sarah's life in England. Her parties, her coming out into London society, her love and respect for her mother and father, and her relationships with her sibling and the closeness they shared. Every night this Sarah would sit at her desk and write about her day, not unlike our modern Sarah. Her journal writings became our modern Sarah's inspirations. The desperation in her writings seemed to become more pronounced as Sarah saw her life belonging to her father's restrictions. Each day brought her closer to her wedding day and she felt herself losing control. Her fate was sealed until one day in May. It was May 2nd, two months before her wedding, and Sarah was filled with joy. She found the courage to take the 1st step in fulfilling her dreams. Her aunt, her father's beloved sister, was sailing to New York City with her husband. Sarah convinced them both to allow her to join them on their trip. It was not unusual for her aunt to have Sarah and her siblings accompany her on such travels. She felt young men and women needed to see and experience the world, particularly the New World of North America. Sarah's aunt, Emma, became the matron of the family after the passing of her parents, yet her husband or her brother, although younger, would make choices for her. She had the honor of marrying a man, Sir. James Harrington, a popular, wealthy, and well-respected Duke. She had grown to love him although not chosen by her, and with whom she shared a bond of mutual respect. He was different in his time for he would often consult his wife on matters

of business, finance, and social obligations. He saw her as wise and highly intelligent. They would often talk about many issues of the day. They were never blessed with children but had many around them. Emma adored Sarah more than all her nieces and nephews. She loved her curiosity and spirit and saw much of herself in Sarah. She readily agreed and appreciated the female companionship. So, the two women with their chaperone Sir James set sail for the New World. Aunt Emma was in many ways a modern woman and her husband an accepting man, with much love and respect for his wife, encouraged and supported her. The Atlantic crossing at first was difficult for Sarah but with time she was able to adapt. She enjoyed her time with her extended family and was looking forward to new experiences in the New World. She missed her parents, her siblings, and to bring her comfort, a sense of home, her aunt brought her favorite desk with them and had it placed in Sarah's stateroom. Every night Sarah would write in her journal and place it back into her secret back compartment. Although traveling transatlantic in first class Sarah did meet many wonderful women, one in particular that fulfilled her dreams of becoming a writer, a young woman of means, Adeline Virginia Woolf. Ms. Woolf was just beginning her career to become within one decade a well-recognized author of the 1920s from England. Sarah was impressed by this independent thinker not tied down by the binds of tradition, and secretly wished to be like her. From the first moment they met, they spent every waking moment together discussing all relevant issues of the day, Sarah's aunt Emma was intrigued by this author to be and would often join the conversation. Sarah, a young impressionable lady idolized this woman of independent thought. Her essays

included “A Room of One’s Own (1929), a book length essay in which she wrote, “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction”. When Sarah met this young woman in 1910, she was not as yet well recognized as a feminist force. Virginia Woolf’s writings were often noted as inspiring feminism. Modern Sarah had come to realize her role in modern feminism. Woolf was most vocal in her criticism of early female writers such as George Sand and George Elliot for taking on the persona of men. She attributed their lack of success to this deception. She admired Jane Austen for being accepted as a female writer. She shared these thoughts with Sarah as early as 1910 and helped her to realize the importance of resources and opportunities in order to be taken seriously as a writer. She offered Sarah a new look into the contemporary literature of their time, particularly the works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Chekhov, and Leo Tolstoy, Russian authors that Sarah had not heard of as yet. When both arrived in NYC, Virginia Woolf invited Sarah and Emma to her scheduled readings. As a young “want to be” writer, Sarah hung onto every word spoken by Ms. Virginia Woolf. Sarah knew that she could not return to the proposed life waiting for her in England. Through the efforts of Ms. Woolf, Sarah became acquainted with many contemporary writers living in NYC. They all shared a common goal, a common love of the written word. Her time in New York City changed Sarah from a traditional young lady to a bit of a Bohemian. Her aunt Emma as much as she wanted to see Sarah grow and experience life was concerned that the proper and innocent young lady, she was so proud of was somehow disappearing. She decided with her faithful husband that it was time to return to London via White Star Liner

R.M.S. Majestic and for Sarah to take her place in London Society. The trip was booked, and Sarah had a decision to make. Return home to her family and live out her predetermined life or stay in NYC and begin a new adventure. That night her soul-searching entry was a long one. It brought tears to our modern Sarah as she could feel the pain in making such a decision. So, Sarah decided to stay in NYC and her loving Aunt Emma gave her a tight hug as she departed for London. Sarah found solace with her literary friends and had a few successes with her writing submissions. She missed her parents and her siblings and wished to see them. Her resources were limited, and she could not afford to return to England and was too proud to ask for assistance and forgiveness from her father. It took her nearly two years to finally write and ask to return to England. Her father and mother agreed to make the six days journey to NYC to bring her home. They chose to travel on a new White Star Line luxury ocean liner from Southampton on April 10, 1912, called the Titanic. On April 14, 1912, the Titanic on its maiden voyage struck an iceberg and sank in less than three hours. Some 1,500 of its 2,200 passengers and crew perished. A few of the Titanic's passengers were among the wealthiest and most famous people of the day, such as John Jacob Astor IV, Benjamin Guggenheim and Lord William James Warren and his wife Elizabeth. She chose not to leave his side that night. They both perished. It was not until that next day that Sarah heard the news. She was sure that her parents must have survived, and she waited for the RMS Carpathia to enter the port of NY. Carpathia arrived in New York on April 18, 1912, at 9:25pm, docking at Pier 34. It then moved to the Cunard pier 54, where the passengers disembarked. Anxious crowds of people, numbering in the thousands,

awaited the arrival of the Carpathia and news of loved ones on this cold and rainy evening. Sarah was waiting amongst them. She searched amongst the survivors aboard the rescue ship but to no avail. Neither her father nor her mother was on board. She talked to the survivors who were still in shock, but no one remembered her parents. With much persistence she finally found acquaintances that told Sarah that her brave parents stayed on board the Titanic. They told her that the men had to stay and how her mother refused to leave his side.

She offered her seat on the lifeboat to a poor mother with an infant in her arms. They both sat on a bench on the deck and held hands. That was the last time she saw them. Sarah fell to the ground and cried profusely. There was no entry in her journal on that evening and for weeks to come. The next entry was almost 10 weeks later on July 2nd, 1910 – the day that had been reserved as her wedding date. Sarah was back in London in her childhood home. Her eldest brother, Edward, was now the man of the house, running its functions as would his father. He was well trained and ready for the obligation. He had taken over his father's business and had added an additional governess for the younger children, Sarah. Although having disgraced herself and her family, she was forgiven by Edward and all her siblings and allowed to rejoin them. She chose to reunite as a servant rather than as a member of the family. This position allowed her time to write instead of attending social affairs, in which she had little interest. Connecting with her younger siblings that barely remembered her was indeed her reward. Sarah loved to read and together with the children she could read aloud often and choose the best works to read. She was a natural teacher and the children loved her. As she worked each day the entries in

her journal reflected her now found happiness. Edward worked hard and his brothers were still studying and could not be of immediate assistance. He came upon an old friend, John Worthington, from the School of Law one day in London. They had not seen each other in years and today was most fortuitous. Edward was concerned about the future of his father's firm and John was looking for a new position. That day they agreed to help each other, so John joined the firm and they two men became partners. John, not unlike Edward, was young, tall, quite handsome, and dedicated to success but also very just in his actions. He was intelligent and well read. He had a modern mother with three such sisters and respected women for more than just the obvious. Yet, the first time he met Sarah he could not help but be attracted to her beauty as well as her mind. He attended dinners at their home often and at times Edward and John would work from home. Edward did not introduce Sarah as his sister at first but as their governess, by Sarah's choice. With time Edward saw Sarah as his equal and respected her thoughts on many issues, as did her brother, Edward. Her relationship with John was developing in her journal and modern Sarah was so pleased to see that Sarah was indeed finding love. The sadness of the past was slowly dissipating, and a new future was emerging. The family of Lord William James Warren and Elizabeth Ann Warren was rising from the ashes due to the efforts of Edward and Sarah. They worked together to raise their siblings and to bring them into London society once again. Although not important to Sarah, she saw the importance for Edward and her younger siblings and worked to achieve it for their future. Time had passed and the choices now open to her siblings were emerging. Some chose different paths.

William the youngest son did not wish to follow Edward into law but chose to be an artist and became a well-known artist of his time. Elizabeth, the youngest amongst the daughters, entered society as planned and married a Lord that too was a barrister, not unlike her father and brother. Sarah's two other sisters, Mary, and Anne chose to stay unmarried, each pursuing their dreams. Mary chose the religious life and became part of the Anglican religious movement. Mary joined The Convent of the Epiphany in Cornwall, UK, the home of the Community of the Epiphany established in 1883. The sisters were involved in pastoral and educational work. Mary became a certified theology teacher and in 1936 Mary and the sisters moved out of England and founded the Community of Nazareth, in Tokyo, Japan. Mary lived out her life in Japan continuing their works. Anne became a poet and pursued her dream with readings throughout London, Paris, and even the New World. Eventually Anne settled in San Francisco at the age of 18 in 1915, nine years after the 1906 earthquake. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906, a major earthquake and fire had destroyed as many as 28,000 buildings and killed more than 3,000 people. By 1915 most of the theatres had been rebuilt to their past glory but more smartly build. Much of the city was rebuilt to be earthquake- and fire-resistant. New plans for civic development made headway as the debris of the old city vanished. In 1915 San Francisco invited the world to see the results of its efforts at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The Panama-Pacific International Exposition was a world's fair held in San Francisco, California from February 20 to December 4, 1915. Its stated purpose was to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal, but it was widely seen in the city as an opportunity to showcase its recovery from the 1906

earthquake. Anne and her poetry were a featured event at the fair. Anne was aware of the potential for another such destructive event but felt the city offered, through its new building codes, safety, and more so it offered Anne the exposure she needed as a young poet. As modern Sarah read Anne's poems she was reminded of the words of a young poet of her own time, Ms. Amanda Gorman had said, "poetry is the lens we use to interrogate the history we stand on and the future we stand for." Anne's poetry interrogated the role of woman in society and projected the equality that needed to be achieved. Anne became an integral part of Women's Suffrage. Women's suffrage is the right of women to vote in elections. Beginning in the mid-19th century, aside from the work being done by women for broad-based economic and political equality and for social reforms, women sought to change voting laws to allow them to vote. Inclusive was the right of women to seek a higher education at any college or university. In 1920 women gained the right to vote through the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. Anne eventually received her PhD in English Literature from Stanford University. In 1927 at the age of 30 years, Anne was appointed Dean of the English department and associate professor at Stanford University.

Sarah did well in preparing her siblings for their future endeavors both through education and support of their talents and dreams. Each had found their path and Sarah was proud of each and every one of them. She kept in touch through numerous letters to each sibling. Time passed and Sarah returned to writing once again. She did not stray far from home except for a short visit here and there. Her friends were now gone scattered throughout the world, and she spent her days with

her servants and Edward and John when they were not working, which was seldom. It was her choice to be the mistress of her parents' house for her brother Edward and her siblings when they were able to visit. For Sarah it was a lonely life but a prolific one. She accomplished much during those years. She succeeded in writing two complete novels and over 50 short stories and essays. Her inspiration was the beautiful gardens of their estate. She would often take long walks throughout the paths of this English Garden. Roses abound in every shade and shape. Lilies seem to float between them in beautiful displays. Her mother, who had inherited the gardens, actively pursued an interest in botany and began planting an arboretum that eventually covered 15 acres. The collection included specimens that she had collected from the wild as well as plants acquired from some of the region's leading botanists. Lady Elizabeth's arboretum boasted one of the finest collections of trees in addition to flowers in London and had become a place for her friends to gather outdoors. Her Conservatory contained over 1000 different types of plants and trees, as well as fountains. Her gardens included Flower Garden Walk, Forest Walk, Main Fountain Garden, Meadow Garden, Oak Knoll, Peony Garden, Rose Arbor, Rose Garden, Topiary Garden, Waterlily Display, and Wisteria Gardens, to name a few. Her chrysanthemum collection included historic Japanese cascade selections of the genus *Chrysanthemum*. Her fern collection included representatives of all fern families, both tropical and hardy. Her holly collection included native species and hybrids of the genus *Ilex*. Her lilac collection included horticultural selections of *Syringa vulgaris*. Her magnolia collection included species and horticultural selections of the genus *Magnolia*, native to eastern North America. Her orchid

collection included tropical species and horticultural selections of the family Orchidaceae cultivated before her time. It was a garden, the envy of all of London. In the center there was a 30-foot-wide dodecagon white pagoda style gazebo where she would sit on the long benches and write. Sarah saw to it that these beautiful gardens that reminded her of her mother's love and care were always well taken care of. Many of Sarah's best works were written there. Yet, even more inspirational for Sarah were the white cliffs of Dover. Their home in Kent allowed her to often visit the cliffs. These cliffs are part of the coastline of Kent in England. The White Cliffs of Dover is the region of English coastline facing the Strait of Dover and France. The cliff face, which reaches a height of 350 feet owes its striking appearance to its composition of chalk accented by streaks of black flint. The cliffs, on both sides of the town of Dover in Kent, stretch for eight miles. The wild sea striking the cliffs created an explosive sound that was loud yet somewhat soothing in its repetitiveness. One particular entry in Sarah's journal became most memorable to our modern Sarah.

“It was here and now that I realized there was something different about me. A sense of not belonging seemed to follow me wherever I would go. I was truly different from everyone else here and this realization made me feel totally unsettled throughout my years.

It became a habit of mine to go down to the cliffs that overlooked the sea and gaze for hours at the turbulent waves as they beat wildly upon the shore. The icy frost of the foam and the warmth of the clear waters seemed to imply an almost natural contradiction; a harmonious interplay of two extremes. A persistent battle of two

forces destined to exist in one body. Each fighting for its individual existence, yet each accepting and respecting the existence of the other. Truly we were one. The yoke of tradition rested upon my shoulders, as the spark of rebellion grew in my soul. Often the conflict would be overbearing, but their coexistence was inevitable.”

Sarah found solace in the contradiction of the sea for she indeed was such. Her younger siblings did not have the burden of tradition thereby carried a lighter load in a world not ready as yet for its inevitable female roles. Sarah respected the traditional world she was born into, yet her very existence told of a world yet to come. She loved deeply and respected her younger sisters but often felt they did not truly understand her struggles. Staring down upon those tumultuous waves she knew that she was not alone. How can there be such beauty in so much violence as those waves slammed with much forceable intent upon those white cliff walls. They say beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and for Sarah each subsequent wave was pure poetry, magnificent in its presentation. Each line followed by the next in perfect harmony with the first. The strength of those waves was easily seen yet with gentleness they dissolved in the sea.

For Sarah, the writer, this scene was inspirational. She needed to be close enough to hear and feel the sea. Sarah decided it was time to leave the city of London and head to a new home. John offered Sarah his ancestral home in Kent, southwest of London. His parents preferred the social life of London and were rarely there, particularly during the winter months. Except for the servants maintaining the estate, Sarah would be alone. Sarah accepted with much gratitude because she had come to trust John as she did her brother Edward. There was a strong bond between

John and Sarah although neither had realized it as yet. For now, it served them both well to keep their lives apart. Sarah left London and traveled by rail to her new home. The train ride was both long and uneventful, allowing Sarah to write in her journal. Anticipation can be our greatest ally or our biggest foe, our nemesis. Sarah's excitement was not often seen by others. Her quiet and often stoic reserve separated her from others around her. She despised at times the social graces and was often the topic of gossip amongst the London elite rather than the one immersed in it.

Her sudden departure from London society brought many such conversations which John and Edward would often have to quell. For Sarah, this world was behind her, and a new world was to emerge. A carriage was waiting for her at the station. An older man with greying hair took her luggage and helped position Sarah comfortably into the carriage's cushioned seat. The countryside was just beginning to bloom in its perfect color palette. The old man was called Joseph and he, not unlike Sarah, was of few words. Her arrival at John's home was greeted by a row of servants. Joseph took the lead and introduced each to Sarah. As each greeted their new tenant, they would bow and then immediately leave to return to their tasks within the mansion. Joseph was left with Sarah as they entered the house together. Sarah was greeted by a tall and rather large atrium flanked on both sides by beautifully grand marble winding staircases that merged into equally exquisite balconies on each of the four floors. Sarah's bedroom was on the 3rd floor overlooking the cliffs in the distance. From her open window she could hear the tumultuous waves and it was music to her ears. The house was located 250 feet from the cliff's edge. She could easily walk through the extensive grounds to the cliffs and watch those waves

perform their dance just for her. On a clear day she could see the shores of Calais, France, just 22 miles away. A large balcony outside her sitting area beyond her private bath featured for her enjoyment allowed her awe-inspiring sea views. It was the perfect place to write with the symphony of the waves playing in the background. This was a setting made for Sarah offering the isolation she longed for. Yet, although not starved for human contact, she was pleased when John would come to visit for a weekend. His trips became more and more frequent with time, and she began to look forward to his arrival. They would take long walks together often to the white cliffs, John's favorite place as a young man. As they walked, they would talk about the characters in her stories. He had a keen interest in and admiration of her writing and would often advise her on a particular characters next endeavor, particularly if it involved the law. With time John proposed to bring her chapters to a publishing company in London known for publishing the works of female writers for their review. Sarah agreed and John obliged. Her first novel focused on her early years in London and was very well received. She was even given an advance. This encouraged Sarah to write further, and it also drew her closer to John. John had become her confidant, her advisor and her best friend. She could not imagine a life without John and could imagine one easily with him. Years past and Sarah was once again had become the toast of London Society, not a young and alluring debutant, but as an accomplished writer whose books donned many bookshelves throughout London and the continent. She was often invited to do readings at private soirees which she would politely decline. She was considered eccentric yet adored by many, mostly women as her audience at first, but with time she was accepted by men as

well.

On July 2nd, 1931, on one of his weekend trips, John asked Sarah for her hand in marriage, and she accepted. They were married in a small local Victorian chapel, St. Edmund's chapel in Dover with her immediate family and his in attendance. London society was unaware of the event until much later. Sarah continued to write, and John continued his legal practice until 1946, after WWII, when John returned home from the war, retired, and joined Sarah. They lived out their lives together with no children except for their nieces and nephews until John's death in 1951 at the age of 65 years. Sarah lived alone by her cliffs for another 2 years. They say she died quietly with a smile on her face, believing she would soon see her John once more.

The desk that Sarah loved so very much and where she had written many of her works and journals was auctioned later that year through Christie's, a British auction house founded in 1766 by James Christie. Its main premises were and still can be found on King Street, St James's and in South Kensington in London and in Rockefeller Center in New York City. The desk was purchased by an American soldier that settled in the UK after the war. He purchased it as a 1st anniversary gift for his new bride that hoped to become a writer. It was the perfect gift for her, and his only desire was to make her happy. On that day during the auction, he sacrificed much of his earnings at the Christie auction in South Kensington, London. Sarah Elizabeth Ann Stanton was a nurse during the war and had seen her share of grief. She was there during the last moments of many soldiers and wanted to commemorate their stories in print. She met her husband First Lt. Daniel Edward

Martin, a military pilot, as a patient. First Lt. Martin arrived in Britain in January of 1942 along with many US soldiers to help in the war effort. The British had been virtually single-handedly holding off the Germans for over two years and the Americans were greeted with both relief when they finally landed on British shores. Over two million American servicemen passed through Britain during the Second World War. In 1944, at the height of activity, up to half a million were based there with the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF). Their job was to man and maintain the vast fleets of aircraft needed to attack German cities and industry. Working with the Royal Air Force (RAF), their aim was to severely weaken Germany's ability to fight.

In late 1944 First Lt. Martin's plane was shot down during a mission, he survived yet was severely injured and was sent back to the UK. Sarah was his caring nurse. She watched over him as she did all her patients. And like all her patients he fell deeply in love with her. When he recovered and the war ended, he asked Sarah to marry him, and she accepted. They married in London with her family present and hoped to save enough to visit Daniel's family in NYC later that year. In the meantime, they secured a small flat in Chelsea and began their married life. Sarah continued her work as a nurse and Daniel was assigned to remain in the UK to help coordinate the occupying US forces in Berlin. In the UK there remained basically a constabulary force designed to hold and deal with the US occupation zone of Germany and Berlin, plus rear-area troops for supply and communications. It was to be a short, less than a year, assignment for First Lt. Martin. It was 1953 and the increasing hostility between the USSR and US and the large Soviet presence in

Eastern Europe led to increasing US forces, especially in Germany, to deter the Soviets from overrunning Western Europe. These forces were part of the NATO alliance that was created during that time. So, Daniel remained in the UK for a few years after the war.

It was two years later when First Lt. Martin was deployed back to the US. He brought his wife and yet unborn child to Virginia where they settled as a family. Sarah loved to write when she could, and her desk became her private world. Not unlike many military wives she was often a single mother with her nursing career still intact. Living on the base helped her adjust more readily as many young mothers formed a community of support. She loved to work with vets and felt she was making a difference in their lives. Ten years had passed, and Sarah's family had grown. Two boys and one girl between them. Her writing took a back burner to her daily life except when the children were asleep it took on a life of its own. She would often write into the night. First Lt. Daniel Edward Martin worked hard and had moved up in rank to Captain. Life was good, life was secure. One night the unthinkable happened. Coming home from a family gathering a semi- truck lost control and hit the family car. All four members of the Martin family were instantly gone. Captain Martin was now alone. He gave away all that reminded him of his life now gone and took a position in foreign service abroad. He could not return to the UK, too many memories so he was stationed in Germany instead. All his belongings were sold. Sarah's perfect desk was purchased by a rich widow, Sarah Elizabeth Michaels. She asked to pay beyond the price given as an aid to the charity of Captain Martin's choice.

Sarah Elizabeth Michaels was comfortable with her life and surroundings. She had built her financial future upon a strong foundation established with her late husband William Martin Siegfried. William was a financier and successful in his business dealings. Sarah started as his business partner and soon enough became his partner in life. She had a keen mind, and it was often said that “he was the man behind the woman”, which was unusual to say in 1963. William respected Sarah’s many talents and indeed it was an equal partnership in all aspects of their lives. Sarah was a perfectionist, very detail-oriented, and made sure all deals were done well and to completion. Their success together built their business and life was a blessing in so many ways. William was the face of the business and helped expand its reach globally. Sarah and William had become a “power couple” in the international financial world. On a flight to Paris, France for a well-deserved and anticipated second honeymoon William had a cardiac arrest with no previous ill health history. Although the plane could not make an emergency landing it was indeed rerouted to the closest place where medical personnel could address William’s condition. There was not much they could do for him, and he died shortly thereafter. Sarah was devastated and choose to not leave her home nor associate with family and friends for almost three years. Buying this desk was her first action and upon it she rebuilt the business she shared with William, their legacy. It served her well until her death in 2019 at the age of 96 years. Her estate was auctioned in late 2019, soon after her death. The desk was purchased by a small antique shoppe in the far corners of a town nestled amongst tall pine trees. Its design did not seem to be exceedingly popular. So, there it sat until early 2021 when a young woman by the name of Sarah

Elizabeth Warren accompanied the desk for its long-awaited journey home.

