

An illustration for a book cover. A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue dress with a floral pattern, stands on the left, her arms outstretched towards a white pigeon flying in the air. A young child with a round head, wearing a blue tunic, stands on the right, also with arms outstretched. In the background is a house with a red roof and a red door, decorated with colorful flowers and garlands. Three white pigeons are flying in the sky. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange color. The title 'Jacqueline of the Carrier Pigeons' is written in a blue, cursive font at the top. At the bottom, there is a blue banner with a white circular logo on the left and the text 'THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY' in white. Below the banner, the author's name 'AUGUSTA HUIELL SEAMAN' is written in a white box. The bottom edge of the cover is decorated with a floral border.

# Jacqueline

of the  
Carrier Pigeons



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

AUGUSTA HUIELL SEAMAN

# Jacqueline

of the  
Carrier Pigeons



*“The hush of a golden May afternoon lay on the peaceful, watery streets of Leyden.”*

Thus begins the story of Jacqueline and her brother, Gysbert, but things do not remain peaceful for long. Leyden soon lay completely encircled by the Spanish army. With wonderfully trained carrier pigeons, determination to find a way out of the city, and a lot of courage, the two siblings believe they can help free Leyden. Augusta Huiell Seaman weaves rich historical detail into an engaging plot, complete with a father who has been missing for years, a nurse acting mysteriously, and a dangerous visitor to the city.

*“When we give books to children, we are giving them ideas and language that shape their hearts, minds, writing skills, and so much more, so these books should be chosen carefully. The goal of The Good and the Beautiful Library is to help parents and children have access to a library of books that are of the best moral, literary, educational, and entertainment value—books like Jacqueline of the Carrier Pigeons.” —Jenny Phillips*





*Jacqueline*  
of the  
Carrier Pigeons

By Augusta Huiell Seaman

*To my severest critic, my father, and to Virginia, who was its  
inspiration, I dedicate this book*

Cover design by Tina DeKam

Cover illustration by Lydia Colburn

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This unabridged version has updated grammar and spelling.

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# Chapter I

## On Hengist Hill

The hush of a golden May afternoon lay on the peaceful, watery streets of Leyden. Just enough breeze circulated to rustle the leaves of the poplars, limes, and willows that arched the shaded canals. The city drowsed in its afternoon siesta, and few were about to notice the boy and girl making their way rapidly toward the middle of the town. Directly before them, the canal-interlaced streets and stone bridges gave place to a steep incline of ground rising to a considerable height. Its sides were clothed with groves of fruit trees, and from its summit frowned the moldering walls of some long-forsaken fortress. So old and deserted was this tower that a great clump of oak trees had grown up inside of it and overtopped its walls.

“Art thou tired, Gysbert?” asked the girl, a slim, golden-haired lass of seventeen, of her younger brother, a boy of little over fourteen years.

“No, Jacqueline, I am strong! A burden of this sort does not weary me!” answered the boy, and he stoutly took a fresh grip on some large, box-like object wrapped in a dark shawl that they carried between them.

Up the steep sides of the hill they toiled, now lost to sight in the grove of fruit trees, now emerging again near the grim walls of the old battlement. Panting for breath yet laughing gaily, they placed the burden on the ground and sat down beside it to rest

and look about them. Before their eyes lay pictured the sparkling canal-streets of the city, beyond whose limits stretched the fair, fertile plains of Holland and in the dim distance the blue line of the boundless ocean. Gysbert's eyes grew misty with longing.

"Ah! If I had but brush and colors, I would paint this," he sighed. "I would paint it so that all the world would think they looked upon the very scene itself!"

"Some day thou shalt have them, Gysbert, if thou dost but possess thyself with patience," answered his sister, with the gentle yet authoritative air of her three years' seniority. "We will raise many pigeons and train them. Then, when the price we have obtained from them is sufficient, thou shalt buy an artist's outfit and paint to thy heart's content. Meantime thou must practice with thy charcoal and pencil and wait till the war is over."

Both sat silent for a while, each occupied with thoughts that were, in all probability, very similar. The little word "war" recalled to them memories, pictures, speculations, and fears, all very painful and puzzling. Neither one could remember the time when their peace-loving land of the Netherlands had been allowed to pursue its avocations unmolested by the terrible Spanish soldiery. From time immemorial had these fair provinces been tightly grasped in the clutch of Spain. Now at last they were awakening, rousing themselves from the long inaction, and striking the first bold blows for liberty from the relentless oppressor. Little did the children dream, as they sat looking out over the beautiful city, that this same year of 1574 and this same Leyden were to witness the great turning point of the struggle.

"Look, look, Jacqueline! There is the church of Saint Pancras, and there is our house in Belfry Lane. I can almost see Vrouw Voorhaas looking from the window! Come, let us set free the pigeons!" And Gysbert, all excitement, began to fumble with the wrappings of the bundle. Jacqueline rose, threw back the two golden braids that had fallen across her shoulders, and knelt down to superintend the work.

Very carefully they removed the dark shawl and laid it aside,

disclosing a box roughly fashioned like a cage, containing four pigeons. The frightened birds fluttered about wildly for a moment, then settled down, cooing softly. When they had become accustomed to the daylight, Jacqueline opened one side of the box, thrust in her arm, and drew toward her a young pigeon of magnificent coloring, whose iridescent neck glittered as if hung with jewels. The girl cuddled the bird gently under her chin and with one finger stroked his handsome head.

“Let us send ‘William of Orange’ first,” she said. “He is the finest, strongest, and wisest and will lead the way. I am glad we named him after our great leader.”

“But the message!” Gysbert reminded her. “We must not forget that, or good Vrouw Voorhaas will never know whether he got back first or not. She cannot seem to remember one pigeon from another. Here, I will write it.” He drew from his pocket a tiny scrap of paper on which he hastily scrawled, “‘William of Orange’ brings greetings to Vrouw Voorhaas from Jacqueline and Gysbert.” This he wrapped about the leg of the bird and tied it with a string. “Now, let him go!” he cried.

Jacqueline stood up, lifted the bird in both hands, and with a swift, upward movement launched him into the air. The pigeon circled round and round for a moment, then mounted up into the sky with a curious spiral flight. When it was many feet above the children, it suddenly changed its tactics, spread its wings taut, and made straight in the direction of Saint Pancras spire and Belfry Lane.

“Bravo! Bravo!” they cried, watching intently till its sun-gilded wings had all but faded from sight. “‘William of Orange’ is a true carrier pigeon! Now for the rest!”

One after another they released the three remaining birds to whom they had given the names “Count Louis” and “Count John” after the great William of Nassau’s two favorite brothers, and lastly “Admiral Boisot.” It seemed to be a fancy of the children to call their pets after their famous generals and naval commanders.

“These are the finest pigeons we have raised,” remarked Jac-