

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The weeks and months passed so quickly. "We must be getting old," Thea said one night to Oliver. "They say when the days go so fast you must be getting old."

"Some days they seem to drag," Oliver said. "Perpetual youth, I suppose."

Thea laughed. She was feeling so well these days. And she was so happy with her beautiful young girl. Sometimes when she was asleep Thea sat watching her, fascinated. Even her hands were lovely---long, slender fingers that closed and opened even in her sleep. She tried to imagine the child at the age of sixteen. And what she saw was a sunburst---lovely and startling all at once. The child was Scandinavian through and through, though she dared not say such to Oliver. He took too much pride in the English Whitfields. Thea knew this, though he never said as much to anyone, even Thea.

Viola Astrid Whitfield. Astrid, she knew, was probably too difficult a name for

most here to pronounce. Her sister, Martha, wrote the name "Trila" as a combination of names. Both Thea and Oliver liked the nickname and so did Velvet:

"That's it! It sound just like her!" And she talked to the baby: "Is you wake, Tri-la? You haungry? Come heah to Velvet, Tri-la. . ."

Thea had never heard such a name. But even Thea was difficult for the populace around to pronounce. Most often it sounded "Thay-uh." But she answered to anything, never correcting. "Manners," to most in this small Southern town, were important. The viciousness and meanness lay hidden somewhere in the pine trees, though ever present. So, to most, she was "Thay-uh", which Oliver imitated when he was in a playful mood, though seldom these days.

Little Arthur Whitfield came often to see the baby. Arthur, glasses or not, was an amusing child. Even at such a young age he imitated people, trying to walk like Oliver with great loping steps, and the star of his life was Chris, who could absolutely do no wrong. Chris in turn was kind to the child.

All this she wrote to Astrid and Martha, though she never forgot to make reference to Chris's heart. Time after time she asked the pediatrician if Chris would not grow out of the condition. And there was always the averted eyes and the shaking of the head, which left Thea sleepless at night, wondering and watching. She dared not worry Oliver with her constant worry. He had so many worries. Business failing, no advertising, the poor — the very poor. But she would catch him watching the child sometimes with fear in his eyes.

Chris, too, was sweet with his little sister. Each morning he hopped out of bed

and ran to Trila's crib. Most of the time he just stood there staring at his sleeping sister, but when she awakened she smiled at Chris, a wide smile given only to him. And he was charmed. Velvet often took the two of them for a stroll outside and sometimes they would meet other nurses, all in white, caring for other white children. The nurses chatted and laughed away while the children made up games and chased one another.

It was a scene not to be repeated anywhere in the world, Thea often thought, as she sometimes studied the black and white scene. Once she took a picture and sent it to Astrid, but she never heard from it. The silence there was so large a hurt that Thea had taken to pushing it away. Her life now could not take such pain. So she wrote almost like a diary, without expectation of a return, only with the hope that one day she would see the familiar handwriting in the basket that carried the house mail.

As the baby grew, it was certain now that Trila was to become a great beauty. Her hair was golden blond in contrast to Chris's white and her eyes were a deep blue, sometimes appearing black in the night. Her chin and nose and cheekbones were almost the work of an artist, delicately drawn with the proper tilt and lift. Thea gazed at the child at length, pride filling her senses but concern also. Beautiful women were so often hurt, she thought again. And the thought of this innocent one bearing hurt of any kind struck her with denial.

Oliver, too, she noted, saw the beauty, and his pride was enormous as he showed the child to visitors, accepting their exclamations with what Thea saw to be almost a grin. Usually only his eyes smiled as a rule. But now this lovely child appeared

to be his enchantment. Even the weight of the Depression seemed to leave him. And Thea, too, felt an inner glow watching him and knowing she had given him such a gift. Was this not happiness? She asked herself this.

Chris was not in the least jealous of the child. At first Thea thought he might be. But it was not in his nature. He accepted the world as it was given. In return, God had given him kindness. In this he was like his father, she thought, and her own father and Bert. She herself was more like Astrid. Yet she felt something of her father, too.

So the days were gentle in the main. Time seemed to rush. Especially the summer days. They were spent mostly at the Eubanks' swimming pool. Chris had learned to swim with great splashes of water, happy in his accomplishment. Beside the pool was little Trila almost walking. Thea believed she was finally getting accustomed to the heat. The swimming pool helped and she had also taken to closing the blinds early in the morning so that the night breezes would remain most of the day.

Jackson Eubanks was often at the pool, though he seldom swam. Golf was his game and after golf he would join his mother and father and sometimes Thea for a drink after swimming. There they talked continuously of the South. When would it recover? When would freight rates be changed? The price of cotton. Politics. Politics. The Republicans and the "hated" Roosevelt. Thea could never understand the Eubanks' venom against Roosevelt. She herself admired the man and his wife, also. It was strange, but shortly after his inauguration the whole climate seemed to lift: Peoples' spirit, Thea told Oliver. The Negro race, especially, appeared freed from something. And the hordes of country people who came into the small downtown, usually sallow

with weariness and hunger, gave an appearance now of almost well being. This was not shown, of course, in any increase in advertising for the newspaper. But Oliver even appeared younger. There was hope. Still the Depression wore on. In Europe, however, the talk was more of Adolf Hitler. Little Norway, whose fear was always of Russia, now spoke of nothing but Hitler. Letters from her friends and relatives, on her father's side, wrote constantly of this little man who they believed to be all evil and a nearby threat.

Thea gave the man little thought. All of her attention was on her own family, mainly Chris. She noted that he tired easily when he swam. He never complained, but she watched him sitting on the pool bench, his frail body shivering with a towel wrapped round him, his lips blue. Thea always went to him, put her arm about his shivering body. "Are you not well?" was her constant question.

"I'm all right."

The same answer over and over. All summer long.

It was Jackson Eubanks who suggested to Thea she should take Chris to New Orleans. There was a fine heart specialist there. Jackson knew the man. He had roomed with him at St. George's Preparatory School. Thea discussed this with Oliver. She wondered if they had the finances, since almost all they had was invested in the newspaper now. He had also borrowed from Allison to pay the ever present paper mills. Even Thea gave what she could. She had been saving for a trip to Norway so that she could bring the children. But that would have to be far into the future now.

"It doesn't matter about the paper," Oliver said. "Chris's needs always come first."

So in September Thea and little Chris boarded the train for the exotic city of New Orleans. She was slightly nervous. She had heard of the ethnic mixture of people in New Orleans. Also the crime and free ways there. But Chris was so excited about the train that his high spirits were contagious. They sat in the diner, and Chris was almost struck dumb with the joy of it all.

“We’re eatin, Mamah! We’re eating here on this thing!”

Thea was aware of the other diners, who openly stared at Chris. Her own rage at the impoliteness of people heightened by minutes. Chris was unaware. He was totally thrilled with everything that happened: the man serving him ice cream, the tall water glasses, the rose in a bud vase and the trees, tall trees as they rushed by scene after scene. He was going to be a train engineer when he grew up. “Not a newspaperman?” Thea feigned disappointment. “Papah will be very disappointed.”

“I know. But I wanta be a train man.”

Even the porters stared at the child, sometimes turning as they passed. Thea concluded she would just have to get used to this. Ashton had accustomed itself to Chris and no longer saw him as different. If only it could be the same with strangers. Still, the child seemed unaware, which caused Thea further to seethe with anger. Manners, she was thinking, these people did not know the word. Manners to most were mere theatrics.

Thea was charmed with New Orleans. Before they saw the doctor she and Chris traveled the city — the Garden District and the exotic vieux carre. It reminded Thea of

Europe: France and Italy, and she found their speech charming. It was the first time Chris had traveled to a larger city and at first Thea noted his silence and what amounted to timidity. He rode in absolute silence on the streetcar, his eyes wide with admiration. He told Thea he wished Ashton had streetcars.

But there was nothing good about their visit to the doctor. The man who headed the clinic was Dr. Devenraux, a heart specialist. His clinic was known throughout the country. Thea learned this from fellow patients as they sat in the bare waiting room between various tests.

Dr. Devenraux himself saw Chris as a favor to his old friend Jackson Eubanks. Whenever the name was mentioned the otherwise staid doctor had a twinkle in his eyes as if in remembered amusement. Thea, too, smiled as if the two shared the same opinion of the vacant Jackson.

But there was nothing but severe pronouncement in the grey face that declared Chris in "serious condition." Thea tried to be calm as she listened to the words: "heart" "valves" "arteries." Thea told the doctor she tried to keep Chris as quiet as possible. "With so young a child it's almost impossible," she explained.

"No, he needs exercise. Just not strenuous exercise."

Thea explained that the doctors in Ashton had warned her to keep him quiet.

There are pills, the doctor mused. Thea would be unable to get them in regular drugstores. He would send them through the mail, monthly.

Thea listened to the man. She wanted to ask "how long," but she couldn't bring herself to say the words. In her mind she kept repeating "how long." How long does my

child have to live in this world? But her silence was all she gave the doctor. He rose from his desk.

"Keep in touch with us," were his final words.

On her return home Thea repeated all this to Oliver, who listened to her with narrowed eyes. Never once did they speak the word "death" but it hovered over the house, lounging there like the summer air, heavy with perfume and heat. A person. Death.

Thea tried to stay busy. Now her greatest distraction was the welcomed presence of her charming daughter. Chris remembered Bert's teaching him how to walk with the walking cane and he tried this with Trila, the tiny girl stumbling around with the long cane.

"Don't hurt her, Chris," admonished Thea.

"She almost done it. D'ja see? She almost walked."

Thea had quit correcting the boy's English, and she noted Oliver had too. It was like an unspoken defeat, as if they had given in to the inevitable. But little Chris saw none of this. He rarely complained, and his grades were "exceptional," or so Miss Barnes, his blonde countrified teacher, said.

Thea tried not to show her concern to Oliver, who still was going through constant bargaining and wrangling with paper mills, who kept after him, especially in the summer months when advertising was so slack. One night Thea suggested that they sell their house.

"Where would we live?"

“Over the newspaper,” Thea suggested. “There’s all that empty space up there.” Though privately she was seeing the rooms, filthy dirty with rats darting here and yon. She was terrified of the creatures. But aloud she said they could fix the rooms up. “It could be quite charming.”

“And you are a charming liar,” Oliver said.

Once she discussed all this with Jackson Eubanks. Thea was alone at the swimming pool. It was so hot she decided to take a swim. Chris and the baby were at Sarah's for Arthur's birthday.

She was just getting out of the pool when Jackson's car drove up the driveway. Thea waved at him and he immediately parked the car and joined her.

“Wine?” he asked. “A glass to end the day.”

Thea agreed. She now felt closer to him since their weekly dinners. Actually she found him most engaging. She told Oliver this and Oliver said Jackson had always been “good company” even with all his “devilment.” Hopefully, he added, all of them had grown up from those days.

Thea was drying her hair with her towel when Jackson returned with the tray carrying Thea's glass of wine and bourbon for himself. She put on her robe and sat beside the black wrought iron table where Jackson had placed the tray. The last rays of the sun were shaded from them by a white umbrella.

“Oh, this is wonderful,” Thea said, half sighing.

Jackson said nothing, his dark eyes twinkling.

"I don't know what I would do without this pool. Your mother is so generous."

"You know," Jackson said as he sipped his bourbon, "You're actually getting a Southern accent."

Thea laughed and raised her face to the sun, closing her eyes. "I wonder what my mother would say." She was half talking to herself.

"God knows," Jackson said. "How does she like Oliver?"

Thea abruptly stared at the man

"Have I said something wrong?"

Thea looked away.

"She doesn't like Oliver? She must be the only person in the world."

"Why?"

"Everyone likes Oliver."

"She's never met him." It was pure abandonment. Telling Jackson Eubanks this was the last thing she wanted to say aloud.

"Never?"

"We married so quietly." She was looking at the grape arbor. "I don't think she ever forgave me. They make so much of weddings in Norway."

Jackson said nothing, leaning back in his chair, examining the amber color of his drink.

"How was your golf?" Thea asked, her eyes wide with the knowledge of the sudden change of subject.

"Ho hum. I played with a man who thinks you're German."

Thea placed her wine glass on the table. "It's so tiresome, that."

"It's a small town. They wouldn't know there was a Germany if half the male population hadn't fought over there."

"I know. But it's still tiresome."

"Agreed."

The two sat watching the water in the pool now reflecting the day's last sun rays. They both were at ease with long silences. It pleased her that his man found her "interesting" to be with. He knew so many people, famous people all over the world. It was flattering that he had chosen her and Oliver to be his closest friends. Rarely did the Eubanks see others in the town. True, they had constant visitors from other places, but it was they he seemed to enjoy the most.

"I'm so worried about little Chris," Thea suddenly volunteered. "I worry all the time about him and Oliver."

"Oliver's a born worrier. He's worried all his life. But the child---

"He's very ill," Thea said, frankly looking at Jackson's face and thinking, too, she might weep.

"Children grow out of these things," Jackson said, sipping his drink, examining the glass and sipping again.

"I'm afraid----" And her voice broke. She looked away.

There was only silence.

"I don't know what to do." She was searching her pocket for a handkerchief. Finally she found one and touched it to her nose. How humiliating to lose her calm this

way, now, with the dark eyes staring at her.

"I've learned to accept life," he said quietly. "It took me a long time. It's a gift--- acceptance."

Thea looked away. The last rays had left the pool. The air was not so heavy. "Yes," she said only. She was thinking of her mother and healing. Was Jackson saying he was healed?

"I've also learned to let life unfold, believing there is wisdom somewhere."

"Do you believe that?" Thea saw that he was painfully serious. Her thoughts rambled. Melancholia. Her mother. This man. Her aunt. Herself? In no way did she want to invade this man's privacy. He wanted only to be an ornament, to please, to lift his nature from the dark to light. She had caught him sometimes staring into space, alone with his thoughts, and for an instant she thought she detected grief. Was he healed? Healing? Is that what he was saying?

"Yes, I believe every word of it. I have to." He looked away.

"I'm worrying you. Such a lovely day." She saluted him with her glass.

"You're not happy here, Thea. Are you?"

"Oh, yes. There are many days. The children. Oliver. The beauty here. I'm happy, always, with this pool. Water."

"And you have relatives here. The honorable Allison Whitfield and his wife, the complete nit-wit."

Thea stared at him, her mouth open. "Sarah?" she asked. No one, ever, had said such a thing about Sarah. No one had ever had anything but praise concerning her

sister-in-law.

"The brainless one," he said. "I'll bet if you took the I.Q. of her entire family it would, it might, add up to sixty-three." He examined his glass, his face pleased with his analysis. "As a matter of fact, you could take the entire city of Charleston and the average I.Q. would probably be somewhere near the moronic."

"Why don't you like the city?"

"Not much there."

"It's beautiful."

"Superficially."

"Don't be so hard on everything, Jackson." She wanted to add that his negative vision was no help for his illness.

He sipped his drink. "I suppose I'm more European than American. Like you."

She moved her shoulders. "No one takes me seriously. Here they don't"

"I do."

Something in her softened. "Thank you, Jackson."

She rose to go. "Thank your mother, too, for everything."

He walked her to the car, his glass still in his hand. "Don't worry about Christian. He'll be all right. And so will this damned Depression. Everything changes. But don't you change."

She was seated behind the steering wheel. "I'll try not to," she called as she drove down the gravel driveway.

Still, and she knew it deep inside her, she was pleased with Jackson's analysis

of Sarah. She was fond of her sister-in-law, but there was so much of Sarah in her life: Sarah's parties, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter---daily visits. There was even business---Oliver's constant dealings with the bank--- Sarah knew everything of her life and she, Thea, knew very little of Sarah's life. Still, she was grateful for Sarah and by no means was she "dumb."

The notion of loneliness had been growing large in Thea's mind these past few weeks. She yearned for relatives of her own, even old friends. Occasionally, she had dreams of her friends in Oslo. Once she dreamed of Halvor---skiing, but he was skiing in Georgia. No one had ever done such a thing. But Halvor had. And when she awakened, she laughed aloud. And Oliver asked her what was so funny. She said, "Nothing," Because, in truth, Oliver would not have understood. There was so much he didn't understand.

She wondered now, as she drove, if it was loneliness that made her feel so comfortable with the Eubanks and Jackson in particular. He did know Europe. He was the only one. Oliver, of course, had traveled, but he had never really lived in Europe. Hotels and Inns were not real "living." He was a mere visitor in war-torn countries. Was Astrid, her own mother, the cause of all this? This loneliness? Her silence was a curse, a banishment, even making her husband a stranger. A small voice within her was growing louder: I hate my mother! When she parked she put both hands to her ears. She had to be deaf to such a thought. Hatred. A newness in her life. A villain.

But then she saw Chris running toward the driveway and instantly what seemed like ~~perfume bloomed inside~~ ^{a sweetness filled} her. ^{removes +} So much love. So great a love for so small a creature.

No room for hate. No room for loneliness. He is growing so fast, Thea observed. And the older he gets she could see the similarities of Bert and her father. Not in actual looks, though in profile he was her father with the wide forehead, straight nose and defined chin. In action he was Bert: the shy smile, the determination, the gentleness, kindness. He walked with his head lowered, a thinking walk. But he was a quick, graceful runner, too, as was Bert on the tennis court.

"You're so like your Uncle Bert," Thea said, running her hand through his dampened hair.

"No, I aint."

She knelt beside him, taking his hand. "Now, Chris---this is the last of that no-word 'aint'. Your father---"

"But listen."

"Did you hear me?"

"Uh huh."

"Say 'Yes' or 'No'--- Not uh huh."

"You says it: Uh-huh."

"No, I don't"

"Yeah, you do." He wrung his hand, shaking it. "But listen."

Thea stood. "What is it?"

"I'm gonna go on a over-night hike."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm gonna sleep in a tent---or on the ground so that we can look up at the stars."

Thea signed. "What are you talking about, Chris?"

"Father George, at church, he gotta house out in the country---and just us boys are goin on a all-night hike out yonder."

Thea's immediate reaction was fear.

"I don't know, Chris," she said.

"Aw, Maw. I don't never have any fun. I wanna go." He picked up a piece of gravel and threw it.

"Not if you're going to start having temper tantrums." She walked toward the house. "We'll see. We'll talk to your father tonight."

"Call him now. On the telephone."

She reminded him that his father was very busy. "He's busy all the time. We never call him unless something is very grave."

"What's grave? Like Uncle Bert?"

"Don't be silly. Grave means serious." She stretched out her hand. "Let's go see little Trila."

Chris went reluctantly. Thea was disturbed by his remark that he never had any fun. She wondered if that were so. He had plenty of friends. Young boys were always playing with him. In the woods, the creek and some even joined him at the Eubanks pool. She detected a definite tone of whining in the child, something she wanted corrected immediately. Whining was the one annoyance never allowed in her house when she was young. Even her father corrected her if he heard such from either her or Martha.

Trila and Velvet were walking down the hall stairs when Thea and Chris entered. The child's face immediately lightened at the sight of Chris. And he returned the gesture, running to her and taking her hand, helping her down the stairs.

"Lawd, them twos a sight," said Velvet. "Trila she trying to talk. Commenced to calling me V V. She can look at them pitcher books and tell what ails in there---just as gooooood."

Thea smiled at her lovely girl baby. She was seeing again her red cheeks, darkish blue eyes and golden hair. Indeed, the child was golden. Thea sighed. She had so much to be grateful for. How could she possibly think of loneliness and loss when she had such bounty? She must remember that, she told herself, and never forget it. Later, tonight, she would tell Chris he could go on the overnight trip. She would call the rector and tell him again about Chris's heart, that he must be watched if he got too tired, running or climbing.

But that night Oliver dismissed Chris's trip as unimportant. "Fine" was all he said. And then he gave her the news that left her first surprised and then bereft, a latter emotion she could not understand. Jackson Eubanks was leaving town, returning to Europe where he planned to live the rest of his life. A cousin in Boston was asked to run the mill in his absence.

"He came to the office this afternoon, late."

"I just saw him. We had a drink. He mentioned nothing."

Oliver shrugged his shoulders.

"Why?" Thea asked.

"He'll never stay settled. Part of his situation, I suppose."

"Melancholia?" And Thea remembered Jackson's face so suddenly dark and serious and his sweet compliment to her.

"He's got a mean side to him," Oliver said.

"But he can be so sweet. Except---"

Oliver turned to her. "Except what?"

"Sarah. He doesn't like Sarah. He think she's dumb."

"You see."

Thea was envisioning Sarah's face, so effervescent, pretty. "No one has ever said anything mean about Sarah."

"And why should they?" Oliver was looking at her as if he were searching for something in her face.

"Why are you looking like that?"

"I just don't think it's seemly."

"What?"

"You and Jackson. Alone in the swimming pool. It doesn't look right."

Thea was so taken back she laughed. "Oliv---," she tried to say.

"No, it doesn't. And what is so humorous?"

"You!"

"It's nice that I can amuse you."

There was a noise in Chris's room, a thumping noise. But Thea was too occupied with Oliver's astounding words to pay attention elsewhere.

"What is the matter, Oliver? You're actually angry. I had a glass of wine and Jackson had a bourbon which he hardly touched, I might add."

"He's leaving town because of you."

Thea said nothing. Her mouth was open, but no words came. She just stared at Oliver, wonderingly. Was Oliver ill? Had the Depression finally worn him out?

He turned from her, started back to his room.

"Explain yourself," Thea said and she heard the anger in her voice. She was angry. He had no right to say such a thing. "Unseemly." He was calling her "unseemly."

"I know Jackson. And I've watched him with you. What have you done to inspire this in him?"

And now she was angry. Her mind was in a white whirl. She picked up a magazine and threw it at him. She saw him raising his arms, dodging the magazine. "You bringing me here, bore me to death and then accuse me of something that never entered my mind."

"I didn't know I was so boring. Possibly Jackson---"

"Stop it, Oliver, I mean---" She left the room and climbing the stairs she almost tripped. I'm going home, leaving, she said to herself. But she had no home. This was her only home. There was nowhere to go. Still raging she ran to her room and fell on the bed sobbing.

After a while she felt hands on her back and shoulder. She glanced up. It was Oliver.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I'm very sorry."

"You should be," she muttered.

"Do I really bore you so?"

She turned over and she saw the hurt in his eyes. "No," she said. "But you're never here. It's lonely sometimes."

"I know," he said softly.

"But accusing me? Why?"

He stood taller. "I'm afraid you don't know American men---maybe all men.'

"Jackson has been only circumspect, the perfect gentleman, a friend, a sweet friend." She was thinking of Bert. Bert had shocked her, too, with his declaration of love and departure. Perhaps she didn't know men. She knew Halvor, her father and uncles. No one had ever been forward toward her. Halvor had been her only suitor. But that was in all innocence. Oliver was her first and only love.

"Well, he's leaving. Just thought you would like to know."

She heard noise in Chris's room again. Somehow she lifted herself from the bed and made her way to the child's room. Astonished, she saw all of Oliver's luggage on the floor. One case was opened and Chris was putting his clothes, bathing suit and three baseballs all stuffed together in the case.

"What are you doing, Christian?" Rarely did she call him by his proper name. It was the way in this country. Nicknames. When she was angry she called him Christian.

"Packin," he said nonchalantly.

"For what?"

"My trip." He glanced up at her and continued stuffing. "We gone play ball and

all kinds of things." Father George, the director of youth activities at the church, told him this, he said.

"George didn't tell you to take all your clothes. You're just going to be there over the weekend."

"Uh huh."

"Now, Chris, you take your father's luggage back up to the attic. Right now. Besides, you didn't ask him if you could borrow his things."

Chris said that ". . . uh uh, I did and he told me to be careful with them."

Oliver was standing at the door, laughing. "Let him take one," he said.

"All right. You deal with this. I'm too tired."

As she left the room she heard Chris's excited voice: "We gone climb the haystack in the barn. And they got horses. Then we gone fish and, and, and"

Thea smiled to herself as she undressed. Chris was such a blessing. Both of her children were. But she was still disturbed over her argument with Oliver. Not for a minute did she believe he even entertained the thought that there was something between her and Jackson. Certainly not in his normal thinking. But the hard days for him just kept coming. He was simply exhausted. Nerves. Worry. She must remember not to cross him. Not now. Still, she would like the luxury of anger.

But she was too tired to think of all that now. She turned out the bed lamp. Immediately Jackson's face came before her---his dark teasing eyes, cheekbones and his way of speaking: more English than Georgian. She also liked the way he walked, more of a swagger, a manly swagger, used to getting his way and bringing order to

things. Yet he lacked arrogance. He had grace, strange in so stocky a man.

He was to live in Europe. He was to go there when so many were fleeing to come to this country. Hitler had become a fact. Even in Ashton, Georgia.

She rose from the bed. She couldn't sleep. She began a letter to her mother:

". . . and so the news prompts me to think of you and worry," she finished.

When she awoke her head was resting on the stationery and the pen was in her hand dripping ink all over the desk and on her nightgown and robe. Chris was by her side, tugging the sleeve of her robe. He was all dressed for his trip. It was only six o'clock.