

~ Somewhere in Time ~

by DS Bauden

Disclaimers: This is an adaptation of the movie "Somewhere in Time" which was based on Richard Matheson's novel, "*Bid Time Return*." The characters have been changed a little to resemble a couple of women we all know and love. I took liberties with the screenplay, but used quite a bit of the actual dialogue to keep this story as true and as wonderful as possible. I even made my own cover I was so obsessed! MCA/Universal released this film and no copyright infringement was intended in the writing of this piece of fiction.

Dedication: To my mom, Nancy. I love you, wherever you are.

Thank You's: CN Winters and TNovan for coming up with the wonderful idea of rewriting the movie classics "Xena style." As soon as I received the email, I knew exactly which movie I had to do. This will always be one of my favorites. So ladies, thank you both so much for asking me to participate in such a fun endeavor. I hope you enjoy it as well. May I present, my adaptation of the classic...

Somewhere in Time Adaptation By DS Bauden

June 19, 1966

The campus of Millfield College was quiet and peaceful on this night. Couples were holding hands walking in the moonlight while others were sitting on the grass talking and laughing with each other. The Student Union building was buzzing with excitement as the Grad Night Party was in full swing under its roof. Several people were coming and going and others were screaming, "I did it!" while running out the door and into the night.

Rachel Collier and her date, Anna, were dancing on the dance floor, uncaring who saw them, or even who cared. Both of them were in their early twenties and were casually dressed for the occasion. Anna wore a light yellow sundress and sandals, where as Rachel wore jeans and a black short-sleeved dress shirt with "Selling Author" printed on the nametag that rested on her chest. The music kept them swaying and laughing with each other, giving them not a care in the world. Rachel turned around to spin Anna when she saw her friend, Steven approach them.

"Hey! You really sold a story!" He bellowed.

"Five cents a word, Stevie!" She happily cheered.

"Sensational! What's next? A novel?" Steven inquired.

"Why not?" Rachel answered with a smirk and turned to dance again with Anna and stepped on her foot.

Rachel watched her face cringe in pain, but couldn't contain the smile on her face.

"I'm really sorry, Anna," Rachel apologized.

"Hey, it's okay. I think it's really wonderful about the story, Rachel. You're going to be a big success," she beamed.

"Tonight?" Rachel asked saucily.

"We'll see, Ms. Selling Author," she smiled airily.

They turned to continue their light banter and dance near the bandstand as a small figure watched them from the shadows. Rachel sensed that she was being watched and turned in the direction of the figure. Their eyes met briefly and Rachel noticed the woman's gaze never left hers. She continued to dance with her date, feeling extremely uncomfortable, but trying not to let it show. The woman didn't take her eyes off of Rachel and she was very aware of that fact.

The song ended and Rachel decided she needed to get a drink from the bar. She led her date over to the bar and ordered two drinks. While speaking to the bartender, she felt a touch on her shoulder. She turned around very abruptly and locked her eyes on an old woman staring back at her. Rachel couldn't keep the startled unease off of her beautiful face.

Unknowing what to do or say, Rachel was stricken with wondering who this person was and what she wanted. She flinched slightly when the old woman placed something into her right hand and leaned over to whisper something into her ear.

"Come back to me," she whispered desperately to Rachel and turned quickly away from the bar and disappeared into the throng of people. Rachel couldn't help but stare after her retreating form.

"What did she say, Rach?" Anna asked to an unhearing Rachel. "Rachel?" Anna tried again startling Rachel from her thoughts.

"I...I'm not sure," she breathed taking a step in the direction of the old woman's path.

"What did she give you?" Anna looked at Rachel and then down to Rachel's fist.

Rachel opened her hand to reveal an antique gold pocket watch. She stared at the watch feeling her heart tense with a strange and inexplicable sensation.

A limousine driver was taking the old woman to her hotel. Kingston Point Hotel was a massive structure, which had stood on Kingston Point since the late 1800's. Her face was expressionless as she sat in the backseat of the car. Her eyes glistened with unshed tears as she stared straight ahead. The car stopped in front of the old building and the doorman greeted her warmly as he helped her exit the vehicle.

She entered the hotel and walked through the lobby to the metal cage elevator that would take her to her room. Closing the door of the elevator, the operator greeted her.

"Evening," he said with a smile, but got no response from her. Shrugging he started the elevator raising them to the third floor.

She walked out of the elevator when it stopped on her floor. She walked down the corridor until she reached room 317. She unlocked and walked through the door resting against it as it closed. Her eyes were shut as her head leaned against the wood.

Her assistant, Laura Roberts, was sitting on the sofa in the sitting room reading a book, when she heard her enter.

"You're back early," she commented. "Nice party?" she added when she got no response.

The old woman nodded and walked into her room. Laura attempted to speak to her when she saw the door close and heard it lock. She hesitated, then set her book aside and got up and went to the door.

"Are you alright?" She asked gently.

She waited and was about to ask again when she heard music come from the other side of the door. It was the same easy music that was heard on the dance floor when the old woman was watching Rachel. Laura put her ear to the door and listened curiously.

Inside her room, the old woman opened the French doors leading to the balcony and stepped out to look at the ocean. After a while, she decided to sit on a chair with a sigh. The look on her face was clearly one of acceptance as the moon shined brightly on it. She sat in her chair looking out at the ocean until her head fell forward and her body slumped over in death.

June 26, 1979

Rachel was standing on her balcony gazing at the city as music came from her stereo. It was the same music that was playing the night of her graduation party thirteen years ago. The night she met that mysterious woman. It was music that had stayed in her heart since that night. She was totally immersed in the romantic music and the visions it was painting in her mind. As the song ended, Rachel was shaken from her reverie and walked back into her living room. She quickly

shut and locked the balcony door. She walked to the stereo, ejected the cassette that was playing and turned the receiver off. She put the cassette into her jacket pocket and walked across the room until she reached a sign on the wall that read:

THAT WHICH YOU THINK BECOMES YOUR WORLD

She shook her head and walked through her door leading to the hall where her baggage awaited her. She had a few bags and a portable cassette recorder ready to accompany her. As she turned to lock her door, she jumped humorously as she noticed her brother, Bob, on the doorstep about to ring her bell.

"You're going to work early," she said.

"I thought I'd see how you..." he stopped as he noticed her luggage, and looked at Rachel. "What are you doing?"

"Leaving," she said casually.

"Now?"

"Yup."

"Rachel," he mocked with a frown.

"Robert," she said with the same frown and tone in her voice.

"How can you leave?" he asked clearly disturbed.

"Down the elevator, and into my car," she answered lightly.

"Come on." he waited a beat. "Your tests won't be back 'til tomorrow."

"By tomorrow, I'll be in Canada." "Rach, you can't do this," he said with an angered expression.

"Bob, I am doing it. I've planned this trip for seven months and..."

"...You're going to escape no matter what," he said finishing her sentence.

"I'll let you know where I am along the way, but I'm not staying here," she said matter of factly.

"And the headaches?" Bob asked.

"I've got pills for them," she answered matter of factly.

"And an answer for everything it would seem. Is it that simple?"

"I gotta go, Bob," she said with irritation etched in her voice. "I want to miss the morning

traffic."

Rachel scowled as she felt her brother put his arm around her broad shoulders.

"You can't run away from this, Rachel."

"I'm not running away. I'm just going on a trip," she said trying to keep her patience.

"You're escaping. The way you've escaped in your work. The way you've escaped settling down," he said quietly.

"Bob!" She said pulling away from her brother. "For the last time, writing fantasy is not a crime. Staying single is not a crime. Going on a trip instead of hanging around waiting for doctors' reports is not a crime. I am not a crook. I'm just your sister leaving on vacation. Okay?" She paused waiting to hear a response. "Okay, Robert?"

Bob looked into her determined blue eyes and wouldn't back down. "I don't think you should go."

Rachel groaned and finally walked away from her brother leaving him to stare after her in disbelief.

Rachel drove her Porsche through Manhattan to the Queens-Triboro Bridge and crossed it. She watched the traffic heading in the opposite direction inch down the highway. She smiled and thanked whatever god that was out there, that she wasn't going that way.

She drove into the suburbs of Connecticut, through Rhode Island and into Massachusetts. As she drove along the coast highway, she listened to the music from her cassette that she'd brought from home. Humming quietly along with the tune, she approached a sign which read Kingston Point Hotel. She glanced at it and then looked ahead. Thoughts were racing through her mind so she pulled over to the shoulder on the road. She sat back and listened to the tune playing and made her decision.

"Yeah," she said to herself.

She pulled out from the shoulder and completed a U-Turn in the direction of the hotel. As she drove up the entry road, she was completely enchanted with the appearance of the old hotel.

"Oh, yeah," she whispered as she took in the large structure that stood on Kingston Point.

She happily drove the Porsche up to the entry of the hotel. The doorman who greeted her was the same gentleman that had helped the old woman thirteen years ago. She amiably shook his hand as she gestured towards the hotel gushing compliments about it to him.

Walking through the lobby of the hotel, Rachel walked up to the desk and greeted the clerk behind the counter.

"Yes ma'am?" he asked.

"I would like to stay here tonight," she said with enthusiasm.

"You have a reservation?" He asked coldly.

"No. But I'm..."

"I'm sorry, ma'am. All the single rooms are booked," he said while interrupting her.

"The double rooms then," she said to him. "The suites."

The clerk just stared at her confident smile and registered her. After she signed in, she jumped when she heard the clerk ring for the porter to help her with her bags. An older gentleman approached her and smiled warmly as she grabbed her luggage.

"I'll be glad to carry that, Miss," he said.

"No, no, I can do it," she insisted on carrying at least one of her bags.

"Is this your first time here, Miss..."

"Collier. Yeah. For some reason I never got around to coming here. Heard how nice it was though."

They started to walk towards the elevator.

"Oh? When was that?" The porter inquired.

"Thirteen, fourteen years ago. When I was going to Millfield College."

"Oh! Right up the coast, yes," he said with a nod. "The students still come here to enjoy the restaurant... and the rooms," he added conspiratorially and Rachel chuckled. "Seems to me they held a graduation prom back in... oh let me see now... '47 was it?" He said trying to recall the year.

"You've been here that long?" Rachel asked with wide eyes.

"I've been here since 1910," he said amused.

"Nineteen-ten?" Rachel gasped then whistled as the older man pushed the button on the elevator. "Wow," she added.

"I came here with my parents when I was only five years old. My father was a desk clerk. See

that corner of the lobby?" He asked as he pointed towards the area in question.

"Yeah."

"Used to hang fish there." "Did you say fish?"

"Fish the guests caught," he answered while nodding. "Real whoppers some of them. I used to play with them. Drove my father crazy. 'Leave those fish alone' he'd say," the porter shook his head. "He got so mad at me sometimes."

The bell of the elevator rang and they turned around to greet it. When the elevator stopped the operator opened the large metal caged door. He was the same operator that took the old woman up to her floor. The two walked into the elevator, and the porter turned and faced the operator, addressing him by name.

"Four, George," he stated. The elevator door closed and the cage started to rise.

"How long has this hotel been here?" Rachel asked.

"Since 1887," the older porter replied.

"That's a LOT of years," she said back to him.

The elevator reached the fourth floor and stopped. The operator opened the door and Rachel and the porter exited. They started to walk in the direction of her room, when the porter turned to her.

"On vacation?" He asked her.

"Yeah. I'm gonna visit the college... haven't been there since I graduated... take a look at Eastern Canada... then come back and drive across the country," she said cheerfully.

"I can tell you're not married," the porter chuckled.

"I just never met the right person," she said casually.

They reached her room and the porter let them both in. Rachel took in the look of the room and seemed very pleased. The furniture in the sitting room was aged and would almost be considered antiques. The living area of the room was a little more contemporary. The porter opened the French doors showing her the view of the ocean. She could hear the surf outside making her smile warmly. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a few bills to give to the porter.

"Thank you," she said with a smile.

"Thank YOU, Miss. Collier." "You're very welcome."

"If there's anything I can do for you, just let me know. My name is Arthur and I live in the

bungalow behind the hotel," he informed her.

"Thanks, see you around, Arthur," she said as she turned towards the sound of the surf.

Something in the words she spoke and how she said them made Arthur pause to look at her. Sensing she wasn't alone yet, she turned around to find Arthur staring at her quizzically.

"What?" She said gently.

"Have we ever met before?" He asked curiously.

"I don't think so." She paused. "Why do you ask? Do YOU think we have?"

Arthur looked at her intently and then shook himself from the feeling and smiled. "No, I'm sure we haven't. Have a nice stay here, Miss Collier."

"I will, thank you."

As Arthur left the room, Rachel reached in her jacket pocket and took out the pocket watch the old woman had given her. She pressed the stem and looked at the face as it opened. It was just past two-thirty. After several moments, she put the watch on the bedside table, sat on the bed, and picked up the telephone receiver.

"I'd like to make a person-to-person call to Scarsdale, New York, please," she paused as the operator asked her name. "Rachel Collier."

After changing her clothes, Rachel decided to go site seeing around the hotel. She locked up her room and headed for the elevator that had just arrived on her floor. There were several other people on the elevator with her. She listened quietly to the multitude of conversations whirring around her.

"I hear the fishing's good this time of year," said the first man.

"Let's rent a boat and try it," said the second man.

"If Teddy runs next year, I'll vote for him," a lady next to her said.

"They can't just keep raising the price of gas indefinitely," the second woman said.

"What's to stop them?" A third man asked.

"To hell with Perrier water, I need a triple martini," another woman said with a laugh. Rachel looked at her and smiled.

As they exited the small cage, Rachel took a look around the hotel noticing several guests arriving and chatting amongst themselves. She looked around the lobby and a small corridor caught her eye. As she got closer she read the sign above the doorway which read:

HALL OF HISTORY AND THEATRE

She smiled and walked through the entrance. The sunlight coming in through the windows gave the corridor a strange haze-like brightness. There were photographs on the walls, display cases, and an alcove. Walking behind some other guests, she waited to look at the first photo on the wall. It was of the hotel in the early 1900's. A carriage and a horse team were in front of it. She smiled and walked towards the next photograph of a huge fish hanging in the lobby. She shook her head and smiled thinking back to her conversation with Arthur about his antics as a child.

Rachel walked towards the display case and looked inside. There were little things placed inside of it. There was a dish, a menu, a napkin ring, an iron, a telephone, an open hotel register, and a program for a play entitled "Wisdom of the Heart / June 28, 1912". She looked at the objects with a charming smile, and then moved to an alcove.

Inside it, behind a glass partition, was a typical hotel bedroom from the early 1900's. It contained a bureau, a table and chair and a wall mirror. Rachel looked at it then turned around. Abruptly she froze staring at something on the wall. It was a photograph of a young woman. The fading light of the room illuminated it mysteriously.

She was drawn to the photograph as if she was entranced by it somehow. She stopped in front of it and just stared. The woman in the photo was in her late twenties, gloriously and ethereally beautiful. She was dressed in the style of the early 1900's and had eyes like emerald gems. Rachel looked down at the bottom of the photograph and noticed the nameplate was missing. The last rays of sunset reflected Rachel's face on the glass of the photograph, melding their faces together. After a while she finally tore herself away from the photo and went back towards the lobby.

She walked to the clerk at the desk to ask for some assistance. He motioned for her to find Arthur in the lobby. As she entered the lobby she noticed Arthur working on some luggage.

"Arthur?" She said loudly to get his attention.

"Yes, Miss Collier?" He answered.

"That lovely man behind the counter said you might be able to help me. There's a photograph in the Hall of History, a young woman. It has no nameplate..."

"Oh, yes." He answered immediately. "That's Elise McKenna." "Elise McKenna," she said savoring the name.

"Yes'm. She was a very famous actress in her day.... Starred in a play here in 1912."

"Nineteen-twelve," Rachel said taken slightly aback.

The repetition of the year reinstilled the sense of oddness in Arthur and he stared back at an unknowing Rachel. Lost in her own thoughts, she put a five-dollar bill on the counter.

"Thank you, Arthur," she said as she walked away. Arthur watched her leave as he tried to put a name to the weirdness he was feeling.

Later that night, Rachel was lying awake in her bed listening to the surf sounds coming from her balcony. She had been lying there for hours unable to sleep. Finally, she flung her bedclothes aside and sat up quickly.

"This is ridiculous!" She shouted to the empty, dark room.

She turned on the light on the bedside table and picked up her pocket watch. She opened the watch and looked at the time with a groan. She put the watch back on the table and got out of bed.

"Ridiculous," she repeated as she went to the closet to get dressed.

Rachel walked down the hallway towards the elevators. As she approached them, she noticed a sign that read:

CLOSED

"Of course," she mumbled to herself.

She immediately looked to her right finding the stairwell door. She followed the stairs downward and entered the lobby. She walked right up to the Hall of History and into the corridor. Drawn once again to the photograph of the young woman on the wall, Rachel sighed as she stared at the young woman's face. After awhile, she moved away from the photograph and walked towards the theater.

Rachel approached the theater door and tried the handle. The door easily opened and she walked inside noting the soft romantic feel of the atmosphere. She walked down to the orchestra seating and took a seat about ten rows away from the stage. She looked up at the stage and just stared in total silence. Startling Rachel from her thoughts, the night clerk tapped her on the shoulder.

"Ma'am?" he said. "The theater is closed to the guests after midnight."

"Oh, okay," she said standing. "Okay."

As she walked towards the exit door, the night clerk stopped her. "I'm sorry if I startled you."

"It's all right. It's time I went to bed anyway. I have to leave in the morning. I'm glad you came in," she said as she left the theater.

Morning finally came for Rachel and she collected her things together for her departure. She went to the bathroom to brush her teeth and wash her face. She looked at her reflection in the mirror and saw the tightness in her face. She grabbed her watch to check the time.

"Good," she said opening a bottle of pills, tossing one into her mouth and swallowing it. "Go to work."

A knock sounded on her door and she looked around. Her packed bags and cassette recorder were on the unmade bed. She put the medication bottle in her bag and walked to the door. Arthur was standing outside waiting for her.

"Good morning, Miss Collier," he said brightly.

"Morning, Arthur," she said pointing to the bed. "My stuff is in on the bed, but please leave half to carry down myself. Okay?" She said with a glint in her blue eyes.

Arthur couldn't help but smile back at the tall beauty. "All right," he acquiesced.

They grabbed the bags and Arthur looked to her again. "Did you enjoy your stay?"

"It was... different," she said with an odd expression on her face.

The two went down in the elevator to the lobby, and walked towards the desk to check out. Rachel put her key on the desk and the woman cashier picked it up and smiled.

"Thank you," she said as she looked for Rachel's bill.

Rachel's gaze was drawn again to the Hall of History and she walked quietly towards the corridor unbeknownst to the cashier looking for her bill.

"Collier, Collier... ah, here we are," she looked up to find Rachel gone. She looked around making sure the guest wasn't trying to run out on her bill. After a few moments her eyes found her standing in the corridor of the Hall of History.

Rachel walked to the mysterious photograph and stares. Her expression was one of obvious obsession. She started to turn to leave, then stopped to look at the face again. She was almost nearing surrender when she finally made a decision.

"I'm NOT staying," she said to the photograph and walked out of the corridor. She walked towards the desk repeating her mantra. "I'm not staying... I'm NOT staying." She looked to the cashier and grabbed her key.

"I'm staying."

The cashier watched her go with bill in hand and a blank look on her face. Rachel walked outside to find Arthur waiting to put the luggage into her car. She immediately grabbed some money from her pocket and gave it to Arthur.

"Arthur, would you put my luggage back in the suite?"

"Uh... yes of course, Miss Collier," he said surprised.

"And would you tell me where the nearest library is?"

"South on the highway, seven miles down. It's in Duxbury," he said perplexed.

"Got it," she said handing him another bill. "See you around, Arthur."
Rachel jumped in her car leaving a puzzled Arthur watching her go.

"See you around, Arthur," he mulled in his head again, unknowing why these words held such meaning.

Rachel drove quickly to the library and entered the building barely turning off the engine of the car as she did so. She immediately went to the desk asking the woman there for information. The woman pointed to the room and Rachel thanked her and moved in that direction.

Rachel went to the rows containing theater books and pulled each out one by one. She grabbed as many as she could carry and set them down at her table. The first one she found was entitled, "American Stage Actresses." She leafed through the pages, stopping at every one containing information on Elise McKenna. She stopped to look at a photo of Elise and read the text under it.

"Elise McKenna, 1888-1966. One of the most revered actresses of the American Stage."

She grabbed another book finding another entry about her.

"Known primarily as a light comedienne in her early days, she later became one of the world's great tragediennes."

Rachel continued her search of books on the shelves of the Duxbury Library. She grabbed another pile of books and set them next to the others on the table. She grabbed "Luminaries of the American Stage" by John Fraser. She looked through the book finding more information on the actress.

"Elise McKenna was the first American actress to create a mystique in the public's eye. She was never seen in the public in her later years, the absolute quintessence of seclusion."

Rachel was relentless, she paged through several more books and finally opening "Famous American Actresses" by Laura Roberts.

"After her retirement, she lectured occasionally at various schools and colleges in the New England area. She died on the night of June 19, 1966."

Rachel stopped and tried to understand why that date meant something to her. "June 19, 1966," she repeated trying to remember.

The librarian approached Rachel with more periodicals and theater magazines. After looking through several she finally found a magazine article about her.

"Elise McKenna - The Final Years"

She turned to the page containing the article and froze when she saw the picture of Elise in her eightieth year. It was the old woman she'd met thirteen years ago that had whispered in her ear as she gave her the pocket watch. Rachel's world as she knew it froze as she sat in the stillness of the library staring at the photograph.

The next day sitting in room 417, Rachel telephoned her agent. Her attitude was compulsive as she tried to solve this enigma.

"The first one is by John Fraser. *"The Luminaries of the American Stage"* Harpers, 1948. The second is by Laura Roberts, *"Famous American Actresses"* Galliard Press..."

"Hold it, hold it! Not so fast!" Peter shouted. "Famous American Actresses."

"Galliard Press, 1968. The jacket says she lives in Massachusetts. The third is Bernard Appleby, *"Nineteenth Century Stage Actresses"* Lippincott, 1952. What I need are the phone numbers and or addresses of the three authors. So far they're the ones with the most information about her."

"I'll see what I can do," Peter said.

"How soon?" Rachel asked.

"Tomorrow morning?" He suggested.

"Today," Rachel said firmly.

"Today! Rachel, I've got lots of things to..."

"Peter!" She cut him off. *"Please; it's important."*

"Is it for a novel by any remote possibility?"

"Yes. A BIG one," she lied.

"All right," Peter sighed.

"Thank you, Peter," she paused. "Get back to me as soon as you can, okay?" She added anxiously as she hung up the receiver.

Later that day Rachel was in her bathroom throwing water on her face when she heard the phone ring. She quickly dried her face and ran towards the phone.

"Peter?" She answered anxiously.

"Yeah," he replied.

"Let's have it." "John Fraser is dead." "Great." "Bernard Appleby moved to Spain nine years ago," he continued.

"Suuuuper," she answered sarcastically.

"And Laura Roberts..."

"Fell down a well and drowned," Rachel finished cutting Peter off.

"No, I got her address if you want to try and see her." "Yes! What is it?" She asked excitedly and her eyes widened when she heard the address. "That's incredible."

Rachel quickly said her good-bye and grabbed her keys and ran out the door. She drove quickly but carefully as the rain hit the windshield of her car. She watched as the numbers of the cottages increased from thirty-seven to forty-five. Seeing forty-seven she braked in front of the small weathered cottage. She pulled into the driveway, got out of her car and walked to the front gate. She walked down the path to the door and rang the bell. After awhile, Laura Roberts opened the door.

"Miss Roberts?" Rachel addressed the woman with long curly hair and brown eyes.

"Yes?" The woman answered.

"My name is Rachel Collier," she paused trying not to frighten the woman. "I just read your book 'Famous American Actresses' and enjoyed it very much, especially the part..." "How did you get my address?" Laura interrupted. "It isn't listed in the telephone directory." "My agent in New York got it for me. He contacted Gilliard Press..." "I never authorized anyone there to..."

"It's my fault, Miss Roberts." Rachel cut her off. "Ordinarily I'd never do such a thing but..."

"What is it you want?" She asked suspiciously.

"Information about Elise McKenna," she said trying to ease herself out of the rain.

"What sort of information," she asked guardedly.

"Well... you see, I'm a writer and I'm thinking of doing a novel based on her life and..."

Laura began to shut the door with a hardened expression on her face.

"Don't," Rachel begged. "Please... it's... not a novel, Miss Roberts. It's something very personal."

"I don't understand," Laura said.

Rachel took in a deep breath and pulled out the pocket watch from her jacket and showed it to Laura.

"Miss McKenna gave..." "Where did you get that?" Laura asked with a sudden jolt.

"You recognize it?" Rachel asked startled.

"Where did you get it?" Laura asked again icily.

"She gave it to me," she answered not understanding her ire.

Laura stood staring at her unbelieving waiting for Rachel to explain herself.

"At a party at Millfield College," she finished.

The two stood in silence staring at each other. Laura finally began to speak.

"That watch was very precious to her, Miss Collier. She never let it out of her possession. It disappeared the night she died."

"She died the night she gave it to me?" Rachel asked startled. "My God," she whispered then took a step back.

"Would you like to come in?" Laura asked.

"Please."

Rachel entered Laura's home and watched as she shut the door and approached her. "May I see it?" Laura gestured to the watch.

"Of course," Rachel said handing her the watch.

"She kept it with her all the time. I... almost thought she died because she lost it."

After a few moments, she returned the watch to Rachel. Rachel looked at her curiously not knowing where to begin.

"I know this will sound insane to you, but... I saw her photograph at the Kingston Point Hotel and..." "That's where she died," Laura softly said.

Rachel looked at Laura as new emotions filled her with this revelation. She thought she knew why she was drawn to the hotel now. She looked around the room and noticed some photographs on the mantel of the fireplace. She walked towards them as Laura silently followed.

"She was so beautiful," Rachel said reverently.

"Yes, she was," she agreed.

She continued to look around and noticed a stern looking bearded man in a different photo. "Her manager?"

Laura was taken aback. "How did you know?"

"You described him perfectly in your book," she said with a faint smile. "Not a man to be trifled with, eh?"

The two shared a smile as Rachel saw some books out of the corner of her eye. One in particular caught her attention and she picked it up. "*Journeys Through Time*" by G. Finney.

"He was one of my teachers at Millfield," Rachel revealed.

"Really," Laura answered politely.

Rachel looked at the other two books. "*Man and Time*" and "*An Experiment with Time*". A wave of curiosity went through her. She looked at Laura. "Have you... other things of hers?" Laura hesitated momentarily and then nodded.

"In the next room," she said and led Rachel out of the room.

Laura led her into a den that held many artifacts owned by Elise McKenna. The room was beautifully arranged and held a touching feeling of nostalgia.

"May I look around?" Rachel asked hoping she wasn't overstepping.

"Please," Laura said warmly.

Rachel walked first to a dressmaker's dummy on which a pale white evening gown rested. Long white gloves were pinned to it. She looked at the dress trying to imagine Elise McKenna wearing

it. She touched the fabric with a delicate tenderness.

"It's a costume from one of the plays she was in," Laura commented.

"It's lovely," Rachel said entranced.

Laura nodded and smiled. Rachel moved to a wall shelf that had a pair of perfume bottles resting on it. Next to them rested a hand mirror, a brush and a comb that were all decorated in silver. She again tried to imagine Elise using these items as she stared at them.

"Lovely," she whispered.

"Yes, she had wonderful taste. I was so pleased when she left these things to me," she said with melancholy in her voice. "I had such respect for her."

"Miss Roberts, what was she like?" Rachel asked as she walked through the room marveling at all of Elise's belongings.

"When I knew her... she was kind and thoughtful but..." She hesitated. "Remote... withdrawn. She'd been living alone since her mother died in 1927. I didn't start to work for her until 1950."

"She was alone for..." she quickly did the math. "Twenty-three years? Why?"

"She never said, and... well I didn't feel it was my place to ask." Laura took a deep breath and continued with her memories. "She was just too much within herself," she sighed. "As though, in some way, she'd... died before that night in 1966... As though there was nothing left in her."

"Was she always that way?" Rachel asked sadly.

"Oh, no. Not at all. People who knew her when she was young said that she was quick and bright and full of fun. She was strong... willful... but not at all the way she was later. Not the way I knew her when I worked for her."

"What made her change?" Rachel asked deeply curious.

"I'm not sure. All I know, from my research, is that the change took place in 1912. Right after she performed a play at the Kingston Point Hotel."

Rachel took in Laura's words and felt something within her cry out. She looked over at the window and on a shelf next to it, rested a small replica of the Kingston Point Hotel. She immediately walked towards it and stared at it.

"She had it made," Laura informed her.

"Oh, my," Rachel sighed looking at the craftsmanship of it.

She picked it up carefully and noticed the top had hinges on it. The miniature hotel was a music

box. She opened the lid and almost lost her footing as she heard the music begin to play.

"What is it?" Laura asked curiously.

Rachel couldn't answer, but could only listen to the music as it played until it wined down. She wound it up again and listened as it started to play. She was completely lost and Laura began to look at her with concern.

"What *is* it?" She asked again gently.

"It's my favorite music in the whole world," she said with a dazed look on her face. "What is happening?" She paused again. "Dear God, what is happening?"

She put down the music box with shaking hands and she and Laura looked at each other. Laura had sympathy for Rachel's deep distress. They decided to leave the den and Rachel felt the loss as soon as they exited the room.

The two walked into Laura's dining area and had a cup of coffee. They sat across from each other at the table.

"Are you all right?" Laura asked.

Rachel nodded and managed a small smile. She hesitated briefly but had to ask a question she wasn't sure she wanted the answer to.

"I know she never married, Miss Roberts, but... was there ever someone special in her life?"

"Yes, I think there was," she answered quietly.

Rachel tried to hide her disappointment as Laura continued.

"There was such a sadness in her. Such a sense of loss."

"Did she ever speak about them?" Rachel asked disturbed.

"Oh, there were hints now and then, but nothing definite. Except for that watch you have. And the," she stopped and remained silent.

"What?" Rachel asked but Laura didn't answer. "What, Miss Roberts?" Rachel persisted.

Laura sat and debated with herself momentarily then got up and walked out of the room. Rachel heard a drawer open and shut and waited for Laura to return.

Laura came back and sat down holding something in her hand.

"One day, in 1928, she burned everything she'd ever written. Had her gardener dig a pit in the backyard of the house she was living in; threw everything inside it, had kerosene poured across the pile and set it all ablaze." Rachel sat in silence as she listened to Laura speak.

"All that remained was a fragment of a page the fire wind had blown away. Her gardener found it and kept it. Later on, he sent it to me when I called to ask him some questions for my book."

She took the paper fragment from the envelope in her hand and handed it to Rachel. The paper had brown edges from the fire and looked extremely fragile. Rachel eyed the fragment but it was too faded to be legible. Laura closed her eyes and began to recite it from memory.

*"My love, where are you now?
From what place did you come to me?
To what place go?
Come back to me."*

As she listened to Laura recite the beautiful words, the astounding realization came to her.

"Come... *back* to me."

Rachel left Laura's cottage almost in a dead run. She knew where she had to go for answers. She took the highway north and headed for Millfield College. She saw the sign on the highway stating she had four miles to go. She felt the anticipation running through her veins.

She parked the car and ran to the building at full speed. She reached the landing wheezing for breath and started along the corridor that was filled with students eying her warily. She came to room 321 and looked in the window to find Dr. Gerald Finney talking animatedly with several students. He was a short bearded man easily in his seventies, but had energy for life that belied his true age.

She watched him grab his briefcase and head towards the doorway and opened the door.

"Dr. Finney?" Rachel said to the hurried man.

"You'll have to walk with me young lady. I have another class. What's your name?" He asked as Rachel kept up with him easily.

"Collier, sir. Rachel Collier." "Student?" "Thirteen years ago."

"Just visiting?"
"I came to see *you*."

"Well," he said brightly. "I try to make my classes interesting, but I've never seen that interest last for thirteen years before. What can I do for you?" He asked clearly intrigued.

"A question, sir," she answered simply.
"Shoot." "Is time travel possible?" Rachel asked as Finney stopped dead in his tracks.

"That *is* a question."

"I read your book about journeys in time when I was at school and I remember your lectures on the subject," Rachel said as she braced herself to ask her next question. "Is it possible?"

Dr. Finney hesitated then continued down the stairs with Rachel in tow.

"Two Englishwomen thought so in August, 1901. Misses Moberly and Jourdain. Deans of ladies' schools, I'll have you know, not idiots, by any means. Claimed to have walked back to the year 1789 in the Gardens of Versailles. Seen Marie Antoinette celebrating her 34th birthday. They drew sketches of what they'd seen but no one was ever really convinced. For one thing, they wrote down the music they claimed to have heard but experts said that no such music was ever played at that time."

Rachel was discouraged. "It isn't certain then."

"Well... consider this. Just recently, in Paris, some music manuscript was found. It had been composed for Marie Antoinette's 34th birthday and played only on that day," he said smiling. "Guess what?" Rachel looked at him fascinated.

"Also recently discovered was a journal kept by one of the ladies of the court. In an entry written on Marie Antoinette's birthday, she commented on 'two women dressed in very strange clothes' who had wandered unexpectedly onto the grounds."

"My God!" Rachel exclaimed.

"Did the Misses Moberly and Jourdain travel back through time?"

"What do you think?" Rachel challenged.

"Scientifically?" He smiled. "Or personally."

"Personally," she said.

"That we are where we are because it's accepted, by the world around us, therefore, by US... therefore it is."

"That which you think becomes your world?" Rachel added with a smile.

"You know the phrase," he said pleased. "Yes. A perfect description. That which you *think* becomes your world. The consciousness of the observer influencing, perhaps even *determining*, that which is observed."

"You think it can be done then?" She said nervously.

Dr. Finney looked up in to tense blue eyes as they walked looking at each other in silence. They reached his classroom and they both entered. Dr. Finney put his briefcase down on his desk while students started to file in.

"Let me tell you something, Rachel, is it?"

"Yes, sir," she nodded.

"I was in Venice in 1971 staying in a very old hotel, but I mean *very* old; the structure, the furnishings, everything. The atmosphere was... aged if you follow me. In my room, I felt as though it was a century or more earlier than 1971, you understand?"

"The location is very important."

"Not all-important but essential," he said touching his head. "The rest is here..." he paused. "One afternoon, I was lying down in that room, all the sights around me a part of the past; even the sounds I heard.

"And I conceived a notion. What, I asked myself; if I attempt to hypnotize my mind... suggest to it that it isn't 1971, but *1571*. I mean *actually*. Actually 1571."

"Did you do it?" Rachel asked quickly.

"I closed my eyes and fed a suggestion into my brain. It's August, 1571. I'm in the Hotel Del Vecchio. I spelled out details for myself, kept doing it over and over. August, 1571, the hotel, the details of the past. Again and again and again." "And?" "Well, I'll never really know, Rachel. I've never done it since and I'm not sure I'd want to do it again, but... for a flicker there, the... fragment of an instant... I was certain I was there. Venice. 1571. It was imperfect, granted. How could it be otherwise? There were objects around me that were clearly of the present; I knew they were there. A telephone, a book, my luggage. And the clothes I wore; strictly 1971; well, in my case, probably a lot older." They exchanged a smile.

"If I were going to try it again... mind you, I have no such intention, but *if* I did... I would disassociate myself entirely from the present... Move everything out of sight that could possibly remind me of it. Then... who knows?"

Rachel felt closer to Elise than she'd ever hoped. "*I* do," she paused. "Thank you, Dr. Finney."

Rachel left the classroom feeling very positive and very determined.

Rachel drove into town towards the hotel and stopped at a phone booth to through the yellow pages. She found a listing close to the hotel for Smythe's Costume Shop. She quickly jumped back in her car and drove through town hoping to get there before closing time. She found the store and noticed the OPEN sign still in the window. Rachel entered a costume rental shop and quickly found a salesman.

"Can I help you, Miss?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm looking for a suit that would've been worn in the early 1900's. Specifically 1912."

He scratched his head. "1912?"

"Yes." "Let me check my catalog," he said walking towards the book on the counter. "Ah yes, I believe we just got this suit back. It was a man's suit you were looking for, correct?"

"Yes, I don't do well with dresses and heels at my height," she smiled.

"Let me see if I can find it."

The salesman walked into the back room and came out with a brown suit and a white shirt and tie. "Try these on," he said motioning to the dressing room.

Rachel took the clothing and nearly ran into the dressing room. A few moments later she emerged wearing the suit with the pants covering her feet.

"The pants are a mite long," the salesman said.

"A mite," she said quite amused.

"What about the rest of it?" he asked.

"It's fine," she said as she looked at her reflection. "You're sure it's what they wore in 1912?"

"That's what the catalog says."

"Okay, how soon can the pants be shortened?" She asked.

"A day or two," he replied.

"Now," she said confidently.

"I'm afraid that's a..."

"Whatever it costs," she cut in.

"The gentleman who rented it just brought it back. We haven't even had a chance to clean it yet," he said exasperated.

"Whatever it costs," she repeated.

"It's so late in the day," he continued to argue.

"And twenty more for you," she said pointedly.

"I'll talk to the tailor," he acquiesced. "How long will you be needing the outfit?"

"Sixty-seven years," she answered while looking into the mirror.

"Beg pardon?" he asked unsure he'd heard her correctly.

Rachel smiled back at him. "Just a few days."

The salesman nodded and Rachel looked at her reflection again. A few moments later she bowed a little. "Good evening, Miss McKenna. You don't know me but... you *will*."

After the suit was fitted and paid for, Rachel made her way down the street until another shop caught her eye. She pulled over into a parking spot close to the shop. *McNeil's Coin Shop* was on the sign and she hoped they'd have what she needed.

She walked in and the bell on the door sounded alerting the salesman that she was there. She smiled briefly at the man behind the counter and told him she was looking for currency from the year 1912. He smiled at her and walked into the storeroom. While she waited she perused the contents of the display case in front of her.

After a few moments, the man returned holding a box with drawers in it. He opened the box and pulled out an aged twenty-dollar bill. It was larger in size than a contemporary bill, it had a portrait of President Garfield on it and a colorful red seal that held the words: *Twenty dollars in Gold Coin repayable to the bearer on demand*.

"How much," Rachel asked.

"Three hundred dollars," he said calmly.

"Three hundred dollars for a twenty-dollar bill?" She said aghast.

"That's very inexpensive. It was never circulated," he said with an incredulous expression.

"Just what I've been looking for," she said dryly.

"Tell you want I'll do. Three hundred and I'll throw in a ten-dollar certificate worth forty-five dollars," he paused. "You did say 1912?" He added when he saw the indecisiveness on her face.

"Right!" Angry at herself. "What am I wasting time for? I've gotta have them." She took out her wallet and removed her credit card, tossing it onto the counter. "I can't use *this* in 1912."

The two shared a chuckle until the salesman looked at her quizzically when he realized he didn't get the joke.

Rachel was now finished with her shopping and headed back towards the hotel.

Rachel entered her hotel room with bags in hand. She had her suit, her money, her shoes, and some blank cassettes she had purchased. She threw her goods on the bed and started to organize them quickly. She grabbed the cassettes and ripped open the packaging with her teeth. She reached over to the bedside table and got the cassette recorder. She removed the cassette from it and placed a blank one in its place. Rachel took a deep breath and took the microphone in her hand. She pressed the "start" and "record" buttons simultaneously and began to speak.

"It's June 27, 1912. You're lying on your bed, eyes closed, completely relaxed and it's June 27, 1912. June 27, 1912..." she continued until she had filled the cassette completely.

Later that night she lay on her bed fully dressed in the suit and was listening to her voice come from the recorder.

"You're lying on a bed in the Kingston Point Hotel and it's June 27, 1912."

Rachel was lying with her eyes closed trying to relax to the deep timbre of her own voice.

"Your mind accepts this absolutely. It *is* June 27, 1912. You're lying on your hotel bed, eyes closed, on June 27, 1912..."

Rachel had removed all the items from the room that would have reminded her of the present. She put all the items in a closet and closed the door. It was no longer 1979 it was 1912 in her mind. She listened in vain as her voice continued to play.

"You're lying quietly, at peace, your eyes closed, in this room in 1912. You have traveled back in time. It is 1912 in the hotel; June 27, 1912. Soon you will get up and leave the room to find Elise McKenna. Soon you will open your eyes in 1912 and walk into the corridor and go downstairs and find Elise McKenna. She is in the hotel now. At this very moment. Because it is June 27, 1912..."

A few hours later Rachel staggered into the bathroom completely drained and exhausted. She switched on the light and picked up the bottle of pills and removed one. She washed the pill down with a cup of water and returned to her bedroom. She rewound the cassette and started the playback once again. She closed her eyes and tried to relax.

"Elise McKenna and her company are here in the hotel at this very moment. The stage is being set for their performance tomorrow night...even as you lie here on your bed in the Kingston Point Hotel on June 27, 1912..." the tape played on.

"Come on... COME ON!" Rachel said in desperation. Her face was tight as she tried to will herself back in time. She took a deep breath to calm herself.

"There is no question in your mind; it IS June 27, 1912. Relax and believe. Relax and accept..."

Rachel was not relaxed nor was she believing. She got tenser with each moment that passed. She listened to her voice repeating again and again until the phone rang nearly making her scream out. She grabbed the phone from under the bed and barked into the receiver.

"What!"

"Rachel?" Her brother Bob said.

"Oh... Bob," she said fighting control. "Look, can I call you back?"

"No, Rachel. We have to talk."

"Bob, I'm all right. I'll..." "Your reports came back this afternoon," he interrupted and Rachel went still. "You'd better get back here as soon as possible," he said waiting for a response from his sister and getting none. "Rachel?" "What?" she said quietly.

"You'll have to start treatments right away." "NO, Bob," she said quickly.

"Rachel!" He said alarmed. "You can't escape *this* one."

"What makes you think I've been escaping it?" She said angrily and pressed the button on the telephone base ending their conversation. The receiver began to buzz and very slowly it fell from her fingers. She held the cassette recorder and pressed the stop button. The room was completely silent except for the buzzing telephone and the surf sounds coming in from the balcony.

Rachel got up from the bed and walked into the bathroom. She turned on the cold water and washed her face. She looked at her reflection in the mirror.

"Time travel..." she said with contempt. "You... stupid... dying.. idiot!" She leaned over the sink with a groan and slapped the flat of her hand against the counter over and over.

Rachel walked down to the hotel bar and ordered a drink. She sat alone in a booth watching the crowd and listened to their cheering of the basketball game being shown on the TV. She was immersed in thought not touching her drink. A loud burst of laughter made her wince so she got up from her seat and left.

Rachel's expression was lifeless to anyone that passed her in the lobby. Many heads turned in confusion as they saw the beautiful woman walk by. She walked towards the elevator but quickly turned into the Hall of History. She walked to the photograph and stared at Elise's face.

Suddenly she couldn't bear to look at the face any longer, so she turned away with tears streaming down her face. She immediately noticed a couple enter the corridor so she moved to the display case so they wouldn't see her crying. She looked down and noticed the items in the

case. Suddenly it dawned on her.

"Wait a second," she said and ran out of the corridor and out of the hotel. She reached Arthur's bungalow and started to pound on the door.

"Arthur!" she screamed. When there was no response she pounded again more loudly. "Arthur, wake up!"

She watched as a few lights turned on and a sleepy Arthur answered the door wearing his pajamas.

"I apologize for waking you up but I asked at the desk and they couldn't help me. Those things in the Hall of History display case. Where did they come from? Is there a storeroom or something?" She asked to a confused Arthur. "Arthur, please. Where did those things come from?"

"The... attic, Miss Collier," he said.

She went back to the hotel and up to the attic with Arthur in tow. She lifted the trap door and shined her light inside the dusty attic. She looked around and saw boxes and books and old furniture. Everything was covered in dust and cobwebs.

"Be careful, Miss Collier. It's a low..."

"Ow!" Rachel exclaimed as she hit her head.

"Ceiling..." Arthur finished.

"Thanks," she said rubbing her head.

She moved forward more carefully and shined the light ahead of herself, but not before she tripped on something.

"Miss Collier?" Arthur called.

"It's okay. It's okay... I'm not going to..." she paused as the light shined on the figure of a woman in an old fashioned dress stunning her silent.

"What is it?" Arthur asked.

"Just a... mannequin.. I guess it uh.. caught me by surprise," she said while swallowing nervously.

She moved the beam of light around the room until it fell upon what she was looking for. She walked over to an immense book; it was about a foot and a half long, a foot wide and several inches thick. It was covered in a thick layer of dust and when she blew it off, it created a cloud that made her cough roughly.

"Oh, Jesus!" She said in between coughing fits.

"Are you all right?" Arthur asked concerned.

"Yes," she said while still coughing.

She opened the book. It was a ledger filled with figures. She frowned and put the book down. She pointed the beam of light at a pile of ledgers and registers, all covered in the same dust.

She picked up each register and looked at the spine of the book looking for the correct year. She went through several books until she came to the one that had 1912 on its spine. She grabbed the book and wiped it down with her sleeve instead of blowing off the dust.

She opened the book and ran her fingers down the list of guests in the hotel. The columns on the registry had the names, residences, rooms, and times for every guest. She ran her finger down the list of names until it landed on the name of Elise McKenna.

Elise McKenna, Ronkonkama, NY, Suite 123, 12:37 p.m.

Rachel's anxiety rose about one hundred percent as her finger continued down the page. She read through the many names on the pages and her finger moved continually faster increasing her anxiety level. Her face fell when she didn't find what she was looking for. Her lips trembled as she turned the pages once again hoping she'd missed it. After a few pages turned her eyes locked on a familiar name and she screamed.

"What is it?" Arthur asked with a shaky voice.

Rachel couldn't answer him. She couldn't contain her emotions as she let herself cry. She held the book close to her body as she rocked cross-legged on the dusty attic floor. Her sobbing became louder and Arthur was clearly worried for his guest.

"Miss Collier? All you all right?"

"Yes!" Rachel answered through her sobs of joy.

She brought the book back down and fingered the entry from June 28, 1912.

Rachel Collier, New York, NY, Room 350, 9:18 a.m.

Rachel ran back to her room and dressed in her suit once again. She grabbed the coins she had purchased and put them in the pocket of her trousers with shaking fingers.

"Take it easy," she said trying to calm her racing heart.

Her excitement would not be repressed however and she took the watch off the table and started to put it in her vest pocket and almost dropped it. She made a face and flinched.

"God, don't drop the watch!" She scolded herself.

She took a deep breath and the smile she'd just made went away as she felt the pain in her head increase. She grabbed her head and went into the bathroom in search of her medication. She grabbed the bottle and took out a pill.

"One for the road," she said before swallowing it. She took another look in the mirror and couldn't contain the pleasure she felt.

"I'm on my way, Elise," she whispered to her reflection.

Forgetting the bottle was still in her hand, she turned back towards the bedroom. She sat on her bed and took a deep breath. She pressed play on the cassette recorder as she lay down and closed her eyes. The tape began to play.

"It's June 27, 1912. You're lying on your bed, eyes closed, completely relaxed and it's June 27, 1912..."

The sound of her voice was beginning to blur and fade. Rachel immediately opened her eyes believing she had traveled back in time. The room looked a bit obscured to her as she lifted her head from the pillow. She sat up and became conscious of the bottle in her right hand. She looked at the label which read June 26, 1979 and cried out as she let herself fall back to the bed. She was breathing hard and as she recovered from the shock, she looked at the bottle in her hand. She remembered Dr. Finney's words.

"I would dissociate myself entirely from the present... Move everything out of sight that could possibly remind me of it."

With a deep snarl she flung the bottle across the room. She sat back and listened to her voice continue to play on the machine when realization struck her.

"Hold it," she said as she sat up and hit the "stop" button on the recorder. She stood and walked to the bureau across the room and opened the top drawer. She placed the cassette recorder inside and closed the drawer. She returned to the bed and closed her eyes.

"Now," she said with confidence. "It's June 27, 1912. Relax and believe. Relax and accept. There is no question in your mind. It is June 27, 1912. You're lying on your bed, eyes closed, completely relaxed and it's June 27, 1912. Your mind accepts this absolutely. You are in the Kingston Point Hotel and it is June 27, 1912."

She spoke to herself as she felt herself drift into a brief sleep. Realizing she'd fallen asleep, she immediately opened her eyes and heard the surf coming in through the balcony. She looked

around slowly and became conscious of the room around her. The room no longer held the contemporary look of 1979, it now resembled 1912. The room began to swim around her as she looked around frightened. She was terrified she was going back so she closed her eyes. She whispered to herself and kept her body perfectly still.

"June 27, 1912, it's June 27, 1912."

The swimming sensation stopped and very cautiously, Rachel opened her eyes and made a sound of gratified relief. The room was still as it was in 1912. She tried to keep calm believing if she did otherwise, it would send her back to 1979.

"I made it," she said unable to stop the grin on her face from forming. "Jesus, I made it."

Rachel looked around the room trying to keep her emotions in check. The drapes on the French windows were now white airy curtains. The furniture was now much like the furniture in the Hall of History. She took in every object she saw and it only enhanced her wonderment and delight.

"Look at that... Holy shit..." she mumbled to herself.

She finally slid her legs off the edge of the bed and took deep breaths.

"1912 air going in," she said as she breathed deeply.

She took many breaths and eased herself off the bed. Without any bad results, she sighed in contentment and walked slowly through the room. She held her arms out to balance herself during her explorations. She got a bit dizzy and sped up to grasp the top of the bureau, closing her eyes. She looked into the reflection of the bureau mirror.

"I think you left your blood in nineteen seventy..." she stopped and scowled. "NEVER say that again; never. It's 1912, **1912**, **1912**."

She noticed the some of objects on the bureau were men's toilet articles. She picked up a whiskbroom and looked at it. The words *Just A Few* were inscribed on its handle. The inscription confused her until she moved the brush and it made a gurgling sound.

"Ah-ha!" She said as she unscrewed the cap on the end of the handle and held the opening to her nose. She twitched back from the strong smell and made a feint whistling sound before she took a little sip. As soon as the liquid hit her throat, she began to wheeze and cough. She held her mouth trying to silence herself when she heard a woman begin to sing "Beautiful Dreamer" in the next room. She kept a hand over her mouth and dropped the cap onto the bureau looking frantically around the room.

She picked up the cap and rescrewed it onto the handle of the whiskbroom. She turned towards the sitting room where the woman's voice was coming from. She stepped into the room and tried to cross it as quickly as she could when she heard approaching footsteps. She looked around the room finding a curtained alcove and practically dove into it as the woman entered the sitting

room wearing nothing but her undergarments. Rachel stood frozen and started to cough again. The woman, oblivious to Rachel's presence, continued to sing as Rachel peeked around the edge of the curtain.

The woman moved around the room looking for a tortoise shell comb she found on the fireplace. She picked it up and returned to the bedroom. Rachel moved with silent speed across the sitting room to the door. She reached for the knob and turned it only to find it locked. The only way for her to unlock the door was with a skeleton key, which she did not have.

"I don't believe this," she mumbled in amazement. "Now what?" She asked while looking around haplessly.

She looked at the door as she heard a key being shoved in the keyhole. Shock registered on her face and then she dove behind the sofa. Just as she disappeared behind it, a whiskered man entered the room wearing a dinner suit. Rachel lay dazed behind the couch as she listened to the man speak.

"I'm back, Maude. Are you ready yet?" Rollo asked.

"No," Maude replied coolly.

He put the key in the lock and turned it aggravated. He walked towards the bedroom trapping Rachel behind the sofa unbelieving this was happening.

"I don't know why you act in such a fashion, Maude."

"Indeed I suspect you do not," Maude answered back.

"And what am I to make of that remark?" Rollo said agitated.

Rachel sat there and rolled her eyes wishing this would end soon so she could get out of there.

"What you will, Rollo. What you will." "Are we to have this maddening exchange each and every time I notice the existence of a female other than yourself?"

"Notice her existence?" Maude repeated sarcastically. "That scarcely describes your rapt appraisal of her every inch." "Rapt appraisal of her...!"

"You just don't love me anymore..." Maude started crying.

"Oh, Maude," Rollo protested.

"Oh, Christ!" Rachel groaned as she closed her eyes and leaned against the wall.

"I'm going to lie down for a little while," Maude said sniffing.

"Good idea," Rollo agreed.

"*Great* idea," Rachel said fervently.

As the silence continued, Rachel began to look over the sofa edge. She peered around the sofa and saw the man standing by the sitting room window. With a sigh, Rollo walked into the other bedroom. Rachel watched him enter the room and bolted for the door. She turned the key clicking it loudly as she unlocked the door.

"Who's there?" Rollo called.

Rachel panicked and yanked the door open and jumped into the corridor. She silently closed the door and sped towards the elevator stealthily. She moved a few yards when she heard the door open to suite 417. She immediately spun around and walked casually towards the room. Rollo came out and saw Rachel.

"Did you see someone just come out of this room?" He asked Rachel.

"Why, yes. Some young chap, ran that way," she said as she pointed down the hall.

"I'll be damned. I'd better check to see if anything is missing." "Indeed you'd better," she answered as Rollo turned back inside.

"I'd have stopped the rascal if I'd known that..."

"Yes, yes, thank you," Rollo said curtly over his shoulder and shut the door.

"I traveled sixty-seven years for *this*?" Rachel breathed out.

She leaned against the wall briefly then headed down towards the elevator. As she reached the doors, there were a number of people waiting to enter. Some glanced at her and whispered, while others just looked away. She smiled nervously at her first interaction with 1912 people.

"I'm told there are good plover near here," she heard a man say. "And curlew are abundant, too. Also black brant." Rachel looked on in confusion.

By the time the elevator arrived and she got on, the elevator was full. She was feeling confused from her experience and from the conversations overlapping around her.

The elevator reached the lobby opening its doors, revealing the Kingston Point Hotel, in 1912. Rachel was fascinated by the changes despite her feeling of disorientation. Suddenly, she noticed a bright red ball coming towards her chest. She automatically caught it while people looked around in disgust and amusement. She could only stare at the ball as she heard a little boy come up to her.

"Not inside, Arthur," the clerk yelled to the boy.

The little boy looked up at Rachel with guilt in his eyes. Rachel gazed down at him extremely charmed and touched. She reached down and tousled the boy's hair as she smiled and gave him the ball.

"See you around, Arthur," Rachel said to the young charge.

Arthur grabbed the ball and ran away, bringing an even brighter smile to her face. Knowing she had lots to do, she walked along the corridor and began to talk to herself.

"Miss McKenna? You don't know me but..." she scowled as she continued down the hall.

She moved quickly until she reached suite 123. She swallowed heavily and braced herself as she knocked on the door. She stood nervously waiting for the door to open. With a jerk, a heavysset woman wearing a floor-length yellow gown opened the door.

"Yes?" Mrs. McKenna greeted.

"Is...Miss McKenna here?" Rachel swallowed hard.

"And who, may I ask, are you?" She asked in a motherly protective tone.

"My name is Rachel Collier. You must be her mother." She realized.

Mrs. McKenna stepped back suspiciously as Rachel looked past her.

"Is she here?" Rachel asked again.

"She is not," she said as she started to close the door. "If you'll excuse me." "Could you tell me where she is?"

Mrs. McKenna eyed her coldly and answered. "No, I couldn't." She shut the door in Rachel's face.

"Well, that went well. Okay, strike one." Rachel stood in the hallway until she got an idea and ran down the corridor.

Rachel ran to the theater and noticed the placard in front of the doors.

*THE FAMOUS AMERICAN ACTRESS
MISS ELISE MCKENNA
STARRING IN
"WISDOM OF THE HEART"
FRIDAY JUNE 28, 1912
AT 8:30 P.M.*

She took a deep breath and opened the door to force herself to keep going despite her lack of confidence. The theater was alive with several noises from hammering to singing. She entered the theater and anxiously headed towards the stage.

A group of actors and actresses were rehearsing on stage with their director. The stage manager was sitting in the front row arguing with another man. She braced herself as she approached the stage manager.

"...be out of here in two hours? That's impossible! The man's insane," the stage manager cried.

"Nonetheless, it's what he wants and you know Robinson," the other man replied.

"I wish to God I didn't," he said angrily. "All right! If he wants us out of here so soon, let him doff his fine coat and help us tear the set down, pack the..." he stopped glaring at Rachel.

"What!"

"Is Miss McKenna here?" She asked shakily.

"You have a message for her, give it here. I'll see it reaches her," he offered.

"I came to see her," Rachel pressed on.

"Well, I don't know, she may be backstage, maybe not. I just don't know."

Rachel looked miserably around then walked up to the stage. She noticed one of the carpenters and approached him.

"Excuse me, have you seen Miss McKenna?" She asked.

"Danke schoen," he answered in a thick German accent.

She quickly turned away from him and knocked into a serious faced man.

"Excuse me, have you..." she started.

"No, I haven't, he finished and brushed past Rachel.

Rachel walked backstage and rehearsed once again.

"May I speak to you a moment, Miss McKenna?" She rolled her eyes and groaned softly.

"Watch it!" A stagehand cried coming around a corner carrying a huge statue with another stagehand. She jumped aside and bumped into the wall.

"Um.. have you seen?"

"Not now, toots," the burly stagehand said sourly.

Rachel blinked at the men and quickly moved towards the dressing room. The door was open and Rachel looked inside finding Maria, a gypsy-like woman on the inside sewing a costume.

"Excuse me," Rachel said politely.

"Yes, my dear?" The woman said looking up.

"I'm looking for Miss McKenna."

"She's walking on the beach of course," Maria oddly informed Rachel.

"Of course," Rachel answered reacting to the oddness. "Thank you very much."

As Rachel left, Maria stood and walked towards the doorway looking after her with a strange expression on her face.

Rachel walked down the corridor as quickly as she could. She found the exit door and headed outside. She followed a path that led down to the beach. She looked towards the beach searching for Elise. The last rays of sunset were falling onto the water. Along the path were several benches and Rachel noticed a man resting on one of them smoking a cigar. She continued down the walk taking in deep breaths.

"I just came sixty-seven years to see you, may I speak with you?" Rachel repeated to herself.

She made a pained sound as she passed the man on the bench who eyed her curiously. She reached the end of the path and stopped to look at the beach. She saw nothing immediately then looked again into the distance. She stiffened as she saw a tiny outline moving almost imperceptibly against the background of the water. Her heartbeat began to quicken and her palms began to sweat. She knew it was her.

The figure walked along the surf line holding her dress above the sand. She moved in a dreamlike slowness entrancing Rachel with each step she took.

Rachel walked down a series of steps leading her closer to the figure. Her eyes never left the figure strolling slowly towards her. Suddenly, the figure stopped and stood immobile by the water, a silhouette against the last dim flicker of the sunset. She was looking at Rachel.

Rachel continued on still not knowing what she was going to say, but unable to stop. She was compelled by what she felt was the inevitability of the moment.

As she neared Elise McKenna, Rachel's expression was taut and uneasy. Elise remained unmoving as Rachel continued to approach her. When she stood in front of her, Elise's beauty paralyzed her completely. Even though the light was dim, Rachel couldn't believe how beautiful

she was. The photograph in the hotel didn't do her justice. The photograph that she fell in love with in another time.

"Is it you?" Elise whispered.

Rachel just stared at her incredulously. "Of all the thing I imagined you to say..."

Rachel's lack of answer increased Elise's tension.

"Is it?" She said in a demanding tone.

"Yes," Rachel replied impulsively.

Elise began to waver and Rachel reached out to quickly assist her.

"Are you all right?" Rachel asked concerned.

"I'm quite all right," Elise replied even though she was dazed.

"I'm sorry if I startled you," Rachel said gently.

"You didn't startle me," Elise said almost mechanically.

"I think I did," Rachel said with a small smile forming on her lips.

"I'll take you into dinner now." A voice was heard above the steps.

Rachel looked around for the voice and found it belonged to William Fawcett Robinson, the man who'd been seated on the bench. He was a very distinguished looking man with dark hair and a well-manicured beard. He extended his arm out to Elise.

"Could I speak to you first?" Rachel asked as Elise moved towards William.

"Elise?" William questioned.

"All right," Elise said as she moved up the steps to take William's arm.

"Wait a second, please," Rachel said nervously momentarily thwarted.

Elise was trying to regain the emotional balance she'd just lost.

"Who is she?" Robinson asked Elise.

"I don't know... I mean... I don't know... I think..." She stammered.

"Very precise," he chuckled sarcastically.

"Don't be snide, I'm not myself," she said struggling for control.

"What in God's name did she say to you to make you act like this?" William was stunned.

"She apologized for startling me," she said uncertainly.

William regarded her suspiciously as Rachel started after them.

"Miss McKenna?" Rachel called.

Robinson glanced across his shoulder in displeased surprise, then looked to Elise.

"Keep walking. I'll be right along," he said as he turned towards Rachel.

Elise moved on for several paces, paused, slowed down to a stop, and then finally turned back. She looked distressed and confused as she looked at Rachel and Robinson. Robinson was clearly disturbed by Rachel's presence.

"Are you a guest at this hotel?" He asked her gruffly.

"I don't understand," she answered not knowing what that had to do with anything.

"Are you?" Robinson insisted.

"Yes," she said in case she was being set up.

"Then stop annoying Miss McKenna or I'll see to it that you are put out from the hotel. Good evening," he threatened as he turned from a very frustrated Rachel.

Robinson extended his arm to Elise wanting to end this situation.

"What did you say to her?" Elise asked.

"What have I always said to people like her? To stop annoying you. Now, shall we go?"

Elise hesitated then took his arm as they headed back towards the hotel.

Rachel was extremely angered with herself for her lack of perseverance.

"Why am I just STANDING here?" She stood up straight and started after them.

Robinson noticed Rachel approaching them and Elise glanced back.

"If you look at her, she'll follow us," he said.

"She *is* following us," Elise answered as Robinson started to turn back to Rachel.

"Never mind. Walk faster," Elise said holding him back.

"You afraid of a woman?" William said amused. "You *aren't* yourself, are you." "Stop badgering me and just keep moving," Elise said as they approached the back door of the hotel.

Robinson opened the door for Elise who looked back at Rachel before entering the building. William glared at her as he escorted Elise inside.

Rachel ran the rest of the way towards the back door. She opened it to find Elise's mother walking with Elise and Robinson down the corridor towards the lobby. She watched the three of them as they made their way to the dining room.

Rachel crossed the lobby willfully, intent on her quest. She moved to the dining room entrance and had to wait for several couples to go in before her. The Maitre D' looked at her.

"I'm dining with Miss McKenna," she said as she moved past the Maitre D' before he could utter a word.

The dining room was crowded with several tables of people making her search very challenging. The sound of a light string orchestra could be heard in the background. Suddenly, she stopped as someone plucked her coat, pulling her off balance.

"Ma Cherie," an actress said from a table. "I *so* admire a woman not hide-bound by fashion," she smiled.

"What?" Rachel looked at her confused.

"That adorable suit! I haven't seen one like it for a decade." "A *decade*?" Rachel said shocked.

"What is your name?"

"Uh... Collier," Rachel stammered.

"Mademoiselle Collier. Mademoiselle Hammond. Monsieur Fisher. Monsieur Bones." She introduced her table.

Rachel smiled distracted and glanced around looking for Elise as she shook a trio of hands.

"Enchante, Mademoiselle," Hammond said.

"Good evening, Mademoiselle Collier," Bones greeted.

"Unless I miss my guess, you're going to a costume ball," A drunken Fisher said. "No woman would dress like that." "Correct," Rachel said not correcting the inebriated man as she continued

to look around.

"Are you still looking for Miss McKenna?" The actress smiled.

"Yes," Rachel replied anxiously.

"She's over there," she said while pointing to the dance floor.

"Indulging in the light fantastic, as t'were," Fisher slurred.

Rachel watched on as many guests danced on the floor, including Elise with her stage manager.

"Thank you," Rachel said to the group as she headed towards the dance floor.

The quartet exchanged smiles and snickers.

Rachel made her way out to the dance floor and tapped the stage manager on the shoulder.

"Excuse me," Rachel cut in.

"I beg your pardon," the stage manager said surprised.

Rachel took Elise away from him. "Thank you." The two began to dance while Elise's composure began to rattle in the arms of the beautiful stranger.

"What do you think you're doing?" Elise demanded.

"Trying to get through to you," Rachel said intensely.

"How, by making a scene?"

"No, I just wanted to talk to you," Rachel pleaded.

"Why? We've never met before." "Yes, we have," Rachel insisted.

Elise stared at her in confusion.

"I know everything about you," Rachel said softly.

"Of course you do," she said snidely. "A little research and you'd have it all." Rachel was frightened thinking that some way Elise knew about the research she'd done on her.

"Have what?" Rachel said perplexed.

My heart. "I'm sure you know my income down to the penny," she said instead.

Rachel was distressed and accidentally stepped on Elise's foot. "I'm so sorry," she apologized.

"If you'll excuse me," Elise said trying to extricate herself.

"Please don't leave me. You don't know how far I've come to be with you," she said desperately.

Elise heard the sincerity in Rachel's plea and it made her heart jump. She wanted so much to get away from this woman, but she couldn't force herself to move. Something in her eyes arrested her will.

"I'm not after your money. I'm not that kind of person... Oh God..." she stepped on Elise's foot again making her hiss in pain. Rachel couldn't bear it anymore. "If I really meant to cheat you, don't you think I'd have learned how to dance first?"

Despite the pain in her foot and the doubts in her mind, Elise managed a smile that melted Rachel's heart.

She looked miserably into Elise's eyes. "Let's sit down before I cripple you."

Elise started to speak but looked over Rachel's shoulder suddenly as Robinson's hand grabbed for it. Robinson and the Maitre D' were staring at Rachel.

"This woman is an intruder. Kindly see to it that she is escorted from the premises," Robinson growled.

The Maitre D' took Rachel's arm and addressed her coolly. "If you will, Miss."

Rachel looked at Elise pleadingly as she was drawn away. Elise spoke up impulsively.

"One moment," she said to the Maitre D'. "I'll walk out with her."

Robinson looked at her in amazement.

"But of course," the Maitre D' said politely.

Elise moved towards Rachel when a glowering William blocked her way.

"I cannot permit this, Elise," he said softly.

"Your *permission* is not required, William," she said stone-faced.

Robinson realized he'd gone too far and stepped aside. Elise walked with Rachel to the lobby and Rachel looked at her gratefully.

"Thank you."

Elise didn't respond but continued to walk across the dining room. They passed the actress's table and she raised her glass of wine.

"Together at last! Tres merveilleux!" She cried hardening Elise's expression as they walked through the entryway.

Rachel and Elise crossed the lobby and Rachel was eying her uneasily.

"Are you angry?"

No response.

Elise looked around for a private spot. "Where are we going?" Rachel inquired.

Rachel noticed that Elise was leading them to the place where the enormous fish were hanging.

"The perfect spot," Rachel said wanly.

Elise stopped by the fish and faced Rachel. She was determined to get to the bottom of this.

"Your name, please?"

"Rachel Collier," she answered obediently.

"Your place of residence," she continued.

"New York," Rachel said more confused.

"Your profession?"

"I'm a writer; what is this, a job interview?" Rachel challenged.

"Yes, what indeed?" Elise challenged back. "You say we've met..." "Yes."

"...which is patently absurd. We've NEVER met. We're strangers. Total strangers," she overlapped Rachel's answer.

"Then why did you say 'is it you?'"

"I don't have to answer that," she said brusquely.

"I know you don't," she answered almost child like. "I wish you would though." Rachel noticed Robinson watching them. "What's the matter with him?"

Elise looked in the same direction. "Nothing," she defended. "He's protecting me." "From what? Do I look dangerous?" Rachel fired back.

"I'm sorry, but I have to leave." The confusion was just too much for Elise.

She started to turn away.

"Wait," Rachel pleaded. "When can I see you again?"

Elise stared at her unable to resolve her ambivalent feelings. "I have no idea." She walked away from Rachel towards Robinson. His face was filled with worry.

"Are you all right?" He asked as she walked passed him into the dining room.

William looked back at Rachel then followed Elise inside. Rachel looked to the dining room then moved to the sofa and sat down. She lowered her head into her hands and stared at the floor defeated.

Elise sat at her vanity table brushing her long blonde hair while staring solemnly into her mirror. On her vanity were the silver decorated comb, hand mirror and perfume bottles.

"You're going to brush it all away if you don't stop," her mother chided surprising Elise out of her thoughts. "You've been at it for almost an hour." "Yes," Elise answered quietly and put her brush down with a sigh.

"What is it, darling? Are you still concerned about that young woman?" Her mother said unbelieving.

"I don't know." "Elise," she gently scolded.

"Well... what if she's the one I was told about?"

"You must be joking," her mother said in amusement.

"Yes, I must be," she said gazing at her reflection sadly. "It's written all over my face."

"You're not a superstitious person, Elise," her mother continued.

"I'm glad one of us is sure of that." "You'll be fine, dear," her mother soothed as she stroked her back. "You've seen this sort of thing before... well with others... and never succumbed once." "I'm good at not succumbing, aren't I, mother?" She sighed. "I'm a whiz-bang non-succumbler." Elise stood and moved toward her bed while removing her robe.

"That's it. Get some rest. It'll be out of your mind by morning."

Elise got into her bed as her mother sat beside her stroking her hair. She smiled up at her mother

and kissed her cheek.

"Good night, mother," Elise said softly.

"Good night, dear," her mother replied before leaving her room.

Elise sat motionless for many moments just staring ahead of her. Her mind was filled with more confusion than she'd ever known. She reached over and turned off the lamp on the bedside table and lied down. Moonlight was shining down and accenting her beautiful and troubled face. She knew she wasn't going to get much sleep this night. She looked towards the window seeing the curtains move from the breeze coming off of the ocean. The sound of surf accompanied the fresh air coming through.

Rachel came out of the side door of the hotel and moved to the porch heading for a group of wicker chairs. She sat on one of the chairs and gazed towards the water feeling extremely somber. She leaned back slightly and remained there until morning.

As she woke the next morning, panic raced through her body until she looked up at the hotel. She got up from the wicker chair and stood on wobbly legs.

"I've turned to stone," she muttered stiffly.

She noticed a horse and carriage making its way to the front of the hotel and she smiled knowing she was still in 1912. She took the watch from her pocket and pressed the stem to check the time. It was just after six a.m. Winding the watch, she yawned, and placed it back in her pocket.

She walked down the porch holding slightly to the railing collecting the dew on her palm. She rubbed her face with her palm then dried it with her handkerchief. Suddenly, she felt her head in amazement.

"Oh my God... no headache. Not a trace!" she paused to marvel at her health. "Jesus, God! It's a miracle. A bloody miracle!" She cried.

She walked into the hotel and down the corridor and headed for Elise's room. Rachel approached Elise's door and ran her fingers through her long dark hair. She tried unsuccessfully to remove the stiffness in her back as she turned to knock on her door. After hearing no response, Rachel raised her hand to knock again.

"Who is it?" Elise asked through the door.

"It's Rachel Collier," she said as her heart rate quickened.

Moments passed slowly as she waited in agony for a response from the young actress. Finally, the door is unlocked and opened by Elise, wearing her gown and robe. Rachel knew she hadn't

woken her but was worried by her tired nature.

"Good morning," she said warily.

Elise stared at her almost accusingly.

"Sleep all right?" Rachel asked.

"Wonderfully," Elise said astringently.

"I'm sorry," Rachel winced. "I didn't sleep well either, if that helps. I was on an outdoor chair, of course."

"Don't you even have a room?" Elise asked not wanting something new to stress about.

"I will. At 9:18," she said too quickly.

Elise stared at Rachel quite confused by her answer.

"I mean..." Rachel said trying quickly to change the subject. "Would you like to go to breakfast?"

"At six a.m.?"

"Oh. Well. Later?" She tried again.

"I don't eat breakfast on performance days." "No, of course you don't," she said forgetting that piece of her research. "Lunch then?"

"Ms. Collier," Elise began.

"Not Ms. Collier." "Isn't that your name?" Concern was etched on her face.

"Yes! It's..."

"Shh!" Elise shook her hands at Rachel.

"What's the matter?" Rachel asked alarmed.

"My mother's in the other room," she said pointing.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said softer. "Of course my name is Collier. I just hoped you'd call me by my first name." "Nothing is resolved in any way yet, Ms. Collier," she said firmly.

"All right. All right," Rachel said assuaging. "Let's resolve things then. Today." "I'll be rehearsing all day," she said resolutely.

"All day?" Rachel cried loudly. "I..."

Elise waved her hand frantically in front of Rachel. "Shh! You'll wake her up!"

"Good!" She said softer but stronger. "I'll take *her* to breakfast then! Maybe she'll be more cooperative."

Elise tried to be angry but couldn't repress the smile that formed on her lips.

"Stop it, please."

"Will you walk with me?" Rachel tried a different route.

"I can't," Elise refused.

"I'll throw water in her face," she threatened with a look of playful derangement forming on her face.

Elise made a sputtering attempt not to laugh. Rachel grabbed one of her hands marveling the softness of it.

"Walk with me. Please," she begged.

Elise was in turmoil. This went against everything she'd ever learned.

"Oh..." she said as she drew her hand back and looked at Rachel with indecision.

"Say yes," Rachel supplied and prompted. "Yes, Rachel, I'll walk with you and talk with you and resolve everything with you and we'll live happily ever after."

"All right!" Elise said trying not to smile.

She flung the door shut in her face and Rachel flinched staring at the door. After a few seconds, Elise opened the door again and glared at her.

"One o'clock," she said in a deliciously fierce tone and almost closed the door again holding it back convulsively. "In front of the hotel." Slamming the door again.

"Elise?" Her mother called causing her to groan and threw a hand to her head.

"She's crazy about me," Rachel said happily until she saw Robinson glaring at her from his doorway. She quickly turned away practically skipping down the corridor.

Rachel sat at a table outside eating breakfast in the warm sunshine. She looked up from her meal as she heard a chair pull away from the table. She hesitated then continued eating.

"Can I talk you into joining me?" Rachel asked a scowling Robinson from across the table.

"I want to know exactly who you are and what you are after." "Rachel Collier. Nothing," she answered curtly.

"Do not attempt to gull me, Mademoiselle." "Love the way you talk," she said with a mouthful of food.

"Your manner may seem inexplicable to a certain female party, but I read it clearly enough. You are after gain," he said ignoring her jab.

"Gain," she repeated not understanding.

"Money," he spelled out.

"Are you serious?" She asked incredulously.

"I warn you, Collier. I know about your kind. There is the law and I will not hesitate to make avail of it."

"Robinson..." she started.

"Mister Robinson," he corrected.

"Oh... right. Yes, Mr. Robinson, she mocked taking a drink from her water glass. "You're full of shit," she said in her most polite tone.

Robinson twitched as though she'd slapped him. She picked up her fork and began to eat again.

"You will regret that," he said simply. "I have run across your sort a dozen times over and have always dealt with them as they deserved. The prisons of this country are encumbered with your type of amateur extortionist. Believe me when I tell you, you will join their ranks of durance vile unless you back off instantly."

Rachel put down her fork and began to applaud quietly.

"Good. Good," she said mockingly.

Robinson stiffened and gained control of his anger. He stood and gazed at Rachel coldly.

"The matter is ended, Ms. Collier," he smiled harshly. "You may count on that." "Bye," she said ignoring him.

Robinson turned and walked away. Rachel watched him leave and continued to finish her

breakfast. She took the watch from her vest pocket and checked the time. It was nine minutes after nine.

She rushed across the lobby and up to the desk. The clerk looked up and regarded her.

"Good morning, Miss." "Good morning. Could you..."

"Excuse me, Miss," he said suddenly turning to Arthur as he looked guiltily by the hanging fish. "Arthur?"

Rachel turned around smiling at the little boy's face.

"No, Arthur, he said straining a smile to his face. "Sorry, Miss."

"That's all right... I'd like a room, please."

"Don't you have one, Miss?" He asked surprised.

"Uh... I was ill when I arrived last night. I stayed with a friend," she lied.

"I see," the clerk said.

Rachel glanced at the clock over the counter and got nervous.

"You do have one, don't you?" She asked anxiously.

"Uh... yes; yes." The clerk turned to look at the key slots and grabbed one and placed it in front of Rachel. She took it and looked at the number and flinched. The number on the key was 420.

Rachel was feeling disoriented and looked at the key in bewilderment. She put it down as if it burned her.

"One single, three dollars a day, bathroom privileges extra. Would you care to sign the register, Miss?"

Rachel looked at him numbly feeling as though everything was going to go wrong now.

"Are you sure this is the right one?"

"Right one, Miss?" the clerk asked confused.

Rachel doesn't know what to say, but was saved as another clerk stopped and took a look at the room key.

"Oh; sorry, Mr. Beals. That room is reserved. Forgot to put a notice in the slot." Rachel sighed audibly making the clerk look at her in confusion.

He turned back around to the key slots and chose a different key resting it in front of Rachel. She tried to control her hands as they snatched it up to look at the number. She smiled and exhaled loudly as her composure returned to normal.

"Right..." she pointed to the register. "Shall I sign in now?"

The clerk eyed her warily as he turned the book for her to sign in.

Rachel Collier, New York, NY

She was about to finish the other columns when the clerk took the pen and turned the book around to finish.

"Excuse me," the clerk said as Rachel stared at him nervously.

The clerk began to write in the book and glanced around to look at the clock. Rachel tapped the book loudly.

"9:18 a.m., she said quickly.

"Thank you, Miss," the clerk said as he finished the entry

Room 350, 9:18 a.m.

"Bingo," Rachel said quietly.

"Miss?"

"Nothing," she said smiling.

"What room is your luggage in, Miss?"

"That's all right. I'll get it myself later," she said as she turned away. She spied Arthur poking his finger in the eye of one of the hanging fish and laughed.

She walked up to her floor and went into the ladies bathroom. She noticed several items at the vanity tables including a hair drying dome and a steel curling iron. She raised her eyebrows and shrugged.

She bathed in the tub and marveled at how sore her muscles were from sleeping on the wicker chair. She washed her hair and relaxed in the soapy water.

After dressing in her only suit, she moved to the vanity table to fix up her hair. She combed out the tangles and sat under the heated dome to dry it. "Well, that was different."

She looked at her reflection and then to the curling iron. She'd never used one before now and decided to try to curl her hair. She grabbed the hot steel rod and attempted to roll her bangs, burning her forehead in the process.

Ow! Jesus! How do most women do this every day of their lives?" She cried to herself holding her head. "That thing's a goddamned weapon!"

She looked up at her reflection and noticed the small bright red mark.

"Oh, nice one, Rachel," she reprimanded herself.

She put down the curling rod and never picked it back up. She fixed her bangs to hide the red spot, but had little success.

She grabbed the rest of her things and walked out of the bathroom with a dignified look on her face. She saw another woman heading inside.

"Morning," she smiled.

"Morning," the woman replied noticing her head.

She watched Rachel walk away and shook her head in sympathy as she walked into the bathroom.

Rachel was in front of the hotel pacing like a caged animal. She was waiting for Elise to meet her out front. She pulled out her watch again, wincing at the time. She turned around and her frown instantly disappeared. Her heart sped up as she watched Elise walk briskly from the hotel towards her. She smiled as they came together offering Elise her arm.

"Shall we go?" She squeaked as Elise grabbed her arm and moved quickly away from the hotel.

"I'm sorry I'm late. There were complications," she explained hurriedly. Elise noticed the red mark on Rachel's forehead and looked into her eyes concerned. "What did you do to your head?"

"Um..." she started embarrassed. "I tried to curl my hair."

Elise looked at her curiously.

"The rod wasn't hot enough, so I um... added some pressure," she said sheepishly.

"I shudder to think what you'd look like if it were any hotter." Elise noticed William over Rachel's shoulder.

"Don't tell me. We're being trailed by..." Rachel looked back seeing Robinson. "Who else?"

Robinson didn't attempt to catch up with the couple, but was keeping his eyes on them.

"I got to give him credit, he's a bulldog." Rachel noticed Elise's disturbed expression. "Would you like me to speak to him?"

"It wouldn't do a bit of good." She saw something ahead of them putting a smile on her face. "I think I know what would though."

Elise grabbed Rachel and ran towards an odd looking bicycle. It had a tiny wheel in front, a slightly larger wheel in back and a gigantic wheel in between. Elise jumped in front to steer while Rachel went to the back to pedal. Rachel was having a hard time balancing and the bike began to weave from side to side. Elise seemed to have second thoughts as her expression held wary amusement.

"Maybe this wasn't such a good idea, after all," she panted loudly.

"Why, we've lost him, haven't we?" Rachel answered struggling with the pedals.

"We may lose our lives as well," she half joked. "Perhaps we'd better..."

Elise cried out as the bicycle hit a rut veering the bicycle sharply. Rachel jumped off and barely managed to grab Elise before the bicycle toppled over. She held Elise closely for several moments as they stared into each other's eyes. Elise eased Rachel away trying to catch her breath.

"I think we'll walk," she said cautiously.

"Good idea," Rachel replied gratefully.

Rachel moved the bike to the side of the road and they walked onto the beach. Rachel moved to take her hand as she would've in the present day, but seeing Elise's eyes question her, offered her arm instead. Elise slowly took her arm as they walked along the beach. She looked intently at Rachel and made a sound that could've been translated, as "it's incredible." Rachel sensing her thoughts turned to look into Elise's eyes.

"What?"

"I've actually missed you," she said quite baffled by her emotions.

"How odd. I haven't missed you at all," Elise smiled at Rachel then again grew serious.

"You must understand, Ms. Collier." Rachel eyed her with gentle accusation.

"Rachel," Elise sighed. "I've been dealing with the approaches of women for years now and developed quite a network of defenses. That I'm walking here with you when we only met last night..."

"You *did* say: 'Is it you?'" Rachel interrupted.

"I was expecting..." She paused.

"Me?" Rachel asked hopefully.

"Someone," she finished quickly.

"Who?" Rachel asked gently. "Please tell me."

"I'm afraid you'd laugh," she said uneasily.

"Is it funny?"

"In a way," she said with a sad smile. "About nine years ago, I did a play in Virginia City." "*The Little Minister*."

She looked at Rachel with suspicion again of her knowledge of her. She decided to let it go.

"Yes," she paused. "One night, after the performance, some people brought an old Indian woman to the hotel we were staying at. They said she could predict the future so... as a lark, I asked her to predict mine."

Rachel waited patiently for Elise to finish.

"She told me I would meet a woman under very odd circumstances. I thought it odd since I wasn't aware of my orientation then. I should say I wasn't comfortable yet." Rachel smiled at her.

"Is that it?" Rachel asked getting no response from Elise. "Elise?"

"No, there's more," she reluctantly continued. "There's a wardrobe mistress in our company whose mother was a gypsy. She claims to have... the power of divination, I don't know... Six months ago, she told me I would meet a woman in late June," she swallowed. "On a beach."

Rachel was impressed then remembered Maria backstage. "That's why that woman looked at me so strangely." Elise looked at her. "I met her backstage when I was searching for you, yesterday." They looked at each other and Rachel gripped Elise's arm with her free hand.

"We were destined to meet, Elise." Rachel flinched as Elise pulled away from her.

"I don't believe in destiny. We make our lives what they are," she continued softer. "I'm sorry. I just... can't accept things like that... I just can't."

They walked in silence until they reached a boulder overlooking the surf. Elise sat on it and looked at the water as Rachel sat beside her.

"Are you all right?" Rachel asked

Elise looked at her without answering. She brushed the bangs gently from Rachel's burn and looked deeply into her eyes. The love she had for Elise was very apparent in her stare. Rachel smiled charming Elise down to her toes.

"A most peculiar moment in my life, Ms. Collier." "You'll survive it, Miss McKenna," she said smiling wider.

"Tell me more about yourself." "Well..." she started with a smile. "I love Mahler's music. Especially the last movement from his Tenth Symphony." This was the music Rachel played nonstop.

"Who?" Elise remarked not knowing the composer.

"Mahler. Gustav Mahler... Don't you know who he is?"

"Should I? Elise answered perplexed.

"Well..." she was unable to finish because she was disturbed by this anomaly. Then understanding, she continued. "Of course." "What?" Elise wondered what her change of expression meant.

"I'll introduce you to his music." "Why did you think I knew about him?" She was unwilling to drop it.

"I thought I read it somewhere," she lied. "A long time ago." Rachel's smile didn't reassure Elise at all. She pulled away from her again. "What's the matter?"

"You said last night that we'd already met." Elise paused. "I know we haven't... Why did you say it?"

Rachel didn't know what to say. "I can't tell you, Elise."

Elise turned her face away from Rachel distressed yet again. Rachel took her hand gently.

"It's nothing bad." Elise looked into her eyes. "Believe me. When the right time comes, I'll tell you everything. I just don't want to disturb you now."

Elise looked away immediately. "But you DO disturb me. Can't you see that?"

"I don't mean to," she said as she lightly squeezed Elise's hand. "Really."

"What time is it?" Elise sighed.

Rachel took out her watch and looked at the time. "A little after two-thirty," she answered.

"I should be getting back." Elise stiffened.

"Not because of what I said," Rachel worried.

"No... I... have to rest a while. The play..." she stammered.

"I understand." Rachel nodded.

Elise took the watch from her hand and looked at it closely.

"It's lovely... where did you get it?"

"It was given to me," Rachel said swallowing hard.

Elise nodded then stood handing the watch back to Rachel. She put it back in her pocket as she started back towards the bicycle. Walking the bicycle toward the hotel, Elise and Rachel were both silent. Trying to break the unease between them, Rachel spoke gently to Elise.

"How long will you be doing the play here?"

"Just tonight," she answered surprised at the question.

"I thought plays ran for weeks," she tried to hide her shock.

"It's only part of a tour," she replied shaking her head.

"Then you're leaving tomorrow?" Rachel hoped it wasn't any sooner.

"Tonight," Elise said sadly.

"Where are you going?" She asked stunned.

"Buffalo," Elise said flatly.

Rachel was extremely upset with this revelation and knew she had to do something soon or she may lose the opportunity forever. They walked into the lobby and headed down the corridor towards Elise's room. Elise handed Rachel her key with a smile, which Rachel misread as an invitation. Once the door opened, she looked to Rachel with her hand outstretched.

"Thank you for the pleasant afternoon, Rachel." Rachel realized that her unlocking Elise's door was only a social formality and handed the key back to her.

"May we talk a little longer?"

"I really should rest," Elise insisted.

"Please," Rachel begged. Elise stared at her while fighting every emotional reflex telling her to

go in alone. She couldn't fight the mysterious draw to Rachel any more than she could stop breathing.

"Just for a moment or so," she said finally.

"All right," Rachel said grateful for any time she could spend with her.

She went inside following Elise and closed the door behind them. Elise looked at her unable to move at all. Silence fell between them as they looked at each other. Finally, Elise's gaze dropped then returned back again.

"So, what did you want to... talk about?" She said with a faded voice.

The tension between them was building with each second. Rachel moved slowly towards her feeling her heart begin to beat wildly. As she stood before Elise, she gently reached up and put her hands on Elise's upper arms eliciting a small gasp from the smaller woman.

"No," Elise whispered.

Rachel didn't move.

She reached again slowly and gently cupped one of Elise's cheeks with her palm, caressing her cheek with her thumb. She mirrored the action with her other hand and held Elise's face tenderly. She looked deeply into her eyes looking for some kind of answer. Elise's mind was reeling with the new sensations flowing through her.

"No," she weakly pleaded.

Rachel leaned down and gently kissed her lips.

"Oh, God, what is happening to me?" Elise marveled at the feelings surging through her body.

Rachel reached around holding Elise's body close to hers. She kissed her again, this time more thoroughly. Elise made a slight noise of resistance, but threw her arms around Rachel kissing her passionately. Their lips claimed the others and Rachel knew she had never known another kiss of its equal.

A loud knock on the door made them jerk their heads apart with a mutual gasp.

"Elise!" Robinson's voice bellowed from the other side of the door.

She instantly pulled back from Rachel upon hearing Robinson's voice.

"Don't answer him," Rachel suggested gently.

William knocked again loudly. "Elise!"

She stopped to look in a mirror and groaned seeing her flushed cheeks looking back at her. She lightly fumbled with her hair and moved passed Rachel towards the door. She opened it finding a very hostile Robinson on the other side.

"I think you had better go," he growled pointing at Rachel.

"Have you been waiting all this time for our return?" Elise asked him icily.

"This is scarcely the time for discussion, Elise." "I am involved with you as an actress, Mr. Robinson, not a doormat," she spat. "Do not attempt to wipe your boots on me!" Robinson paled at her words.

"I'll leave a ticket for you at the theater door," she said turning to Rachel.

Rachel started to say something to Elise, but knew she needed her to leave. She nodded to Robinson and winked at Elise on her way towards the door.

"Thank you. I'll see you tonight," she said as she left smiling victoriously at Robinson as she walked passed him.

William watched her leave with contempt on his face. When he looked back to Elise, he saw the door closing in his face. She locked the door leaving him in the hallway with Rachel.

She smiled at him and made her way to the lobby walking jauntily. Robinson's expression stayed stone like as he watched her walk away.

Rachel was led by an usher down to the first row of seats in the theater and was handed a program. She looked around and noticed the full theater and smiled.

"Not bad, my lady, not bad."

Rachel smiled to herself and glanced down at the program.

*WILLIAM FAWCETT ROBINSON PRESENTS
MISS ELISE MCKENNA
IN THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION
OF THE COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS ENTITLED
WISDOM OF THE HEART
BY MR. BARTLETT WELLS
FOUNDED UPON HIS NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME*

Rachel looked up as she heard the overture begin and clapped politely as the play began.

On stage in a bedroom set, Abigail, the maid was opening the bed. Louisa (Elise) came in wearing a gorgeous evening gown. The one Rachel touched in Laura's house. The site of it gave her a warmth in her chest.

Robinson watched Elise on stage as the dialogue began to play out.

ABIGAIL
Good evening, Miss.

LOUISA
Not good at all. Particularly bad... Help me off with this. I'll NOT go downstairs again.

Abigail starts unfastening Louisa's gown in back as Louisa removes the gloves.

Rachel watched Elise with an adoring smile on her face.

Louisa sighs heavily on stage.

ABIGAIL
What is it, Miss?

LOUISA
I've just been dining with the man my father is determined that I wed.

ABIGAIL
Banker Harwell?

LOUISA
Banker Harwell, yes. All sixty-seven years and five feet four of height and several hundred pounds of him.

The audience laughed loudly. Rachel smiled as she watched Elise on stage definitely in her element. Robinson watched on possessively.

ABIGAIL
He does have money, Miss.

LOUISA
And never lets a soul forget it. I'm amazed he has the least desire to marry he's so happily wedded to his gold.

The audience laughed again. Elise's gown was removed and she pulled on a robe.

ABIGAIL
Perhaps it won't be that bad, Miss. There must be SOMETHING you like about him.

LOUISA

Yes. His absence.

The audience laughed again as Louisa walked to the front of center stage.

LOUISA

The one from my dreams has almost faded now.

ABIGAIL

Uh...Uh...Uh and who is that, Miss? (Confused)

LOUISA

The one I have created in my mind. That special someone who women dream of in the deepest and most secret reaches of their hearts.

The prompter was frowning and running his finger down the script page.

"What is she doing?" The director said.

Robinson was intent on Elise wondering, also, what she was doing. Rachel sat and watched as Elise changed the play completely. They locked eyes as Elise began a monologue all her own.

LOUISA

I can almost see them before me. What would I say to them if they were really here?

The prompter and director were panicking behind the stage. "She's gone insane," the director stated plainly.

Robinson's expression was hard as he sensed what Elise was about to do. Rachel looked on as Elise held her captive with her eyes and words.

LOUISA

Forgive me. I have never known this feeling. I have lived without it all my life. Is it any wonder then I failed to recognize you? You who brought it to me for the first time.

Is there any way that I can tell you how my life has changed? Any way at all to let you know what sweetness you have given me?

There is too much to say; I cannot find the words.

Elise struggled for control as she spoke her heart to Rachel. Rachel's eyes were filled with love as the moment overcame her.

LOUISA

Except for these... I love you.

Such would I say to them, if they were really here.

William Robinson's face was cold and hard as he moved across the backstage area to a burly stagehand.

The curtain closed at the end of the first act and Rachel applauded her heart out. The house lights went on as she stood to go to Elise.

Elise moved towards her dressing room when the director stopped her.

"What in God's name were you doing?" He shouted.

"Nothing," she said as she smiled to herself.

"Nothing? Rewriting the entire first scene!" He shrieked.

"I got it back on course," she said serenely.

"I know but..."

"Elise," the stage manager called. "Can you hold a moment? We've just GOT to take that photograph.

"All right. Just a moment though. I have to change."

"I know," he looked to the photographer. "Quickly?" The photographer stood Elise against a neutral backdrop.

"A little smile, please?" Elise smiled, but he wasn't satisfied with it. "Not quite... If we could just..." He broke off as Elise found Rachel looking at her. She smiled at the sight of her as the photographer snapped her photo. It was this pose that would find its way to the wall of the Kingston Point Hotel's Hall of History.

"Oh yes," the photographer sighed. "That was absolutely perfect." The photographer went to compliment Elise, but she was already gone.

Rachel and Elise walked hand in hand backstage and gazed at one another. Elise smiled gently at her as Rachel started to exit backstage before the second act would begin. The burly stagehand came up to Rachel, carrying an envelope.

"Ms. Collier?" He addressed her.

"Yes," she replied to the large man.

"For you, Miss." He handed over the envelope and turned away. Rachel looked at the envelope that had her name written on it with a strong hand. She opened the envelope to find the same handwriting inside.

I must speak with you immediately. This is a matter of life and death so do not fail me. I am waiting for you in Room 132.

W.F. Robinson

Rachel looked at the note in concern and left the theater in search of William Robinson. She walked through the corridor until she came to room 132. She knocked on the door and waited for William to answer. Finally the door opened and Robinson greeted her brusquely.

"Come in." Rachel hesitated briefly, then entered and Robinson closed the door.

The older man looked like he was out of control and had been drinking from the fligid expression on his face.

"Whiskey?" Robinson offered.

"No, thank you," she declined.

Robinson poured more whiskey into his own glass and took a sip before continuing. Rachel was getting impatient and wanted to end this meeting and get back to Elise.

"Well?" She prompted.

"Do you have any notion of how many years I have been with Miss McKenna?" William asked finally.

"Yes, since March, 1903. What of it?"

Robinson was startled by her accurate answer and tried to regain the upper hand.

"That is correct. Close to ten years. Ten years of nurturing and guarding her; caring for her. Developing her." "For what? To be Mrs. Robinson?" She spat angrily.

"Do you really think I have worked with her for almost a decade merely to groom a wife?" William said contemptuously.

"What then?" Rachel challenged.

"A star!" He screamed. "A stage performer without equal!" William continued his rant. "This young woman has, within herself, the potential to be one of the greatest... if not THE greatest actress of our generation. A queen of the stage... an empress even. An actress with the capacity to surpass Bernhardt as the stars surpass the moon. An actress with such qualities as I have never

seen in any woman. The innate ability to wrench emotional adulation from every theatergoer and critic who will ever see her. A power of expression which is on the verge of standing alone on a pedestal which no one in the world can ever touch again. You understand that? Do you?" He stopped to look at Rachel. "And you would have her lose all that for 'love'?"

Rachel paused quietly as his words sunk in her mind. "I owe you an apology, Mr. Robinson." "What?" Robinson was shocked at the words.

"I understand your motivation now and I respect it. You have nothing but the best in mind for her." "Then you'll..." Robinson started with hope in his voice.

"Do you think I'm blind? Don't you think I'm well aware of her potential? Asking her to commit to me wouldn't be asking her to commit creative suicide. Of course she'll continue to act... and grow... and become everything you see for her." "With you at her side?" Robinson said flatly.

"With me at her side," she repeated throwing the gauntlet at him.

"No," he said simply.

"No?" Rachel asked unbelieving. "You really DO believe you own her, don't you?"

"I DO own her," he shouted with a trembling voice. "I have invested all my heart and soul in her and you will not destroy that. SHE... IS... MINE!"

Rachel turned to walk out but Robinson jumped in her way.

"What do you think you're doing?"

"I told you this morning that the matter is ended, Collier. It is."

"Get out of my way," she growled.

"You will not disturb her any longer," he said firmly.

"Will you get out of my way?" She asked one more time.

"Certainly," he answered quietly and opened the door and stepped aside.

"Thank you," Rachel said coldly and turned to leave as Robinson smiled.

As the door opened, the burly stagehand burst in from the corridor and knocked Rachel out.

The performers were on stage accepting their first curtain call. As the curtain closed, Elise was panicked and called to the curtain man.

"No more!"

The other performers were shocked by her behavior and looked among themselves with varied expressions.

"No more?" The first actor said.

"One curtain call?" The heavysset actress questioned.

"The audience will be furious!" Another actor shouted.

"The audience be damned, I'm furious!" The first actor cried.

"Let's take them without her," the actress decided.

Elise ran hurriedly into her dressing room and confronted Maria.

"Did you find her?" Elise asked.

"No, Miss McKenna." "You tried her room?"

"She wasn't there," she said as she shook her head.

"What did they say at the desk?" Elise inquired further.

"They haven't seen her, Miss."

"She left no message there?" She asked incredulously.

"No." Maria's tone was sad.

"It doesn't make sense. Where did she go?" She asked fearfully. "Have you anything to... tell me about this?"

"No, Miss. I'm as perplexed as you."

"Help me quickly," she said quickly to Maria. "I've got to look for her."

Maria started to undress her when a knock was heard at the door. Elise ran to the door and opened it finding Robinson there with a grim expression on his face.

She backed off uneasily as he entered her room. He gestured for Maria to leave and she did without a word. He was back in control, back where he was most comfortable.

"Well?" She asked tensely.

"Your Ms. Collier has gone," he stated flatly.

"What do you mean?" She couldn't help the tone in her voice.

"She's left the hotel... and your life."

"What have you done to her?"

"Confronted her," he answered strongly. "Elicited a full confession." "Confession of what, exactly?" She challenged.

"Intent... On your money. Your position," he lied. "She wanted to use you to gain credibility as a writer! Elise accept the truth. The woman's a fortune hunter, nothing more."

"That isn't true!" Elise cried.

"A bit more shrewd than others we've confronted, but..." "Get out of here!" She shouted.

"Of course... We leave within the hour, remember."

Robinson left the dressing room and closed the door, leaving a shaken Elise who desperately wanted to believe Rachel, but was thrown off by William. She took a deep breath and continued to dress.

She ran to the theater finding the company busy dismantling and packing. Robinson was directing the workers when he saw her leave.

Elise ran to the main desk and approached the clerk.

"Would someone please open Rachel Collier's room please?" She demanded.

"What is it, Miss McKenna?"

"I think something may have happened to her..." she paused as the clerk stared at her. "Please!"

He nodded and called for a porter to lead her to Rachel's room.

The porter accompanied Elise up to the third floor and down the corridor to room 350. He unlocked the door and Elise pushed him aside as she entered. The room is dark and motionless.

The porter turned on the light as Elise ran to the closet. She was struck uncomfortably by the fact that there was nothing inside. She looked to the bureau finding only toiletries. After running throughout the room, Elise found no evidence of Rachel anymore. Stifling a sob, she ran out of the room with the porter in tow.

Inside Robinson's room, Rachel began to stir. She was lying on the floor by the bed, bound and gagged with torn strips of linen. Her arms were tied behind her back as well as her ankles.

She tried to sit up to no avail and was tied so tightly that when she took a deep breath, it sent a wave of pain through her chest. She looked around the room looking for something to help her escape. She began to wiggle toward the door but was stopped when she saw that her ankles bound her to the bed.

Rachel lay there powerlessly and then began to yank her feet trying to break the strips of linen that bound her to the bed. After many attempts, she stopped getting nowhere. The perspiration was evident on her sculpted face and she was gasping for breath. She started to separate her legs using all of her strength she could muster. That began to work and she made a sound of pained victory as she continued to work the bindings until they gave out.

The bindings were clumped around her ankles as she worked her right foot free, followed by the left. She stood weaving and blinked hard trying to get her balance. Rachel walked to the bathroom and managed to switch on the light. She glanced at her reflection in the mirror and saw herself bound and gagged, making her more angry and determined.

She found Robinson's glass on the counter and leaned backwards to grab it with her hands. She shattered the glass and took a shard to rub against her bindings. After several minutes the bindings were cut and Rachel freed her hands and removed the gag from her mouth. She checked her watch and saw it was just after two o'clock.

She ran a few doors down to Elise's room and knocked loudly.

"Elise!" She shouted. "Elise!"

She pounded on the door when no one answered her cries. "Elise!" With a sob she leaned against the door. "No..." she panted against the door.

A porter approached Rachel unbeknownst to her.

"Miss?" Rachel jumped in surprise. "Are you all right?"

"The company... is it gone?" Rachel asked in desperation.

"Company?" The porter asked confused.

"The ones who did the play tonight. Are they gone?" She clarified.

"I think they're still in the theater, Miss." Rachel whirled around and ran towards the theater.

She reached the door, flung it open and ran inside. She gasped for breath as she hurried down to

the stage. She found a worker and approached him from behind.

"Is Miss McKenna here?" "What?" Startling him.

"Is Miss McKenna here?" She asked again.

"I dunno," he turned to call to another worker. "Hey, Rudy! Are any of the actors still around?"

"No! They left hours ago," Rudy answered irritated.

Rachel watched the man go back to his packing as she felt her heart crush inside of her. She let the tears finally fall as she made her way out of the theater. She walked out of the hotel and onto the path leading to the beach. She found a bench and slumped against it while the tears fell freely down her cheeks. She sat there for several minutes before she heard a voice in the distance.

"Rachel!"

She stood up quickly and looked around frantically. She looked down to the beach and saw a figure running towards her. She couldn't believe her eyes.

"Elise," she whispered to herself. "Elise!" She called out and ran towards her with a joyous sob.

After flying down the steps Rachel converged with Elise clinging to her as their bodies met. She pressed her face into Elise's hair and breathed hard.

"I thought I lost you," she sobbed.

"Rachel," she sighed and drew back to look at her.

Their lips crushed together eliciting moans of passion and happiness from both women. The kiss lasted for many moments as they reassured each other it wasn't a dream. Elise pulled away from Rachel and caressed her cheek with her thumb.

"What happened?" She choked out as her own tears ran down her face.

"It doesn't matter," Rachel said. "I'll tell you later."

"I was so sure William had had something terrible done to you," she paused to look into blue eyes. "We had a dreadful row before he left. He said that you'd confessed you were a fortune hunter." "Good old William," she said with a smirk.

"I was so horribly frightened, Rachel," she said as she rested her head against Rachel's shoulder.

"There's nothing to be frightened of. Not anymore."

Rachel leaned down and captured Elise's lips in another heated kiss.

"Let's go inside," Rachel whispered between kisses.

"All right." Rachel led Elise back into the hotel and back to Elise's room.

Once inside the room, the two women held each other kissing passionately. Elise's body was on fire for the first time in her life. She wanted Rachel more than anything she could ever remember. Rachel was tingling all over from Elise's touch.

Elise slowly pulled away and stood before Rachel. She lowered the straps of her dress one shoulder at a time, letting it drop to the floor. Rachel watched in rapt fascination as the beautiful woman in front of her began to undress. Rachel removed her jacket and vest as Elise stood before her in only her slip.

Elise moved to Rachel and slowly unbuttoned her shirt. Rachel watched with heavy eyes as Elise unfastened the button on her trousers and let them fall to the floor. Rachel kicked them off leaving her in her underclothes.

Elise led her slowly to her bed and stopped when she felt the mattress against the back of her knees. She lifted her slip over her head leaving her naked in front of Rachel who in turn removed her undergarments.

"You are so beautiful," Rachel whispered into Elise's ear. "I love you, so much."

"Show me..." Elise whispered back sending chills down Rachel's body.

They moved back onto the bed and sighed as their bodies met for the first time. Elise never felt another person's naked body on hers and reveled in the feeling.

Rachel caressed Elise's breasts and stomach with her hands and mouth, memorizing each inch as she went along. Elise was touched this way by no other and when the passions began to rise, the tears freely slid down her face. Rachel made love to Elise several times before the smaller woman could take no more.

The love that was made was more powerful than either of them had expected. Rachel had never experienced such fervor with any other person. Elise proved to be a quick student in the art of making love and Rachel's body shook from exhaustion when her final release had come. Rachel took Elise in her arms and held her close. She lightly caressed her back as Elise rested her head on her shoulder.

They basked in the glow of their lovemaking for an hour or so, then got up and partially dressed themselves.

"I'm starving, how about you?" Elise said with green eyes sparkling at her new lover.

"Sure, I could eat. Let's order room service, I don't think we are presentable to go anywhere," she smiled devilishly at Elise who looked up at her and kissed her lightly on the lips.

After Elise had ordered room service, she spread a blanket on the floor and set up a picnic for them. When the food came Rachel helped her spread out their food of cheeses, fruits, crackers and wine. Elise had a healthy appetite and devoured as much food as she could with Rachel smiling at her antics. They both were barefooted, but Rachel was wearing pants and her unbuttoned shirt, while Elise sat in her robe.

"You will commit to me, won't you?" Elise asked in a child-like voice.

Rachel burst out laughing at the unexpected question. Elise looked at her with a worried expression.

"You won't?"

"Of course, I will," she said still laughing. "I'm laughing at the way you asked."

"Oh. I thought maybe you had another girl out there somewhere."

"No," she said still chuckling. "Elise..." Rachel leaned towards her and kissed her sweetly. Elise looked at her filled with devotion.

"I want to be everything to you, Rachel."

"You are," she assured.

"I know how unskilled I am at making love. How could I be otherwise?" Her smile turned roguish. "I have no background, madam, and no experience. I move too clumsily and forget my lines. I forget the very name of the play. I'm so involved in it." Elise shook with mock madness. "I go berserk on stage."

Elise moved towards Rachel and kissed her hungrily. Their kisses were passionate and loving. Their moans were driving them further into the kisses. Rachel broke away and spoke breathlessly.

"The part is yours." Elise's laughter filled her with such happiness she hugged her tightly.

"Tell me more about yourself, Love. What sort of things do you write? Plays, I hope." "No. But I can try," she smiled.

"Oh, DO try. I'd love to act in a play you wrote... Assuming that I ever want to act again after tonight..."

"You will," Rachel said smiling.

"I know I will." Elise returned the smile. "It will be a different me on stage though. A WOMAN me." She kissed Rachel again. "Oh, I do love you, Rachel. Always. Always."

They held each other as they fed one another. Elise looked up at Rachel.

"What time is it, Love?"

"Pretty close to dawn, I'd say." She started to get up but Elise held her back.

"No, no. I'll look," she said as she got up to where Rachel's vest was hanging and removed the watch to look at it. "Almost five," she discovered.

"I don't feel tired at all," she said surprised.

"Neither do I," Elise replied smiling and put the watch on the dresser and looked at Rachel's suit. "The first thing I intend to do for you..." "You've already done," Rachel interrupted.

"The second then." Elise repressed a smile and continued. "Buy you another suit."

"No one seems to like my suit," she feigned taking offense.

"Can you blame them?" Rachel got up and went to Elise.

"Well, I'm offended." She said as she donned the vest and coat as Elise sat on the bed trying not to smile. "I think it's stunning. So it's ten years old." "More like fifteen," Elise jibed.

"Really?" Rachel's eyes widened. "Well... it's still in first class condition. Sleeves are nice and long." She pulled out the vest. "Room for a growing stomach." She noticed a rip in the pocket. "Even a fashionable air vent in the lining of the vest."

Rachel felt something in the lining and pat it with her hands. "And best of all, a hidden coin compartment for any financial emergency." She said as she pulled the coin from the tear in the lining.

She looked at the coin and focused heavily on the date of the penny.

1979.

Rachel looked horrified and made a feeble sound of protest.

"Rachel, what is it?" Elise said alarmed.

Rachel tried to fling the penny away but it stuck to her fingers with a nightmarish adhesion she couldn't break.

"Rachel?" Elise called out to her again.

Rachel began to gasp and tremble as a cloud of darkness gathered around her. She tried to cry out but her voice was clutched and frozen in her throat.

"Rachel!" Elise screamed.

She turned like a statue as the shock set in on what she saw. Elise was fading suddenly away from her as she made a last attempt to rid herself of the penny.

"Rachel!" Elise screamed in agony and disappeared. "Rachel!" Elise's voice echoed on as Rachel traveled back to the future.

Rachel's eyes opened and she stared unwilling to believe she was back. It was deathly still in the room and almost completely dark. She looked around and the room was furnished in a contemporary style for 1979. Muted, her lost eyes searched around the room and stopped on a middle-aged couple sleeping on the bed.

Slowly and infirmly, Rachel moved towards the sitting room. She stiffly held herself in check as she reached for the door to unlock it. She came out of the room and into the hallway looking waxen and ill. She started along the corridor with weak, uneasy steps. She looked into her hand to find the penny still resting there. With a hoarse cry, she hurled the penny and wailed as she moved down the hall.

She went up the stairs to the fourth floor and stumbled down the hallway to her room. She walked as if she were fatally wounded. Finally she reached her suite and went inside, locking and bolting the door when it closed. She clutched her head as she walked towards the sitting room and howled in pain. She barely made it to the sofa where she sank into the cushions breathing heavily.

Rachel awoke on the couch a few hours later when she heard a key in the door lock. She opened her eyes and was extremely pale and drawn. A knock came from the door.

"Maid, Miss," she said.

"Huh?" Rachel replied dazed.

"Maid!" She answered louder.

"Later." Rachel's response was unheard.

"...Maid, Miss!"

"Later!" Rachel said louder taking most of her energy.

"Yes, Miss."

Rachel sat up trying to catch her breath as the pain in her head gave a new meaning to the word anguish. She held her head with both hands as she struggled to her feet and headed towards her bedroom. She searched desperately for the bottle of pills she had thrown to the floor before her journey. Finding it, she took a pill and hoped for relief. With a sob of pain she took out another

pill and swallowed it falling onto her bed. She pulled herself slowly further onto the bed to lie more comfortably. She drew her legs into a fetal position and continued to cry until she fell back asleep.

Later that that day, Rachel awoke still with severe pain in her head. She finally changed out of the suit and into her other clothes. Her movements were slow and uneven as she walked. She managed to walk out of her room and towards the elevator. When the operator reached her floor, he eyed her curiously as they descended to the lobby.

Rachel walked to the theater and opened the door to the empty auditorium. She weakly ambled down to the first row of seats, sat down and stared at the stage. Her mind wandered back in time to when Elise was standing in front of her on this very stage. She could still hear the heartfelt words as she spoke them to her.

There is too much to say; I cannot find the words. Except for these. I love you.

Rachel's expression was desolate as she walked out of the theater. She infirmly made her way to the beach watching the surf as it crashed against the boulders. The pain in her head was severe and she reached in her pocket to take another pill. When she realized what she was about to do, she flung the bottle into the ocean.

She barely kept from stumbling as she walked back to the hotel. Her eyes were swollen from the constant tears, but she wasn't able to stop them. Her face was filled with torment as she headed through the lobby and towards the Hall of History. She leaned against the wall holding the photograph of her lost beloved. The tears blurred her view of Elise's emerald eyes. With a final glance she left the corridor and headed to her room.

As Rachel entered the sitting room, she turned and locked the door. She could barely walk and her face was practically white. With staggered footing, she moved across the room into her bedroom. She entered the room and wavered unsteadily as she moved to her bedside table where her cassette recorder rested. Using strength she didn't know she had, she ejected the instructional cassette and inserted Mahler's Tenth. She pressed play and walked towards the French doors leading to the balcony.

She sat down in the chair on the balcony as the strains of Mahler came through the door. Her expression was one of acceptance, reminiscent of Elise's in her eightieth year, while she stared at the same surf, and listened to the same music. Rachel took one last look of the surf and closed her eyes as she let the music claim her soul.

As she opened her eyes she saw the last of the sunset resting against the water. In the distance, Rachel squinted and saw a tiny outline of a figure almost imperceptibly against the background of the water. Staring at the figure, she held her breath. The figure walked near the surf line holding her dress above the sand. Her movements were dreamlike in their slowness. Rachel knew it was Elise and now understood that she was no longer of this world.

Rachel looked down and was wearing her suit from 1912. She was standing in front of the

wooden steps leading her to the beach. Rachel was in perfect health once again. The nebulous sunset added to her anxiousness of seeing Elise again. The vagueness of the moment was getting clearer with each step that took her closer to her beloved. Rachel slowly approached the figure that was standing immobile by the water. She looked at Rachel and started to run to her. Rachel smiled wide and began to run to her. They coalesced in an emotional reunion. Their arms wrapped around each other as their lips came together. As they stood in each other's arms, their figures began to fade with the sunset as it took them home.

Together.

Forever.

The End

I hope you enjoyed my adaptation of this movie. It will always remain one of my absolute favorites.

Let me know what you think!

Feedback is the Ruler of all Bards.

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