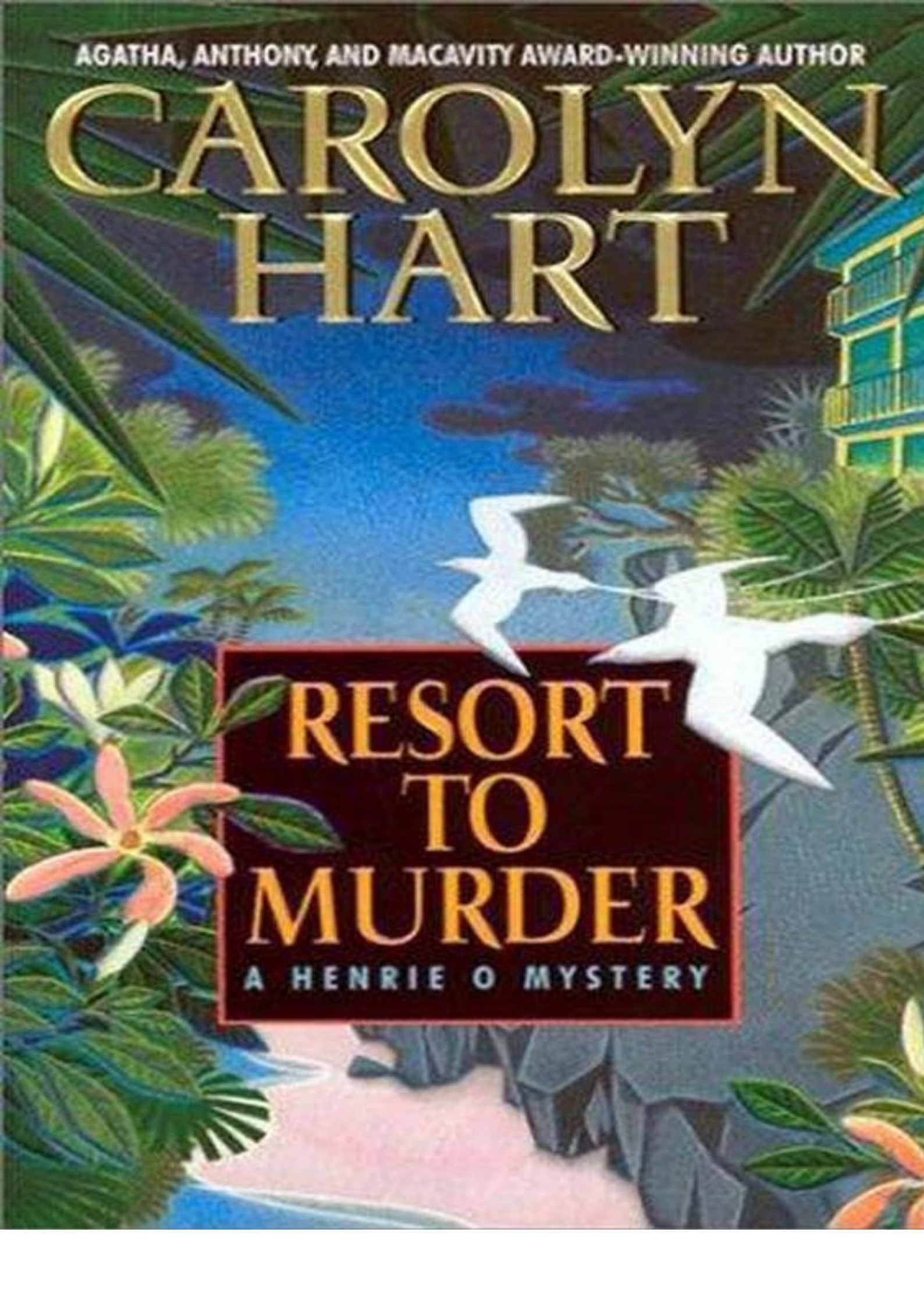


AGATHA, ANTHONY, AND MACAVITY AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

CAROLYN HART

The background of the cover is a vibrant illustration of a tropical resort. In the upper right, a multi-story building with balconies is partially visible. The sky is a deep blue, with two white birds in flight. The foreground is filled with lush greenery, including palm fronds and a large, bright orange flower. The overall scene is set against a backdrop of a tropical coastline with a pinkish beach and dark rocks.

**RESORT
TO
MURDER**

A HENRIE O MYSTERY

RESORT TO MURDER

by

Carolyn Hart

one

THE honeycomb-weathered limestone, prickly, as tiny needles, poked into my hands. I edged my sneakered feet on the narrow trail and pressed against the outward-bowing boulder. A wave crashed over the rock pinnacles beneath me, the water swishing with a thousand eager fingers into the crannies of the cliff, relentlessly sculpting the ancient fissures.

The grainy rock, the thunderous crash of the waves, the fine mist beading my face and hands, the scent of seaweed and salt water enveloped me, creating an embryonic world confined to this place, this moment, these sensations. Slowly, carefully, knowing a false step could tumble me onto the rock pinnacles below, I moved ahead, easing around the bulge.

I felt a moment of triumph when I saw a widening shelf, a three-foot indentation invisible from the rocky headland above, cupped on either side by jutting boulders. Trails lead somewhere. I'd followed the faint ridge in the rock and my gamble had paid off.

Breathing hard, I dropped shakily to the mist-slick ledge, drew my knees up under my chin and looked out at the dark surging ocean. I watched as the pink tendrils of sunrise turned the water from the blackness of night to vivid color. I don't know how long I sat, long enough for the sky to move from a milky opalescence, streaked with red and gold, to a pale cloudless blue. I looked south at the distant horizon and knew there was nothing beyond that meeting of sky and sea but hundreds of miles of water. Ships were out there, of course, and birds and ocean flotsam, but at this moment nothing moved on that endless horizon and I had this spectacular marine world to myself.

My lips quirked in a wry smile. That was always the problem, wasn't it? Wherever you go, the ocean is saying points out, there you are. Here I was, recuperating from pneumonia, a guest at Tower Ridge House, one of Bermuda's lovelier small hotels, and yet I was not at peace. Instead, I was trying to empty my mind of fleeting images jostling and tumbling as unpleasantly as modern television's witless flip-flip-flip of pictures. I'd pushed those images away, submerged them in the moment of struggle on the rock face, savoring the challenge, glorying in the feel of sun and mist on my skin and the sensation—one I'd not had in many years—of sheer adventure.

I cocked my head, watched a flock of terns diving for fish. I'd had an instant of fun, the kind of fun you know when you are ten and the limbs of a tree beckon you high above a garden or the roller coaster crests the rise and plunges down the slope. But I wasn't ten. I was seventy-odd and, truth be told, had no damn business clinging to slick rock with waves crashing beneath me. Besides, now that I was alone in my retreat, the images could not be denied:

Diana slumped in the window seat, staring determinedly out of the airplane at the expanse of ocean. Her young jaw set, a tear trickling down her cheek. She had her mother's delicate, almost sharp features, her father's fair complexion and reddish-gold hair. Lovely Diana, my cherished granddaughter, facing a future she could not alter and was unwilling to accept.

Dark-haired Neal astride the bright red scooter, remembering to stay left on the steep hill, shouting "Hey, Grandma, hold tight," his voice exuberant, but his sideways glance at his sister somber and concerned. Chunky, blunt-faced, direct, uncompromising, my adored grandson. Neal, though, was always pragmatic. What would be, would be.

And the others:

Lloyd Drake, my former son-in-law, raising his champagne glass, earnest face flushed: "To Connor, the loveliest woman I know." Lloyd had looked across the dinner table last night with doglike devotion, uncritical, impervious to the waves of dismay and hostility and anger rising from the other guests, his attention focused solely upon Connor. Lloyd was enjoying late-come love with the enthusiasm of a basketball fan at the Final Four, pumped up, eager and oblivious to criticism. Connor Bailey fingering the quite perfect pearl choker at her slender throat, her coral nails bright against the bougainvillea spilling over the yellow stucco walls of the hotel. Connor was almost beautiful-sleek black hair cupping a Dresden-china face, flashing eyes shiny as amethyst, a lithe yet voluptuous body. What kept her from true beauty? The restless movement of her hands? The glance that demanded too much, gave too little? The unceasing hunger for admiration in her bright, beseeching eyes?

Marlow Bailey pushing up too-heavy, unfeminine tortoiseshell glasses, her dark brows drawn in a worried frown. She was near in age to Diana, but they might have sprung from different planets-Diana graceful and vibrant, Marlow subdued and understated. Odd to see them in such agreement, both opposed to the wedding scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

Aaron Reed smiling ruefully at his future mother-in-law-Connor-and future stepfather-in-law-Lloyd. Last night Aaron had looked perplexed and sad when Marlow stormed from the bar, angry because Lloyd had dismissed Marlow's suggestion that they plan a ski trip in March to the Bailey family lodge in Vail. "Not this year," Connor said firmly. "Lloyd wants to go to Barcelona." Aaron tried to patch over the moment. "Things sort themselves out." His voice was husky, pleasant and vacuous, but his eyes were sharp and thoughtful.

Jasmine Bailey, perhaps the most cheerful member of the Bailey family, staring adoringly at Lloyd, her ten-year-old face wreathed in a sunrise smile when she and Lloyd tossed a beach ball back and forth. "Lloyd, I'll bet I can catch it a hundred times," and Lloyd's good-humored laughter. "Hey, if you do, I'll go up to the pool and get you a Shirley Temple." But Marlow's glance at her little sister held a touch of pity.

Steve Jennings, the Bailey family lawyer and old friend, sipping a Dark 'n Stormy and listening attentively as Lloyd described one more time the first day he ever saw Connor: "... it was right there at the moongate at the top of the limestone steps that curved down from the first terrace to the second-"and there she was and everybody knows moon-gates are all about love and she had on a kind of blue dress and it made me think of that song, you know the one, 'Alice Blue Gown'..." I looked at the moongate, knowing the common semicircles of limestone often serve as a frame for newlyweds in Bermuda-what was a wedding without a picture of the happy couple standing beneath the stone arch of a moongate?-and I wasn't sure which astounded me the most: Lloyd responding to the old tradition or Lloyd dredging from somewhere deep in his mind a song that had been old when I was a child, or his lack of poetry in re-creating a moment that obviously meant much to him, or the unfaltering geniality of Connor Bailey's old friend. Of course, Jennings was drinking the national drink of Bermuda, a mixture of Black Seal rum and ginger beer, which argued automatic conformity or a total lack of imagination. Yet the lawyer's light eyes-tan flecked with green-were bright and shrewd and cold when he looked at Lloyd, cold.

Those images were worrisome. There were other, darker moments from the bar last night. I was tired and didn't want to join the group there after dinner, but I was disturbed by the pinched look on Diana's face, so I'd forced myself to join them. I'd gained a different picture of Connor, realized that Lloyd certainly wasn't the only man in the room aware of her presence. The bartender was a dark, handsome man in his forties. His demeanor was polite, deferential, but his eyes returned again and again to Connor. Steve Jennings sat close enough to Connor that their shoulders touched. Another hotel guest, drinking at the bar by himself, half turned to watch her. He was a big man with a shock of red hair, and when he spoke, a flat Texas drawl. He moved toward our table. "Did I hear you follow

mention Dallas?" He stuck out a rawboned hand. "Curt Patterson. Fort Worth." He'd even taken the trouble to repeat my name. "~~Henrie Collins? I have an Aunt Henrietta, but nobody would ever have called her Henrie. Her loss, ma'am.~~" His tone was admiring. Soon he had joined us. Before long Connor's face was flushed and her voice gay. She absorbed the attention of the men as hungrily as a sponge soaking up water. Lloyd's smile was strained. He tried twice to close the evening down and each time Connor resisted, turning to Jennings or the Texan with an eager laugh and glowing eyes. I'd stayed until Diana pushed back her chair, said flatly, "Good night, Dad." Lloyd had scarcely noticed her departure. As we walked to our rooms, I wanted to tell Diana that some women, often without conscious effort, exert an incalculable magnetism upon men. But I wasn't sure the observation would be helpful to Diana. I doubted it would be helpful to Lloyd either. Diana and I bade each other good night, neither of us saying what was in our hearts.

This morning I'd left the hotel, but I had not left behind my concern over this wedding journey so freighted with undercurrents of unhappiness. I wished the fresh mist spraying up from the water could wash those images from my mind. Below me, a bigger wave crashed against the headland. The tide was coming in. I'd better start back. It would be trickier now, the rough rocks shining with wetness. I felt suddenly exhausted and wondered if I'd pushed too far in making the climb. It takes a long time to recover from pneumonia. I took a leaden step, pausing to rest.

I hoped it was the aftermath from pneumonia that made me feel dull and old, apprehensive and weary. Surely this lassitude was coloring my perceptions of Lloyd and Connor and their entourage even though it was reasonable that a second marriage could create enormous tension for all involved, especially the extended family.

A quick grin touched my face. Connor Bailey had taken the addition of her husband-to-be's former mother-in-law to the wedding party with grace. Or was it simply disinterest? Moreover, Connor scarcely seemed to notice when either Diana or Neal appeared. Her glance swept right over them, a negligent nod her only greeting. She'd merely given me a cool glance when we'd met at the airport in Atlanta.

I'd mightily resisted the idea of accompanying Diana and Neal to Bermuda for their father's wedding. It certainly had nothing to do with the fact of the impending marriage. Lloyd and Emily had been divorced for almost ten years. Emily had remarried two years ago and was, I believed, quite happy. I would surely be churlish to wish less for Lloyd. As for Emily and Lloyd's marriage, as with any and all marriages, I would never presume to judge why one marriage succeeds and another fails. I'd had misgivings for them from the first-Emily mercurial and passionate in her enthusiasms, Lloyd conventional to an extreme and terribly sensitive to the opinions of others. I'd never felt they understood each other. When they began to draw apart, Emily plunging into the children's world and into the community, and sometimes sponsoring unpopular causes, such as the battle against teaching creationism in the schools, and Lloyd working longer and longer hours, but always finding time for golf and eager for the approval of his conservative friends, I'd wondered if their common love for the children would be enough. It wasn't. As with all broken marriages, there was pain enough for everyone.

I'm always puzzled by society's casual attitude toward divorce. The very word is harsh and discordant, signaling breakage. But in a world where one of every two marriages ends by decree, perhaps a dismissive acceptance is a kind of balm. In any event, today's world accommodates all kinds of marital and nonmarital arrangements, so perhaps my attendance at my ex-son-in-law's wedding was not that unusual.

Still, I wasn't particularly comfortable in this role and wondered again at Emily's entreaty that I come with Neal and Diana. After all, they were certainly old enough-Neal a high school senior, Diana in her second year of college-to make the trip unaccompanied.

As I carefully began to ease around the bulging boulder, my feet toeing hard against the trail, remembered Emily's voice, husky with strain, "~~Mother, please. Go with them. It's fine with Lloyd. You know he's always liked you~~"-I'd quirked a skeptical brow at that. Lloyd was alert and cautious around me, like a lawyer handed a contract with a codicil in Urdu. Of course, he always exercised lawyer's caution, since that was his training. At least, he had until he saw Connor Bailey framed by limestone arch, the soft breeze of Bermuda stirring the folds of her blue gown.

"- and the trip will be good for you since you've been so sick. A week of sun and sea and sand..." I hadn't been tempted. I loved Bermuda, had spent several wonderful holidays there with Richard, my late husband, staying at lovely old Rosedon, built as a private residence in 1906 and at one time the only house in Bermuda with gaslights: walking on the pale pink sand of Elbow Beach, snorkeling in Church Bay, fishing for amberjack off Argus Bank, bicycling on the Railway Trail, playing tennis on a beautiful court above Whale Bay, climbing to the windswept top of Gibbs Hill Lighthouse. Yes, Bermuda was an isle for lovers, young or old, just beginning or nearing the end, first time around a tattered at the edges but clinging to hope.

"I'm too tired to travel-" I'd begun.

Emily had interrupted. "Mother, Diana needs you. Please."

I'd held the telephone, frowning. There was more than concern in Emily's voice. There was fear. Now I clung to rock with arms that suddenly ached and wondered anew what Emily had meant. She had given me no chance to probe, talked fast about travel dates and tickets and clothes. I didn't yet understand why Emily wanted me here. Yes, I could see clearly that Diana was unhappy about her father's remarriage, but my presence couldn't change that fact. I hoped, whatever I said or did, to encourage Diana and Neal to accept Connor. It was important for the children to be a part of the father's life. Or, to turn it around, it was important for Lloyd to be both their father and Connor's husband, just as Emily was their mother and now Warren's wife. I wanted that to happen and would do my best to help it happen. Perhaps everything would go fairly smoothly. Certainly every effort was being made to make this a happy holiday for everyone. Connor had planned a full week of entertainment for the guests.

We'd each received a small photo album. Gold letters on the red leather cover read: bermuda. Within the outline of a heart, Connor and Lloyd's names were intertwined in silver script. The inside front cover held a map of the coral archipelago, from Paget Island in the east to Ireland Island North in the west. On the facing page, in bright red print, was a "Programme."

First on the schedule, this morning, was an outing to the old village of St. George's. It was the nearest an American would ever come to seeing a reflection of Jamestown. St. George's was founded in 1612, five years after the earliest colony and three years after the *Sea Venture*, en route to Jamestown, was wrecked on Bermuda's reefs. I looked forward to seeing some parts of the old village again, especially the Featherbed Alley Print Shop where Bermuda's first newspaper, the *Bermuda Gazette*, was printed in 1784. And I always visited St. Peter's on Duke of York Street, the oldest continuously used Anglican church in the world. I wasn't interested in noting the blue channel where trussed victims of witch-hunts were thrown in the late sixteen hundreds. If they floated, it surely meant the Devil had gotten them up, so they were quickly dragged out of the water and hanged. The original no-win situation. I was a little hesitant to plunge into the activities for the wedding party. Even though I definitely was an invited guest, I felt that perhaps Connor's creativity actually hadn't been intended to include the mother of Lloyd's former wife. Although it would be fun to see St. George's again, there was almost a full week ahead of us, with plenty of free time. Excursions were planned for either morning or afternoon and the rest of the day devoted to the beach or napping or shopping or cards or golf.

fishing, or whatever the guest desired. It would be easiest to take part in planned outings in the hot minivan. But I could walk down the steep hill to the South Shore Road and catch the bus in Hamilton and transfer to a bus to St. George's. Perhaps at breakfast there might be a moment to exchange some pleasantries with Connor and I would feel less an interloper. I would decide after breakfast.

Everything, of course, comes down to attitude. Right now it was clear that some of the members of the wedding party were determined not to have a good time, no matter how beautiful the surroundings, no matter how important the occasion for Lloyd and Connor. I would do my part to encourage good humor. I edged forward. One step, two, and I would be safely back-

Tiny stones rattled over the edge of the cliff above.

"Wait up, Dinny." Neal's shout was loud.

Startled, I looked up, but I could see only the outward curve of black rock. My grandchildren were above me, on the narrow headland that overlooked the bay, a high and private place with a spectacular view of the shore and sea. Over the sounds of the water surging and gurgling among the rocks below and the caw of seabirds and the *whop-whop* of a helicopter, Diana's passionate, angry voice rang out. "I had to get out of there. If I'd looked at her one more minute, I'd have thrown something or bashed her in the face. I hate her, Neal, I hate her!"

"Oh, come on, Dinny." Neal wasn't quite the impatient male dealing with the irrational female. But close. I could have told him that his response was the equivalent of heaping gas on an open flame. But I was female.

"Neal"- her voice was an open wound-"don't you even care?"

A silence. I wondered if he shrugged. Or stared out at the sea with puzzled eyes.

"Neal, she's awful." Diana's voice oozed disgust. "You saw how she acted last night. Like a bitch in heat. She'll ruin his life-"

"Dinny, get over it." A rock arced above me, to splash in the water, Neal venting his irritation in action. "It's going to happen." Another rock, another splash. "Dad's going to marry her and we've got to put up with it and-"

"Do we? I'm not going to the wedding. I don't have to." Her young voice was implacable. "I wish she hadn't come. I shouldn't have. I hate missing a week of classes. If she had any sense at all, she'd have set the wedding earlier, before the semester started."

"Come on, Dinny. Her kids are missing school, too. And you'll survive." His voice was dry. "Two curricula in every class? Big deal. Besides, it was that closing of Dad's that pushed the wedding into late January. And you sure wouldn't have liked it if she'd had it over Christmas."

"He spent Christmas with her anyway." The words were freighted with pain.

Neal didn't answer.

"I wish she'd die." Diana's voice was almost unrecognizable, deep and guttural like a seal's bark. "I wish-"

"Dinny, shut up." He sounded young and anxious, bewildered and scared.

Diana's laugh rang out, discordant and chilling. "That would solve everything, wouldn't it? If only she'd die... Maybe she will. Maybe she'll swim out too far. Or fall out of the tower. Let's ask her if she'd like to go to the top. If she steps-"

"Dinny, Dinny, stop it!" His voice was now both scared and angry.

"Let go. You're hurting me. Oh, I hate you too." There was a clatter of running steps.

"Dinny..." A heavy sigh. "Oh, hell."

I waited until the sound of his heavy steps faded away, then resumed my cautious progress on the path, but I was scarcely aware of the bulging rock and the slapping of the waves below. I knew now why Emily had begged me to come. She should have told me... But I understood her silence. Sometime

too often, perhaps, we refuse to put our fears into words because the words will make them concrete, inescapable, overwhelming.

Emily knew that her daughter's pain was deeper, wilder, than it should be. Emily was afraid of what Diana might do.

And so was I.

two

I STOOD beside a huge azure pot brimming with lace-white stephanotis, the sweet-smelling, trumpet-shaped wedding flower, and looked down a shallow flight of steps at the drive where a gleaming blue mini-van waited, door ajar. From this vantage point, I could see the main part of the hotel, the walkway marking the upper terrace, the steps leading down to the pool on the lower terrace, and look down the hillside to the tumbled blackish gray rocks and the rich sheen of turquoise water.

In the drive, a tall, slump-shouldered woman with frizzy orange hair polished a side mirror. The van glistened with care, the paint glittering with wax. On the side was the legend tower ridge house and the outline in white paint of a crenellated tower. A van and driver were available by special arrangement with the hotel. All tourists travel by taxi, van, bus, moped or on foot on Bermuda, as there are no rental cars. In fact, each Bermudian family is limited to one car, an attempt to control the number of vehicles on the narrow curving roads which are treacherously slick during rains.

The woman gave a final energetic swipe, swung toward the steps, saw me. She tucked the cloth in the pocket of her drooping brown cardigan and raised a thin hand in greeting. "Good morning, Mrs. Collins. We have another perfect day." She spoke with the cheery firmness of a nursery-school teacher, but her eyes were somber.

"Good morning, Mrs. Worrell." I smiled and started down the steps. I'd met the hotel manager upon our arrival. This morning I realized that she was older than I'd gauged, probably in her fifties, her freckled face lined and gaunt.

I reached the drive, walked toward the van. Mrs. Worrell nodded at me, then stood quite still, staring up the steps. For an instant, her blue eyes glinted, shiny and impenetrable as sunstruck metal. I felt a wave of malignancy. The feeling was gone as quickly as it came and I heard her cultivated voice raised in greeting: "Good morning, Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Drake. Everything is ready for the outing."

I stared at the manager, but now she was smiling, and though the smile didn't reach her eyes, her manner was that of a genial, impersonal hostess. Surely I had imagined that instant of hostility. I turned to look up at Connor and Lloyd. They stood by the front door: Connor, her dark hair panther-sleek, her finely sculpted features glowing with health, and, it seemed to me, uncharacteristic eagerness and hope; and Lloyd, his squarish, ruddy face burnished by the sun, his pale green eyes squinting against the brightness. Connor wore a blue chambray dress, a pale rose cashmere cardigan over her shoulders. Lloyd's bright green blazer was so crisp it shouted its newness, and his gray wool slacks had a knife-edge crease. New clothes to begin new lives.

I pushed away the thought and the sadness that swept me. Damn it, I was getting morbid. Of course everything is transitory. I knew that this day would roll into the next and the next and the next, and that Diana and Neal, coming up the stairs from the lower terrace, their movements confident and easy, would someday lose the swiftness of youth. But not right now. Right now they were young and I could take pleasure in their youth. Right now Connor and Lloyd, who were not young, had another chance to find life's most elusive prize and I wished them success.

Diana hurried up the stairs. "Dad, you've got to come down to the beach with us when we get back. Neal and I found the coolest place. You can see forever. It's way out on the headland. We thought maybe everybody—you and Connor and Marlow and Aaron and Jasmine and Steve and Grandma-could

come and we could get a picture of all of us together." Her smile was enamel-bright. She looked swiftly toward Connor. Captured in the golden pool of sunlight atop the steps, Diana stood with her head flung up, graceful and invincible as her huntress namesake.

Neal, hands jammed in his pockets, gave his sister an uneasy glance. Then he pulled free a hand and raised it in an easy salute. "Hi, Dad. Connor."

Lloyd beamed. He reached out, pulled his daughter close, gave her shoulders a brisk squeeze. "That's a great idea."

Connor's porcelain-cool face softened, looked suddenly vulnerable. The beginnings of a smile lifted the corners of her coral mouth. "All of us?" She usually spoke in a tired drawl, as if the words were almost too much trouble to utter. Now the tone was wondering and pleased.

Marlow's shoes scraped on the tiles. "Won't we get enough pictures before the week's over, Mother?" Her voice was dry. "Pictures are such-" She broke off as Aaron slid his arm around her, nuzzled her face against her hair.

They were an unusual couple-Aaron remarkably handsome with curly brown hair, blue eyes, a blue chin and merry smile; Marlow determinedly plain with her dark hair drawn sharply back, no make-up but with arresting silver-flecked hazel eyes behind the unstylish glasses.

Aaron grinned at her. "There's no such thing as too many pictures. I want a bunch of us out on the headland. I hiked up there last night. Diana's right"-he nodded at my granddaughter-"you feel like you're on the edge of the world. I'll take a bunch. Of course," and he glanced ruefully toward Diana, "don't have a fancy camera like Diana's"-her Leica hung from a leather strap around her neck-"but my handy little disposable will do pretty good."

Jasmine bounced up to her big sister and Aaron. She tugged on Aaron's sleeve. "Will you take my picture, Aaron? Out on the rocks? Me and Lloyd?" She swung toward her stepfather-to-be.

Connor's smile was pleased. "All of us together, Jasmine."

Aaron tousled Jasmine's short hair. "Sure, kid. I'll be chief photographer, me and my disposable." He slipped one arm through Jasmine's and the other through Marlow's and started down the steps.

The main door opened. Steve Jennings shaded his eyes from the sun. He saw Connor and his angular face creased in a lopsided smile. Jennings, though near in age to me, moved like a young Gary Cooper, confident, unhurried, commanding.

Lloyd suddenly stood straighter, but he looked small compared to Jennings.

Jennings's lazy drawl was casual. "Am I the last?" There was no apology in his tone, merely mild inquiry. "Almost skipped but thought it would be fun to see *Deliverance* again. Makes you grateful for creature comforts. I'm afraid I'd have stayed on the island." His smile was self-deprecating.

Deliverance is a replica of the ship built with the timbers from the wrecked *Sea Venture* and from planks from the island's luxuriant cedars. The tiny ship, forty feet long and nineteen feet wide, carried 132 people, crew and passengers, on its voyage from Bermuda to Jamestown in 1610. There was scarcely room to stand in its cramped interior and the cook had to manage with one big pot. But the little ship safely reached its goal.

"We're all here now." Lloyd was just a little impatient. Impatience was one of his traits. He was always on time and expected punctuality from others. "All right, everyone. Connor thought we should start with St. George's-"

Brisk steps clattered around the corner from the upper terrace.

"- because it's the oldest-"

Curt Patterson saw their group on the stairs, threw his arms wide. "People! Hey, I thought this place was dead, then I heard you folks." He had a salesman's sunny smile, an unquashable here-I-am, I'm-your-buddy, laissez les bon temps rouler. "Hey, looks like you've got some action going. What's up?" He shoved his hand through his curly red hair, beamed at Connor.

There wasn't a woman alive who wouldn't have responded to that frank stare of admiration. Certainly not a woman like Connor. Her vivid blue eyes sparkled. Her richly red lips curved in delight. "We're on our way to St. George's." Connor gestured toward the hotel van.

The big Texan clapped his hands together. "Good deal. I've been here a half dozen times and never seen the place. But if you're going there--"

Mrs. Worrell cleared her throat. "Certainly, Mr. Patterson, if you wish to plan ahead for your party with your sister, Mrs. Elliot, and her husband, I believe-I will be happy to convey you there. Today the van is engaged by Mr. Drake." Her crisp Bermudian accent, to American ears so very British, was quite pleasant but firm.

"Oh hey, sorry. I wouldn't want to horn in." Patterson strode up the steps, stood looking down at Connor, stood perhaps an infinitesimal space too near. "Maybe some other time I'll--"

Connor reached out, touched his arm. "Oh, do come with us." Her voice was eager. "There's plenty of room." She looked down at Mrs. Worrell. "We've room, haven't we?"

"Connor." Lloyd's tone was stiff.

"Why, Lloyd, it will be fun to have Curt with us. You said yourself-the more, the merrier." She slipped her arm through Patterson's and started down the steps.

Diana gestured from below. "Hey, Dad, Neal and I will save you a seat."

In the general movement toward the van, I followed Lloyd. I wished I could tell him to grin and catch up with Connor and slip his arm around her shoulders and tell Patterson about the plans for the wedding.

But Connor would probably invite Patterson and his sister and her husband to the wedding and I didn't think that would make Lloyd happy either. At the door to the van, the big Texan took Connor's elbow.

"Here you go, little lady." And he swung up beside her. He looked over his shoulder, "Coming, Lloyd?"

Diana grabbed her dad's hand. "We're taking the back row. Those are the best seats."

A tiny frown touched Connor's face, then she shrugged and patted the seat beside her for Patterson. "I can't believe you've never been to St. George's..."

I ended up in a seat by myself two rows in front of Neal and Diana and Lloyd. Marlow and Jasmine and Aaron sat behind me. I looked out at the masses of green shrubbery and occasional spots of color as the van curved on the twisting narrow road. Hibiscus blooms even in January, but the riot of color that I always remember of Bermuda would begin in March, especially the bougainvillea with blooms of purple, magenta and salmon. As I took pleasure in the lovely pastel houses, I wondered at the human capacity for stupidity. And boorishness. Patterson's booming laugh was exuberant. Connor giggled like a schoolgirl.

As the van veered from *Collectors Hill Road* into *Middle Road*, I half-turned, wondering about Lloyd and the children. Diana was talking to her father, her voice light and cheery, her face far too satisfied. I wanted to catch a moment alone with Diana. There was no way-no good way-to reconcile Diana's outburst on the headland and her apparently friendly overture to Connor on the hotel steps. One had to be false and I had no doubt which. What did Diana intend? What was her objective? Why corral everyone in our group for a photo session on the headland? That was the very place where the morning Diana had wished for Connor to die. I didn't like remembering that moment, but I knew I had to talk to Diana. The sooner, the better.

If I hadn't been uneasy about Diana and concerned for Lloyd, I would have enjoyed the drive, the incredible vistas of the sea, the cottages in pastels softer than summer sunsets, and Mrs. Worrell's brisk commentary. She recommended future day trips to Spittal Pond and the Bermuda Aquarium. I regretted that the Leamington Caves were closed but suggested a visit to the Crystal Caves, and pointed out a majestic old tamarind tree, a favorite lounging spot of Mark Twain, who thought

Bermuda might well be preferable to heaven. And I listened to the snatches of conversation swirling within the van:

Connor: "... early Saturday afternoon and I hope the weather..."

Patterson: "... perfect spot to get married..."

Marlow: "... the last time we went down, there was a huge squid..."

Aaron: "... like to fish for barracuda..."

Jasmine: "... said there would be trifle tonight. I love..."

Neal: "... look at that catamaran..."

Diana: "... remember the time we..."

But not a word from Lloyd.

The van reached the causeway and I knew we were almost to St. George's. Mrs. Worrell pointed out Mullet Bay, where boats seized by privateers were held in the eighteen hundreds. At the entrance to the old town, we passed a pink-walled flower bed chock-full of purple pansies. The tourist area would be jammed in summer, but on this cool January day, there was plenty of parking available in the Town Square. January didn't offer fabulous blooms. It did offer quiet and peace. As we climbed off the van, Mrs. Worrell pointed toward the Globe Hotel. "We'll start there. It's now the Bermuda National Trust Museum. Actually, it was built in 1699 to serve as the Governor's House and..."

I lagged behind the group moving toward the softly pink building. I had no wish to watch Lloyd's grimace. I wanted to grab his arm and say, "Laugh, Lloyd. Connor doesn't mean any harm and this is going to be the pattern of your lives." I was equally ready to grab Diana's arm and give her a good shake and say, "Don't gloat, Dinny." I couldn't at this moment do either. Moreover, Lloyd, hurt and angry, would neither listen nor understand. As for Diana, I'd get only a toss of her head and a bland expression. I stopped. Neal and Diana had already disappeared into the building. I reached out a hand to brace myself against the rose-pink wall.

"Mrs. Collins, are you all right?" Steve Jennings was beside me, a firm hand on my elbow.

I blinked. I was dizzy, likely the result of worry combined with fatigue and too little breakfast and the lingering malaise from the pneumonia. I'd not had any appetite when I came in from my early rock excursion. I was still hearing the ugly tone in Diana's voice, "I wish she'd die."

Jennings and I were alone on the quiet street. "Would you like to rest for a moment? There's a cafe on the next block. We can get some tea."

He kept a firm hand on my elbow as we walked up the cobbled street. When we settled at an outdoor table overlooking the harbor, I ordered coffee and a sweet roll. Jennings chose tea.

As the waitress served us, Jennings gave me a rueful smile. "Did you have a bad night's sleep, too?" I'd slept the heavy, weighted sleep of one recently ill. I shook my head. "No. Actually, I slept deeply. I'd still felt tired upon awakening. "Is your room not comfortable?" I was surprised. The block of rooms reserved for the Drake-Bailey party was contiguous and I assumed all the rooms were as lovely as mine. The appointments were charming: white wicker furniture, rose walls, paintings of Bermudian scenes including the steep, stepped, brilliantly white roofs, Gombey dancers, and the ever-changing sea. The paintings could only dimly reflect the beauty of the tiny country. I had only to step onto my balcony for a dramatic view—the white tower on the ridge to my right which gave the hotel its name, the dazzling gardens below, the terraces and pool, and then, always, the rugged black rocks and sapphire sea.

"Oh, the room's fine." He rubbed his cheek, looked at me sharply. "So you weren't awakened? I thought you might have been. I believe our rooms are next to each other. I'm in room twenty-six."

"No. I'm in room twenty-two." Diana was in room 24 and Neal in room 20. I sipped the strong, hot, invigorating coffee, relished the spurt of energy from the sugary roll, and wondered what excitement I'd missed. I spent almost fifty years as a reporter, so I'm not shy about asking questions. "Wh

happened? Loud guests?" That seemed unlikely. The small hotel was genteel, and none of the guests had seen appeared to be the sort likely to erupt with late-night festivities.

Jennings frowned. "Somebody knocked on my door. About two a.m. I thought you might have heard it."

"No." If I heard the knocking, the noise had merged into my dreams-dreary, tiring dreams of locked doors and blocked hallways, the subconscious signaling fatigue and frustration.

"It was quite loud. And sustained." Jennings no longer looked genial. "It took me a moment to walk up."

I understood. Two a.m. is not an hour when most of us awaken easily.

"When I got to the door, there was no one there." He frowned. "I thought I heard running steps. I slipped on some clothes and came out to the upper terrace."

"Was that wise?" I asked mildly.

He shrugged. "Oh, it's very safe here. Besides, if anyone meant harm, they'd scarcely knock on the door and disappear. Anyway, it made me mad. Like a kid's trick, you know, knocking on the door and running. But at two o'clock in the morning..."

No, that wasn't an hour when kids were likely to be out playing pranks.

"When I reached the terrace, I looked toward the garden-" He broke off, his silvery brows drawn in a puzzled frown.

I waited, but he seemed to have come to a full stop. "You saw something odd."

His head jerked up. "How did you know?"

I don't claim psychic abilities, but I've read a lot of faces. "You'd just been awakened. You were half mad, half worried. You didn't see a person or animal. But you saw something that puzzled you." And that worries you.

"Oh, it was late. I was half asleep." He almost seemed to be talking to himself, persuading himself.

Abruptly, he forced a smile. "Nothing worth mentioning. Now, tell me, Mrs. Collins, is this your first trip to Bermuda?"

If Steve Jennings hadn't resisted describing what he had seen, I might not have been concerned. But I didn't like the possibility, which occurred to me at once, that the rousing knock on the door might have been intended for Diana's room. Surely she would not open the door without checking the peephole. But she might assume that her brother was in the hall...

I definitely wanted to know what Steve Jennings saw in the deserted garden late last night. I ignored his question. "Perhaps you should inform Mrs. Worrell-"

His interruption was sharp and final. "I couldn't do that. Absolutely not."

How odd. Wasn't the manager the first person who should be informed if someone played a malicious prank on a guest? And "malicious" seemed apt. Being awakened late at night to find no one at the door is disturbing. But Jennings's response to my suggestion was immediate and I thought its sharpness and finality out of proportion. Why would it be unacceptable to inform the manager? I was dealing with nuances I didn't understand.

Jennings shrugged. "Sorry I brought it up." His tone was brisk. "Believe me, it doesn't matter-"

Didn't it? What had he seen in the garden? Why wouldn't he tell me? After all, my grandchildren were staying in the hotel. I intended to be certain no danger threatened them. But clearly I would not find out anything from Jennings. However, I had no compunction about speaking to Mrs. Worrell.

"- and I'm sure it won't happen again. Is this your first visit to Bermuda?"

This time I answered his question. "No." I remembered the warmth of the sand beneath our feet. Richard and I walked hand in hand on Windsor Beach, alone together with only the crash of the surf and the cry of the seabirds and the sand that shimmered a delicate, elegant pink in the late-afternoon sunlight.

Perhaps it was a result of my recent illness, perhaps it came from the turmoil of emotion accompanying this journey, but sudden tears burned my eyes. I do know that grief ambushes the heart without warning, triggered by a scent, a sound, a memory.

Jennings looked at me kindly.

I blinked and managed a smile. "My late husband, Richard, and I came here several times. We always stayed at the Rosedon. The garden..." The Rosedon's garden is extraordinarily beautiful. Richard and I often walked just after dawn to watch the sun spill over the horizon and touch the gorgeous plants with glory.

Jennings looked away. It was a moment before he spoke. "I've never known whether memories help or hurt."

I drank my coffee. "Both."

We looked at each other with understanding.

He stared toward the water, but I knew his gaze went far beyond St. George's Harbour. "This is the first time I've been back since..." He stopped, took a sip of his tea. "My wife, Ellen, died last April. Ellen and I started coming here almost thirty years ago with R.T. and Margaret. Margaret was R.T.'s first wife. They were only married a few years when she died. R.T. worked like a madman but I was always able to persuade him to come to Bermuda with Ellen and me. When he married Connor-

I attached the identities to the names. Ellen had been Steve Jennings's wife. R.T. must have been R. T. Bailey, Connor's husband. R.T. had been married previously to Margaret, who predeceased him.

"- we picked up the old habit, Ellen and I and R.T. and Connor. We didn't come the year that R.T. died but the next year Ellen and I encouraged Connor to come with us. We continued to come every January. I suppose we took Connor under our wing. She was much younger than R.T. and was left a widow very early. Actually"-his eyes narrowed-"I was surprised when Connor and Lloyd decided to get married here."

We were silent. I was curious whether he would explain what he meant, but he simply continued to look out at the glittering blue water. Jennings had piqued my curiosity. I didn't have faces for Ellen or R.T. or Margaret, but they pressed against the edge of my consciousness. I'd given no thought at all to Connor Bailey's past when I agreed to attend the wedding. I knew only that she was a widow with two daughters. I'd had no idea that she and Lloyd had met here, nor had I known that this was a favorite resort of her first marriage.

"Did Connor and her first husband stay at Tower Ridge House?" I finished my coffee, shaded my eyes against the sun.

"Always." His tone was casual.

"Are there children from R.T.'s first marriage?" I was guessing there were not, or surely they would be in attendance.

Jennings confirmed my guess. "No. R.T. and Margaret were married such a short time before his death. And he didn't meet Connor until he was almost fifty. It came as quite a surprise to everyone when he remarried." Jennings looked amused. "R.T. was a tough old bird, but Connor bowled him over. She was just out of college and had her first job with an ad agency that was doing a corporate promotion featuring R.T. and she was assigned to follow him around for a couple of weeks. By the end of a month, he'd decided to marry her."

I wondered at Jennings's bemused tone. Had he opposed that long-ago marriage?

Perhaps the lawyer sensed my question or perhaps he wanted to keep talking about anything other than what he'd seen last night in the garden. He cleared his throat. "I thought it would be a disaster. But R.T. knew what he was doing. Connor thought he was wonderful. And he decided Connor needed looking after and he was the man for the job. She took to his protective manner like a duck to water. And the greatest happiness, of course, was the children. R.T. loved his kids. He thought Marlow was

the neatest person he ever met and he was proud of Jasmine being a towhead the way he'd been as a kid. And he loved bringing them here. I think that's why Connor decided to keep coming back, even after he was gone."

"And this is where Lloyd and Connor met?"

"Last year." The words were clipped, his face impassive. Was he remembering that meeting or was he thinking of his wife's last visit here and her death only a few months later? Suddenly, he lifted a hand to his face breaking into an easy smile. "Here they come." He stood.

Jasmine Bailey ran toward us, her hand outstretched. "Uncle Steve, look what I got!" She raced up to us and opened pudgy fingers to reveal a silver charm of the *Sea Venture*. "Lloyd got it for me."

"That's wonderful, honey." He patted her head.

We were swept up by the others. Connor was gesturing energetically to Lloyd, but the big Texan was close at hand, still booming. I felt sorry for Lloyd, wished my granddaughter would stop frowning, and continued to battle occasional waves of dizziness. Yet these were swift, surface thoughts. During the rest of our visit in the narrow streets of old St. George's, despite the pleasure of seeing an altar in St.

Peter's and knowing that human hands lovingly fashioned it more than 376 years ago, and my disappointment that the Featherbed Alley Print Shop wasn't open, I was preoccupied by my talk with Steve Jennings. I kept wondering about a knock in the dead of night and something glimpsed in the silent garden.

Three

LOW- HANGING metallic-looking clouds had turned the sky a pale gray. The wind was picking up, whipping whitecaps as far as the eye could see and roiling the water over the reef. I steadied myself against the breeze, strong enough to pluck at my hair, tug at my clothes.

Connor's dress flattened against her. "Oh, it's too windy. Let's go back." She lifted her hands to press against her wind-ruffled hair.

"Oh, Mom, it's fun!" Jasmine exclaimed.

We bunched at the beginning of the headland, everyone except Aaron. He strode exuberantly toward the narrow point, moving through a moongate to stand at the farthest edge. He peered over the side.

"Hey." He turned toward us, gestured with his arm. The wind lifted his brown curls, ballooned his jacket, flared his trousers. "The waves are huge!" He shouted to be heard over the crash of the surf.

"Come on, Dad." Diana urged everyone forward. "It won't take long. And this will be a picture no one will ever forget." The breeze tangled her strawberry curls, touched her cheeks with pink.

Neal laughed. "We can title it 'Waiting for Rain.' "

Jasmine pointed out to sea. "Look at the waves coming over the reef." She darted to Lloyd. "How close can we go to the edge?"

Connor reached out. "Stay close, Jasmine."

Lloyd laughed, took Jasmine's hand. "Let's take a look." He called over his shoulder, "It's okay, Connor, I'll keep her safe." He and Jasmine stepped through the moongate, went almost to the edge.

Steve Jennings grinned at Connor. "The sooner we get it done, the sooner we can retreat with dignity." But his voice was good-humored.

Connor looked out at the darkening water. "All right, all right." She was suddenly amused, an impish smile lighting her face. "It's a good thing I'm going to the beauty shop Friday."

For the first time I had an inkling of Connor Bailey's charm. I was glad I'd decided to make the climb and be part of the picture even though I'd almost stayed behind to rest. But I hadn't wanted to disappoint Diana and I hoped to catch her for a quiet chat after the picture taking was done. Diana had announced her plan at lunch. "I have it all arranged. George will come up with us and take the

pictures." George was a lanky young Canadian who worked at the hotel as a waiter. He had a mop of light brown hair, a peeling, sunburned nose and an agreeable smile. Now he held Diana's Lei comfortably in one big, rawboned hand and looked expectantly toward her.

Diana waved her hand. "We'll stand in a semicircle looking out to the ocean. Dad, you and Connor in the center. Mr. Jennings next to Connor-

Lloyd's face was rigid for an instant.

"- Marlow next to him, then Aaron and Jasmine. Neal, you can be next to Dad, then Grandma and me. George, why don't you go to the moongate and look toward us."

As we sorted ourselves out, stepping carefully because the rocky surface fell away sharply on both sides, George edged past us, stood with his back to the moon-gate. When George lifted the camera Diana called out, "What's in the background? Does the hotel show?"

George peered through the viewfinder. "Some of it. Mostly you see the tower... Hey." He lowered the camera, squinted toward the hotel. "There's something on the platform of the tower... no, no, I'm wrong. I thought I saw something white-

Steve Jennings's head jerked around to look up the hill at the tower. He wasn't alone. Connor, too, his face stiff, swung to look. She remained half-turned, face taut, intent on the tower.

"Okay, everybody. Look this way," George instructed. "Now come a little closer together..." He lifted the camera.

I slipped my arms around my grandchildren, felt their arms around me, and looked toward George.

George took one step nearer, another. "Smile..."

Obediently, we smiled.

The camera clicked. "One more for luck." George snapped another picture.

As we moved apart, Connor gripped Lloyd's arm. Head down, she was tugging him along the narrow path.

Steve Jennings looked after Connor and Lloyd, his face creased in concern. But it wasn't Jennings' expression that disturbed me. I could see Diana clearly. Her green eyes flashed; her lips curved in triumph. She gave her brother a swift, utterly satisfied glance, then moved quickly along the path. Neal frowned.

Jasmine tugged at her sister's arm. "Did you hear George? He said-

"Hush, Jasmine." Marlow's voice was sharp.

I was the last one off the headland. I followed the others slowly down the craggy path to the sand. We picked our way across the boulder-strewn beach to a gridded cement walkway, avoiding the mounds of sargassum seaweed that smelled of rot and drew tiny flies in whirling clouds. The walkway was steep. It led from the beach to a hard dirt path that sloped up toward the hotel beneath the interlocking branches of leathery-leaved bay grapes that created a tunnel of greenery. The pathway was always dim. Now the clouds had turned the sky pewter-gray, and the tunnel was almost dark.

I stopped to rest midway up the long slope, perhaps a city block in length. I heard the others far ahead. I felt cut off from their cheerful holiday chatter. I wasn't cheerful. I was disturbed. That picture-taking session on the headland had been planned by my granddaughter and I was afraid the object had been to distress Connor. When George claimed to have seen something white near the tower, Connor was startled. Perhaps even frightened. I wanted to know why. I wanted to know what George thought he saw. I wanted to know why Connor Bailey and Steve Jennings stared at the tower. And these questions reminded me of Steve's refusal to tell me what he saw last night in the garden. The tower dominated the ridge beyond the garden. Most of all, I wanted to know whether my granddaughter had engineered a family photograph on the windswept headland solely because the tower loomed in the background. I had the hotel hallway to myself. It didn't matter, of course, whether anyone saw me, but I wanted to be alone to make a quiet survey. The others had scattered after the picture session. Lloyd, Connor, and

Steve had taken a cab into the capital city of Hamilton to shop at Trimingham's. The large department store had the same fusty charm as Woodward and Lathrop's in Washington, D.C., in the 1950s. The young people had sped off on their mopeds. I would try to find Diana upon their return. Jasmine had refused to go shopping, insisting she'd be fine at the hotel and wanted to play in the pool until the rain came. It rains often in Bermuda, sometimes with force and fury, more often a gentle steady downpour that lasts a little while and then the day brightens again.

I studied the silent corridor. There were entrances at either end of the hallway. This two-story building sat atop a ridge, separate from the smaller main house. Our rooms were on the second floor facing the ocean. I was in room 22, Neal in room 20, Diana in room 24, Steve Jennings in room 26, and the rest of the party on down the hall: Aaron in room 28, Marlow and Jasmine in room 30, Connor in room 32, Lloyd in room 34. I'd been a little surprised that Connor and Lloyd were in separate, although adjoining, rooms. I wondered who made that decision and thought it displayed remarkable delicacy considering today's mores. I guessed that the Drake-Bailey party were the only guests on this floor and that the opposite rooms were empty. There were perhaps a dozen or so other guests at the hotel and I thought most of them were in the main building. January was, of course, the off-season.

Jennings said he'd dressed last night after the knock on his door awakened him, and hurried out to the upper terrace. I walked down the hall. A push bar opened the door. Outside, I stopped on the step and noted the small placard which informed that the doors were locked after 9 p.m. but would open to a room key. That indicated access to the building after 9 p.m. was restricted to guests or hotel employees. Of course, an intruder might enter through the balcony of an unoccupied room although the sliding door should be locked.

I walked slowly down the steps. I had a choice at the bottom. One walkway led west to the main house past a wall covered with bougainvillea. A second walkway led south to the upper terrace. I took the south walk. The terrace was a broad grassy expanse between the hotel and another rock wall that marked a drop-off. I looked over the wall at the swimming pool on the lower terrace. No one was in the water. Despite the gray skies and freshening wind, two leathery-skinned middle-aged women in swimsuits rested on deck chairs, one knitting, the other immersed in a book. I welcomed the warmth of a cashmere cardigan and wool slacks. No doubt they were Canadians.

Jennings said he came to the main terrace, then looked toward the garden. It was there that he brooded off, refused to say more.

The garden sloped to the east, beds of flowers and shrubs running downhill, then up. The poinsettias blazed a vivid coral and blue petunias wavered in the wind. My gaze rose to the tower that stood at the crest of the ridge, overlooking the garden. Despite the sweep of flowers and shrubs, the eye was drawn immediately to the thirty-foot-tall, shining white tower. The parapet at the top was crenellated, so the tower had the appearance of a battlement on an English castle.

I walked through the garden, down and up the hillsides, past orange blossoms of an African tulip tree, poinsettias and lacy green ferns, always keeping the tower in view. I paused to rest midway up the first slope. Moist air pressed against me. Rain could not be far distant. I started on, picking up my pace. The wind was brisk when I reached the base of the tower. I circled, looking for an entrance.

I don't know whether there was a sound or whether I simply sensed movement above me. I looked up and jerked back as a white shape fell toward me. A round face poked over the side of the parapet, then quickly disappeared. I looked down. A big bed pillow in a smudged white case lay on the flagstones. I left it there and moved on. The door to the tower, on the far side, was ajar. I pulled it wider, stepped onto a stone floor. Uneven circular steps curled upward.

I didn't relish climbing the steep stairs. There was utter silence above. I wished for a flashlight, but there was a patch of lighter gray far above where daylight streamed into the tower from the opening to the platform. I started up. I made no effort to be quiet. "Hello!" I called out.

I was midway to the top when a young voice responded warily, "Hello."

I was out of breath when I reached the platform. The wind made an eerie sound in the rafters, rustling the shrubbery far below, stirred Jasmine Bailey's short blond curls as she leaned against the parapet. She cut her eyes toward me when I stepped out onto the platform.

I doubted it would get us very far for me to admonish her about the pillow or question whether her mother would want her to be in the tower dropping pillows or suggest she was rather a distance from the hotel. Instead, after catching my breath, I said quizzically, "An experiment?"

Her round face creased in a pleased smile. "Oh, yes. That's where Mr. Worrell landed, you know."

"I didn't know." I came up beside her, looked over the edge of the stone wall at the pillow far below Mr. Worrell. Steve Jennings had insisted he couldn't mention what he had seen in the garden to Mr. Worrell. "Down there?"

Jasmine wriggled with eagerness. "Right there. And now he's a ghost. George says he came last night. At least, George thinks it was him because there was something white and Mr. Worrell always wore white."

"Really." I kept my tone casual, but I was surprised. It seemed apparent that the young waiter was quite willing to provide information to hotel guests, even young ones. "Did you know Mr. Worrell?"

Jasmine said importantly, "He sang songs in the bar. He was married to Mrs. Worrell, but she's the one who takes care of the hotel. And he fell out of the tower and killed himself."

I doubted that Mrs. Worrell would be pleased to hear that an employee had been telling a very young guest that her dead husband appeared as a ghost at the tower. And now I understood Steve Jennings' reluctance to discuss disturbances in the garden with Mrs. Worrell. And I was afraid I now knew why Diana planned the picture session out on the point.

Jasmine peered over the edge at the pillow. "George says ghosts come back to the place where they died if they have unfinished business." She glanced at me, her eyes bright with inquiry. "Why do you suppose Mr. Worrell's come back?"

"I don't know." The first fine drops of rain spattered on us. "Maybe we'd better go down and get the pillow. You don't want to sleep on a wet pillow tonight."

She giggled. "I'd just trade with Marlow. Wouldn't that surprise her!" The little girl whirled and plunged for the steps. I hoped she'd hold on to the railing, but the hurried scuff of her sneakers indicated a rapid descent.

I followed more slowly, chilled not by the wet wind on the parapet but by the child's casual announcement: "That's where Mr. Worrell landed, you know."

Jasmine stood in the doorway, clutching the pillow, looking out at the steady sweep of rain. I hoped the moped riders were safe and dry and would seek shelter until the rain passed.

Jasmine plopped the pillow on the bottom step of the staircase. "Would you like to sit down?"

The pillow was long and oversized and must have been a challenge for her to wrestle all the way to the tower. I grinned. "Thanks." I patted the pillow beside me. "We can share."

She plopped down beside me, regarded me curiously. "You know," she confided, "you don't look like a skeleton."

I'd lost some weight from the pneumonia and was a bit bonier than usual. I knew I seemed very old. Jasmine, my dark hair streaked with silver and my eyes deep-socketed in a lined face. But I had a inkling she'd overheard someone else's comment. "The skeleton at the feast," I murmured.

"That's what Mom said." She peered at me.

So Connor had indeed taken note of the presence of her husband-to-be's former mother-in-law. That was surely more normal than her apparently casual acceptance. I smiled and said easily, "Oh, that's just an expression, Jasmine." But, of course, it was Death who was the unseen companion at meretricious feasts. "Now tell me about your experiment. Did Mr. Worrell die a long time ago?"

"Oh, no." She hunched forward eagerly. "It was last year. We were here. Mr. Worrell fell out of the tower late one night." Her face screwed up in disgust. "I didn't hear a thing! I was asleep. Aaron said he'd had too much to drink. Anyway, Mr. Worrell fell over the edge. They said it was an accident. The police came and everything. All of the guests went over to the Southampton Princess the day of the funeral, so Mrs. Worrell could have everybody here. Have you ever been to that hotel? It's huge. There were Gombey dancers and it was so loud I thought my ears were going to burst. We left two days later."

"Did you like Mr. Worrell?" I looked at her curiously. Her report had all been delivered in the same tone, Mr. Worrell's fall given the same emphasis as the loud Gombey dancers.

The excitement fled. "I did like him." She spoke assertively and I gathered there were those who had not. "He was nice to the kids and he had a big laugh. Not like Mrs. Worrell. She frowns all the time. I don't think she likes kids. And she always seemed mad at him. She was always frowning"-Jasmine turned her lips down into a scowl-"when he talked to my mom. Of course," and she spoke proudly, "I was in love with my mother. Everybody always is."

I doubted Jasmine was quite yet into an adolescent girl's preoccupation with sex. There was no hint of adult understanding in her pronouncement. I guessed she'd heard someone else comment on her mother's attractiveness. Steve Jennings?

The rain pattered softly. I pictured the water sluicing down the steep-stepped roofs to swirl down pipes to the catchment, lifeblood for a remote island without springs or streams. "I'm sure everyone finds your mother very charming."

She cocked her head at me. "Uncle Steve doesn't like Lloyd." She scuffed her toe on the stone floor, her face suddenly forlorn. "Marlow doesn't either. But Lloyd's really nice. He plays Monopoly with me." Her eyes were suddenly shrewd. "I think he lets me win. Of course, he isn't funny like Mr. Worrell."

No, serious, striving Lloyd was not the least bit funny.

"- but Mr. Worrell could be kind of mean. I heard him tell his wife she was about as much fun as a wooden leg. She turned away and I think she was trying not to cry." Her face crinkled into puzzlement. "But when he died, she cried and cried." Jasmine stared out at the curtain of rain.

"And George says he's come back?"

Jasmine twisted to look up the curving stairway. "Yes. Maybe if I stay up real late I can see him." I almost told Jasmine ghosts didn't exist. But she wouldn't have believed me. No, I didn't believe in ghosts, but that was unimportant. What mattered was the effort being made to create the ghost of Mr. Worrell. Who was doing it, and why? I had no idea. I only knew that something dark and ugly and devious was near at hand. Moreover, my granddaughter had involved herself and was apparently trying to exploit the unhappy history of the tower.

Oh, Diana. It was time we talked.

four

I CARRIED a beach towel up the steps *from* the pool -area to the upper terrace and dried a rain-wet wooden chair. Water still gurgled softly down drain spouts, but the rain had ended, one of Bermuda's quick, gentle showers. The sun felt warm. It might be winter in Bermuda, too cool for the chirp of the tree frogs and the blooms paltry compared to those of spring and summer, but it was definitely summery compared to the weather in my small-town Missouri home in January. My spirits lightened as the pale yellow walls of the hotel glowed from sunlight. I settled in the chair, listening to the splashes in the swimming pool on the lower terrace. From here, I would also be able to hear the mopeds curling uphill to the parking area near the entrance to the hotel.

I pulled a paperback from my pocket. I'd found an old copy of *Around the World in Eighty Days* in the book cabinet in the hotel drawing room. I was midway through. I began to read, but closed the book a few minutes. The charm of the familiar story was lost on me today.

A motor chugged. I rose, dropped the book into my pocket and strolled toward the curve in the wall that overlooked the drive. As I looked down, Lloyd and Connor stepped out of an elegant old-fashioned, London-style cab. Lloyd reached into the backseat and lifted out four cardboard cylinders. Connor smiled and held out her arms. "I'll take them up."

"Are you sure?" He was eager to help, his good humor obviously restored by a sojourn alone with Connor. I hoped Curt Patterson wasn't anywhere near.

"Yes. I'll rest a bit, then meet you for tea." She gave him a swift, sweet smile.

Lloyd looked after her as she moved gracefully up the main stairs, his square face softened by love. I backed away from the wall, returned to my chair, thinking idly that Steve had apparently stayed in Hamilton, that the kids weren't back yet, that Lloyd and Connor had likely bought prints of Bermuda scenes to take home as keepsakes of their wedding journey, and most of all, that Lloyd was very much in love.

I sank into a reverie, my mind a collage of memories: Emily's wedding day; my first glimpse of Diana as a tiny, wispy-haired baby; Richard and I one perfect October day in Mexico City; Neal running in his grandfather's arms. The common thread was faces full of love. I was far away in time and place.

"Henrie." Lloyd's voice was cheerful.

I jolted to the reality of place.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to startle you." Lloyd dropped into the chair beside me. "Are you enjoying the trip?" His glance was hopeful but tentative.

This was likely the first time in more than a decade that we'd been alone together. It had taken some courage for him to approach me. Also, of course, Lloyd was one of those persons who always wanted to be around people. Perhaps an ex-mother-in-law was preferable to solitude. "Absolutely." I spoke warmly. "I'm so glad I was able to come. It was very kind of you to invite me to accompany the children."

"My pleasure." His tone was expansive. And pleased.

"It's truly lovely here." I spread my hand to encompass the hotel and the terrace and the garden. "I hadn't realized this was where you and Connor met."

Once again, happiness transformed his face. The slight puffiness under his eyes, the heaviness of his jowls, all the telltale traces of middle age disappeared in the eagerness of his gaze, the joyous curve of his lips. "Right there." He pointed to the moongate and the steps leading down to the lower terrace.

"That's where I saw her."

"Was it love at first sight?" My tone was gently gibing.

Serious, intense Lloyd simply nodded. "Yes. Yes, it was. That's the way it should be, you know. One day you walk along and suddenly you see someone and you know nothing will ever be the same, that the future's going to be different and wonderful. It happened for us." His light green eyes glowed.

"And the neat thing is, the same thing happened for Marlow and Aaron on ElbowBeach the year before. They just happened to be on the beach at the same time. Both of them came here for spring break and they'd never met on the campus even though they both were in school at Emory. It's fate, you see."

I was long past belief in fate or karma, but I was glad Lloyd had a romantic illusion that pleased him. He was so open, his love there for everyone to see. There are none so vulnerable as those who love. I reached out, patted his hand.

He turned his fingers, held mine. "That's nice of you. You're a very nice person. To wish me well." I was not at all sure how nice I was. But I was too old to be critical. One of the surprising by-products of age is empathy for everyone-the right, the wrong, the good, the bad, the best, the worst, the kind, the cruel, never approving evil or ugliness or selfishness but recognizing the corrosive cost to those in the grip of darkness. "I hope everyone will wish you and Connor happiness." His grasp slackened. He lifted his hand, brushed his fingers against his face as if smoothing away a cobweb. "Yeah."

The single word told me that serious, intense Lloyd was well aware of the unhappiness swirling around them.

I saw no point in talking about the resistance Lloyd and Connor faced and I doubted he wanted to discuss that with me. I said briskly, "What prompted you to come to Bermuda last year?"

"Golf." Happily, he described his foursome and some of their previous journeys. "One of the guys has stayed here before. The hotel has privileges at some of the best courses. Even the Mid Ocean Golf Course." There was awe in his voice. "Actually, I'd wanted to stay at the Southampton Princess. That's a great course, too. But thank God, we didn't. The very first night we got here I saw Connor. By the third night, I knew I wasn't going to let her get away from me." He spoke in a possessive-caveman tone, but it was more endearing than overbearing.

"That must have posed a logistics problem." My tone was light.

Lloyd never met a joke he recognized. "I flew to Atlanta every weekend. It's a direct flight from Dallas."

I'd not given any thought to the aftermath of Lloyd and Connor's marriage. Lloyd was a partner in a small law firm in Dallas, his specialty corporate mergers. Connor and her daughters lived in Buckhead, a posh Atlanta suburb. I'd known she was a widow. Since my talk with Steve Jennings, I realized R. T. Bailey must have been very successful. I didn't know what kind of company he had owned. It wasn't, as a matter of fact, any of my business.

"Will Connor and the children move to Dallas?" It was a casual question.

For an instant, the brightness left Lloyd's face and he looked more than middle-aged. He looked lost. He cleared his throat. "Connor's lived in Atlanta all her life. Jasmine's in school and Connor doesn't want to upset her. And Marlow said they couldn't ever move from their house."

Instead, Lloyd could close down his law practice and lose his golf foursome. What price love?

Lloyd said loudly, a man reassuring himself, "I'll have plenty to do. Connor says there's lots to look after with her properties and the business. Steve's been handling all of that, but I can give her advice. And I'll be looking around. There will be opportunities."

Opportunities. That sounded to me like the old corporate line: "Mr. Who's-it has left to pursue other opportunities." Sure.

I smiled reassuringly. "Everything will work out." Yes, it was inane, but bromides paper over the moments that would otherwise be too uncomfortable.

Lloyd's glance was grateful. Then he scowled.

I looked at him in surprise but his eyes, sharp now, gazed past me. I turned and glimpsed the young waiter, George, carrying a heavy silver tray covered with a damask cloth.

"I don't want to cause trouble"-Lloyd's voice was tight with anger-"but Jasmine told me something that George said to her. And if Connor hears about it..." Lloyd shook his head. "I'd talk to Mr. Worrell, but it's a damned awkward situation."

"Mrs. Worrell appears rather tense. Do you know what's troubling her?" This morning the manager had looked up the main steps and given Connor a look of utter loathing.

Lloyd gazed carefully about. "You never know when Mrs. Worrell's going to pop around a corner. Nice woman, but like having a death's-head at a party. Damn awkward."

Death's- head. I felt a moment's chill. When Jasmine chattered about the skeleton at the feast, I'd been amused. There was nothing amusing about Lloyd's observation.

He leaned closer to me, dropped his voice. "Of course you wouldn't know anything about it. There was a very unfortunate accident here last year. It was awful for Connor because the fellow'd been a bit too friendly. I was about ready to put him in his place, but I was glad later that I hadn't said anything. Poor devil got drunk and fell out of the tower. Or jumped. Mrs. Worrell's husband. A blowhard."

Jasmine had liked Mr. Worrell. Obviously, Lloyd had not.

Lloyd looked suddenly forlorn and uncertain. "Maybe I shouldn't have insisted we come here for the wedding. But this is where we met..." His voice trailed off.

I understood. Lloyd was sentimental. That didn't surprise me. Oddly, I was swept by a mixture of anger and compassion, anger at the forces combining to ruin this special journey for Lloyd and compassion for his very human hunger to love and be loved. I wanted everything to go well for him. Yes, he'd caused my daughter great unhappiness, but I was sure he'd done his best. The haunting truth is that most of us at most times do our best, no matter how short we fall.

"So the good outweighs the bad." I gave him a reassuring smile.

"I thought it did. But ever since we got here, Connor's been on edge. She wanted us to get different rooms so she wouldn't see that damn tower. They couldn't make a change because they're painting a bunch of the rooms and they don't have enough that are all together. But if Connor hears what the waiter's saying, I don't know what will happen." Lloyd rubbed the back of his neck.

"What's George saying?" I wanted to hear what Lloyd knew.

He slammed a hand against his leg. "He's been spreading all kinds of nonsense about, saying that Roddy Worrell's ghost is walking. That would upset Connor a lot." Lloyd's face flushed.

I looked at him curiously. I almost inquired why a rumor of ghostly doings would be especially distressing to Connor. I would have thought that Mrs. Worrell would be most affected. As, of course, she probably was.

"Something's got to be done." His face was grim.

"Would you like for me to speak to George?" I heard my own words with surprise. I'd intended to talk to Diana, of course. I didn't like her taking part in what appeared to be an effort to harass Connor. I didn't care, frankly, what the young waiter did or why. But if I could help Lloyd...

His face lightened. "Would you do that? Listen, if-" He broke off, looked past me. "Here comes Connor." He spoke in an undertone. "Don't tell her what we've been talking about." He scrambled on his feet.

I nodded, then turned toward the walk.

Connor hurried toward us, dark head bent. She had changed sweaters. This one was a pale yellow patchwork with a sea motif, embroidered with shells and starfish. I wondered if she'd bought it at Trimmingham's.

She broke into a stumbling run.

I came to my feet, realizing that something was wrong. Lloyd hurried toward her, calling out "Connor, what's wrong? The children..."

I felt a quiver of fear. Those damn mopeds.

Connor never even saw me. She flung herself into Lloyd's arms. "In my room! The tower..." She shuddered. "It's smashed-"

Automatically, my head swung toward the hillside and the shining white tower, a dramatic beacon.

"- and there's a smell of gin. Oh, God, Lloyd, I'm frightened."

Lloyd frowned. "I don't see how it could have fallen-"

Abruptly, I understood. In my room, a miniature white porcelain tower sat in the middle of the circular table near the sliding glass door to the balcony. The legend tower ridge house was printed

dark blue Gothic script on one side. Likely, there was an identical miniature tower in every room. Connor was talking about a decorative tower, not the actual tower on the ridge.

"- unless someone bumped the table. Maybe Jasmine..."

Connor jerked away from him. "It wasn't an accident." Her voice was tight and strained. "It couldn't have fallen where I found it." She shuddered. "Lloyd, that last night, Roddy was angry with me." Connor reached out, clung to Lloyd, her face imploring. "He's come back. He's come back and he hates me."

"Nonsense." Lloyd was gruff. "Just because that stupid tower got broken-"

"Gin. I smelled gin. That's what Roddy smelled like, a sea of gin." She flung away from Lloyd. "I want to go home." Her voice could scarcely be heard.

"Connor, it's all right. I'm here." His voice softened. "Honey, it's all right. You're upset over nothing. Maybe a maid knocked..."

I slipped away, left them there, and hurried across the grass. I looked back as I opened the door to the corridor to our quarters. They had not even noticed my departure. I walked swiftly up the hall. I always like to see for myself. I paused outside Connor's room. The door was wide open. I was surprised. She'd seen the smashed tower and turned and run away.

I poked my head into the room. "Hello," I called softly.

There was no answer. I looked down the hall. I was sure that Connor and Lloyd would soon be here. I imagined that Lloyd would make every effort to reassure Connor, but she would insist that he see the breakage.

I moved quickly. This room was much like mine, only the walls were a pale cream instead of rose, the pillowcases silk instead of cotton. I wasn't surprised that Connor traveled with her own pillowcases and likely with her own sheets. I knew if I opened the closet, her dresses would be hanging neatly. Connor had never, I was sure, lived out of a suitcase. Cosmetics in gold-accented ebony cases were neatly arranged on the dresser. Wire-rimmed glasses were lying next to a magazine. There was a faint scent of lilac, either bath powder or cologne. My nose wrinkled. And the even sweeter smell of gin.

A white wicker sofa with cheerful yellow chintz cushions sat along the wall to my right. The perfume containers lay in a casual tumble on the sofa. The bathroom opened to the left. Light burned there. Lloyd and I had engaged in a fairly long conversation, which likely meant that Connor didn't see the broken tower when she first reached the room. No, she'd stepped inside the door, dropped the cardboard cylinders onto the sofa, stepped into the bathroom. No doubt she'd redone her makeup, brushed her hair, then returned to the bedroom.

I walked into the bedroom. The sliding glass door to the balcony was open. I passed the bed, stopped at the balcony. The gardens spread below. The tower loomed on the ridge to the right. Perhaps Connor had stood a moment enjoying the view. Then she'd turned...

I swiveled. A table and three chairs were between me and the bed. I skirted the table. Midway between the table and the bed lay a half dozen pieces of broken porcelain. I stepped close, knelt. I swiped one finger against the smooth glaze of the largest piece. My finger came away damp. I poked the rug with another finger. The rug was moist. I sniffed each finger in turn. It didn't take a bartender to identify that odor.

I pushed up from the floor and wavered on my feet, dizzy for a moment. Damn, would I ever be over the aftereffects of the pneumonia? I moved as fast as I could, if a little unsteadily, concerned my examination was taking too long. I went out to the balcony, glanced quickly about. I reached down near the metal railing and touched a sliver of porcelain. That sliver told me everything.

I left it where it lay. Perhaps Lloyd would find it. I wondered, as I hurried back across the bedroom, whether I reached the door and poked my head into the hall, whether Lloyd would reach the same conclusion as I. The hall was empty. I plunged into the corridor and was at the door to my room when Lloyd arrived.

Connor came through the entrance. I pretended to be closing my door. I smiled. "Will I see you for tea?"

Lloyd was hearty. "We'll be down in a few minutes."

Connor, staring straight ahead, made no reply. She stopped in the hall outside her room. "I'll wait here."

I was thoughtful as I walked down the hall and out the entrance. I don't believe in poltergeists, disembodied spirits or any of the other folderol of psychic phenomena. There is always a rational explanation of any occurrence.

A reasoned appraisal of the smashed tower suggested a carefully set stage rather than a spirit's violent effort. The tower could not have broken as it did by being dropped or thrown onto the floor because that floor was carpeted. In fact, I was almost certain that someone took the tower out to the balcony and struck it hard against the railing to break it into several pieces. The pieces were then placed where they were found. As a final touch, gin was splashed generously over the broken shards.

Obviously, the intent was to disturb Connor. Why? Simply for sheer malevolence? I pushed away the memory of Diana's angry young voice. Whatever the purpose, it seemed clear that Connor was to be frightened by the prospect that the ghost of Roddy Worrell was near.

I put aside for the moment speculation as to why Connor should be afraid. Had her connection to the dead man been stronger than Lloyd believed?

Worrell died in a fall from the tower. George told Jasmine about his fall. Moreover, George had apparently told Diana about the tower and Roddy Worrell's death and the connection between Roddy and Connor. The place to start was with George. I checked my watch. Almost four. Tea was offered every afternoon at three on the patio near the pool. George was the server. I walked faster.

Five

I WAS almost to the steps leading down to the lower terrace when I heard the rumble of mopeds. I hesitated. Yes, I wanted to help Lloyd. But first things first. I turned and hurried to the limestone wall that overlooked the drive. I was leaning over the top of the wall when the mopeds-Neal's red, Diana's green-careened around the curve, so fast my heart thudded. Children, slow down, slow down, take care.

They were laughing. The mopeds slowed. Neal looked up, saw me, waved. They parked. Diana climbed off the bike, removed her helmet and ran her fingers through her reddish-gold hair. She called up, "Are we back in time for tea?" Neal looped his helmet over the handle.

"Plenty of time." I would catch George after tea.

Neal and Diana ran lightly up the steps, Diana in the lead. "Grandma, tomorrow we have to take you to see the Spanish Rock. It's amazing. It has the date 1543 on it and they think a sailor-

"Portuguese, not Spanish," Neal interrupted.

"- whatever," his sister said impatiently. "He was shipwrecked here and he climbed to the top of a cliff and scratched the year and his initials on this rock-

"But now they think the letters aren't his initials after all, but an inscription meaning *Rex Portugalia* for the 'King of Portugal.' The date and initials are cast in bronze because they were wearing away from the rock. It's really neat," Neal exclaimed. "It's right on the edge of the cliff, seventy feet high."

"- and a cross," Diana continued, "and you have to wonder if he died here like Amelia Earhart did on that island in the Pacific-

Neal shook his head. "Nope. I read about it. Their ship foundered on a reef but they built a new boat and made it back to Santo Domingo. Earhart and Noonan crashed on an atoll and there was nothing to build with. So they died unless they were captured by the Japanese. But that's been generally discredited." He stared out at the water, richly blue, inviting, beautiful, merciless. "Pretty awful. To crash-land and think you're going to live and find out you're on a scrap of land without any water. N

water, only scraps of food in the cockpit; no way to get help, no way to build a boat." I was proud of him, proud that he looked beyond a glib recital of Earhart's end, sensed the pain understood the fear. Neal's imagination would make his life harder, sometimes almost unendurable but far, far richer.

Then he was young again. "Think I'll go put on my suit, take a swim. Coming, Dinny?"

I spoke quickly. "Stay with me, Diana. We'll go down for tea."

"See you later." Neal strode quickly away.

Diana smiled, took my arm. We walked slowly down the path. I wondered how to begin. Diana looked out toward the sea. The pleasure of the outing with her brother seeped away, leaving her face somber. Her delicate features sharpened. Her lips pressed together. She should have been lovely, with strawberry-blond curls framing finely chiseled features. But if I were in the business of giving beautiful advice, I'd be succinct: Be happy.

I've spent a lifetime asking questions. All reporters know that the unexpected question can yield enormous dividends. It's not a polygraph, but definitely the next best thing. Even the slickest liar can be startled by a totally unexpected inquiry. My granddaughter was not a slick liar, but she was a very unhappy young woman.

We were at the top of the steps leading down to the lower terrace. The sounds of conversation drifted up to us. Abruptly, I demanded, "Diana, was the tower hard to break?" I watched her closely, alert for the flare of eyes, for the sudden immobility of shock, for a quick-drawn breath.

Diana stopped, puzzled. She bent toward me. "I'm sorry, Grandma. What did you say?" Her voice was polite. And untroubled.

Not even a trill of joy by a choir of angels could match the relief that flooded through me. "I said that you look as though your heart was about to break."

"Oh, Grandma." Tears welled in her eyes. "I can't stand it if Daddy marries her. She's a mess. You saw the way she acted in the bar last night, playing up to that awful man from Texas. It made me sick. And she doesn't care a bit about what matters to Daddy. He's going to leave Dallas and you know how he always loved Dallas. And he's going to leave his law firm. And all of his friends."

I could have told her that a city, no matter how much enjoyed, and friends, no matter how treasured, are cold comfort in a double bed alone. I reached out, took her hand. "Diana, don't make your father unhappy. I know it's hard for you and Neal, but try to see this from your father's-

She gripped my hand in her hands, held it tightly. "Grandma, she's a tramp. Listen, I've found out a lot about her. They've been coming here for years and she always had men clustered around her, even when Mar-low and Jasmine's father was alive. Just like that Mr. Patterson. She's always stayed up late in the bar and there was always somebody drinking with her. And Mrs. Worrell's husband followed her around and he'd get drunk and sing to her. Mrs. Worrell got really upset. But last year, Dad was here and Connor went after him and that made Mr. Worrell mad. He and Connor had a big fight and the next morning they found his body at the foot of the tower."

"Is that why you engineered the picture on the point this morning?" My tone was sharp.

She dropped my hand, looked at me defiantly. "All right. It bothered her, didn't it? Why should the tower upset her unless there's something about it she doesn't want to think about? Like a man getting drunk over her and falling off and getting killed."

"You said you've found out all about her..."

"She's a slut." Diana was disdainful, her voice hard.

"Really. And how did you achieve this intelligence?" I gazed at her steadily.

Diana's eyes fell away. She fingered a shell button on her cardigan.

"From George? The ever-helpful young waiter?" My tone was cool.

"He knows." Diana's retort was impassioned. "He sees everything. He knows all about her."

"And apparently can't wait to broadcast it to others.

Diana, look at your source. Why is George doing this?" If Diana didn't wonder, I damn sure did.

"No, no. It isn't like that. He didn't even want to tell me," she protested. "Here's what happened. I had lunch down at the pool yesterday. And he was nice-

Read "cute." Diana is at the age when all young men are interesting.

"- and we got to talking and I asked how long he'd worked here. He's Canadian and he dropped out of college. He's been here three years but he's thinking of going back to school-

Always a good line with a college girl.

"- and I asked if he remembered my dad being here last January. He said he'd never forget last January because that was when Mr. Worrell got drunk and fell out of the tower. And George said it was all because of the American woman. Then he broke off and looked embarrassed and tried to change the subject. But I got it out of him. I told him I didn't like her at all and she was going to marry my dad and I was just sick about it."

Two sides to every story. At the least. George's revelations to Diana could be as innocent as she claimed. As for his dramatic description of a ghost to Jasmine, he might simply enjoy entertaining and all the world loves ghostly tales. None of that, however, explained the knock on Steve Jennings' door last night. Moreover, Jennings obviously saw something near the tower that disturbed him. Or he thought he saw something. And the broken ceramic tower in Connor's room argued a degree of hostility that was disturbing. I wasn't persuaded that Roddy Worrell's purported ghost could be responsible. I believed a living hand knocked on Steve's door and broke the pottery tower in Connor's room. If the young waiter was behind either event, it needed to be discovered because the happiness of both Connor and Lloyd was at stake. As for my granddaughter...

"Diana." I spoke gently. "I understand your concern about your dad's marriage. But you should remember that George's description of last January is that of one person. Is it smart-or fair-to rely on a single source?"

Diana grew up in a newspaper family. She understood what I was telling her. George could be right or wrong, he could be mistaken, he could be hostile, he could be credulous.

"One source?" I let the question hang, then said quietly, "Talk to Steve Jennings."

"He's in love with her, too," Diana said bitterly. "I don't need anyone to tell me anything about her. I know what she is and she's nothing but trouble. And I'll do anything I can to get rid of her." She whirled and ran away.

I almost followed Diana, then, lips pressed together, I walked down the steps to the lower terrace. I paused in the shadow of the arbor to look over the clusters of guests on the sunny side of the swimming pool. In summer, of course, most would likely have chosen a table beneath the arbor, but in the January air was cool in the shade. In fact, I doubted that tea was served around the pool during the summer months, more likely in the drawing room that overlooked the upper terrace. This January afternoon, only a half dozen tables were occupied. Voices murmured, teacups clinked. The two angular women who'd sunbathed despite the cool air were now dressed in dark sweaters and slacks and accompanied by their husbands. Two couples in their thirties, unmistakably New Yorkers, talked loudly, as New Yorkers do, about the mayor and police reform and what might happen if there was a transit strike. An austere old lady in a well-worn tweed suit listened with a slight smile as her companion, his gentle features intent, gestured enthusiastically. He was possibly in his forties. Two cheerful young women shared a magazine. One turned the page and the other giggled. They both had soft blond curls and bright blue eyes. I wondered if they were sisters. Curt Patterson held court at the table nearest the arbor, lounging back in a webbed chair. His sister looked much like him, bright red hair, lots of freckles and a confident face. Her dark-haired, burly husband munched tea sandwiches and listened, occasionally nodding as Patterson jabbed the air for emphasis. A young family occupied

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