

Elizabeth sighed. The summer of 1943 had begun with a different train ride, through the first traces of springtime rebirth: young grass that had only recently greened, newly plowed fields awaiting planting, trees bearing newly budded leaves...everything was new and fresh and promising. Now, a short four months later, the signs of the inevitable fast-approaching conclusion to this summer were all around her as she morosely stared out the train window. The chilly winds of autumn were just around the corner, and would be followed too soon by the leafless trees, spent farmers' fields, and the cold, gray skies of yet another winter.

How could *this* summer, of all the summers of her life, have flown by so quickly? Time could be a merciless tyrant. Elizabeth had been granted the unexpected luxury of four entire months alone with her husband, in the midst of an all-consuming war. Yet when Elizabeth thought back on this summer of 1943 that wasn't even concluded, as hard as she tried, she could only remember scattered fragments, almost every one enveloped in disappointment and despondency.

However, Elizabeth realized, time could also be a healer. Frustration and despair could well soften and even fade as days and weeks and months passed. Maybe a nostalgic tinge, newly overlaid onto sporadic moments from the summer, might eventually bestow those brief occasions with outsized significance. The Fourth of July picnic, for one: Carlo off duty for the day, now knowing that Elizabeth was carrying his child, spending an entire day with his wife in the small community park in town, mercifully away from Camp Lejeune. Elizabeth had enjoyed far too few moments like that one over the past four months; but they had been there.

She would give anything to have a do-over for this just-concluded summer!