

## Time Will Tell

His name was Evan Sorenson. He had turned fourteen two days ago. His father was Robert Sorenson, an airline captain. His mother was a housewife and part-time secretary for an insurance company until she died in a car accident two years, one month, and seventeen days ago. He had no brothers or sisters.

Three years ago this month, Evan and his mother and father had taken a two-week vacation to Hawaii. They had stayed in the Royal Hawaiian Hotel at Waikiki in Honolulu. Evan had been happy then. Every morning he woke to go swimming in the ocean conveniently bordering their hotel. Later, his parents would join him for a quick swim and then lounge on the beach until lunchtime. Each afternoon they would visit a different place on the island in their rented car. Evan had fond memories of beaches, restaurants, and countryside filled with tropical plants, pineapple, and sugar cane.

Now, in 1954, Evan's father was going to Hawaii again, but this time to marry Julie O'Brien, a stewardess for the airline. Too bad she had to quit her job when she got married, Evan thought. She was okay, he guessed, but he really didn't want to be stuck with her at home and certainly didn't want her for a stepmother. The idea seemed ridiculous, as she was only nine years older than he.

Evan had met Julie, Faith, Gloria, and Ellie when his father had them over to dinner a few months earlier. They were all stewardesses and all quite attractive, but Evan found himself taken with Ellie. More than her striking French-Italian beauty, her dark hair, and her soft brown eyes was the fact that she treated him with respect, asking after his interests and opinions and treating him more like a man than a boy.

There were a couple of his father's pilot friends at that dinner that evening when he announced his engagement to Julie. It had been the first Evan had heard the news, though he had expected it, the way his father had been talking of Julie so often and frequently telephoning Evan to say he'd be late home from his shift.

Evan moped around the house a lot, and when his friends, Chuck Crenshaw or John Cleveland, would come around, Evan knew he wasn't very good company. They would walk around together or ride their bikes, sometimes on the runway if there weren't many planes around. Evan got a thrill from the danger of speeding down the runway as fast as he could. If an airplane was going to come, he could hear the propellers in plenty of time to ride off the pavement and crash onto the soft scrubland far enough from the wind of the approaching plane. He hadn't been caught yet, but Chuck and John quit going with him after a while, telling Evan he was crazy. Evan called them chickens, but the threat didn't bring them back. They even stopped going to the empty lot with him and breaking pop bottles against the giant pile of rocks. A waste of money, they had told him. They were right. He could've gotten two cents for each of the bottles. But he was often in a destructive mood, and it was worth two cents a piece to smash those bottles. He got a certain satisfaction from whirling them as fast as he could, listening to them shatter, and watching the pieces of glass fly in all directions.

Evan's dad had invited him to the wedding in Hawaii. He had mixed feelings about going. On the negative side, being in Hawaii would remind him of the time he

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went with his mom and dad, and the memories might intensify how sad he was now without his mom. He'd likely resent Julie even more than he did now, though he knew his mom's death wasn't Julie's fault. And it would be difficult to see his dad marrying another woman. Evan might retreat even further into his melancholy, and that would definitely not be good.

On the positive side, it would be fun to get away from the chilly Pacific Northwest and play in the warm ocean again. In Hawaii, it was warm at night, unlike Seattle where it was cool at night, even in the summer. He might even meet some girls, though why any girls would be interested in him was beyond his ability to imagine. Still, it would be fun to watch all kinds of people on the beach.

Then a thought struck him. Maybe Ellie would be there at the wedding. It was a possibility if she didn't have to work. What if Ellie worked on the flight he and his dad took over to Hawaii? His hopes were dashed as soon as he finished the thought. She didn't have enough seniority to work on a Hawaii run. She'd only been with the airline two years.

Just then, the phone rang. Evan jumped off his bed and ran to the living room. It was his father telling him he needed an answer about the trip. Was Evan going or not? If he stayed, his Aunt Ginny would come over to "keep an eye on him." Evan had told his dad he didn't need anyone babysitting him, that he'd stayed by himself plenty of times, and that he knew how to cook TV dinners. But his dad was insistent those would be the arrangements if Evan were to stay home. If he went, he would stay with one of his dad's pilot friends, Slim Norris, after the wedding while his dad and Julie went on their honeymoon. Slim didn't have any kids and would probably let Evan do whatever he wanted.

"Who's going to be our crew on the flight over?" Evan asked.

"I don't know yet," his dad said. "Does it matter?"

"Nope, I was just wondering."

"Well, I need your answer now, son. I'll have to order you a pass if you're going."

Evan heard the impatience in his father's voice. He might as well go—nothing much to do around the house—and now with school out, he had even more free time. Besides, he didn't get along all that well with Aunt Ginny. She was too bossy, always making him take out the garbage or do the dishes or dust the furniture or some other kind of boring household chore.

"Okay, I'll go," Evan said, thinking of the too long flight and having to get dressed up in a suit for the wedding.

"Good," his father said. "I'm glad you made that decision. Most kids don't get this kind of opportunity—to travel by air, especially to Hawaii."

"I know," said Evan, having heard that speech before.

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"I have to go now, son. I'll see you around two o'clock. Then we'll go shopping for some appropriate clothing for you.

The two weeks until the trip went by slowly, and Evan was increasingly glad he had made the decision to go. If he was this bored, what would he do the rest of the summer? His two friends, Chuck and John, had stopped coming by, probably because of Evan's sour mood, but Evan told himself he didn't care. Maybe he would meet some friends in Honolulu and have some real fun for a change.

The flight was to leave at ten-thirty p.m. from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, make one stop at Portland, Oregon, then fly for about fourteen hours across the Pacific Ocean. Julie, his dad's fiancée, was already over there, partying with her stewardess friends before she got married.

"Might as well take a nap before we go," Evan's dad told him.

"But it's only seven-thirty, and I'm not tired at all."

"Suit yourself, but I'm going to lie down for an hour."

At eight forty-three the phone rang. Evan answered it. "Just a minute," he said. He set the receiver on the telephone table and went to get his father, who was getting dressed.

"Who was that?" said Evan after his father got off the phone.

"Change of plans, son."

"We're not going now?" Evan was a little upset, but he could live with waiting another few days to take the trip.

"We're going, but I'm going to have to take over as captain."

Evan frowned. He'd been looking forward to sitting next to his father on the flight and maybe talking about a few things. Letting his father know how he felt about the loss of his mother and his remarrying might make him feel better, even though circumstances wouldn't change. His father was pretty understanding, but Evan rarely got an opportunity to spend time alone with his dad. He was either off on some trip, busy with Julie, or doing bookwork when he was at home.

"Why? What happened to the other captain?"

"Actually, the entire crew has to be replaced. They all came down with food poisoning. Fortunately, it wasn't the airline's fault. It was from a restaurant in Billings, Montana.

"Oh," said Evan.

"So, I've got to change into my uniform and we need to leave right away."

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Evan scurried into gear, stuffing the last of his belongings into his suitcase. He already had on the slacks and aloha shirt his dad had brought him from their recent shopping trip. He slipped on his lightweight jacket and waited for his dad at the door.

"Can I start the car?"

No answer.

"Dad?"

"I'm coming now." His dad appeared at the end of the hallway, suitcase in hand and garment bag over his arm. He looked really sharp in his captain's uniform, four stripes on each sleeve, wings on his pocket, hat in hand. He tossed Evan the car keys. "Let's go."

Once Evan started the car, he slipped over to the passenger side of the '51 Chrysler, his father took the wheel, and they headed for the airport.

Evan picked up a piece of paper his dad had tossed onto the dash. Once the car was close to a streetlight, Evan read it. Replacement crew for Flight 84: Capt Robt. Sorenson, Co-pilot Simon "Slim" Norris, Second Officer Ken Waddell, Navigator Charlie Seymour, Stewardess Ellie Lambert. Evan's heart jumped. Ellie was going to be their stewardess. He was going to be in an airplane for fourteen hours with Ellie!

Once they were parked next to the hangar, Evan and his dad got out of the car and walked the long stairway up to the operations office. Maybe Ellie would stop by while they were there—sometimes the stews did.

Evan waited outside the office while his dad checked the weather and went over some figures with the dispatcher on duty. He watched pilots, reservations agents, teletype girls, and the occasional stewardess come and go down the long hallway, but Ellie never showed up.

"Let's go get your bag checked at the terminal," Evan's father said. "I'll drop you off. Just give this to the ticket agent." Robert Sorenson handed his son a ticket envelope. Evan was glad his dad had put their suits together in *his* garment bag. Hauling one bag to the ticket counter was enough for Evan.

The terminal building was still pretty new, having been built about ten years ago, his dad had said, but it hadn't officially opened to the general public until five years ago. Evan stepped across the circular airplane mosaic just inside the main entrance and headed toward his airline's ticket counter. He looked around for any sign of Ellie but did not see her. He would be pretty disappointed if she weren't on his flight after he'd been counting on it.

The ticket agent tagged Evan's suitcase and handed him back his ticket, giving him a suspicious stare. "Gate 3, South Concourse."

"Thanks," said Evan, stuffing his ticket into his back pocket. He walked over to the lobby feeling much lighter with only his comic books to carry. Now he'd have to

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wait. He decided not to start his new Superman comic until he got on the airplane. He would have more than enough time to read all five comic books during the flight.

Evan strolled over to the long panoramic window and watched the planes taxiing on the runway. It was dark outside now, but Evan could identify the planes by their flashing lights. When he got tired of watching the runway, he paced the lobby and rode the elevator to the second level where he walked past several offices. Just as he was about to step back into the elevator, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned around abruptly to see Ellie smiling up at him.

"I didn't mean to startle you," she said. "Evan, isn't it?"

She was a couple of inches shorter than Evan, but he felt like a clumsy giant in her presence. Worse than that, he was momentarily speechless.

"I don't know if you remember me, but we met at your house some time ago when your father announced his engagement to Julie O'Brien. I'm Ellie Lambert."

Remember! How could she think he wouldn't remember her? But he frowned, pretending he had to think a moment to recall her. "Oh yes, of course. Will you be going to the wedding?"

She stepped ahead of him into the open elevator. He had completely forgotten he was standing in the elevator doorway, and he rushed inside. The door closed behind them and she pushed the Lobby button. Evan could smell the subtle fragrance of her perfume. He couldn't identify the scent, but it was pleasing.

"Yes, I'm going to the wedding." Evan had almost forgotten he'd asked the question, so distracted was he with just being around her. "In fact, I'm going to work your flight. Didn't plan on it, but you know, that's the airline business for you—last minute changes."

The elevator door opened and Ellie walked out in front of him. She looked down at Evan's hands, and he instantly became self-conscious about holding his comic books. He rolled them up and shifted them to his left hand.

"That's a good idea to bring your own reading material," she said. "We've got some magazines on the airplane, but nothing very interesting for kids."

Evan felt insulted being referred to as a kid. "Well, I like Time and Newsweek too," he stammered.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said. "I meant to say teenagers, not kids. That's good you're interested in world news." She glanced at her wristwatch. "I've got to run. I'll see you on board, Evan." She touched his shoulder again, lightly, and walked off quickly, her high heels clicking across the floor.

Evan stood there entranced, watching Ellie until she was out of sight. He had been attracted to girls before but not like he was to Ellie. He wondered if she had a boyfriend and instantly felt jealous at the thought. He wasn't sure how old she was. Women were sensitive about telling their age, his father had said. But she couldn't be

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all that much older than Evan. Even if she were ten years older, he could still marry her in a couple of years with parental consent. And if he waited until he was eighteen, he wouldn't even need that.

"Flight 84 for Portland and Honolulu now boarding at Gate 3 on the South Concourse," the loudspeaker announced. Evan's body jerked awake from his musings, and he looked at his watch. It was a couple of minutes before ten. He followed the signs to the South Concourse and proceeded downstairs to the gate. Twenty or more passengers were already waiting behind the fenced-in area outside. Evan held back. "Let the paying passengers board first," his father's words came to mind.

Ellie would already be on board, ready to greet them at the door. Evan stood impatiently behind the crowd of passengers and those who were bidding them farewell. He had so much nervous energy, he couldn't keep his feet still, so he shifted back and forth on them like an excited child.

Several more people passed by him and through the gate. He now saw a line of adults walking out on the tarmac toward the portable stairs that stood against the DC-4's door. Most of them appeared to be married couples, the sight of which made Evan feel even more lonely than he already was. However, he saw at least three men traveling alone. Two of them wore business suits and hats, and Evan thought they'd sure be hot once they got off the airplane in Honolulu. The other single man wore casual clothes, slacks and an aloha shirt like Evan. He looked younger than the others, maybe nineteen or twenty.

"You can board now, son," said the gate attendant, an older man, maybe in his forties. Evan wasn't sure how accurate he was in gauging men's ages except that his father had just turned forty, and this guy looked a little older than his father.

"Thank you," Evan said, showed the man his ticket envelope, and stepped through the gate out into the clear starry night.

The airplane sat proudly on the tarmac, growing larger as Evan approached it. A row of portholes along its fuselage revealed light and activity within, and Evan caught his breath at his sudden exhilaration. He imagined the airplane as a spaceship that was going into outer space instead of cruising at eight thousand feet across the ocean. He supposed the outer space wish had to do with his general desire to leave behind his current life and find a completely new one.

Evan heard the flimsy metal stairs ring beneath his feet as he climbed his way toward Ellie—Miss Lambert he should be calling her—standing in the doorway. He looked behind him and discovered he was the last to board. No more "pass" passengers, he thought. Good, I can have my choice of vacant seats.

"Welcome aboard, Evan," Ellie said. "Your father's up front if you'd like to talk to him."

"Thank you," said Evan. He stepped into the cockpit. As always, he was overwhelmed when he entered the control center of the airplane. Dials, switches, levers, and gauges covered the front, sides, and ceiling of the flight deck. Not only

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that, four men were squeezed into the small area. Fortunately, there was a bed where they could trade off resting. Evan had thought seriously about being an airline pilot. The money was certainly good, but he wasn't sure he could handle the odd hours. Besides, when he had his own family, he didn't want his wife and kids worrying about him getting killed in a crash. His dad knew a couple of pilots who had. There was always the possibility they could crash, but he knew his dad was a good pilot. Still, the best pilot could only do so much if the plane had a mechanical failure.

"You okay, Evan?" his dad said.

"Yes sir, fine," said Evan, hoping his thoughts had not betrayed him. He didn't know why, but he wanted his dad to believe he was perfectly fine all the time—maybe because he wanted to be independent and not be babysat by Aunt Ginny. And maybe because he didn't want to burden his dad with worrying about him. He decided he would act like a perfect gentleman at the wedding—even if he didn't feel like one.

Captain Sorenson introduced Evan to Ken Waddell and Charlie Seymour. They each shook his hand and paid him their respects. And of course, he already knew Slim Norris. Slim shook Evan's hand anyway. "Welcome aboard, Evan," Slim said.

"Thanks."

Evan found two seats next to each other the third row from the front on the left side of the airplane. There were advantages and disadvantages to this location. On the positive side, he was close to the cockpit and would be able to watch Ellie take coffee to the flight crew. He was also closer to the stewardess jump seat, where Ellie was supposed to sit during takeoffs and landings. On the negative side, he didn't have a view of Ellie walking all the way up and down the aisle. That was okay though. He couldn't watch her every minute anyway.

The propellers started and Ellie instructed the passengers to fasten their seat belts. It seemed to take a long time for the engines to warm up, but once they did, the airplane taxied out to the end of the runway. Ellie walked up and down the aisle checking to see that people had their belts fastened. She winked at Evan as she passed him, and he hoped she didn't notice his face flush.

Once they were airborne, Evan relaxed. It would be a short hop to Portland, and he might as well watch out the window, even though it was dark. Once they were over the ocean, there wouldn't be much scenery. Ellie spent the time passing out gum and visiting with the passengers. Evan never had a problem with his ears popping from the altitude changes, but he took some gum anyway.

It wasn't long before the DC-4 landed in Portland and more passengers boarded while their luggage was loaded and over three thousand gallons of fuel was pumped into the tanks. Evan never understood how the wings could hold so much weight in fuel but ice would bring the plane down.

Only six passengers boarded in Portland, which brought the passenger total to thirty-seven. Fortunately, Evan still had two seats to himself. He would need them, as

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he had grown to five feet, eight and a half inches, and it would not be as easy to lie down as it had been on his last trip to Honolulu.

The DC-4 got underway much faster than it had at Seattle-Tacoma, as the engines were already warmed up. Ellie gave her seat belt speech, but this time she told the passengers where the life vests were. Evan read the printing on the back of the chairs in front of him: LIFE VEST UNDER SEAT.

Once the airplane was ready to take off, Ellie sat down beside Evan. "You mind if I sit here? Those jump seats are so uncomfortable."

Evan was startled but managed to answer calmly. "Of course not. You could have sat here when we left Seattle."

"Thanks, Evan, but I was closer to the galley and took a seat back there. I know it's not as good for the airline's business, but I like it when the flights are not full."

Me too, Evan thought. "Have you ever worked a flight to Honolulu before?"

"Actually, no. This is my first. As soon as we get to cruising altitude, I'll be serving beverages. In the morning there'll be breakfast."

"Oh," said Evan, not knowing what else to say.

Just then, the engines revved up and the airplane accelerated down the runway. It seemed to take a long time before it lifted off the ground. Evan always loved the thrill of taking off and momentarily forgot about his seat companion. He often thought about being an astronaut, blasting off in a rocket ship to the moon or Mars, but this was the closest he could get to what it might feel like to do that. His dad told him he was a dreamer and that he should connect with reality more, but Evan believed that in his lifetime, someone would figure out a way to send a man to outer space and even the moon. There was no reason Evan shouldn't be that man. He also thought about becoming a test pilot—what a thrill it must have been for Chuck Yeager to go faster than the speed of sound. Or maybe he could wear a devise on his back like Flash Gordon and go rocketing off on his own.

Ellie got up before the plane leveled off. "I've got to work now, Evan. Nice talking to you."

"Oh, okay. Nice to talk to you too."

Evan waited until Ellie was out of sight then opened up his Superman comic book. When she went by again, he closed it quickly and asked her for a magazine.

"Time or Newsweek?" she asked, evidently remembering he'd said he read those particular magazines.

"Both," he said quickly. "And thank you."

"Sure." Ellie returned with the June 21 issue of each magazine, protected by a thick, transparent cover. Time had a picture of Sam Snead, the famous golfer, on the front. Boring. Evan thought of golf as an old man's game. Newsweek had a picture



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of Pogo, the comic strip possum, on the front, playing some kind of guitar and reading a comic book set on a music stand. Pogo, he thought, a baby's comic. But he opened the Newsweek first.

Ellie walked away and Evan turned the pages until he got to the Pogo article, which was not interesting at all. He read the short strip that accompanied the article, but it didn't make him laugh. The front cover said: "Pogo: The Funnies Are Getting Funny Again." What a lie. He put down the Newsweek and picked up the Time. The only things that seemed to catch his eye were the advertisements, many of which were in color. Inside the front cover was an ad for a green Nash station wagon showing a family of four inside. What an ugly car, Evan thought. The other advertising included a camera, a Burroughs accounting machine, a water cooler, a Royal typewriter, and a Magnavox TV with a smiling lady in the picture screen. As for the articles, the National Affairs section included stuff about Senator McCarthy, the Atomic Energy Commission, and a picture of President Eisenhower waving. The Foreign News section was even more uninteresting and had subtext about France, Indo-China, Great Britain, and West Germany. Nothing happening in the world had to do with him, except he did sometimes think about the atomic bomb and hoped no one dropped one near him.

Evan's thoughts were interrupted by his father's voice from the cockpit. "Ladies and gentlemen, this is Captain Sorenson. I have turned off the no smoking and seat belt signs, and you may move about the cabin. Our flight should be smooth, but if we do run into any unexpected turbulence, please take your seats and fasten your seat belts. Our stewardess, Miss Lambert, will be serving beverages shortly. Enjoy your flight."

Evan unclasped his seat belt and stretched his legs. He looked at his watch. It was a little past midnight, but he was wide awake and seemed to have an excess of energy. He got up and walked back to the lavatory, just for something to do. When he got there, it was occupied. While he was waiting, he watched Ellie preparing coffee in the galley and wished he could help her, but he knew he couldn't. That was her job and he couldn't interfere, just as he couldn't help his father fly the airplane.

Walking back to his seat, Evan noticed the young man he'd previously seen—the one who wore an aloha shirt and slacks. He was lighting up a cigarette. He looked too young to smoke. Evan had tried smoking one time, but it just made him cough. His father had a cigarette once in a while, but it looked natural for him to smoke. He didn't know if Ellie smoked—she hadn't lit up the time she was over to his house for dinner. Some guys thought it looked sexy when women smoked, but Evan thought it looked cheap, and he hoped Ellie didn't have the habit.

Evan picked up his Time and Newsweek and returned them to the magazine rack. Then he went back to his seat. The other passengers were visiting with one another, but Evan didn't feel sociable. Ellie was now working her way up the aisle, with coffee. When she reached Evan, he asked for a hot chocolate. He'd tried coffee once and it tasted nasty.

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By the time Evan finished his hot chocolate, he was feeling sleepy. He turned off his reading light, removed the arm between the seats, and lay down as much as he was able, leaning his head against the window. His eyes had not been closed for long, when Ellie leaned over him, offering him a pillow and a blanket.

"Thanks," said Evan as Ellie draped the blanket across him. He felt like a little kid whose mother was tucking him in, but he was too tired to be embarrassed about it. He closed his eyes. Soon the comforting drone of the engines lulled him to sleep.

Evan was a little boy, maybe six or seven years old. His mother was pushing him on a swing at the park. Evan kept telling her he wanted to go higher. The trees and the sky swished by faster and faster. Then Evan's mom was in the swing beside him, and they were both going higher and higher. Evan and his mom flew off the swings and traveled up into the clouds. Somehow they both landed on a roller coaster at the top of its rail. Evan closed his eyes and felt himself drop down the steep rail. His stomach rose to his throat. He gasped for air and he woke.

The airplane was bumping terribly, worse than he'd ever experienced. Evan sat up and threw off his blanket. He held onto his chair and stood up to look at the rest of the cabin. It looked as though a strong earthquake was hitting. Ellie was trying to walk down the aisle but she stumbled on her way and had to grab hold of the bulkhead. As she did, several pillows and blankets came tumbling out of the shelf above and onto the floor. Evan started toward her.

"No, Evan, sit down and fasten your seat belt."

Evan was spooked. He turned back and saw the young man wearing the aloha shirt coughing into a bag. A wave of nausea came over Evan and he managed to sit back down before throwing up into his own bag. God, what is happening, he thought?

Once he recovered, Evan looked out the window. It was still dark outside. Rain splattered his window and he jerked away. He stood up, walked back a few rows, and peeked out the windows. As far as he could see, the engines on both sides appeared to be functioning fine. He got back to his seat before Ellie could tell him to. Then his father's voice came over the loudspeaker.

"Ladies and gentlemen. This is Captain Sorenson. I apologize for the turbulence. We have run into an unexpected weather front with a ceiling of about seventeen thousand feet. We will need to remain at our present altitude until we get through the storm, as this DC-4 is unpressurized and we cannot ascend much above ten thousand feet."

The airplane made another violent jerk and Evan's seat belt tugged at his waist. The loudspeaker threw out some static, but his father's voice returned. "Please stay in your seats and cooperate with Miss Lambert. We hope to be out of this storm soon."

Evan had a sinking feeling that none of the cockpit crew knew where the storm would end. He didn't want to die. He wanted to get married and have kids and be a test pilot or astronaut. He had too many things he wanted to do in life. The fear made him start breathing hard and fast. Hyperventilating, his father had told him. It

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had happened a couple of times before—once when he had to walk into school the first day of first grade, the other when he'd heard the news his mother had died. Both times, someone had put a paper bag over his mouth and it had slowed his breathing. Evan grabbed the motion sickness bag out of the seat pocket of the chair in front of him on the aisle side and jammed the open end over his mouth. It worked. He started breathing more slowly and eventually removed the bag.

The airplane seemed to settle down at the same time as he did. It was still bumping, but there were no more violent jerks. As he sat there, catching his breath, Evan started believing they would all be okay. He looked out the window. It was still raining, but the rain was a soft drizzle instead of a forceful spatter against the window. Then Evan looked at his watch. It read three forty-four, but the second-hand had stopped. He wound it, but it still didn't run. Then he tapped it with his fingernail. No luck. He let out a long sigh and leaned back against the seat. Hopefully it was later than three forty-four and daylight would soon appear. He closed his eyes and dozed off into a fitful sleep.

When Evan woke again, daylight was coming through his window. He lay there for a moment, scrunched into the two seats, and watched as Ellie walked up and down the aisle, picking up fallen blankets and misplaced pillows.

Evan sat up. His entire body was sore. He stretched his legs out in front of him and peeked out the window. The sky was completely blue as was the ocean below. He pulled the small curtains closed and shut his eyes again. He remembered the storm and wondered if it had been a dream. He looked at his watch. It still read three forty-four.

Evan stood up and made his way down the aisle toward the lavatory. He felt much too big for this airplane and told himself he would be glad when it landed. His mouth felt dry and had an ugly taste to it. He wished he would have brought his toothbrush with him. He felt in his jacket pocket and discovered he had a cinnamon jaw breaker. It would make his mouth red, but it was better than nothing.

As he was coming out of the lavatory, he ran into Ellie, who was holding a tray of food. "Ooops, sorry," Evan said.

"It's okay, it happens all the time," she answered. She looked a little rough in the face, like she'd been awake all night. Well, of course she had. She had to take care of the passengers. Evan noticed faint circles around her eyes, and her eyes looked weary.

"Do you know what time it is? My watch stopped."

"I'll let you know in a moment, Evan. Right now my hands are full."

"Of course." Evan took his seat before she had to tell him to. He straightened his comic books and removed his jacket. The smell of coffee, eggs, and bacon filled the cabin as Ellie continued serving the passengers. Evan didn't find the odor appetizing.

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"Would you like some breakfast?" Ellie asked him. His stomach was still a little queasy from the night before.

"Just some pop."

"Seven-Up okay?"

"Yes, that would be fine, thank you."

Ellie winked at him and walked away. Yes, the storm must have been real or he would not have an upset stomach. He should have been hungry by now.

"Here's your Seven-Up," she said as she handed him a cup filled with ice and the bubbly liquid.

"Thank you. Do you have the time?"

"Oh yes." She looked at her wristwatch, frowned, then tapped it with her fingernail. "I'm sorry, my watch must have stopped. I'll find out for you though."

"If it's not too much trouble," Evan said apologetically. If it was eight or nine a.m. Hawaiian time, they still had several more hours to go before landing.

Ellie started to walk away, but Evan stopped her. "Did we go through a storm last night or was I dreaming?"

Ellie's face turned serious. "You were not dreaming, Evan. But the weather is clear now. Would you like to talk to your father? I can ask if it's okay."

"Yes, yes I would," Evan stuttered.

Ellie walked toward the cockpit, stood for a moment and straightened her hat, then opened the door. Evan could see the blanket of instruments inside and was glad he hadn't been the pilot flying this ship through the storm. He saw Ellie speaking to Slim. She looked back out the door for a moment, then pulled it shut.

By the time lunch rolled around, Evan's stomach had settled and he was pretty hungry. He scarfed down the bologna sandwich and potato chips and wished he had more, but he knew from what his father had told him that the number of meals were counted out. If extras were not used while in flight, they had to be thrown out, for some reason. Evan wasn't quite up to drinking any pineapple juice and had more Seven-Up instead.

By the time he finished his meal, Evan was feeling much better. Ellie was looking better too, he noticed as she picked up his lunch box and cup. Soon after, he felt the airplane descend. Good, they were going to land soon. No one had ever told him what time it was. Maybe everyone's watches had stopped, maybe caused by some electromagnetic forces in the storm. And Ellie had never told him he could go to the cockpit and talk to his father. Something weird was going on, but Evan just wanted to land. He was quite claustrophobic by now. Everything would be fine once they landed.

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Evan barely noticed Ellie holding his hand as they sat next to each other in the “containment area” along with the rest of the passengers and crew of Flight 84. His watch had miraculously started working again once they landed at the Honolulu International Airport. Evan had reset his watch to the clock on the wall. Correct Hawaiian time was two thirty-four p.m. They had been sitting in this room for over an hour while security officers and airline personnel came and went. A couple of passengers had started to light a cigarette but were immediately told to put them out.

When they had first filed into the area, Evan heard someone asking his father if this was a joke. His father had emphatically answered no and demanded to see an airline official. Later, all the luggage and cargo was removed from the DC-4. Each bag and container was opened, while passengers stood by to answer questions. Hawaii was not a state, but it was a U.S. territory, and Evan didn't remember having to go through Customs the last time he was here.

What really bothered Evan—what was really strange—was what he had seen out on the airfield when they landed. For one thing, the airport had grown a lot since he'd been here last. The control tower was wider and taller, and the terminal building seemed much larger. But what Evan noticed the most were the huge jet airliners with swept back wings. Evan recognized some airlines but not all of them. He'd seen jet engines on military planes, but never on airliners. And on their approach to the island, Waikiki looked as if it were lined with hotels from one end to the other. He saw none of the little grass huts he'd seen the last time he was here.

Finally, everyone in the group was told they could leave. They walked down a long concrete concourse carrying their bags and huddling together like a group of refugees. Evan stayed close to his father's side hoping his father's proximity would get rid of the funny feeling he had inside. Passengers and airline personnel going in the opposite direction passed the group, barely glancing at them. Many of the travelers were pulling luggage on rollers and carrying backpacks. Some wore leis, others, aloha shirts. That was normal, but they seemed different somehow. Maybe it was their quick steps, their casual dress or their odd hairdos. No one smoked, but Evan saw several people, even a teenaged girl, using some kind of small walkie-talkies or portable telephones.

When the group arrived at the main terminal, Evan noticed a long line of people waiting to get into the concourse area. His eyes followed the line to several machines with conveyor belts that pulled bags, cameras, and shoes through a large box. Evan wanted to stop, but his group's escorts, two security guards, seemed to want them out of the airport as soon as possible. Promptly, they were led down an escalator, through the baggage claim area, and outside, where a shuttle bus picked them up.

Evan thought they all might be displaced in time somehow, but he dismissed that idea as his imagination working overtime. Still, the sight of those jet airliners, some of them really huge, really got to him. On the bus he saw cars like he'd never seen before. Most of them were the shape of late '40s and early '50s models, but they

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looked shinier, more colorful, more streamlined. Trucks, vans, and buses looked the same way.

The passengers of Flight 84 were dropped off at various hotels in Waikiki. Evan's suspicions were confirmed about how much the area had grown. Multiple-story buildings, hotels, and businesses ran all long Kuhio and Kalakaua Avenues, but Diamond Head crater was still visible. Surfers and swimmers still played in the ocean. White-skinned tourists still lay on the beach.

Evan, his father, and the rest of the crew had originally planned to stay at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, but its prices had skyrocketed so much, the airline suggested they stay at a modestly priced hotel two and a half blocks away from the beach.

Evan was finally calming down, getting used to the new scenery, until he spotted a newspaper on a chair in the lobby of the hotel. It was *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the headline on the front page blasted out something about seven people killed as the space shuttle Columbia broke up over Texas. Space shuttle? He examined the paper more closely. The date read, Sunday, February 2, 2003.

Evan spent very little time on the beach. Most of the time he stayed inside the hotel room and watched TV. Evan had never been interested much in the news, but now he couldn't get enough of it. The TV had sixty-some channels that kept him occupied most of the time. Everything was in color except "old" movies, some of which were made after 1954, according to one of the channels that listed all the programs.

Robert Sorenson was spending most of his time with the other three men of the cockpit crew, who were sharing a room. Evan knew they were all scared. Evan was too, so he kept watching TV to take his mind off the jam they were all in. Ellie was probably by herself, maybe crying, and Evan wanted to comfort her, but he felt incapable of doing that. He needed to be comforted himself and wished his mother were there.

Evan stood up and stretched. He was taller than he'd been an hour ago, and his clothing was too tight. He took off his shirt and shorts and wrapped a towel around his waist. There was a full-length mirror on the side of the closet. He was afraid to look in it, afraid to see how much he had aged. If his suspicions were correct, he would continue to age at the rate of about one year for every hour that went by. It had been five hours and twenty-two minutes since the DC-4 landed, which made Evan nineteen years old and his father forty-nine.

Just as he was climbing under the bed sheet, Evan heard a knock on the door. He started. "Who is it?" he yelled.

"Evan, it's Ellie Lambert."

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Did her voice sound different? More mature? No, it sounded scared. "Just a minute." Evan jumped out of bed and wrapped himself in a beach towel then padded to the door and cracked it open.

"May I come in?" Ellie asked.

Evan slowly opened the door and stood aside as she walked in. She looked more mature, even more beautiful than before, except for the worried expression on her face. Evan's face flushed as he imagined Ellie undressed and in bed with him. He tried to suppress the thought—even felt guilty for having it—but the logical part of his mind told him he was nineteen now and could legally engage in such relations with a woman, even if she was an older woman.

Ellie took Evan's face in her hands and looked him in the eye. "Evan, what's happening to us? I just saw the men and...."

"We're all getting older." Evan forced himself to pull away from her lest he attack her right then and there. He sat in a chair and she sat in one opposite him. "Are you sure?"

"It's the only thing that makes sense. What do the pilots say?"

"Well, your dad, Slim, Ken, and Charlie all seem to think the same. Your dad is a little grayer at the temples, Ken's hairline has receded, and Slim needs reading glasses." She chuckled in spite of the serious nature of their predicament.

"And I'm becoming an adult," Evan said soberly.

"Yes you are," Ellie said, looking him over as if she only then noticed Evan's physical maturity.

Was she coming on to him? Evan's heart pounded. He did the only thing he could think to do. He kept talking. "Well, you know what I think?"

Ellie sat down in a chair. She was still wearing her uniform but it looked slightly rumpled, and she had removed her hat before she came into Evan's room. "What do you think, Evan?" she said matter-of-factly.

He sighed. "I think we're going to keep getting older and older until we reach the age we would be in this year of 2003. Then we'll stop aging because our bodies will have caught up with time. That's what I think."

Ellie frowned. That would make me thirty-five by late tonight, fifty-nine by tomorrow night, and..." she put her hand to her forehead, "...seventy-three by the time I stop aging."

Evan quickly calculated her age. So, she was ten years older than he. And he would be sixty-three when *he* stopped aging.

Ellie stood and started pacing. "I'll never have the opportunity to have a family, to watch my kids grow, to marry when I'm young, if at all. I'll be an old maid."

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She was clearly upset and Evan desperately wanted to figure out a way to remedy the situation. He stood and paced as well. "There's got to be some way to get back to 1954," he said. "Maybe if we got back in the DC-4, went through the same type of weather conditions. I don't know, but there's got to be a way."

The hotel room door opened, and Evan's father came in looking tired and worn-down. He *did* look older, Evan thought. "Dad."

Captain Sorenson glanced at Ellie then at Evan. "Why aren't you dressed?" he snapped.

"I...I outgrew my clothes."

Captain Sorenson's face relaxed a little, but he still spoke abruptly. "I'll get you some more as soon as I shave." He stepped inside the bathroom and shut the door.

Ellie stood. "I should be going."

"Do you have to?" Evan's eyes pleaded with her.

She touched his shoulder with her hand and gave him a friendly wink. "I'll be back."

That evening, Evan's father asked him if he wanted to join him and the other men for dinner at a restaurant.

"What about Ellie—Miss Lambert?" Evan said.

Captain Sorenson shrugged. "Said she didn't want to go."

"Hmm. Maybe I should keep her company. None of her friends are here." Including Julie, his father's fiancée, he thought. His father must feel terrible, missing his wedding and all. And how must Julie feel, being stood up at the altar?

"Sure. Here's some money." His dad handed him a ten-dollar bill.

"Dad, I need more than that. You know, inflation?"

"Of course." Captain Sorenson fumbled through his wallet and gave Evan an additional twenty. "Spend wisely, Evan. Our funds are running out quickly."

"Yes, sir." Evan wondered what they would do once their funds *did* run out, but he didn't ask.

Robert Sorenson left the hotel room to join his colleagues, while Evan spruced up and got ready to call on Ellie. She had said she'd be back, but when would that be? Evan's heart was pumping overtime just thinking about taking her to dinner.

It turned out that Evan didn't have to call on Ellie—she showed up at his door a few minutes after Evan's dad left. She was wearing a Hawaiian print dress, sleeveless, with brown flat sandals, and her hair was brushed back and piled on top of her head. When she entered the room, Evan knew his mouth was gaping open, but he couldn't help himself.



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"My, you look beautiful," he heard himself say.

She smiled looking pleased. "Thank you."

He stood there for a moment, just staring, not saying anything.

"Would you care to take me to dinner?"

"Oh, yes." He didn't have any idea where they would go.

"I thought we could walk around Waikiki until we found a suitable restaurant," she said, rescuing him from that decision.

"Um, sure. Good idea." He opened the door for her and they stepped out.

After dinner, Evan walked Ellie back to her room. When she invited him in, he couldn't resist. He had the urge to check with his father first, but that would make him seem like a juvenile, which he really wasn't any longer, physically, that is. Besides, his father was probably still out.

"Sit down," she said. "I'll get us something to drink."

Evan did as he was told, still nervous about being with Ellie alone in her room.

The hotel rooms contained small refrigerators filled with various drinks including beer, wine, and hard liquor. Evan chose beer, though he'd only tasted it a few times when his father let him have a sip from his own can. Evan wondered where he would get a can opener until he realized the can had its own opening tab built right in. He popped it, but spilled some beer on his pants while in the process. Ellie rushed to his side with a small towel and wiped the beer from his lap.

"It's okay," she said. "I did that myself with the first one I tried."

Evan blushed, then took too big a chug of his beer and ended up coughing. "I'm just clumsy today," he apologized.

"You need to relax, Evan. I know we're in a fix here, aging so rapidly, but I don't want to grow old and gray before I get a chance to live a bit."

"What do you mean? We're going to be old and gray in the next couple of days."

"Drink up, my dear. It'll help you relax." She was already going for her second glass of red wine. Evan obeyed and finished his beer, this time without coughing.

After downing his third beer, he was definitely feeling high. He stood up to go to the bathroom and stumbled against his chair. Ellie giggled, asking if he was okay, to which he answered he was. He laughed to himself. She was right, all he needed to do was relax.

Evan spent several minutes in the bathroom examining his aging face in the mirror. Since he was getting drunk, he wasn't afraid to look, and he found himself amused. He wasn't what he would call handsome, but he was somewhat attractive.

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At least Ellie thought so. He grinned and came back out to find Ellie in her nightgown, leisurely lounging on the bed, holding her glass of wine. He sobered right away. What first came to mind was whether his father was back at the hotel room yet. He had the urge to flee but he couldn't move.

"What's the matter, Evan? You still feeling shy?"

Evan felt his face flush, and his Adam's apple got stuck in this throat. "I...I was just going to see if my father was home yet," he stuttered.

"You promise to come back?" she asked mischievously.

"Um...I don't know...I...."

Ellie pouted. "You aren't going to let me spend the last night of my youth alone, are you, Evan?"

"Well...."

"You don't want to be alone either, do you?" Her voice was softer now, more enticing.

"No, I don't. Just let me check back at my room."

"Okay then, I'll be waiting for you."

Evan rushed out the door. He didn't know if he liked the way Ellie was acting. He had always respected her, and now she was begging him to go to bed with her. He was both fascinated and repulsed by the idea, but he knew he was going back. He couldn't help it.

The empty hotel room seemed so stark, so unlivid in. He glanced at his open suitcase, clothing still folded neatly inside—clothing he could no longer wear because he had outgrown it. The closet door was open, the garment bag still holding his and his father's suits for the wedding. The room was too cool, so Evan went to the wall and turned down the air conditioning. He had nothing to wear for pajamas, so he grabbed the beach towel he had worn earlier and stepped back across the hall to Ellie's room.

When he got back, she was under the covers. Her mood had completely changed, and she looked worried. Evan sat in the chair next to the bed.

"What's wrong?" he asked. She looked at him and started crying. Oh no, he thought. He stepped over to her bed and sat down on the edge. "Please don't cry, Ellie. Tell me what's the matter."

"We're getting old by the minute," she spouted. "We're going to die!" She wiped her eyes with the bed sheet and continued sobbing.

Evan was at a loss as to what to do. On the airplane, she was taking care of him and the rest of the passengers. She was the strong one then. Now he was supposed to be the strong one. He was completely unprepared for this new responsibility. He did the only thing he could think to do. He removed his shirt, shoes, and slacks and

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got into bed with her. He put his arms around her and held her a long time until she stopped shaking and slipped off to sleep.

Some time during the night, Evan woke to a loud knock on the door. He had momentarily forgotten where he was. He fumbled for the lamp on the nightstand and managed to switch it on. Amazingly, Ellie was still asleep, and he didn't want to wake her. He scrambled out of bed and managed to pull on his slacks and shirts. "Just a minute," he yelled.

Slim Norris was at the door. Evan was shocked at how much he had aged. He looked even more thin and drawn than before. His hair, what he had left of it, was gray, turning white. Besides more lines on his face, he was pale. Slim looked back at Evan with equal shock.

"What's wrong?" Evan said.

"It's your dad, Evan. I'm sorry. He's had a heart attack."

"What?! Where is he?"

"Meet me down in the lobby. We have a taxi waiting."

Evan almost had a heart attack himself when he looked in the mirror. The aging process had accelerated. His own hair was salt-and-pepper colored. His hairline had receded some, but not a lot. There were lines around his eyes, and his skin was thicker, more leathery.

Before he left, he checked on Ellie. He certainly didn't want to wake her, but he also felt bad about leaving her alone. He tiptoed to her side of the bed and lifted the sheet to see her face. She too, had aged. Her hair was completely gray and her face had a few wrinkles, but she was still beautiful. Good-bye, Ellie, he thought. I may not see you again. We may all be so old by the time I return, if I return, that we will die in a very short time. He lightly kissed her forehead. Then he left, closing the door gently behind him.

Ken Waddell and Charlie Seymour were already at the hospital when Evan and Slim arrived. They too had aged considerably. The nurses let only one person in Robert Sorenson's room at a time. When Evan approached the hospital bed, his father looked small and weak, though Evan knew he was over six feet tall. He was hooked up to a machine that transmitted a constant beep, beep, beep. There was a rubber tube in his nose, and his breathing was raspy, but he opened his eyes for Evan.

"I don't know what's happening to us all son. I'm sorry I didn't pay more attention to you. I'm sorry your mother died."

Evan took his father's hand. "Dad, don't. It's okay." Now he was comforting his dad. It seemed like he not only had to physically grow up too fast, he had to do so emotionally as well. "I'm glad I came on the trip. If I hadn't, I would have never found out what happened to you."

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His dad smiled and squeezed Evan's hand, then let go. His eyes closed and his face relaxed. Then the machine's beep, beep, beep, turned into a single continuous sound. Evan leaned over and put his ear to his father's heart. It had stopped beating.

"Nurse, nurse!" Evan flew out of the room, knocking over a cart of Jell-o in the hallway. Doctors rushed into the room with some equipment on a cart and told Evan to get out of the way. A few minutes later, a doctor came out and told Evan he was sorry, but his father didn't make it.

Evan went out of control, yelling and screaming, and Slim, Ken, and Charlie had to restrain him. Evan couldn't help himself. He kept struggling against the three men. Then someone came and gave him a shot in the neck and everything went dark.

When he woke again, Evan was sitting upright in what appeared to be the DC-4. He peeked out the window and saw the propellers functioning normally. The sky was clear with only a few white puffy clouds. There was no indication of a storm.

The dream had been so real that Evan had a hard time convincing himself it *was* a dream. But it had to have been. He was so relieved, he felt elated. He looked at his hands—they were young hands. He felt his face—it was smooth. He had to find a mirror. He stood up to walk back to the lavatory, but he was struck with dizziness. He bumped against one of the passenger's seats and excused himself, as he looked down into the face of a middle-aged man. He was pale and so was his wife. Had they suffered airsickness? He stumbled on toward the lavatory, looking around for Ellie, but she was not in the cabin.

The mirror reflected Evan's fourteen-year-old face, his greasy skin, and his brown hair, but he too, looked unusually pale. He splashed some water on his face to get his circulation going. The water seemed to help, but only a little.

He was still light-headed when he walked up the aisle toward the cockpit. He wasn't supposed to go in without permission, but Ellie wasn't around to ask. He had to make sure his father was still there. The dream of him dying was still vivid.

When Evan opened the door, he saw Ellie standing behind the pilot and co-pilot seats. "Dad?"

Captain Sorenson turned his head and frowned at Evan. His face was pale and drawn. Everyone looked unusually white as if they had seen a ghost. "Son, get back to your seat. We'll be landing soon." His voice was unnaturally stilted.

"I need to get back to the passengers," said Ellie quickly. "Come on, Evan." She put her hand on his back, but her touch was annoying, not exciting as it had been before his dream.

Once Evan and Ellie were back in the cabin, Evan insisted he tell her what was wrong with everyone. She avoided answering him other than saying she didn't know. "Just sit down and fasten your seat belt. We can talk later."

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Evan did as he was told. He picked up his Superman comic and flipped through it, just for something to do. Then he felt a finger poke his arm. It was the young man wearing an aloha shirt and slacks, the one he had seen smoking a cigarette early in flight. Evan looked up.

"My name's Jim." He held out his hand and Evan shook it.

"Evan."

"Mind if I sit down?"

"Nope." Evan scooted over.

"I don't know about you, but it seems something strange is going on here."

Evan frowned. "In what way?" He didn't want to tell Jim about his dream until he was sure it was not all in his imagination.

"Well, to me it looks as though everyone on this flight is scared out of their minds. Seems like they should be happy, you know, going to Hawaii and all."

"Yeah, I noticed that," said Evan, not offering any more.

"That storm we had last night—I think it maybe scared everyone or something."

Evan looked out the window. "Weather looks fine now." He frowned. "I felt pretty dizzy when I got up just now. How about you?"

Jim's eyes lit up. "Yes, I did too. Maybe there was something in the food that affected everyone. I don't know, but something isn't right."

Evan nodded. Just then, his father's voice came through the loudspeaker, saving him from further conversation. "Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats, fasten your seat belts, and extinguish your cigarettes. We will be landing at Honolulu International Airport in approximately thirty minutes."

Ellie made her way up and down the aisle, checking seat belts and making sure pillows, blankets, and stray items were put away. She smiled but it seemed forced, unnatural. She too was pale but looked better than she had in the cockpit. What is wrong with everyone, Evan wondered? He shook his head and watched out the window while the DC-4 made its final approach to the airport.

Relieved to see the familiar "Aloha" in red displayed across the control tower, Evan had final proof that he really was back in 1954 and that his time travel experience had been only a dream. He looked out on the tarmac and saw only propeller-driven passenger planes—no huge jets, no unfamiliar airlines.

He waited until all the passengers had deplaned, then grabbed his jacket, gathered his comic books, and stepped out the door. He was relieved to discover he was no longer dizzy. The soft, warm air relaxed him as he walked down the metal stairway. Men and women dressed in Hawaiian clothes and leis greeted him as he stepped onto the ground. He smiled at them shyly and walked toward the gate. Everything was fine now. Everything was going to be fine.

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Evan sat next to Ellie in the front row of chairs. The small wedding was held outside on the beach. A large canopy was set up to shade people from the hot sun, but Evan was still sweltering in his suit. Ellie was wearing a sleeveless dress with a Hawaiian print, a different one than she had worn in his dream. Evan wondered why when women dressed up, they could wear light, comfortable clothing, while men had to wear stuffy ties and jackets. It didn't make any sense.

As he watched Julie's father walking her up the aisle toward Evan's father, he thought about how happy he was that his time travel experience had all been a dream—actually it had turned into a pretty terrifying nightmare, one of the worst he'd ever had. From now on, he was going to cooperate with his dad. He wasn't going to mope around the house. He was going to stop throwing bottles in the empty lot and riding his bike down the runway. He was going to be nicer to his friends, Chuck and John, if they were still willing to be friends. And he was going to try his hardest to get along with his new stepmother.

The marriage ceremony itself wasn't very interesting. Evan was restless and eager for it to be over, even though he was sitting next to Ellie. She was pleasant enough, and he felt he knew her better, but he wasn't fascinated with her like he'd been before the dream. Evan realized it was much easier to be around her when he didn't have a crush on her. He even thought he could stand it if she really did have a boyfriend, though he hadn't asked and she hadn't said.

Finally, it was time for the reception, which was held in the hotel's party room. There were only about twenty people in attendance, as most couldn't afford a trip to Hawaii. Those who attended the wedding were airline employees. But there was lots of food, most of it Hawaiian. Evan tried it all. If he didn't like something, he would scrape it off his plate into the garbage can when no one was looking.

When it was time to cut the wedding cake, a waiter handed him a glass of champagne. Evan took it and gulped down the bubbly liquid. Ellie brushed up to his side and told him he was supposed to wait until a toast to the bride and groom was made.

"Oh, sorry."

"That's okay," said Ellie. "I'll get you another." She grabbed a glass from a passing tray and handed it to Evan. "Here you go." She chuckled. "And *sip* it this time."

Evan had the strangest feeling when Ellie handed him the champagne, and then he remembered his dream when they had been drinking together—he beer and she wine. He wanted to talk about the dream. The fact that he hadn't had been nagging at him ever since they had landed in Honolulu.

"Thanks. Um, Ellie, I had a crazy dream when I was on the airplane. I'd like to tell you about it."

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She looked at him seriously and hesitated before she answered. "Sure, Evan."

Just then, Slim Norris, who was his dad's best man, tapped his glass and announced that he would like to propose a toast to the new couple. Evan hardly heard what he said, so eager was he to share his dream with Ellie. Then Gloria, the stewardess who was Julie's maid of honor, tapped her glass and proposed a toast. Then everyone applauded and the bride and groom finally cut the cake.

Evan took a sip of his champagne. Ellie's eyes sparkled as she looked fondly toward the bride and groom. She started to walk away, but Evan took her arm. "I wanted to tell you about my dream."

Ellie stopped, and Evan quickly let go of her arm. "I'm sorry, Evan, I was caught up in the moment." Then Evan realized Ellie was probably looking forward to the day she got married. "Let's have a seat over there." She pointed to a soft bench against the wall.

Once Evan had told her the dream, leaving out the part where he was in bed with her, she looked troubled. She took his hand and turned her face toward his, looking directly into his eyes.

"Evan, when you found me in the cockpit before we landed, your dad, the other guys, and I were discussing what had happened on the flight. That wasn't a dream you had. We were all there. We all experienced the storm. We all landed in the year 2003. The passengers never said a word, but I'm sure they traveled through time as well. I'm just glad we are back."

"What?" Evan could hardly believe his ears. "So you remember the jet airliners, the new control tower?"

She nodded. "And I remember us...", she hesitated, "...going out to dinner."

And sharing a bed, Evan thought, but he didn't mention it. That would embarrass them both. But her eyes told him she did.

"Yes, I remember it all. I have no idea how that phenomenon happened, but I certainly don't want to experience it again. I'm going to stick to the domestic flights from now on." She was trying to make light of the situation, but she wasn't succeeding.

"We still have to go back across the ocean to Seattle," said Evan.

"I know. It's just a chance we'll have to take."

Evan propped his elbows on his thighs, rested his face in his hands, and stared at the floor. All that had happened streamed through his mind, but he stopped and thought about the space shuttle crash. If that was really going to happen, he might still be alive in 2003. He could warn the government. They might think he was crazy though, or they might think he had done something to cause the crash. And would it be wise to tamper with the future? It could distort the whole timeline.

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Ellie put her hand on Evan's knee. "Evan, don't worry. It'll be okay. It's probably a fluke accident that will never happen again." She stood up. "C'mon, let's enjoy the party."

"You're right." Evan stood up. Just then, a young man came along and asked Ellie to dance. Evan didn't even mind. He was still thinking about that space shuttle.

THE END