

In the Lap of the Gods.

It is often tiny details, made by others, that can change our whole lives.

1948: ST Patrick's Hospital Hartford Connecticut.

Identical Twins (Nat and Pete) are born to Mr and Mrs Richard Dawenport, a local insurance broker and a schoolmistress. An hour later Mrs Ralph Forbes, the wife of the President of Russell's Bank having suffered two miscarriages in the past, finally gives birth to a son Fletcher.

In the middle of the night Mrs Forbes wakes and asks to see her first born. Her faithful ~~maid~~ retained Mrs Neckall goes off to the hospital nursery to ~~bring~~ ^{bring back} Fletcher.

When she leans over to pick up the child she doesn't need to be told that the heir to the Russell fortune ~~is~~ ^{momentarily} has died. She looks across at the sleeping twins ~~and~~ Nat and Pete and ...

For the next half century we follow the lives of the two brothers as they are brought up in totally different backgrounds, ^{and} although they do not meet for far decades their paths regularly cross, school, University, Vietnam, ^{every} their chosen professions. ~~They~~ finally ^{come together} when Nat is arrested for the murder of his rival in the Republican party ~~for~~ ^{for} candidate for Governor, ^{and} he selects Fletcher to defend him, unaware that he is his brother.

But it is only when Fletcher is involved in a terrible car crash, and needs a rare blood group that he is to survive, that Nat comes forward and the surgeon stumbles across the truth, that they are twins.

Should they let the rest of the world know, especially while the parents are still alive, and what effect will it have on the election for Governor for which they are the two main candidates.

Nat's election to be the Governor will keep you on the edge of your seat, and it will not be until

the last line of the book that you will award
which one of them will be the key to the gateway
Mauson.

Chapter One.

All Miss Driscolls become Miss Nicolls

Forbes realized Ruth ~~was~~ ^{realized} that this ~~was~~ ^{would be} her last chance.

Dr Greenwood for professional reasons would not have put it quite so bluntly, although he ~~to~~ ^{he} accepted that after three miscarriages in as many years ~~his patient could not~~ ^{he could not advise} ~~to~~ ^{not} risk becoming pregnant again.

Robert on the other hand was not bound by the same professional etiquette and had been characteristically blunt, when ~~his~~ ^{his} wife told him she was pregnant ~~again~~ ^{again}. He simply issued an ultimatum that this time she must take it easy, a euthyasm for don't do anything that might hamper the birth of our child.

Robert knew that it would be difficult for his wife to take it easy, she was after all the daughter of Stephen Russell, and ~~it~~ ^{it} often said, somewhat ironically that if Ruth had been a boy, or even born a generation later, then it might been her, and not her husband who ended up as President of Russell's Bank.

But it was Robert who became President after her father's ~~untimely~~ ^{untimely} death, and she had to settle for the compensation prize, when she succeeded him as Chairman of St. Patrick's Hospital Trust, a cause to ~~which~~ ^{which} the family had been associated for four generations.

Although some of older physicians at St. Patrick's, needed to be convinced, that she was of the right metal, to follow her father, it was only weeks before they were made aware, that Ruth had not only inherited ~~his~~ ^{his} drive and energy but he had also instilled ^{Quicker} his knowledge and wisdom that was so often lavished on an only child. ~~It~~ ^{It} when Ruth Forbes first became pregnant, some of these older physicians expressed the desire to preside over the birth.

Ruth had not married until the age of thirty-three, and it wasn't ~~surpr~~ ^{surpr} because the young didn't do that sort of thing in the fifties, and it certainly

visited the adoption society, and in ~~the~~ one of those co-madences that fate deides, and novellits are not allowed to consider, Ruth became pregnant on the day the adoption society accepted their application.

This time Robert was determined to ensure that ~~it would not be~~ human error would not be reason for their child not entering the world. Ruth took her husband's advice and resigned as Chairman of the Hospital Trust, and agreed that a full time nurse should be employed to and I quote Robert's words 'keep a watchful eye on her'

Robert interviewed several applicants for the post, and she ~~blited~~^{all} those who held the necessary qualifications. But his final choice was based solely on whether he believed the person would be strong enough willed to make sure that Ruth kept to her agreement 'to take it easy', and not lapse into her old habits, of wanting to ~~see~~ everything she ~~was~~ ~~electd~~ to come across.

After a third round of interviews he settled on a Miss Patricia ~~Smith~~^{Nicoll}, who was a senior nurse on the maternity wing of St Mark's. He liked her no nonsense approach, and the fact that she had brought over a thousand children into the world tipped the balance.

It's sometimes big decisions made by others that change our whole lives.

Robert was delighted by how quickly Miss ~~Smith~~^{Nicoll} settled in, and as each month passed, he became more and more confident that they wouldn't ^{be} face the same problem this time.

When Ruth passed first six and ^{then} seven months without incident, he even began to consider christain names, ~~Andrew~~^{Andrew Nick} ~~George~~ should it be a boy. Victoria Grace if it were a girl. He never expressed a preference, as all they both wanted was a healthy child.

Robert was at ~~the beach~~^{in New York} when Miss ~~Smith~~^{Nicoll} called

to warn him that the contractions had begun. He didn't need to tell her to take ~~the~~ ^{his wife} straight to the hospital because she was already packing an overnight bag. He said he would catch the next flight back, and take a taxi straight to St Marks.

Dr Green ~~was~~ ^{was} on his way back home having just delivered twins when he spotted Ruth accompanied by Mrs ~~Driscoll~~ ^{Nichol} coming through the swing door. He turned back and once ~~she had~~ ^{she had} settled ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ a private room, quickly assembled, the finest ~~of~~ ^{of} team the hospital could muster. The truth was that had Mr Forbes been a normal patient he and Mrs Driscoll would have performed the task, without ~~any~~ ^{any} extra help calling on any extra help.

It quickly became clear that ~~Ruth~~ ^{to Dr Green} would have to undergo a caesarian operation, if the child was to be delivered safely. He ~~took~~ ^{took} a silent prayer, aware that ~~there~~ ^{his} ~~was~~ ^{was} going to be ~~no~~ ^{no} chance.

The delivery took over forty minutes, and when the head appeared ~~Driscoll~~ ^{Nichol} let out a sigh of relief, but it wasn't until she cut the umbilical cord that ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~added~~ ^{added} Alleluia. He couldn't see the unfeigned smile beneath Mrs ~~Driscoll~~ ^{Nichol}'s mask. PTG

Ruth was so exhausted and full of drugs that she fell into a deep sleep even before she had the chance to hold the child in her arms. It was left to Mrs ~~Driscoll~~ ^{Nichol} to take the boy off to the aptly named waiting room, where he would share his first few hours with several other ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~born~~ ^{born} ~~babies~~ ^{babies}.

When ~~she~~ ^{Nichol} had settled the child in his little cot, she returned to Ruth, delighted to find that she was sleeping peacefully. She settled ~~into~~ ^{into} a comfortable chair in the ~~corner~~ ^{far}, and ~~found~~ ^{found} herself nodding off from time to time.

Suddenly ~~she~~ ^{she} woke with a start, when ~~she~~ ^{she} heard the words - How is my son? Thought she

He's doing just fine ~~replied~~ ^{replied} Miss Driscoll
Am I allowed to see ^{Miss Driscoll} Ruth asked.

I can't see why not ~~Miss Driscoll~~ ^{Miss Driscoll} replied. I'll just go and
fetch him. I'll be back in a few moments.

Ruth pulled herself up as ~~she~~ ^{Miss Driscoll} left the room.

Miss Driscoll took the lift to the fifth floor,
and checked her watch. It was 3.31. She hadn't
realised that it was the middle of the night. She
opened the door to the waiting room ~~quietly~~ ^{quietly} so as not
to wake any of the ~~sleeping~~ ^{sleeping} children.

As she stepped into the room, she spotted the
night nurse dozing in the corner, and didn't disturb
her as it was probable the only few moments of ~~rest~~ ^{rest}
she would ~~get~~ ^{manage} in the next eight hours.

^{Miss Driscoll} ~~she~~ ^{only} ~~stepped~~ ^{stepped} between the two rows of cots, stopping
(for a moment to glance at the twins in the double cot
next to ~~Robert~~ ^{Andrew Nicholas} ~~George~~ ^{George} Forbes. She stared down at a
child who would ~~be~~ ^{want for nothing} ~~end~~ ^{for} the rest of his life.

Miss Driscoll bent down to pick up the ~~child~~ ^{child} (170)
when she ~~gained~~ ^{gained} in horror, hesitated, and then ~~gained~~ ^{gained}
in horror. After a thousand births you ~~became~~ ^{became} well qualified
to recognise death. The pallor of the skin, the look in the
eyes made it unnecessary to check the pulse.

~~It can often be decided made by other that change
our whole lives.~~

~~It was then that~~ ^{then} she made a decision that would change so
many lives.