

Leahs Children



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LEAH GOLDFEDER stood at the window and studied
red-winged blackbird
magically balanced on a slender branch
maple tree that dominated her garden.
Her first Labor Day will be
David's who always had a special fondness for the
holiday that marked the end of summer. Still, she noted with a pleasure that
she had
thought to feel again that the bird's scarlet flashings matched
tree's fiery crown of leaves. The brittle foliage always the first
take on the bright
mantle of autumn rustled musically in a
breeze and a single leaf
trembled and fell onto the thick green grass.
She leaned forward and her sudden
movement frightened the bird. It soared southward its brightly slatted wings
scissoring way through the azure summer sky.
The hallway clock tolled the
hour with delicate chimes and she
turned from the window. Aaron and Michael
would be arriving to take her to the Labor Day party at the Ellenbergs' Great
estate. Traditionally the Goldfedeers had hosted the festive reunion
of family and
friends that marked the changing season but Leah
not protested when Sherry
Ellenberg cautiously suggested that she
held at her home "this once." She had
in fact been relieved.
Her journey to Russia had exhausted her and she was
not yet ready to
greet her guests alone in this garden where once David's presence
beside her had been so essential. She had known that it was best to
have the party

elsewhere to mark a new beginning and acknowledge that there had been an ending. Briskly racing against a threatening melancholy she went to the closet and selected a dress of topaz silk shot through with intricate threads of silver that matched the moon-colored talons that veined their way through her long dark hair. She searched through the jewelry box for the smoky opal pendant and the small combs that matched it. She swept her hair back and sculpted the silvered plaits into a regal crest and slid the combs into place. She studied herself in the long mirror and acknowledged with shy surprise that she looked like a queen with an air of confidence.

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