

Chapter 1: Lord's Luck

Autumn twilight pierced the tall double paned windows overlooking Central Park 30 floors below. The light framed Owen Lord's Louis XIV desk and shaded his chiseled face and silver shoulder length straight hair.

He had aged, but not in a common way, rather, in the way that only certain old men age – those who knew themselves to have once been extraordinarily beautiful young men.

Owen Lord was a rare breed, and he knew it.

From an early age, the world bent its knees at the sight of him. It was not his fault, therefore, that people loved him without actually knowing him, or that fame and fortune had come all too quickly, and easily, and, perhaps, without merit.

The cavalcade of years had done nothing to alter the image he had of himself as one worthy of notoriety and acclaim. Indeed, instead of becoming alarmed at each passing birthday, Owen Lord found cause to celebrate his exceptionalness.

“Look at this face!” he was fond of exclaiming aloud -- sometimes to no one but the mirror -- most often to his middle daughter, Onora, who, like the family's loyal pair of moppet Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, usually could be found by her father's side.

Amused by how easily Onora startled, Owen Lord would, (without much provocation), shout this petition in her direction. Awaiting her inevitable response, he would position himself in the signature pose he was famous for: feline manicured hands placed defiantly on his trim hips, his still thick footballer's neck swiveled haughtily to the

left, his square chin thrown up a notch or two to show off its marvelous cleft while still allowing him to gaze down at his admirers.

Once thus positioned, he would shoot his sharp ice-blue eyes towards his target, offering the astonished witness an ever so bemused smirk from what was arguably his most recognizable attribute – his soft, unnaturally wide, moist, mouth.

Having achieved the pose recognized the world over, Owen Lord would then proclaim: “THIS is certainly NOT the face of a 61-year-old!”

At which point he expected, and remarkably always received, a reassuring response from whoever was there, usually his loyal middle daughter Onora.

Single and 29, Onora oversaw her father’s property and affairs, so it was usually she who sat at the desk in the study while her father paced, posed and postulated. And, it was usually she who reassuringly reaffirmed his frequent pronouncements.

If Owen Lord had a religious belief, it was that he had been anointed at birth with the responsibility of maintaining himself for the world because -- simply – the world needed him. Perhaps it was this extraordinary conviction that enabled him to be one of the few original 1960s British rock stars still left standing. He outlasted the social, drug-induced, tumult of mid-twentieth century rockers, welcoming in the first decade of the twenty-first seemingly without breaking a sweat. His pretty face and the signature hands-on-hips stance he adopted on occasion for his daughter Onora were as recognizable in the populous marketplace of the United States – a country he had called home since arriving there as a fresh, long-haired, 20-year-old Londoner in 1968 – as it was on the remote penniless island of Tristan da Cunha.

To utter the name “Owen Lord” anywhere in the world was to speak in code – he was rock royalty and referencing him immediately conferred clout. To nerdy types, their ability to analyze “hidden” meanings in Owen Lord’s incomprehensible lyrics denoted true intellectual achievement. To football players, their copying of Owen Lord’s concert prance as touchdown dances was still hip. To millionaires, their snatching Owen Lord as a guest speaker for their favorite charity events was a coup.

Years after he had stopped singing altogether, Owen Lord was still a recognized celebrity, and a must-have at any party worth going to. It was as if the world had acquiesced to Owen Lord’s vision of himself, continuing, without question, to offer him the deference and service he thought he was justly due.

So, as happens with most legends, whether or not they deserve it, Owen Lord blithely believed his own press.

Ironically, no one was more surprised, and confused, by the public’s adulation of Owen Lord than his own daughter Onora. Throughout her childhood, Onora had been unwittingly photographed at her father’s concerts staring blankly out at his throng of fans. Misunderstood by a public too willing to play their role as rabid fans, Onora’s photographed gaze became an iconic expression of reverence towards her father. Had anyone actually bothered to ask the child Onora the meaning of her stare, she would have, even at that young age, responded with characteristic rectitude that she just thought the crowd “crazy”.

Alas, in truth, the public’s view of Onora as an adoring child was indeed accurate, for Onora absolutely cherished her father – but that had nothing to do with his fame.

Unfortunately, Owen seldom gave Onora neither the time, nor the fatherly love, she craved. And so, Onora did the best she could growing up, relying perhaps too much on pleasing a father who would never be able to notice.

Eventually, the adult Onora learned to deal with her reality the way she dealt with the everyday prospect of rain: she sheltered and protected herself; her feelings buried under a blanket of duty and responsibility.

A pretty woman, Onora demonstrated strength and intelligence even when just sitting in sweat pants silently reading at her father's desk. Having long eschewed her father's jet-setting life in favor of solitude and work, Onora found her peace away from public scrutiny. Always a precocious child, she had inherited her father's thick mane of auburn hair, his height, his square jaw and dimpled chin, but not, to Owen's great dismay, his talent or charisma. Worse still according to Owen, Onora adamantly denied her patronage. Among Owen's constant chides was that Onora didn't try hard enough to be admired and live the life she was born to have.

However, whatever Onora lacked in talent and charm, she made up for with pure common sense.

Since her mother's death 18 years earlier, Onora was the one everyone in the Lord family unconsciously relied on.

Generally, however, the world ignored Onora...a fact she neither denied, nor bemoaned.

It seemed the public only had an appetite for two of Owen Lord's three daughters: the eldest, Orla, named after the classic Italian literary character Orlando Furioso, and the youngest, Ofelia, named after the tragic Shakespearean character in "Hamlet". Fittingly, unlike her sisters, Onora's name did not denote a literary figure; rather it stood simply for honor.

Many assumed the Lord girls' fanciful names were a product of Owen's literary pretensions and artistic imagination, but, truth be told, the girls' names were as much an homage to his beloved wife, Olivia, as they were to himself. Lord felt, (as did the once privileged of old), that names imbued the bearer with majesty – so, being that they were the product of rock-n-roll *royalty*, Owen felt his children were to bear his and his wife's initials as they would crowns ... O.L. O.L. O.L. O.L. O.L. There was something beautiful, thought Owen, about seeing a perfect set of Louis Vuittons all bearing the same gold stamped initials lined up in a row by his apartment door.

Owen's wife, Olivia, had been dubbed "the songbird of the 1970s" for having once led the California rock scene with her honeyed voiced ballads. Gorgeous and renowned, she won Owen's heart the first time she sang for him in the back room of a now-forgotten New York folk club where they had both gone as Andy Warhol's guests. It was not only her perfect pitch, but also Olivia's leggy look and smoldering gaze that captivated Owen. Crowning Olivia "future queen of rock," Owen decided that only she was good enough to capture him. So it was that when Owen, the then-30-year-old self-proclaimed rock prince, married his 20-year-old rock princess, Olivia, the world went mad with joy. Quickly christened "*the Royal Lords*" by paparazzi, the couple cemented

their dynasty with a succession of lovely daughters – one for each of their first three years of their marriage.

Olivia would spend the rest of her short life dotting upon Owen and her precious girls. So much so that when she died of un-diagnosed breast cancer, she left a void neither Owen nor her daughters could ever fill. To his credit, Owen truly loved Olivia to the end of her days... anyway, as much as he could ever love anyone -- beside himself.

As it turned out, Olivia was much more than the glamorous rock-star queen Owen thought he had married. She was not only kind, but, though young, keenly business-minded, and, above all, unwavering in her love of family. Her death devastated the Lord family, especially 11-year-old Onora who had inherited her mother's stealth and wisdom. Though still a child, Onora knew enough to recognize that her mother had been family's real strength as well as its protector – shielding Owen not only from an ugly public that was quick to turn on has-beens, but also from financial ruin.

Olivia's death awakened in Onora a burgeoning maternal instinct: she instinctively knew she was now the one who had to protect Owen Lord from himself.

By contrast, Owen's eldest daughter, Orla, inherited her mother Olivia's blond California looks, but none of her mother's sweetness. Tall, leggy, longhaired, and photogenic, Orla shared her father's worldview and sense of self-importance. Now pushing 30, Orla had distinguished herself as a celebrity while still in her teens by writing and performing a memorable 1990s one-hit-wonder whose annoyingly catchy refrain ("Have a ball at the mall!") infiltrated the airwaves like smog. She catapulted to "People Magazine" stardom after starring in the naughty music video that accompanied her one-

hit-wonder, (a classic MTV favorite featuring a pubescent Orla, dressed a la Brittany in a Catholic schoolgirl's uniform, riding up a mall escalator), but what cemented Orla as a celebrity regular was the never-ending string of men she dated. Orla's boyfriends' careers consisted mainly of oiling their washboard abs and being the latest 'hot' young guitar player.

Though she had stopped making the front cover of magazines, now that she was in her 30s, Orla prided herself on continuing to maintain enough popularity to still employ a small handful of paparazzi. Like her father, so entrenched was Orla's celebrity status, her seasonal quasi-sincere lament to her sisters that she "could not sunbathe topless in the Hamptons without a telephoto lens popping up in the bushes" was still accurate.

Completing the family group was Owen's youngest daughter, Ofelia, a fiery redhead dubbed "Little Sister" by pop magazines. Like Orla, the media doted on Ofelia, but mainly for her petulant antics, not her looks. One year younger than middle sister Onora, the 28-year-old Ofelia had achieved her celebrity status the old-fashioned way – first she got in trouble with the law, then she married big.

When she was arrested outside Hermes in Paris on the eve of her 21st birthday, Ofelia's only response was to exclaim: "But I'm Owen Lord's daughter!" - as if that alone disqualified her from harm.

The press cameras caught her on the rue de Faubourg screaming at the gendarmes while swinging a renegade Hermes white club Birkin bag.

“I thought they would just let me have it as a birthday present!” she cried on the jailhouse phone to her sister Onora.

After a media circus of a trial, Hermes dropped the charges, and Owen Lord became the proud owner of the \$57,000 white Birkin. Onora hoped that act would have chastised Ofelia, but instead of returning home to her family’s New York apartment as instructed, Ofelia turned around and stunned the tabloids by eloping JJ Toyle – the scion of an equally famous rock star.

Upon learning of the elopement from Onora, Owen Lord’s surprising pronouncement was not that his youngest had made a rash marriage, but rather that the family’s lineage was now absolute. Ofelia’s husband, JJ, (that was his legal name: “*two Js, no periods*”), was the son of John Toyle, a famous bass guitarist and lead singer of the glamorous mega-rock-group “Toyle and the Mates.” Often compared to “The Beatles,” “Toyle and the Mates” defined -- as their P.R. agency and frequent award shows reminded everyone -- “the music of a generation.”

The Toyles were also the Lord’s neighbors, occupying an apartment of equal size and on the same floor, but in the second tower of their New York City apartment building. The children had grown up together, but, still, Ofelia’s marriage came as somewhat of a shock since JJ had long professed Onora to be his favorite.

“I believe it was my destiny to produce a child who would carry forward the Lord rock genes,” Owen Lord told *US Magazine* when they published their article of what was called “the rock-n-roll wedding of the century.”

Owen was so excited by the prospect of the two rock royalty families uniting, he insisted on throwing the young couple an after-elopement party. Since the paperwork in her legal case was not yet completed, Ofelia was not allowed to leave France -- so the party was held at a châteaux near Versailles. Reportedly costing over a million dollars, the party attracted the “A” list of rockers and celebrities, whose lively jam sessions took three days to wind down. When wound down they did, and all the guests vacated the mansion, the châteaux’s owners found they had to enforce the obligatory insurance policy to repair the place.

Ofelia’s and Orla’s ascendancy to “princesses of rock” status fulfilled Owen’s sense of world importance, but this public adulation did not help pay the bills.

It was Onora, the quiet, efficient, unrecognized sister, working the phone in her sweats at her Daddy’s desk, who kept the family’s finances from crumbling.

It was Onora who fretted and watched over the dwindling trickle of cash from royalty checks.

It was Onora who policed her father’s aging oeuvre, calling in the lawyers to sue whenever a new song used his same riffs.

It was Onora who pursued endorsement deals for Owen, gently encouraging him to advertise erectile dysfunction pharmaceutical ads, or appear at car dealership openings.

And, after stalwartly negotiating the best possible terms she knew her father could command, it was Onora who lied to Owen, inflating the amount he was actually paid, otherwise, as she knew, he would not deign to sign any deals.

Onora was, without question, the brains behind the legend that was “Owen Lord.” She kept the flame, and, though she would never admit it, it was she who made it possible for the family to keep up appearances. It took a good measure of finesse, charm, guile, and genuine care, to keep her father in line, and the family living in the style they had become accustomed to – Birkin bags included.

When his beloved wife, Olivia, died, Owen Lord was rich beyond his wildest imagination. But 18 years of high-living, and no-concerns, had done a lot damage to Owen’s bank account and his investments. He bought too many things – cars, furs, shoes, silk underwear and socks, one-of-a-kind guitar collections, furniture, art, ... so many things that Owen had to hire a person just to store and care for them.

Ironically, it was Owen’s largest purchase – his \$23-million-dollar, three-story penthouse apartment at the San Remo on New York’s Fifth Avenue – that was the single best investment he had ever made... and the only thing that had thus far kept him from utter destitution.

For several years, against Onora’s advice, Owen repeatedly mortgaged the apartment to pay for the lavish Lord lifestyle. Though forewarned, Owen had just closed another mortgage on the property – utterly ignoring the ominous threats from his private bankers that this was to be their last investment in the Lord name and fame.

As his bankers rubbed their hands in anticipation of acquiring at steep discount what was arguably the best piece of private real estate in the entire island of Manhattan, Owen Lord stood at his antique Louis XIV desk, in that very same Fifth Avenue apartment, casually ignoring his impending homelessness.

Chapter 2: Lord's Choice

Eviction was the furthest thing from Lord's mind as he sat by his favorite window overlooking Central Park. His full attention was instead on his prize possession – a 3-inch tall stack of 30-year-old popular celebrity magazines that featured him and his brood.

Lord took great pleasure in maintaining these documents, lovingly sheathing the magazines' slick pages within specially ordered museum quality archival polyester bags. At least once a year he ordered his maid to fetch the stack from his library's shelves so he could examine them. In past years, Lord would add one or two more magazines to the pile for the maid to lug back to the library's shelf. But, for quite some years, the stack's count had not grown...proving yet again, according to Lord, that the world was no longer as 'grand' as it used to be.

Gingerly fingering the drying pages of *People* magazine's December 25, 1978 double issue, Lord carefully opened to page 67 where, as he well knew, he would find the photos of his wedding day. Absentmindedly, he stroked Olivia's smiling face. In the photo she stood standing next to him, her golden hair like feathered wings framing her brown eyes. Olivia wore a white muslin peasant gown and in both hands she carried an exquisitely delicate bouquet of just picked daisies. Her smile was full toothed and genuinely happy. Lord towered six inches next to her. He wore a more smug pose, and a maroon velvet jacket with open white silk shirt. The couple stood in front of the very same window Lord now faced.

The apartment was a gift from Lord to his new bride. He hoped its opulence would entice Ofelia to leave California for good – and it did. After arriving in the U.S. in

the late 1960s, Lord lived off and on in several apartments both in New York and California. By the 1970s he had settled for a walk-up in the lower East Side neighborhood aptly nicknamed Alphabet-city, but found the filthy streets and odd companions too much for his effete artistic nature. On sheer whim, Lord bought one of the two penthouses in the San Remo from an old musician friend and never looked back.

Once Olivia agreed to marry him, without asking her, Lord merrily bought the two apartments directly below his penthouse and thus created of the most remarkable, and coveted triplexes in all of Manhattan. As intended, the apartment lured Olivia to NYC, and the “songbird of California” stopped frolicking in the Pacific’s waves. Olivia justifiably fell in love with the San Remo’s Greek inspired twin towers, its luxurious marble twin lobbies, and, most of all, the fabulous view of Central Park from all three stories of her new home’s windows.

An imposing building, the San Remo remained the best representation of New York City’s mid-twentieth-century grand apartment building craze. Built in 1930, at the cusp of the Great Depression, the building defined Old World New York City. It’s apartments were still among the city’s most prized possessions. Movie stars and music legends alike vied, (some coming to fist fights), for apartments on prime floors, and high value divorce settlements stalled when couples could not bear to part with their San Remo abodes.

The San Remo was home to the Lords, and witness to their happiest, and saddest of the family’s days. The master bedroom suite, with its colonnaded, round, sunken marble Roman bathtub, was the site of Olivia’s last breath. Onora still caught herself

shuddering whenever she had to cross its private vestibule. The magazine Owen Lord now fingered contained glossy photos of the couple's apartment, including its master bedroom, which in 1978 contained a flokati white shag rug with matching coverlet. Owen found himself wondering what happened to that rug, but the reverie lasted only a minute as Onora entered the room and interrupted his nostalgic thoughts. She was quickly followed by Orla who stepped in front of her younger sister as if she did not exist.

"Father," said Onora, hoping he would look up towards her, but his gaze immediately settled on Orla's pleasing face and they exchanged a knowing look.

"Father," repeated Onora. "You must face reality."

"What, dear child, is 'reality'?" responded Owen as he gently closed the magazine's plastic wrap cover and winked at Orla.

"The 'reality' is that we can no longer afford to keep up this apartment – that we need cash flow," answered Onora. "I've explained it all to Orla -- here are the spreadsheets," she added placing a folder on top of the now closed magazine, "See for yourself father – we have no choice."

Orla bent her sinuous body past her father and towards the plain manila folder, picking it up casually.

"Well, what are our options then?" answered Orla in place of her father.

"Father can go on tour..." offered Onora.

"Not again with that!" Owen shot back.

Over the years Onora had tried desperately to encourage her father to accept generous offers from stadiums as far away as Beijing for him to revive his concert tour. But whenever she approached the subject of a world tour or concert, her father was stern and firm: “For God’s sake child! I am *Owen Lord!* I do not have to work at being a rock star – I invented ‘being a rock star’! Performing at a concert is for wannabees; my people love me already.”

Onora had even entertained an offer for a reality show, but in the end the producers backed away because Owen’s demographics tested poorly in the pre-teen market.

What Owen Lord had refused to see was that his popularity had descended to mere legend status. In a blink of an eye, Lord had witnessed his popular 1960s guitar hits melt from vinyl records onto tape, then morph to digital remasters, and, finally, vaporize onto a multitude of devices he barely knew himself how to operate. Whatever adoration the public had once conferred on Lord had vaporized along with his vinyl. He was still considered a legend, ushered out at regular intervals for rock award shows, but legendary status in the music business did not pay the bills. Owen’s problem was confusing status with wealth.

Having listened once too many times to her father’s pronouncements of eminence as excuses for not working for a living, Onora shot back: “Fine! Without a concert your only option is to sell this place to pay back the mortgages. It’s worth \$57million – enough to pay back the \$25million owed, leaving us with a tidy sum to live on – that is if Orla doesn’t want another ermine jacket.”

“No! We are not selling,” screamed Orla. “Over my dead body.”

“Well, you will be dead once we run out of food in the SubZero!” snapped Onora.

“There must be another way – you’re just too dumb to figure it out,” said Orla dismissingly, having regained her posture.

“Just stop it both of you and let me think!” said their father. “Onora, hadn’t you once mentioned *renting* this place out...is that still on the table?”

Onora had hoped her planned confrontation this morning would lead her father back to the idea of renting, which she had planted in him weeks ago – and, to her delight, her plan worked! She turned to hide her smile knowing that her father and sister would distrust any idea of hers. Both Orla and Owen assumed she turned her back towards them out of pain, little did they know the joy that exploded in her when her father offered the solution she herself had intended.

“If that’s what you think best, Father, then, yes, renting the apartment with furnishings is still an option,” replied Onora calmly.

She knew her father and sister well enough that had she proposed this straight out, they both would have summarily rejected it. The only way to put the apartment up for rent was to make her father and sister believe it had been their idea all along. She had an offer from a prominent A-list realtor to rent the apartment for a year at \$50,000 per month. That amount would net them the needed cash to keep up with the mortgage and perhaps even pay some of it off eventually... Onora knew she could figure out how to extricate her family from their economic distress if she was only given a little breathing

room between payments due. The family owned a beach house in East Hampton where, Onora knew, her father and sister could easily settle. The urgency was getting rid of the apartment, she thought to herself, then she would turn her mind towards trying to get her father back to work.

“Of course!” exclaimed Orla clapping her hands excitedly. “Why Father that’s a great idea! Why couldn’t you have thought of this Onora, you dunce!”

“I’ve been meaning to get back to the Egypt Lane house anyway,” responded her father casually. “No one would blink an eye if we transferred to the Hamptons for a year. I’m tired of the city anyway...”

“What a great idea, *Daddy*,” replied Onora, using the endearing name for him she reserved for only special occasions.

And so, it was settled that Onora would call the realtor and arrange for the lease to be signed. She would also inventory the apartment’s many possessions and arrange for personal items to be stowed or moved directly to the Hampton house on pricey Egypt Lane. Onora sighed feeling relief from the unbearable pressure she had endured for months. The only bump she had yet to face was telling her father and sister that she would not be joining them in the Hamptons, for Onora had quietly engineered her own escape in her plan.

“So when shall we leave?” inquired Orla as she examined her reflection in the mirror above the library’s ornate fireplace.

It had been a very dull February month for Orla, the winter freezing all but the most resilient of New Yorkers. The prospect of welcoming an early spring at the beach seemed reassuring to father and daughter.

“Polo season won’t be until July, but there will be a bit of a social season and I know the Rosses will be in from Europe and they are always good company,” said Lord, adding, “Even though Onora doesn’t think so.”

“I never said anything about the Rosses,” responded Onora, “But, you are right Father: I’d prefer, if it was OK with you, to skip the season.”

“Darling, even when you are with us at the galas you seem to be ‘skipping’ – don’t come, no one will miss you.”

“But where will you go?” asked Orla defensively.

“Oh, I think I can bunk in Aunt Margaret’s place this spring,” replied Onora, hoping neither her father nor her sister smelled a preconceived plan. The truth was she had already asked her Aunt Margaret, and they both were looking forward to an extended time together at last.

Margaret was not Onora’s real “aunt,” rather she was Ofelia’s oldest and best friend and fellow sixties folk singer. Margaret also lived in the San Remo, having moved there shortly after Ofelia, but in a decidedly more modest apartment on the more realistic 10th floor. When their mother was dying, it was Margaret who took charge of the household – making sure the girls got to their boarding schools on time, and that someone paid enough attention to Owen so that he did not become overly despondent. After

Ofelia's death, it was Margaret who stepped in and took over the "motherly" duties, having promised her dying friend that she would watch over the girls as if they were hers. Margaret took these duties to heart -- not that they were overly difficult for her, as her temperament was such that she found the Lord girls, and even their petulant father, "adorable". In turn, the Lords learned to love Margaret, each in their own way...so much so, that all three girls secretly hoped Margaret would eventually marry their father. None wished for this marriage more than Onora, for in Margaret Onora found someone to guide her, to lean onto, and a willing shoulder to cry on – everything a mother should be.

But the marriage was not to be, for neither Owen nor Margaret, as caring as they were towards each other, felt any desire to "tie the knot." So it was that though Margaret received the honorary title of "Aunt" instead of the official title of "Mother", even into their adulthood, she dominated the girls' lives and decisions. Thus, it seemed natural to Owen that Onora would choose to live with her beloved Aunt Margaret, rather than follow him and Orla to Long Island. What he failed to realize was that what Onora's decision had more to do with getting away from him than staying with her Aunt.

"Right. Terrific!" exclaimed Owen, rising from his desk, the spaniels following at his heels. "You are better off with Margaret – you would never be able to keep up with us out on Hamptons anyway. Orla, let's go to the beach house and see what needs to be done."

Before Onora could answer that there was no money left for anything that needed "to be done" to the Hampton house, Orla and her father swept out of the room. Seeing them leave Onora quickly pulled out her iPhone and texted the family accountant to put a

stop on the credit cards and had him withdraw and re-deposit the bank funds into another account she hoped her father had forgotten he had.

“They’re going straight to the decorator’s,” fumed a worried Onora aloud.

As she clicked on her iPhone a message popped up on the screen.

“Is it done?” read a text bearing Aunt Margaret’s moniker “MaggieMae”.

“Yes, it’s done - they’re already off to Hamptons,” replied Onora (leaving out the disconcerting issue of redecoration funds...a conversation she was separately having with her accountant.)

“When do u leave?” typed Margaret.

“Soon as lease signed,” texted Onora.

“OK can I come up?”

“Yes! need help sorting stuff if u can?”

“Be rt there! ☺” answered Margaret brightly.

The truth was Onora had already shown the apartment to a realtor known to the upper echelons of society. Having recognized her father’s name, the realtor immediately took the listing and told Onora the apartment was perfect for a very special client of his – one who not only could handily afford the rent, but was also involved in the music industry! Something Onora knew her father would cozy up to.

“He doesn’t even want to see it!” the realtor told Onora in a high pitched excited voice. “Just knowing it’s Owen Lord’s flat is good enough for him!” So the deal was essentially done, all Onora had to do was get her father to think it was his idea. But, once having achieved her objective, Onora realized she faced the certain reality of leaving her home and suddenly felt faint.

She sat herself on the office blue silk divan to steady her nerves.

“I had no choice,” she said aloud, perhaps thinking her mother was watching her.

The utter wretchedness of the situation engulfed her like a stifling hot breath. She dearly loved her beautiful home – it was the only thing she had left of her dead mother. Onora wanted to be nowhere else but where she was at that very moment – yet it was she who, for the sake of family, had to wrench herself from it. Owen and Orla’s playing at being For the first time in her life, Onora felt disgusted with her father - she knew she could never again justify his stubborn adherence to an attitude of privilege that had led them to these dire straights.

She would never forgive him this.