

FROM: **SUMMER**, CHAPTER TWO  
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When it was over, and the afterbirth was cleaned out of her as well, she had such a feeling of relief, as though something unclean had been taken away and she was whole again. She slept for a long time. The first peaceful sleep she had in months.

And then she heard the baby cry. The baby was hungry. But Summer had promised herself she would never have anything to do with the baby. Her father and Doctor Chapman supported her decision.

Doctor Chapman promised to care for the child himself and eventually take it to a foundling home in Chicago. He would absolutely, positively do that for her. He felt it was the least he could do.

But the baby was crying. The baby was hungry.

It reminded her of a newborn calf bawling for its mother. The cow might not have wanted that particular bull messing with her, but the calf that resulted was still a calf and needed to be fed. It didn't matter who its father was. It was still a hungry calf.

Slowly Summer got up out of bed. She walked out of her bedroom and into the kitchen. She didn't see her father so she assumed he was asleep in his bedroom. She walked past his bedroom and headed for the housekeeper's room. Since the housekeeper quit, it was a guest bedroom. The Doctor had been staying there for the last ten days. The crying was coming from in there.

The door was a little ajar. Summer pushed it open and saw the Doctor sitting in the rocking chair. His brow was furrowed as he looked down at the infant in his arm. He was trying to get it to take the rubber nipple on a bottle full of condensed milk. And the infant was fighting it, pushing the nipple away with its tongue.

The Doctor looked so tired. Summer could see that he had been weeping for this wee life in his hands.

The Doctor looked up and saw her standing in the doorway. He said, "No, Summer. Don't come in here. Please go out and shut the door. She fought it the last time I fed her. She'll settle down after a while. Please, for your own good, just go away. I'll manage."

Summer heard him and closed her eyes so she wouldn't see the child anymore. Until that moment, she didn't even know what gender the baby was; she had asked the Doctor not to tell her.

There were tears in her eyes as she turned to leave the room. And then the child cried again, such a mournful sound, such a sound. And suddenly Summer could feel the milk flowing out of her breasts. It was flowing so much that it dropped onto her stomach, ran down, and filled her navel.

Summer turned back into the room. Still with her eyes closed she moved like a sleepwalker across floor. When her knees bumped into the Doctor sitting in the rocking chair, she opened the front of her gown.

The Doctor saw the milk flowing from her breasts, but he did not move or say anything more.

Summer reached down and took the baby out of his arms and brought it to her breasts. In a moment the child had

found her teat and was no longer crying. Its hunger was being wonderfully satisfied. But Summer was weeping uncontrollably.

And then Summer heard her mother's voice again, That's what I wanted to do for you, my darling. I wanted to hold you and feed you and watch you grow, but I couldn't do it. Now you will do it for both of us.

Tom heard Summer crying. He got up off the floor where he was sleeping in the corner of Summer's room and came into the guestroom.

When he saw Summer nursing the baby, he thought, Dear God, no.

Summer was crying so hard that she was about to collapse onto the floor while holding the baby.

With a sigh, Tom helped the Doctor get Summer turned around and seated in the rocking chair. Then Tom knelt on the floor and put his head against the arm of the rocking chair and wept with her.

The Doctor went into the kitchen, sat down at the table, and drank the beer he had left there earlier.

After a while, Tom came out of the room and sat down beside the doctor. Much later, Summer came out of the room and sat down across from her father.

Summer said, "She's sleeping."

Tom nodded.

Doctor Chapman watched them look at each other.

Then Summer said, "Daddy, her name is Susannah." That was her mother's name.

Her father put his head in his hands on the table and wept.

And for the first time in her life, Summer knew that she was the strong one in the family.