

# Writers House Inc.

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Mr. Ken Follett  
Stevanage ENGLAND  
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~~Please fax to Ken~~

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Dear Ken,

I don't know that I have the definitive solution, but here are a few thoughts as to how you might begin the book.

My favorite one stems from the alternative plot which I suggested to you on the telephone a few days ago. This would involve Berisford coming to Jeannie and warning her that she must flee for her life. With this would come the revelation that she isn't who she thinks she is, but that she is a clone whom he created twenty-five or so years ago; and now that she has achieved some extraordinary intellectual feat, people more powerful than he are determined to use her for their own purposes.

A second possible beginning would be a testing session between Jeannie and Steve. In it, she discovers that he has capacities of various kinds that go way off the chart. To all intents and purposes, he lives the life of an ordinary law student; and then she questions him about these extraordinary abilities. He claims that he came to recognize these at a fairly early age, but he also came to recognize that displaying them would isolate him from his peers, making him seem like a know-it-all; and all he wanted to be is just a regular guy. But, he confesses too that he's very intrigued and impressed by Jeannie, so that in these tests, he didn't hide his true abilities. Then he pleads with Jeannie not to reveal the results; he's apprehensive about what governmental powers or others might want to do with him if they knew of his abilities.

A third scenario would be a variation on the second. Instead of the testing scene with Steve, you have a scene in which Jeannie reports the results of her tests to Berisford. This would confirm to him several things. First, that his experiments with the clones were more successful than he ever could have realized, at least with one of them. And second, that Jeannie may be on the road to discovering what he and his colleagues did twenty or so years ago. But if all we know about now is this "good" clone, then what Berisford has done may seem to be more wonderful than terrible.

Another thought just occurred to me. What if Berisford's assignment when he did the experiments was to try to develop individuals with minimal emotions and maximum physical strength who would be, in a word, super soldiers. But instead, he only partially followed orders. Maybe he created a few such creatures; but what he really wanted to do (and has done) was to create some human beings enormously rich both in emotion and intellect as well as physical prowess, and that's what he's done with Steve (and maybe Jeannie). This then could be the result which he is desperate to keep secret, because he knows that his former colleagues are ruthless and would want to exploit it in some way or another to the hilt.

Ken, I'll be up at Gipsy Trail Saturday and Sunday. Feel free to call me if you want to schmooze about this; if not, I'll see you at my house in New York at 9:30 on Monday. Bon voyage!

Warmly



Albert Zuckerman