

19

their to join
 After lunch, Berisford went to a quiet neighbourhood bar and ordered a martini.

Jim Proust's casual suggestion of murder had shaken him. Berisford knew he had made a fool of himself by grabbing Jim's lapel and yelling. But he did not regret the fuss. At least he could be sure Jim knew exactly how he felt.

It was nothing new for them to fight. He remembered their first great crisis, in the early seventies, when the Watergate scandal broke. It had been a terrible time: conservatism was discredited, the law-and-order politicians turned out to be crooked, and any clandestine activity, no matter how well-intentioned, was suddenly viewed as an unconstitutional conspiracy. Paul Barck had been terrified, and wanted to give up the whole mission. Jim Proust called him a coward, angrily argued there was no danger, and proposed to carry it on as a joint CIA-Army project, perhaps with tighter security. No doubt he would have been ready to assassinate any investigative journalist who pried into what they were doing. It had been Berisford who suggested setting up a private company, and distancing themselves from the government. Now once again it was up to him to find a way out of their difficulties.

The place was gloomy and cool. A TV set over the bar showed a soap opera, but the sound was turned down. The cold gin calmed Berisford. His anger at Jim

It's still not wholly clear what he fears.

19

After lunch Berisford went to a quiet neighbourhood bar and ordered a martini.

?5) (Jim Proust's casual suggestion of murder had shaken him) Berisford knew he had made a fool of himself by grabbing Jim's lapel and yelling. But he did not regret the fuss. At least he could be sure Jim knew exactly how he felt.

It was nothing new for them to fight. He remembered their first great crisis, in the early seventies, when the Watergate scandal broke. It had been a terrible time: conservatism was discredited, the law-and-order politicians turned out to be crooked, and any clandestine activity, no matter how well-intentioned, was suddenly viewed as an unconstitutional conspiracy. Paul Barck had been terrified, and wanted to give up the whole mission. Jim Proust called him a coward, angrily argued there was no danger, and proposed to carry it on as a joint CIA-Army project, perhaps with tighter security. No doubt he would have been ready to assassinate any investigative journalist who pried into what they were doing. It had been Berisford who suggested setting up a private company, and distancing themselves from the government. Now once again it was up to him to find a way out of their difficulties.

The place was gloomy and cool. A TV set over the bar showed a soap opera, but the sound was turned down. The cold gin calmed Berisford. His anger at Jim

19

After lunch Berisford went to a quiet neighbourhood bar and ordered a martini.

Jim Proust's casual suggestion of murder had shaken him. Berisford knew he had made a fool of himself by grabbing Jim's ^{lapel} and yelling. But he did not regret the fuss. At least he could be sure Jim knew exactly how he felt.

It was nothing new for them to fight. He remembered their first great crisis, in the early seventies, when the Watergate scandal broke. It had been a terrible time: conservatism was discredited, the law-and-order politicians turned out to be crooked, and any clandestine activity, no matter how well-intentioned, was suddenly viewed as an unconstitutional conspiracy. Paul Barck had been terrified, and wanted to give up the whole mission. Jim Proust called him a coward, angrily argued there was no danger, and proposed to carry it on as a joint CIA-Army project, perhaps with tighter security. No doubt he would have been ready to assassinate any investigative journalist who pried into what they were doing. It had been Berisford who suggested setting up a private company, and distancing themselves from the government. Now once again it was up to him to find a way out of their difficulties.

The place was gloomy and cool. A TV set over the bar showed a soap opera, but the sound was turned down. The cold gin calmed Berisford. His anger at Jim

gradually evaporated, and he focussed his mind on Jeannie Ferrami.

He tried not to think about her body. Women had always been his weakness. No other vice tempted him: he drank in moderation, never gambled, and could not understand why people took drugs. He had loved his wife, Vivvie, but even then he had not been able to resist the temptation of other women, and Vivvie had eventually left him because of his fooling around. Now when he thought of Jeannie his imagination, acting against his will, showed (him pornographic movies of) her, pulling off a soft wool sweater to reveal neat round breasts, or reclining on crisp sheets with her long legs open and inviting, or moving beneath him, sweating and panting with pleasure.

He pushed such thoughts away. Seducing her was not the answer to his problems.

As well as desire he felt burning resentment. She was just a girl, for God's sake: how could she be such a threat? How could a kid with a ring in her nose possibly jeopardize him and Paul and Jim when they were on the brink of achieving their lifetime ambitions? It was unthinkable they should be thwarted now: the idea made him dizzy with panic. When he was not imagining himself making love to Jeannie, he had fantasies of strangling her.

Fear had caused him to make a rash promise. He had recklessly told Jim and Paul that he would deal with Jeannie. Now he had to fulfil that imprudent

gradually evaporated, and he focussed his mind on Jeannie Ferrami.

He tried not to think about her body. Women had always been his weakness. No other vice tempted him: he drank in moderation, never gambled, and could not understand why people took drugs. He had loved his wife, Vivvie, but even then he had not been able to resist the temptation of other women, and Vivvie had eventually left him because of his fooling around. Now when he thought of Jeannie his imagination, acting against his will, showed him pornographic movies of her, pulling off a soft wool sweater to reveal neat round breasts, or reclining on crisp sheets with her long legs open and inviting, or moving beneath him, sweating and panting with pleasure.

He pushed such thoughts away. Seducing her was not the answer to his problems.

As well as desire he felt ~~burning~~ resentment. She was just a girl, for God's sake: how could she be such a threat? How could a kid with a ring in her nose possibly jeopardize him and Paul and Jim when they were on the brink of achieving their lifetime ambitions? It was unthinkable they should be thwarted now: the idea made him dizzy with panic. When ~~he was~~ not imagining himself making love to Jeannie, he had fantasies of strangling her.

Fear had caused him to make a rash promise. He had recklessly told Jim and Paul that he would deal with Jeannie. Now he had to fulfil that imprudent

undertaking. He had to stop her asking questions about Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker.

It was maddeningly difficult. Although he had hired her and arranged her grant, he could not simply give her orders: as he had told Jim, the university was not the army. She was employed by JFU, and Genetico had already handed over a year's funding. In the long term, of course, he could easily pull the plug on her; but that was not good enough. ~~The bitch~~^{She} had to be stopped immediately, today or tomorrow, before she learned enough to ruin them all.

Calm down, he thought, calm down.

Her weak point was her use of medical databases without the permission of the patients. It was the kind of thing the newspapers could make into a scandal, regardless of whether anyone's privacy was genuinely invaded. And universities were terrified of scandal: it played havoc with their fund-raising.

All the same he was scared of starting a public outcry. It was hard to control the press. There was a chance they would begin by investigating Jeannie and finish up investigating him. This would be a dangerous strategy. But he could think of no other, short of Jim's wild talk of murder.

His glass was empty. The bartender offered him another drink but he declined. He looked around the bar and spotted a pay phone next to the men's room. He swiped his American Express card through the card reader and called Jim's office. One

undertaking. He had to stop her asking questions about Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker.

It was maddeningly difficult. Although he had hired her and arranged her grant, he could not simply give her orders: as he had told Jim, the university was not the army. She was employed by JFU, and Genetico had already handed over a year's funding. In the long term, of course, he could easily pull the plug on her; but that was not good enough. The bitch had to be stopped immediately, today or tomorrow, before she learned enough to ruin them all.

Calm down, he thought, calm down.

Her weak point was her use of medical databases without the permission of the patients. It was the kind of thing the newspapers could make into a scandal, regardless of whether anyone's privacy was genuinely invaded. And universities were terrified of scandal: it played havoc with their fund-raising.

All the same he was scared of starting a public outcry. It was hard to control the press. There was a chance they would begin by investigating Jeannie and finish up investigating him. This would be a dangerous strategy. *Doesn't he need to struggle and at least seem to* But he could think of no other, short of Jim's wild talk of murder. *to see?*

His glass was empty. The bartender offered him another drink but he declined. He looked around the bar and spotted a pay phone next to the men's room. He swiped his American Express card through the card reader and called Jim's office. One

undertaking. He had to stop her asking questions about Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker.

It was maddeningly difficult. Although he had hired her and arranged her grant, he could not simply give her orders: as he had told Jim, the university was not the army. She was employed by JFU, and Genetico had already handed over a year's funding. In the long term, of course, he could easily pull the plug on her; but that was not good enough. The bitch had to be stopped immediately, today or tomorrow, before she learned enough to ruin them all.

Calm down, he thought, calm down.

Her weak point was her use of medical databases without the permission of the patients. It was the kind of thing the newspapers could make into a scandal, regardless of whether anyone's privacy was genuinely invaded. And universities were terrified of scandal: it played havoc with their fund-raising.

All the same he was ~~scared~~ of starting a public outcry. It was hard to control the press. There was a chance they would begin by investigating Jeannie and finish up investigating him. This would be a dangerous strategy. But he could think of no other, short of Jim's wild talk of murder.

His glass was empty. The bartender offered him another drink but he declined. He looked around the bar and spotted a pay phone next to the men's room. He swiped his American Express card through the card reader and called Jim's office. One

undertaking. He had to stop her asking questions about Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker.

It was maddeningly difficult. Although he had hired her and arranged her grant, he could not simply give her orders: as he had told Jim, the university was not the army. She was employed by JFU, and Genetico had already handed over a year's funding. In the long term, of course, he could easily pull the plug on her; but that was not good enough. The bitch had to be stopped immediately, today or tomorrow, before she learned enough to ruin them all.

Calm down, he thought, calm down.

Her weak point was her use of medical databases without the permission of the patients. It was the kind of thing the newspapers could make into a scandal, regardless of whether anyone's privacy was genuinely invaded. And universities were terrified of scandal: it played havoc with their fund-raising.

All the same he was scared of starting a public outcry. (It was hard to control the press. There was a chance they would begin by investigating Jeannie and finish up investigating him. This would be a dangerous strategy. But he could think of no other, short of Jim's wild talk of murder.)

His glass was empty. The bartender offered him another drink but he declined. He looked around the bar and spotted a pay phone next to the men's room. He swiped his American Express card through the card reader and called Jim's office. One

2.8/

ref p
p219

of Jim's brash young men answered: "Senator Proust's office."

"This is Berisford Jones—"

"I'm afraid the senator is in a meeting right now."

He really should train his acolytes to be a little more charming, Berisford thought. "Then let's see if we can avoid interrupting him," he said. "Does he have any media appointments this afternoon?"

"I'm not sure. May I ask why you need to know, sir?"

"No, young man, you may not," Berisford said with exasperation. Self-important assistants were the curse of Capitol Hill. "You may answer my question, or you may put Jim Proust on the phone, or you may lose your goddamn job, now which is it to be?"

"Please hold."

There was a long pause. Berisford reflected that wishing Jim would teach his aides to be charming was like hoping a chimpanzee would teach its young table manners. The boss's style spread to the staff: an ill-mannered person ^{usually} ~~always~~ had rude employees.

A new voice came on the phone. "Professor Jones, in fifteen minutes the senator is due to attend a press conference to launch Congressman Dinkey's book *New Hope for America*."

That was just perfect. "Where?"

"The Watergate hotel."

"Tell Jim I'll be there, and make sure my name is on the guest list, please."

Berisford hung up without waiting for a reply.

He left the bar and got a cab to the hotel. This would need to be handled delicately, ~~he thought nervously~~. Manipulating the media was hazardous: a good reporter might look past the obvious story and start asking why it was being planted. But each time he ~~thought~~ of the risks, he reminded himself of the rewards, and steeled his nerve.

He found the room where the press conference was to be held. His name was not on the list—self-important assistants were never efficient—but the book's publicist recognised his face and welcomed him as an additional attraction for the cameras. He was glad he had worn the striped Turnbull & Asser shirt that looked so distinguished in photographs.

He took a glass of Perrier and looked around the room. There was a small lectern in front of a blowup of the book's cover, and a pile of press releases on a side table. The TV crews were setting up their lights. Berisford saw one or two reporters he knew, but none he really trusted.

However, more were arriving all the time. He moved around the room making small talk, keeping an eye on the door. Most of the journalists knew him: he was a minor celebrity. He had not read the book, but Dinkey subscribed to a traditionalist

right-wing agenda which was a mild version of what Berisford shared with Jim and Paul, so Berisford was happy to tell reporters that he endorsed the book's message.

At a few minutes past three, Jim arrived with Dinkey. Close behind them was Hank Stone, a senior *New York Times* man. Bald, red-nosed, bulging over the waistband of his pants, shirt collar undone, tie pulled down, tan shoes scuffed, he had to be the worst-looking man in the White House press corps.

Berisford wondered if Hank would do.

Hank had no known political beliefs. Berisford had met him when he did an article about Genetico, fifteen or twenty years ago. Since getting the Washington job he had written about Berisford's ideas once or twice and Jim Proust's several times. He treated them sensationally, rather than intellectually, as newspapers inevitably did, but he never moralised in the pious way liberal journalists would.

Hank would treat a tipoff on its merits: if he thought it was a good story he would write it. But could he be trusted not to dig deeper? Berisford was not sure.

He greeted Jim and shook hands with Dinkey. They talked for a few minutes while Berisford looked out hopefully for a better prospect. But none came and the press conference started.

Berisford sat through the speeches, containing his impatience. There was just not enough time. Given a few days he could find someone better than Hank, but he did not have a few days, he had a few hours. And an apparently fortuitous meeting

like this was so much less suspicious than making an appointment and taking the journalist to lunch.

When the speeches were over there was still no one better than Hank in view.

As the journalists dispersed Berisford buttonholed him. "Hank, I'm glad I ran into you. I may have a story for you."

"Good!"

"It's about misuse of medical information on databases."

He made a face. "Not really my kind of thing, Berry, but go on."

Berisford groaned inwardly: Hank did not seem to be in a receptive mood. He ploughed on, working his charm. "I believe it *is* your kind of thing, because you'll see potential in it that an ordinary reporter might overlook."

"Well, try me."

"First of all, we're not having this conversation."

"That's a little more promising."

"Secondly, you may wonder why I'm giving you the story, but you're never going to ask."

"Better and better," Hank said, but he did not make a promise.

Berisford decided not to push him on it. "At Jones Falls University, in the psychology department, there's a young researcher called Dr Jean Ferrami. In her search for suitable subjects to study, she scans large medical databases without the

permission of the people whose records are on the files."

Hank pulled at his red nose. "Is this a story about computers, or about scientific ethics?"

"I don't know, you're the journalist."

He looked unenthusiastic. "It isn't much of a scoop."

Don't start playing hard to get, you bastard. Berisford touched Hank's arm in a friendly gesture. "Do me a favour, make some inquiries," he said persuasively. "Call the university president, his name is Maurice Bell. Call Dr Ferrami. Tell them it's a big story, and see what they say. I believe you'll get some interesting reactions."

"I don't know."

"I promise you, Hank, it will be worth your time." *Say yes, you son of a bitch, say yes!*

Hank hesitated, then said: "Okay, I'll give it a whirl."

Berisford's heart leaped. He had done it. He tried to conceal his triumph behind an expression of gravity, but he could not help a little smile of satisfaction.

Hank saw it, and a suspicious frown crossed his face. "You're not trying to use me, are you, Berry? Like to frighten someone, maybe?"

Berisford smiled and put an arm around the reporter's shoulders. "Hank," he said. "Trust me."

you have to say yes to him

permission of the people whose records are on the files."

Hank pulled at his red nose. "Is this a story about computers, or about scientific ethics?"

"I don't know, you're the journalist."

He looked unenthusiastic. "It isn't much of a scoop."

Don't start playing hard to get, you bastard. Berisford touched Hank's arm in a friendly gesture. "Do me a favour, make some inquiries," he said persuasively. "Call the university president, his name is Maurice Bell. Call Dr Ferrami. Tell them it's a big story, and see what they say. I believe you'll get some interesting reactions."

"I don't know."

"I promise you, Hank, it will be worth your time." *Say yes, you son of a bitch, say yes!*

Hank hesitated, then said: "Okay, I'll give it a whirl."

Berisford's heart leaped. He had done it. He tried to conceal his triumph behind an expression of gravity, but he could not help a little smile of satisfaction.

Hank saw it, and a suspicious frown crossed his face. "You're not trying to use me, are you, Berry? Like to frighten someone, maybe?"

Berisford smiled and put an arm around the reporter's shoulders. "Hank," he said. "Trust me."

These works fairly well, but it will have more suspense if you vary more. If we know more explicitly what he's trying to accomplish, there'll be more tension in whether or not he can succeed. We also need his fantasy of how this will affect Teenie.

20

Jeannie bought a three-pack of white cotton panties at a ^{Walgreen's} ~~Wal~~ Drug in a strip mall just outside Richmond. She slipped a pair on in the ladies' rest room of the neighbouring Burger King. Then she felt better.

Strange how defenceless she had felt without underwear. She had hardly been able to think of anything else. Yet when she was in love with Will Temple she had liked to go around with no panties on. It made her feel sexy all day. Sitting in the library, or working in the lab, or just walking down the street, she would fantasize that Will showed up unexpectedly, in a fever of passion, saying *There isn't much time but I've got to have you, now, right here*, and she was ready for him. But with no man in her life she needed her underwear like she needed shoes.

Properly dressed again, she returned to the car. Lisa drove them to the Richmond-Williamsburg airport, where they checked their rental car and caught the plane back to Baltimore.

The key to the mystery must lie with the hospital where Dennis and Steven were born, Jeannie mused as they took off. Somehow, identical twin brothers had ended up with different mothers. It was a fairy-tale scenario but something like it must have happened.

20

Jeannie bought a three-pack of white cotton panties at a Wall Drug in a strip mall just outside Richmond. She slipped a pair on in the ladies' rest room of the neighbouring Burger King. Then she felt better.

Strange how defenceless she had felt without underwear. She had hardly been able to think of anything else. Yet when she was in love with Will Temple she had liked to go around with no panties on. (It made her feel sexy all day. Sitting in the library, or working in the lab, or just walking down the street, she would fantasize that Will showed up unexpectedly, in a fever of passion, saying *There isn't much time but I've got to have you, now, right here*, and she was ready for him.) But with no man in her life she needed her underwear like she needed shoes.

Properly dressed again, she returned to the car. Lisa drove them to the Richmond-Williamsburg airport, where they checked their rental car and caught the plane back to Baltimore.

The key to the mystery must lie with the hospital where Dennis and Steven were born, Jeannie mused as they took off. Somehow, identical twin brothers had ended up with different mothers. It was a fairy-tale scenario but something like it must have happened.

She looked through the papers in her case and checked the birth information on the two subjects. Steven's birthday was August 25th. To her horror she found that Dennis's birthday was September 7th—almost two weeks later.

"There must be a mistake," she said. "I don't know why I didn't check this before." She showed Lisa the conflicting documents.

"We can double check," Lisa said.

"Do any of our forms ask which hospital the subject was born at?"

Lisa gave a rueful laugh. "I believe that's one question we didn't include."

"It must have been a military hospital, in this case. Colonel Logan is in the army, and presumably 'the major' was a soldier at the time Dennis was born."

"We'll check."

Lisa did not share Jeannie's impatience. For her it was just another research project. For Jeannie it was everything. Now she could hardly wait to get on the ground so she could find out. "I'll call from the airport," she said. "Why don't they have phones on planes?" *Most U.S. domestic flights now do have phones.*

Lisa frowned. "Are you thinking of calling Steven's mother?"

Jeannie heard the note of disapproval in Lisa's voice. "Yes. Why shouldn't I?"

"Does she know he's in jail?"

"Good point. I don't know. Damn. I shouldn't be the one to break the news."

"He may have called home already."

She looked through the papers in her case and checked the birth information on the two subjects. Steven's birthday was August 25th. To her horror she found that Dennis's birthday was September 7th—almost two weeks later.

"There must be a mistake," she said. "I don't know why I didn't check this before." She showed Lisa the conflicting documents.

"We can double check," Lisa said.

"Do any of our forms ask which hospital the subject was born at?"

Lisa gave a rueful laugh. "I believe that's one question we didn't include."

"It must have been a military hospital, in this case. Colonel Logan is in the army, and presumably 'the major' was a soldier at the time Dennis was born."

"We'll check."

Lisa did not share Jeannie's impatience. For her it was just another research project. For Jeannie it was everything. Now she could hardly wait to get on the ground so she could find out. "I'll call from the airport," she said. "Why don't they have phones on planes?"

Lisa frowned. "Are you thinking of calling Steven's mother?"

Jeannie heard the note of disapproval in Lisa's voice. "Yes. Why shouldn't I?"

"Does she know he's in jail?"

"Good point. I don't know. Damn. I shouldn't be the one to break the news."

"He may have called home already."

?
They do
now

She looked through the papers in her case and checked the birth information on the two subjects. Steven's birthday was August 25th. To her horror she found that Dennis's birthday was September 7th—almost two weeks later.

"There must be a mistake," she said. "I don't know why I didn't check this before." She showed Lisa the conflicting documents.

"We can double check," Lisa said.

"Do any of our forms ask which hospital the subject was born at?"

Lisa gave a rueful laugh. "I believe that's one question we didn't include."

"It must have been a military hospital, in this case. Colonel Logan is in the army, and presumably 'the major' was a soldier at the time Dennis was born."

"We'll check."

Lisa did not share Jeannie's impatience. For her it was just another research project. For Jeannie it was everything. Now she could hardly wait to get on the ground so she could find out. "I'll call from the airport," she said. "Why don't they have phones on planes?"

Lisa frowned. "Are you ~~thinking~~ thinking of calling Steven's mother?"

Jeannie heard the ~~note~~ note of disapproval in Lisa's voice. "Yes. Why shouldn't I?"

"Does she know he's in jail?"

"Good point. I don't know. Damn. I shouldn't be the one to break the news."

"He may have called home already."

"Maybe I'll go see Steven in jail. That's allowed, isn't it?"

"I guess so. But they might have visiting hours, like hospitals."

"I'll just show up and hope for the best."

As they were approaching Baltimore the stewardess stopped by and said:

"Don't you remember me, Jeannie?"

Jeannie looked at her for the first time and recognised her immediately. "Penny Walters," she said. Penny had done her doctorate in English at Minnesota alongside Jeannie. "How are you?"

"I'm great. How are you doing?"

"I'm at Jones Falls, doing a research project that's running into problems. I thought you were going after an academic job."

"I was, but I didn't get one."

78/ (Jeannie felt embarrassed that she had been successful where her friend had failed.) "That's too bad."

"I'm glad, now. I enjoy this work and it pays better than most colleges."

78/ Jeannie did not believe her. (It was shocking to see a woman with a doctorate working as a stewardess) "I always thought you'd be such a good teacher."

rep. 226 "I taught high school for a while. I got knifed by a student who disagreed with me about Macbeth. I asked myself why I was doing it—risking my life to teach Shakespeare to kids who couldn't wait to go back out on the streets and get on with

"Maybe I'll go see Steven in jail. That's allowed, isn't it?"

"I guess so. But they might have visiting hours, like hospitals."

"I'll just show up and hope for the best."

As they were approaching Baltimore the stewardess stopped by and said:

"Don't you remember me, Jeannie?"

Jeannie looked at her for the first time and recognised her immediately. "Penny Walters," she said. Penny had done her doctorate in English at Minnesota alongside Jeannie. "How are you?"

"I'm great. How are you doing?"

"I'm at Jones Falls, doing a research project that's running into problems. I thought you were going after an academic job."

"I was, but I didn't get one."

Jeannie felt embarrassed that she had been successful where her friend had failed. "That's too bad."

"I'm glad, now. I enjoy this work and it pays better than most colleges."

Jeannie did not believe her. It was shocking to see a woman with a doctorate working as a stewardess. "I always thought you'd be such a good teacher."

"I taught high school for a while. I got knifed by a student who disagreed with me about Macbeth. I asked myself why I was doing it—risking my life to teach Shakespeare to kids who couldn't wait to go back out on the streets and get on with

stealing money to buy crack cocaine."

Jeannie remembered the name of Penny's husband. "How's Danny?"

"He's doing great, he's area sales manager now. It means he has to travel a lot, but it's worth it."

"Well, it's good to see you again. Are you based in Baltimore?"

"Washington, DC."

"Give me your phone number, I'll call you up." Jeannie offered a ballpoint and Penny wrote her phone number on one of Jeannie's file folders.

"We'll have lunch," Penny said. "It'll be fun."

"You bet."

Penny went forward.

Lisa said: "She seemed bright."

"She's very clever. I'm horrified. There's nothing wrong with being a stewardess, but it's kind of a waste of twenty-five years of education."

"Are you going to call her?"

"Hell, no. She's in denial. I'd just remind her of what she used to hope for. It would be agony."

"I guess. I feel sorry for her."

"So do I."

As soon as they landed, Jeannie went to a pay phone and called the Pinkers in

Richmond, but the phone was busy. "Damn," she said querulously. She waited five minutes then tried again, but she got the same infuriating tone. "Charlotte must be calling her violent family to tell them all about our visit," she said. "I'll try later."

Lisa's car was in the parking lot. They drove into the city and Lisa dropped Jeannie at her apartment. Before getting out of the car Jeannie said: "Could I ask you a great big favour?"

"Sure. I'm not saying I'll do it, though." Lisa grinned.

"Start the DNA extraction tonight."

Her face fell. "Oh, Jeannie, we've been out all day. I have to shop for dinner—"

"I know. And I have to visit the jail. Let's meet at the lab later, say at nine o'clock?"

"Okay." Lisa smiled. "I'm kind of curious to know how the test turns out."

"If we start tonight, we could have a result by the day after tomorrow."

Lisa looked dubious. "Cutting a few corners, yes."

"Attagirl!" Jeannie got out of the car and Lisa drove away.

Jeannie would have liked to get right into her car and drive to police headquarters, but she decided she should check on her father first, so she went into the house.

He was watching *Wheel of Fortune*. "Hi, Jeannie, you're home late," he said.

"I've been working, and I haven't finished yet," she said. "How was your day?"

"A little dull, here on my own."

She felt sorry for him. He seemed to have no friends. However, he looked a lot better than he had last night. He was clean and shaved and rested. He had warmed up a pizza from her freezer for his lunch, (she noted) the dirty dishes were on the kitchen counter. (That annoyed her) She was about to ask him who the hell he thought was going to put them in the dishwasher, but she bit back her words.

She put down her briefcase and began to tidy up. He did not turn off the TV.

"I've been to Richmond, Virginia," she said.

"That's nice, honey. What's for dinner?"

No, she thought, this can't go on. He's not going to treat me like he treated Mom. "Why don't you make something?" she said.

That got his attention. He turned from the TV to look at her. "I can't cook!"

"Nor can I, Daddy."

He frowned, then smiled triumphantly. "Then we'll eat out!"

The expression on his face was hauntingly familiar. Jeannie flashed back twenty years. She and Patty were wearing matching flared denim jeans. She saw Daddy with dark hair and sideburns, saying: "Let's go to the funfair! Shall we get cotton candy? Jump in the car!" He had been the most wonderful man in the world. Then her memory jumped ten years. She was in black jeans and Doc Marten boots, and Daddy's hair was shorter and graying, and he said: "I'll drive you up to Boston

"A little dull, here on my own."

She ^{almost} felt sorry for him. He seemed to have no friends. However, he looked a lot better than he had last night. He was clean and shaved and rested. He had warmed up a pizza from her freezer for his lunch, she noted: the dirty dishes were on the kitchen counter. That annoyed her. She was about to ask him who the hell he thought was going to put them in the dishwasher, but she bit back her words.

She put down her briefcase and began to tidy up. He did not turn off the TV.

"I've been to Richmond, Virginia," she said.

"That's nice, honey. What's for dinner?"

No, she thought, this can't go on. He's not going to treat me like he treated Mom. "Why don't you make something?" she said.

That got his attention. He turned from the TV to look at her. "I can't cook!"

"Nor can I, Daddy."

He frowned, then smiled triumphantly. "Then we'll eat out!"

The expression on his face was hauntingly familiar. Jeannie flashed back twenty years. She and Patty were wearing matching flared denim jeans. She saw Daddy with dark hair and sideburns, saying: "Let's go to the funfair! Shall we get cotton candy? Jump in the car!" He had been the most wonderful man in the world. Then her memory jumped ten years. She was in black jeans and Doc Marten boots, and Daddy's hair was shorter and graying, and he said: "I'll drive you up to Boston

with your stuff, I'll get a van, it'll give us a chance to spend time together, we'll eat fast food on the road, it'll be such fun! Be ready at ten!" She had waited all day, but he never showed up, and the next day she took a Greyhound.

Now, seeing the same old let's-have-fun light in his eyes, she wished with all her heart that she could be nine years old again, and believe every word he said. But she was grown up now, so she said: "How much money do you have?"

He looked sullen. "I don't have any, I told you."

"Me either. So we can't eat out." She opened the refrigerator. She had an iceberg lettuce, some fresh corn on the cob, a lemon, a pack of lamb chops, one tomato and a half-empty box of Uncle Ben's rice. She took them all out and put them on the counter. "I tell you what," she said. "We'll have fresh corn with melted butter as an appetizer, followed by lamb chops with lemon zest accompanied by salad and rice, and ice cream for dessert."

"Well, that's just great!"

"You get it started while I'm out."

He stood up and looked at the food she had put out.

She picked up her briefcase. "I'll be back soon after ten."

"I don't know how to cook this stuff!" He picked up a corncob.

From the shelf over the refrigerator she took *The Reader's Digest All-the-Year-Round Cookbook*. She handed it to him. "Look it up," she said. She kissed his cheek and

went out.

② How helpless he was! Of course he
 (As she got into her car and headed downtown she hoped she had not been too
 cruel.) He was from an older generation, the rules had been different in his day. Still,
 she could not be his housekeeper even if she had wanted to: she had to hold down
 her job. By giving him a place to lay his head at night she was already doing more for
 him than he had done for her most of her life. ^{B.L.} Still she wished she had left him on
 a happier note. He was a completely inadequate human being, but he was the only
 father she had (and she yearned to have a warm relationship with him)

③
 She put her car in a parking garage and walked through the red-light district
 to police headquarters. There was a swanky lobby with marble benches and a mural
 depicting scenes from Baltimore history. She told the receptionist she was here to see
 Steven Logan who was in custody. She expected to have to argue about it, but after
 a few minutes' wait a young woman in uniform took her inside and up in the elevator.

She was shown into a room the size of a closet. It was featureless except for a
 small window set into the wall at face level and a sound panel beneath it. The
 window looked into another similar booth. There was no way to pass anything from
 one room to the other without making a hole in the wall.

She stared through the window. After another five minutes Steven was brought
 in. As he entered the booth she saw that he was handcuffed and his feet were chained
 together, as if he were dangerous. He came to the glass and peered through. When

went out.

As she got into her car and headed downtown she hoped she had not been too cruel. He was from an older generation, the rules had been different in his day. Still, she could not be his housekeeper even if she had wanted to: she had to hold down her job. By giving him a place to lay his head at night she was already doing more for him than he had done for her most of her life. Still she wished she had left him on a happier note. He was a ~~completely~~ inadequate human being, but he was the only father she had, and she yearned to have a warm relationship with him.

She put her car in a parking garage and walked through the red-light district to police headquarters. There was a swanky lobby with marble benches and a mural depicting scenes from Baltimore history. She told the receptionist she was here to see Steven Logan who was in custody. She expected to have to argue about it, but after a few minutes' wait a young woman in uniform took her inside and up in the elevator.

She was shown into a room the size of a closet. It was featureless except for a small window set into the wall at face level and a sound panel beneath it. The window looked into another similar booth. There was no way to pass anything from one room to the other without making a hole in the wall.

She stared through the window. After another five minutes Steven was brought in. As he entered the booth she saw that he was handcuffed and his feet were chained together, as if he were dangerous. He came to the glass and peered through. When

he recognised her, he smiled broadly. "This is a pleasant surprise!" he said. "In fact it's the nicest thing that's happened to me all day."

Despite his cheerful manner he looked terrible: strained and tired. "How are you?" she said anxiously.

"A little rough. They've put me in a cell with a murderer who has a crack hangover. I'm afraid to go to sleep."

Her heart went out to him. She reminded herself that he ^{was supposed to} might be the man who raped Lisa. But she could not believe it. "How long do you think you'll be here?"

"I have a bail review before a judge tomorrow. Failing that, I may be locked up until the DNA test result comes through. Apparently that takes three days."

The mention of DNA reminded her of her purpose. "I saw your twin today."

"And?"

"There's no doubt. He's your double."

"Maybe *he* raped Lisa Hoxton."

Jeannie shook her head. "If he had escaped from jail at the weekend, yes. But he's still locked up."

"Do you think he might have escaped then returned? To establish an alibi?"

"Too fanciful. If Dennis got out of jail, nothing would induce him to go back."

"I guess you're right," Steven said gloomily.

"I have a couple of questions to ask you."

he recognised her, he smiled broadly. "This is a pleasant surprise!" he said. "In fact it's ^{only nice} the ~~nicest~~ thing that's happened to me all day."

Despite his cheerful manner he looked terrible: strained and tired. "How are you?" she said ~~anxiously~~.

"A little rough. They've put me in a cell with a murderer who has a crack hangover. I'm afraid to go to sleep."

~~Her heart went out to him.~~ She reminded herself that he might be the man who raped Lisa. But she ^{still} could not believe it. "How long do you think you'll be here?"

"I have a bail review before a judge tomorrow. Failing that, I may be locked up until the DNA test result comes through. Apparently that takes three days."

The mention of DNA reminded her of her purpose. "I saw your twin today."

"And?"

"There's no doubt. He's your double."

"Maybe *he* raped Lisa Hoxton."

Jeannie shook her head. "If he had escaped from jail at the weekend, yes. But he's still locked up."

"Do you think he might have escaped then returned? To establish an alibi?"

"Too fanciful. If Dennis got out of jail, nothing would induce him to go back."

"I guess you're right," Steven said gloomily.

"I have a couple of questions to ask you."

"Shoot."

"First I need to doublecheck your birthday."

"August 25th."

That was what Jeannie had written down. Maybe she had Dennis's date wrong.

"And do you happen to know where you were born?"

"Yes. Dad was stationed at Fort Lee, Virginia, at the time, and I was born in the army hospital there."

"Are you sure?"

"Certain. Mom wrote about it in her book *Having a Baby*." He narrowed his eyes in a look that was becoming familiar to her. It meant he was figuring out her thinking. "Where was Dennis born?"

"I don't know yet."

"But we share a birthday."

"Unfortunately, he gives his birthday as September 7th. But it might be a mistake. I'm going to doublecheck. I'll call his mother as soon as I get to my office. Have you spoken to your parents yet?"

"No."

"Would you like me to call them?"

"No! Please. I don't want them to know until I can tell them I've been cleared."

She frowned. "From everything you've told me about them, they seem the kind

of people who would be supportive."

"They would. But I don't want to put them through the agony."

"Sure it would be painful for them. But they might prefer to know, so they can help you."

"No. Please don't call them."

Jeannie shrugged. There was something he was not telling her. But it was his decision.

"Jeannie...what's he like?"

"Dennis? Superficially, he's like you."

"Does he have long hair, short hair, a moustache, dirty fingernails, acne, a limp—"

"His hair is short just like yours, he has no facial hair, his hands are clean and his skin is clear. It could have *been* you."

"Jeeze." Steven looked deeply uncomfortable.

"The big difference is his behaviour. He doesn't know how to relate to the rest of the human race. ~~You do.~~"

"It's very strange," he said.

"I don't find it so. In fact it confirms my theory. You were both what I call wild children. I stole the phrase from a French film. I use it for the type of child who is fearless, uncontrollable, hyperactive. Such children are very difficult to socialise.

Charlotte Pinker and her husband failed with Dennis. Your parents succeeded with you."

This did not reassure him. "But underneath, Dennis and I are the same."

"You were both born wild."

"But I have a thin veneer of civilisation."

She could see he was profoundly troubled. "Why does it bother you so much?"

"I want to think of myself as a human being, not a housetrained gorilla."

She laughed, despite his solemn expression. "Gorillas have to be socialized too. So do all animals that live in groups. That's where crime comes from."

He looked interested. "From living in groups?"

"Sure. A crime is a breach of an important social rule. Solitary animals don't have rules. A bear will trash another bear's cave, steal its food and kill its young. Wolves don't do those things: if they did, they couldn't live in packs. Wolves are monogamous, they take care of one another's young, and they respect each other's personal space. If an individual breaks the rules they punish him: if he persists, they either expel him from the pack or kill him."

"What about breaking unimportant social rules?"

"Like farting in an elevator? We call it bad manners. The only punishment is the disapproval of others. Amazing how effective that is."

"Why are you so interested in people who break the rules?"

She thought of her father, but she did not want to tell Steve about him. "It's a big problem," she said evasively. "Everyone's interested in crime."

The door opened behind her and the young woman police officer looked in. "Time's up, Dr Ferrami."

"Okay."

Steven said: "Thank you for coming. I can't tell you how much it means to me."

"Call me when you get out." She told him her home number. "Can you remember that?"

"No problem."

Jeannie was reluctant to leave. She gave him what she hoped was an encouraging smile. "Good luck."

"Thanks, I need it in here."

She turned away and left.

The policewoman walked her to the lobby. Night was falling as she returned to the parking garage. She got on to the Jones Falls Expressway and flicked on the headlights of the old Mercedes. Heading north, she drove too fast, eager to get to the university. She always drove too fast. She was a skilful (but somewhat reckless) driver, (she knew.) But she did not have the patience to go at fifty-five.

Lisa's white Honda Accord was already parked outside Nut House. Jeannie eased her car alongside it and went inside. Lisa was just turning on the lights in the

She thought of her father, but she did not want to tell Steve about him. "It's a big problem," she said evasively. "Everyone's interested in crime."

The door opened behind her and the young woman police officer looked in. "Time's up, Dr Ferrami."

"Okay."

Steven said: "Thank you for coming. I can't tell you how much it means to me."

"Call me when you get out." She told him her home number. "Can you remember that?"

"No problem."

Jeannie was reluctant to leave. She gave him what she hoped was an encouraging smile. "Good luck."

"Thanks, I need it in here."

She turned away and left.

The policewoman walked her to the lobby. Night was falling as she returned to the parking garage. She got on to the Jones Falls Expressway and flicked on the headlights of the old Mercedes. Heading north, she drove too fast, eager to get to the university. She always drove too fast. She was a skilful but somewhat reckless driver, she knew. But she did not have the patience to go at fifty-five.

Lisa's white Honda Accord was already parked outside Nut House. Jeannie eased her car alongside it and went inside. Lisa was just turning on the lights in the

lab. The cool box containing Dennis Pinker's blood sample stood on the bench.

Jeannie's office was right across the corridor. She unlocked her door by passing her plastic card through the card reader and went in. Sitting at her desk, she dialled the Pinker house in Richmond. "At last!" she said when she heard the ringing tone.

Charlotte answered. "How is my son?" she said.

"He's in good health," Jeannie replied. ^{Your son} ~~He~~ hardly seemed like a psychopath, she thought, until he pulled a knife on me and stole my panties. She tried to think of something positive to say. "He was very cooperative."

"He always had beautiful manners," Charlotte said in the southern drawl she used for her most outrageous utterances.

"Mrs Pinker, may I doublecheck his birthday with you?"

"He was born on the seventh of September." Like it should be a national holiday.

It was not the answer Jeannie had been hoping for. "And what hospital was he born in?"

"We were at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, at the time."

Jeannie suppressed a disappointed curse.

"The major was training conscripts for Vietnam," Charlotte said proudly. "The Army Medical Command has a big hospital at Bragg. That's where Dennis came into the world."

lab. The cool box containing Dennis Pinker's blood sample stood on the bench.

Jeannie's office was right across the corridor. She unlocked her door by passing her plastic card through the card reader and went in. Sitting at her desk, she dialled the Pinker house in Richmond. "At last!" she said when she heard the ringing tone.

Charlotte answered. "How is my son?" she said.

"He's in good health," Jeannie replied. He hardly seemed like a psychopath, she thought, until he pulled a knife on me and stole my panties. She tried to think of something positive to say. "He was very cooperative."

"He always had beautiful manners," Charlotte said in the southern drawl she used for her most outrageous utterances.

"Mrs Pinker, may I doublecheck his birthday with you?"

"He was born on the seventh of September." Like it should be a national holiday.

It was not the answer Jeannie had been hoping for. "And what hospital was he born in?"

"We were at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, at the time."

?? (Jeannie suppressed a disappointed curse)

fun
? ok
"The major was training conscripts for Vietnam," Charlotte said proudly. "The Army Medical Command has a big hospital at Bragg. That's where Dennis came into the world."

Jeannie could not think of anything more to say. The mystery was as deep as ever. "Mrs Pinker, I want to thank you again for your kind cooperation."

"You're welcome."

She returned to the lab and said to Lisa: "Apparently, Steven and Dennis were born thirteen days apart and in different states. I just don't understand it."

Lisa opened a fresh box of test tubes. "Well, there's one incontrovertible test. If they have the same DNA, they're identical twins, no matter what anyone says about their birth." She took out two of the little glass tubes. They were a couple of inches long. Each had a lid at the top and a conical bottom. She opened a pack of labels, wrote "Dennis Pinker" on one and "Steven Logan" on the other, then labelled the tubes and placed them in a rack.

She broke the seal on Dennis's blood and put a single drop in one test tube. Then she took a phial of Steven's blood out of the refrigerator and did the same.

Using a precision-calibrated pipette—a pipe with a bulb at one end—she added a tiny measured quantity of chloroform to each test tube. Then she picked up a fresh pipette and added a similarly exact amount of phenol.

She closed both test tubes and put them in the Whirlimixer to agitate them for a few seconds. The chloroform would dissolve the fats and the phenol would disrupt the proteins, but the long coiled molecules of diribonucleic acid would remain intact.

Lisa put the tubes back in the rack. "That's all we can do for the next few hours," she said.

The water-dissolved phenol would slowly separate from the chloroform. A meniscus would form in the tube at the boundary. The DNA would be in the watery part, which could be drawn off with a pipette for the next stage of the test. But that would have to wait for the morning.

A phone rang somewhere. Lisa frowned: it sounded as if it was coming from her office. She stepped across the corridor and picked it up. "Yes?"

"Is this Dr Ferrami?"

Jeannie hated people who called and demanded to know your name without introducing themselves. It was like knocking on someone's front door and saying: "Who the hell are you?" She bit back a sarcastic response and said: "I'm Jeannie Ferrami. Who is this calling, please?"

"Naomi Freeland, *New York Times*." She sounded like a heavy smoker in her fifties. "I have some questions for you."

"Is that a fact?"

"I believe you scan medical databases looking for suitable subjects to study."

Jeannie frowned. "Why are you interested?"

"I'm researching an article about scientific ethics."

"Oh, okay." Jeannie relaxed. She had nothing to worry about on this score.

Lisa put the tubes back in the rack. "That's all we can do for the next few hours," she said.

The water-dissolved phenol would slowly separate from the chloroform. A meniscus would form in the tube at the boundary. The DNA would be in the watery part, which could be drawn off with a pipette for the next stage of the test. But that would have to wait for the morning.

(?) A phone rang somewhere. ^{Jeannie} Lisa frowned: it sounded as if it was coming from her office. She stepped across the corridor and picked it up. "Yes?"

"Is this Dr Ferrami?"

Jeannie hated people who called and demanded to know your name without introducing themselves. It was like knocking on someone's front door and saying: "Who the hell are you?" She bit back a sarcastic response and said: "I'm Jeannie Ferrami. Who is this calling, please?"

"Naomi Frelander, *New York Times*." She sounded like a heavy smoker in her fifties. "I have some questions for you."

"Is that a fact?"

"I believe you scan medical databases looking for suitable subjects to study."

Jeannie frowned. "Why are you interested?"

"I'm researching an article about scientific ethics."

"Oh, okay." Jeannie relaxed. She had nothing to worry about on this score.

"Well, I've devised a search engine that scans computer data and finds matching pairs. My purpose is to find identical twins. It can be used on any kind of database."

"But you've gained access to medical records in order to use this program."

"It's important to define what you mean by access. I've been careful not to trespass on anyone's privacy. I never see anyone's medical details. The program doesn't print the records."

"What does it print?"

"The names of the two individuals, and their addresses and phone numbers."

"But it prints the names in pairs."

"Of course, that's the point."

"So if you used it on, say, a database of electroencephalograms, it would tell you that John Doe's brainwaves are exactly the same as Jim Fitz's."

"The same or similar. But it would not tell me anything about either man's health."

"However, if you knew previously that John Doe was a paranoid schizophrenic, you could conclude that Jim Fitz was, too."

"We would never know such a thing."

"You might know John Doe."

"How?"

"He might be your janitor, anything."

"Oh, come on!"

"It's possible."

"Is *that* going to be your story?"

"Maybe."

"Okay, it's theoretically possible, but the chance is so small that any reasonable person would discount it."

"That's arguable."

The reporter seemed determined to see an outrage, regardless of the facts, Jeannie thought; and she began to worry. She had enough problems without getting the damn newspapers on her back. "How real is all this?" she said. "Have you actually found anyone who feels their privacy has been violated?"

"I'm interested in the potentiality."

Jeannie was struck by a thought. "Who told you to call me, anyway?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Same reason you've been asking me questions. I'd like to know the truth."

"I can't tell you."

"That's interesting," Jeannie said. "I've talked to you at some length about my research and my methods. I have nothing to hide. But you can't say the same. You appear to be, well, *ashamed*, I guess. Are you ashamed of the way you found out about my project?"

"I'm not ashamed of anything," the reporter snapped.

? 8/ (Jeannie felt herself getting angry) Who did this woman think she was? "Well,
 (?) someone's ^{is} (ashamed) Otherwise why won't you tell me who he is? Or she?"

"I have to protect my sources."

"From what?" Jeannie knew she should lay off. Nothing was to be gained by antagonizing the press. But the woman's attitude was insufferable. "As I've explained, there's nothing wrong with my methods and they don't threaten anyone's privacy. So why should your informant be so secretive?"

"People have reasons—"

"It looks as if your informant was malicious, doesn't it?" Even as she said it, Jeannie was thinking *Why should anyone want to do this to me?*

"I can't comment on that."

"No comment, huh?" she said sarcastically. "I must remember that line."

"Dr Ferrami, I'd like to thank you for your cooperation."

"Don't mention it," Jeannie said, and she hung up.

She stared at the phone for a long moment. "Now what the hell was that all about?" she said.

Wednesday

21

Berisford Jones slept badly.

He spent the night with Pippa Harpenden. Pippa was a secretary in the physics department, and a lot of professors had asked her out, including several married men, but Berisford was the only one she dated. He had dressed beautifully, taken her to an intimate restaurant, and ordered exquisite wine. He had basked in the envious glances of men his own age dining with their ugly old wives. He had brought her home and lit candles and put on silk pajamas and made love to her slowly until she gasped with pleasure.

But he woke up at four o'clock and thought of all the things that could go wrong with his plan. Hank Stone had been sucking down the publisher's cheap wine yesterday afternoon: he might just forget all about his conversation with Berisford. If he remembered it, the editors of the *New York Times* might still decide not to follow up the story. They might make some inquiries and realise there was nothing much wrong with what Jeannie was doing. Or they could simply move too slowly, and start looking into it next week, when it would be too late.

After he had been tossing and turning for a while, Pippa mumbled: "Are you all right, Berry?"

21

Berisford Jones slept badly.

He spent the night with Pippa Harpenden. Pippa was a secretary in the physics department, and a lot of professors had asked her out, including several married men, but Berisford was the only one she dated. He had dressed beautifully, taken her to an intimate restaurant, and ordered exquisite wine. He had basked in the envious glances of men his own age dining with their ugly old wives. He had brought her home and lit candles and put on silk pajamas and made love to her slowly until she gasped with pleasure.

But he woke up at four o'clock and thought of all the things that could go wrong with his plans. Hank Stone had been sucking down the publisher's cheap wine yesterday afternoon: he might just forget all about his conversation with Berisford. If he remembered it, the editors of the *New York Times* might still decide not to follow up the story. They might make some inquiries and realise there was nothing much wrong with what Jeannie was doing. Or they could simply move too slowly, and start looking into it next week, when it would be too late.

After he had been tossing and turning for a while, Pippa mumbled: "Are you all right, Berry?"

suggest you write
a comparison name
here and in the
earlier chapter

21

Berisford Jones slept badly.

He spent the night with Pippa Harpenden. Pippa was a secretary in the physics department, and a lot of professors had asked her out, including several married men, but Berisford was the only one she dated. He had dressed beautifully, taken her to an intimate restaurant, and ordered exquisite wine. He had basked in the envious glances of men his own age dining with their ugly old wives. He had brought her home and lit candles and put on silk pajamas and made love to her slowly until she gasped with pleasure.

But he woke up at four o'clock and thought of all the things that could go wrong with his plans. Hank Stone had been sucking down the publisher's cheap wine yesterday afternoon: he might just forget all about his conversation with Berisford. If he remembered it, the editors of the *New York Times* might still decide not to follow up the story. They might make some inquiries and realise there was nothing much wrong with what Jeannie was doing. Or they could simply move too slowly, and start looking into it next week, when it would be too late.

After he had been tossing and turning for a while, Pippa mumbled: "Are you all right, Berry?"

He stroked her long blonde hair, and she made sleepily encouraging noises, but he had too much on his mind, and after a while he got up and went running. When he returned she had gone, leaving a thank-you note wrapped in a sheer black nylon stocking.

The housekeeper arrived a few minutes before eight and made him an omelette. Marianne was a thin, nervy girl from the French Caribbean island of Martinique. She spoke little English and was terrified of being sent back home, which made her very biddable. She was pretty, and Berisford guessed that if he told her to blow him she would think it was part of her duties as a university employee. He did no such thing, of course: sleeping with the help was not his style.

He took a shower, shaved, and dressed for high authority in a charcoal-gray suit with a faint pinstripe, a white shirt and a black tie with small red dots. He wore monogrammed gold cuff links, he folded a white linen handkerchief into his breast pocket, and he buffed the toecaps of his black oxfords until they gleamed.

He drove to the campus, went to his office, and turned on his computer. Like most superstar academics, he did very little teaching. Here at Jones Falls he gave one lecture per year. His role was to direct and supervise the research of the scientists in the department, and to add the prestige of his name to the papers they wrote. But this morning he could not concentrate on anything, so he looked out of the window and watched four youngsters play an energetic game of doubles on the tennis court

while he waited for the phone to ring.

He did not have to wait long.

At nine-thirty the president of Jones Falls University, Maurice Bell, called. "We've got a problem," he said.

Berisford tensed. "What's up, Maurice?"

"Bitch on the *New York Times* just called me. She says someone in your department is invading people's privacy. A Dr Ferrami."

Thank God, Berisford thought jubilantly; Hank Stone came through! He made his voice solemn. "I was afraid of something like this," he said. "I'll be right over." He hung up and sat for a moment, thinking. It was too soon to celebrate victory. He had only begun the process. Now he had to get both Maurice and Jeannie to behave just the way he wanted. It would take all his powers of manipulation. *would he think of himself in this perlocative way?*

Maurice sounded worried. That was a good start. Berisford had to make sure he stayed worried. He needed Maurice to feel it would be a catastrophe if Jeannie did not stop using her database search program immediately. Once Maurice had decided on firm action, Berisford had to make sure he stuck to his resolve.

Most of all, he had to prevent any kind of compromise. Jeannie was not much of a compromiser by nature, he knew, but with her whole future at stake she would probably try anything. He would have to fuel her outrage and keep her combative.

And he must do all that while trying to appear well-intentioned. If it became

while he waited for the phone to ring.

He did not have to wait long.

At nine-thirty the president of Jones Falls University, Maurice Bell, called. "We've got a problem," he said.

Berisford tensed. "What's up, Maurice?"

"Bitch on the *New York Times* just called me. She says someone in your department is invading people's privacy. A Dr Ferrami."

~~Thank God, Berisford thought jubilantly, Hank Stone came through!~~ ^{B...} He made his voice solemn. "I was afraid of something like this," he said. "I'll be right over." He hung up and sat for a moment, thinking. It was too soon to celebrate victory. He had only begun the process. Now he had to get both Maurice and Jeannie to behave just the way he wanted. It would take all his powers of manipulation.

Maurice ^{was} sounded worried. That was a good start. Berisford had to make sure he stayed worried. He needed Maurice to feel it would be a catastrophe if Jeannie did not stop using her database search program immediately. Once Maurice had decided on firm action, Berisford had to make sure he stuck to his resolve.

Most of all, he had to prevent any kind of compromise. Jeannie was not much of a compromiser by nature, he knew, but with her whole future at stake she would probably try anything. He would have to fuel her outrage and keep her combative.

And he must do all that while trying to appear well-intentioned. If it became

obvious that he was trying to undermine Jeannie, Maurice might smell a rat. Berisford had to seem to defend her.

He left Nut House and walked across campus, past the Barrymore Theatre and the Faculty of Arts to Hillside Hall. Once the country mansion of the original benefactor of the university, it was now the administration building. The university president's office was the magnificent drawing-room of the old house. Berisford nodded pleasantly to Dr Bell's secretary and said: "He's expecting me."

"Go right in, please, professor," she said.

Maurice was sitting in the bay window overlooking the lawn. A short, barrel-chested man, he had returned from Vietnam in a wheelchair, paralysed from the waist down. Berisford found him easy to relate to, perhaps because they had a background of military service in common. They also shared a passion for the music of Mahler.

Maurice often wore a harassed air. To keep JFU going he had to raise ten million dollars a year from private and corporate benefactors, and consequently he was ^{terrified} ~~terrified~~ of bad publicity.

He spun his chair around and rolled to his desk. "They're working on a big article on scientific ethics, she says. Berry, I can't have Jones Falls heading that article with an example of unethical science. Half our big donors would have a cow. We've got to do something about this."

"Who is she?"

Maurice consulted a scratch pad. "Naomi Freeland. She's the Ethics Editor. Did you know newspapers had ethics editors? I didn't."

"I'm not surprised the *New York Times* has one."

"It doesn't stop them acting like the goddamn Gestapo. They're about to go to press with this article, they say, but yesterday they got a tipoff about your Ferrami woman."

"I wonder where the tip came from?" Berisford said.

"There are some disloyal bastards around."

"I guess so."

Maurice sighed. "Say it's not true, Berry. Tell me she doesn't invade people's privacy."

Berisford crossed his legs, trying to appear relaxed when he was in fact wired taut. This was where he had to walk a tightrope. "I don't believe she does anything wrong," he said. "She scans medical databases and finds people who don't know they're twins. It's very clever, as a matter of fact—"

"Is she looking at people's medical records without their permission?"

Berisford pretended to be reluctant. "Well...sort of."

"Then she'll have to stop."

"The trouble is, she really needs this information for her research project."

"Maybe we can offer her some compensation."

Berisford had not thought of bribing her. He doubted it would work, but there was no harm in trying. "Good idea."

"Does she have tenure?"

"She started here this semester, as an assistant professor. She's six years away from tenure, at least. But we could give her a raise. I know she needs the money, she told me."

"How much does she make now?"

"Thirty thousand dollars a year."

"What do you think we should offer her?"

"It would have to be substantial. Another eight or ten thousand."

"And the funding for that?"

Berisford smiled. "I believe I could persuade Genetico."

"Then that's what we'll do. Call her now, Berry. If she's on campus, get her in here right away. We'll settle this thing before the Ethics Police call again."

Berisford picked up Maurice's phone and dialled Jeannie's office. It was answered right away. "Jeannie Ferrami."

"This is Berisford."

"Good morning." Her tone was wary. She knew he had been hoping to seduce her on Monday night. Maybe she wondered if he was planning to try again. Or perhaps she had already got wind of the *New York Times* problem.

"Can I see you right away?"

"In your office?"

"I'm in Dr Bell's office at Hillside Hall."

She gave an exasperated sigh. "Is this about a woman called Naomi Freeland?"

"Yes."

"It's all horseshit, you know that."

"I do, but we have to deal with it."

"I'll be right over."

Berisford hung up. "She'll be here momentarily," he told Maurice. "It sounds as if she's already heard from the *Times*."

The next few minutes would be crucial. If Jeannie defended herself well, Maurice might change his strategy. Berisford had to keep Maurice firm without seeming hostile to Jeannie. She was a hot-tempered, assertive girl, not the type to be conciliatory, especially when she thought she was in the right. She would probably make an enemy of Maurice without any help from Berisford. But just in case she was uncharacteristically sweet and persuasive, he needed a fallback plan.

Struck by inspiration, he said: "We might rough out a press statement while we're waiting."

"That's a good idea."

The dialogue is first rate, but
beneath it we need to feel more
that B. is on the hook.

"Can I see you right away?"

"In your office?"

"I'm in Dr Bell's office at Hillside Hall."

She gave an exasperated sigh. "Is this about a woman called Naomi Freeland?"

"Yes."

"It's all horseshit, you know that."

"I do, but we have to deal with it."

"I'll be right over."

Berisford hung up. "She'll be here momentarily," he told Maurice. "It sounds as if she's already heard from the *Times*."

? S /
rep

The next few minutes would be crucial. If Jeannie defended herself well, Maurice might change his strategy. Berisford had to keep Maurice firm without seeming hostile to Jeannie. She was (a hot-tempered, assertive girl) not the type to be conciliatory, especially when she thought she was in the right. She would probably make an enemy of Maurice without any help from Berisford. But just in case she was uncharacteristically sweet and persuasive, he needed a fallback plan.

Struck by inspiration, he said: "We might rough out a press statement while we're waiting."

"That's a good idea."

Berisford pulled over a pad and began scribbling. He needed something that Jeannie could not possibly agree to, something that would injure her pride and make her mad. He wrote that Jones Falls University admitted mistakes had been made. The university apologized to those whose privacy had been invaded. And it promised that the program had been discontinued as of today.

He handed his work to Maurice's secretary and asked her to put it through her word processor right away.

Jeannie arrived fizzing with indignation. She was wearing a baggy emerald-green T-shirt, tight black jeans and the kind of footwear that used to be called engineer boots but were now a fashion statement. She had a silver ring in her pierced nostril and her thick dark hair was tied back. She looked cute, ^{to Berisford} but her outfit would not impress the university president. To him she would look like the kind of irresponsible junior academic who might get JFU into trouble.

Maurice invited her to sit down and told her about the call from the newspaper. His manner was stiff. He was comfortable with mature men, Berisford thought: young girls in tight jeans were aliens to him.

"The same woman called me," Jeannie said (with irritation.) "This is ludicrous."

"But Berisford tells me you do access medical databases," Maurice said.

"I don't look at the databases, the computer does. No human being sees anyone's medical records. My program produces a list of names and addresses,

Berisford pulled over a pad and began scribbling. He needed something that Jeannie could not possibly agree to, something that would injure her pride and make her mad. He wrote that Jones Falls University admitted mistakes had been made. The university apologized to those whose privacy had been invaded. And it promised that the program had been discontinued as of today.

He handed his work to Maurice's secretary and asked her to put it through her word processor right away.

Jeannie arrived fizzing with indignation. She was wearing a baggy emerald-green T-shirt, tight black jeans and the kind of footwear that used to be called engineer boots but were now a fashion statement. She had a silver ring in her pierced nostril and her thick dark hair was tied back. She looked cute, but her outfit would not impress the university president. To him she would look like the kind of irresponsible junior academic who might get JFU into trouble.

Maurice invited her to sit down and told her about the call from the newspaper. His manner was stiff. He was comfortable with mature men, Berisford thought: young girls in tight jeans were aliens to him.

"The same woman called me," Jeannie said with irritation. "This is ludicrous."

"But ^{apparently} ~~Berisford~~ tells me you do access medical databases," Maurice said.

"I don't look at the databases, the computer does. No human being sees anyone's medical records. My program produces a list of names and addresses,

DELAN
CROSS

ditto in
Maurice's
Berisford

grouped in pairs."

"Even that...."

"We do nothing further without first asking permission of the potential subject. We don't even tell them they're twins until after they've agreed to be part of our study. So whose privacy is invaded?"

Berisford pretended to back her. "I told you, Maurice," he said. "The *Times* has it all wrong."

"They don't see it that way. And I have to think of the university's reputation."

Jeannie said: "Believe me, my work is going to enhance that reputation." She leaned forward, and Berisford heard in her voice the passion for new knowledge that drove all good scientists. "This is a project of critical importance. I'm the only person who has figured out how to study the genetics of criminality. When we publish the results it will be a sensation."

"She's right," Berisford put in. It was true. Her study would have been fascinating It was heartbreaking to destroy it. But he had no choice.

Maurice shook his head. "It's my job to protect the university from scandal."

Jeannie said recklessly: "It's also your job to defend academic freedom."

That was the wrong tack for her to take. Once upon a time, no doubt, university presidents had fought for the right to the unfettered pursuit of knowledge, but those days were over. Now they were fund-raisers, pure and simple. She would

If he has qualms, feels any pain, this is the first indication. Should we have some such earlier?

grouped in pairs."

"Even that...."

"We do nothing further without first asking permission of the potential subject. We don't even tell them they're twins until after they've agreed to be part of our study. So whose privacy is invaded?"

Berisford pretended to back her. "I told you, Maurice," he said. "The *Times* has it all wrong."

"They don't see it that way. And I have to think of the university's reputation."

Jeannie said: "Believe me, my work is going to enhance that reputation." She leaned forward, and Berisford heard in her voice the passion for new knowledge that drove all good scientists. "This is a project of critical importance. I'm the only person who has figured out how to study the genetics of criminality. When we publish the results it will be a sensation."

"She's right," Berisford put in. It was true. Her study would have been fascinating. It was heartbreaking to destroy it. But he had no choice.

Maurice shook his head. "It's my job to protect the university from scandal."

? 8 /
Jeannie said (recklessly): "It's also your job to defend academic freedom."

That was the wrong tack for her to take. Once upon a time, no doubt, university presidents had fought for the right to the unfettered pursuit of knowledge, but those days were over. Now they were fund-raisers, pure and simple. She would

grouped in pairs."

"Even that...."

"We do nothing further without first asking permission of the potential subject. We don't even tell them they're twins until after they've agreed to be part of our study. So whose privacy is invaded?"

Berisford pretended to back her. "I told you, Maurice," he said. "The *Times* has it all wrong."

"They don't see it that way. And I have to think of the university's reputation."

Jeannie said: "Believe me, my work is going to enhance that reputation." She leaned forward, and Berisford heard in her voice the passion for new knowledge that drove all good scientists. "This is a project of critical importance. I'm the only person who has figured out how to study the genetics of criminality. When we publish the results it will be a sensation."

"She's right," Berisford put in. It was true. Her study would have been fascinating. It was heartbreaking to destroy it. But he had no choice.

Maurice shook his head. "It's my job to protect the university from scandal."

~~Jeannie said recklessly:~~ "It's also your job to defend academic freedom."

That was the wrong tack for her to take. Once upon a time, no doubt, university presidents had fought for the right to the unfettered pursuit of knowledge, but those days were over. Now they were fund-raisers, pure and simple. She would

only offend Maurice by mentioning academic freedom.

8/? Maurice bristled (visibly) "I don't need a lecture on my presidential duties from you, young lady," he said stiffly.

Jeannie did not take the hint, to Berisford's delight. "Don't you?" she said to Maurice, warming to her theme. "Here's a direct conflict. On the one hand is a newspaper apparently bent on a misguided story; on the other a scientist after the truth. If a university president is going to buckle under that kind of pressure, what hope is there?"

28/ rep (Berisford was delighted) She looked wonderful, cheeks flushed and eyes flashing, but she was digging her own grave. Maurice was antagonised by every word.

Then Jeannie seemed to realise what she was doing, for she suddenly changed tack. "On the other hand, none of us wants bad publicity for the university," she said in a milder voice. "I quite understand your concern, Dr Bell."

Maurice softened immediately, much to Berisford's chagrin. "I realise this puts you in a difficult position," he said. "The university is prepared to offer you compensation, in the form of a raise of ten thousand dollars a year."

Jeannie looked startled.

Berisford said: "That ought to enable you to get your mother out of that place you're so worried about."

Jeannie hesitated only for a moment. "I'd be deeply grateful for that," she said,

only offend Maurice by mentioning academic freedom.

Maurice bristled visibly. "I don't need a lecture on my presidential duties from you, young lady," he said stiffly.

Jeannie did not take the hint, to Berisford's ~~delight~~. "Don't you?" she said to Maurice, warming to her theme. "Here's a direct conflict. On the one hand is a newspaper apparently bent on a misguided story; on the other a scientist after the truth. If a university president is going to buckle under that kind of pressure, what hope is there?"

Berisford was ~~delighted~~. She looked wonderful, cheeks flushed and eyes flashing, but she was digging her own grave. Maurice was antagonised by every word.

Then Jeannie seemed to realise what she was doing, for she suddenly changed tack. "On the other hand, none of us wants bad publicity for the university," she said in a milder voice. "I quite understand your concern, Dr Bell."

Maurice softened immediately, ~~much to Berisford's chagrin~~. "I realise this puts you in a difficult position," he said. "The university is prepared to offer you compensation, in the form of a raise of ten thousand dollars a year."

Jeannie looked startled.

Berisford said: "That ought to enable you to get your mother out of that place you're so worried about."

Jeannie hesitated only for a moment. "I'd be deeply grateful for that," she said,

"but it wouldn't solve the problem. I still have to have criminal twins for my research. Otherwise there's nothing to study."

Berisford had not thought she could be bribed.

Maurice said: "Surely there must be another way to find suitable subjects for you to study?"

"No, there's not. I need identical twins, raised apart, at least one of whom is a criminal. That's a tall order. My computer program locates people who don't even know they're twins. There's no other method of doing that."

"I hadn't realised," Maurice said.

? 8) The tone was becoming perilously amiable (Berisford thought anxiously.) But just then Maurice's secretary came in and handed him a sheet of paper. It was the press release Berisford had drafted. Maurice showed it to Jeannie, saying: "We need to be able to issue something like this today, if we're to kill this story off."

? 8) She read it quickly, and her anger returned. "But this is bullshit!" (she stormed) "No mistakes have been made. No one's privacy has been invaded. No one has even complained!"

Berisford concealed his satisfaction. It was paradoxical that she was so fiery, yet she had the patience and perseverance to do lengthy and tedious scientific research. He had seen her working with her subjects: they never seemed to irritate or tire her, even when they messed up the tests. With them, she found bad behaviour

"but it wouldn't solve the problem. I still have to have criminal twins for my research. Otherwise there's nothing to study."

Berisford had not thought she could be bribed.

Maurice said: "Surely there must be another way to find suitable subjects for you to study?"

"No, there's not. I need identical twins, raised apart, at least one of whom is a criminal. That's a tall order. My computer program locates people who don't even know they're twins. There's no other method of doing that."

"I hadn't realised," Maurice said.

The tone was becoming perilously amiable, Berisford thought anxiously. But just then Maurice's secretary came in and handed him a sheet of paper. It was the press release Berisford had drafted. Maurice showed it to Jeannie, saying: "We need to be able to issue something like this today, if we're to kill this story off." *Sumende*

She read it quickly, and her anger returned. "But this is ~~bullshit~~!" she stormed. *bullshit*
"No mistakes have been made. No one's privacy has been invaded. No one has even complained!"

Berisford concealed his satisfaction. It was paradoxical that she was so fiery, yet she had the patience and perseverance to do lengthy and tedious scientific research. He had seen her working with her subjects: they never seemed to irritate or tire her, even when they messed up the tests. With them, she found bad behaviour

as interesting as good. She just wrote down what they said and thanked them sincerely at the end. Yet outside the lab she would go off like a firecracker at the least provocation.

He played the role of concerned peacemaker. "But, Jeannie, Dr Bell feels we have to put out a firm statement."

"You can't say the use of my computer program has been discontinued!" she said. "That would be tantamount to cancelling my entire project!"

Maurice's face hardened. "I can't have the *New York Times* publishing an article that says Jones Falls scientists invade people's privacy," he said. "It would cost us millions in lost donations."

"Find a middle way," Jeannie pleaded. "Say you're looking into the problem. Set up a committee. We'll develop further privacy safeguards, if necessary."

Oh, no, Berisford thought. That was dangerously sensible. "We have an ethics committee, of course," he said, playing for time. "It's a subcommittee of the Senate." The Senate was the university's ruling council, and consisted of all the tenured professors, but the work was done by committees. "You could announce that you're handing over the problem to them."

"No good," Maurice said abruptly. "Everyone will know that's a stall."

Jeannie protested: "Don't you see that by insisting on immediate action you're practically ruling out any thoughtful discussion!"

This would be a good time to bring the meeting to a close, Berisford decided. The two were at loggerheads, both entrenched in their positions. He should finish it before they started to think about compromise again. "A good point, Jeannie," Berisford said. "Let me make a proposal here—if you permit, Maurice."

"Sure, let's hear it."

"We have two separate problems. One is to find a way to progress Jeannie's research without bringing a scandal down upon the university. That's something Jeannie and I have to resolve, and we should discuss it at length, later. The second question is how the department, and the university, present this to the world. That's a matter for you and me to talk about, Maurice."

Maurice looked relieved. "Very sensible," he said.

Berisford said: "Thank you for joining us at short notice, Jeannie."

She realised she was being dismissed. She got up with a puzzled frown. She knew she had been outmanoeuvred, but she could not quite figure out how. "You'll call me?" she said to Berisford.

"Of course."

"All right." She hesitated, then went out.

"Difficult woman," Maurice said.

Berisford leaned forward, clasping his hands together, and looked down, in an attitude of humility. "I feel at fault here, Maurice." Maurice shook his head but

Berisford went on. "I hired Jeannie Ferrami. Of course, I had no idea that she would devise this method of work—but all the same it's my responsibility, and I think I have to get you out of it."

"What do you propose?"

"I can't ask you not to release that press statement. I don't have the right. You can't put one research project above the welfare of the entire university, I realise that." He looked up.

Maurice hesitated. For a split-second Berisford wondered fearfully if he suspected he was being manoeuvred into a corner. But if the thought crossed his mind it did not linger. "I appreciate your saying that, Berry. But what will you do about Jeannie?"

Berisford relaxed. It seemed he had done it. "I guess she's my problem," he said.

"Leave her to me."

pretty good, but I think it would be more involving if the record book was from J's P.D.V. she is our heroine, and now has her back to the wall, and is on an emotional roller-coaster.

22

Steve dropped off to sleep in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

The jail was quiet, Porky was snoring, and Steve had not slept for forty-two hours. He tried to stay awake, rehearsing his bail application speech to the judge for tomorrow, but he kept slipping into a waking dream in which the judge smiled benignly on him and said *Bail is granted, let this man go free*, and he walked out of the court into the sunny street. Sitting on the floor of the cell in his usual position, with his back to the wall, he caught himself nodding off, and jerked awake several times, but finally nature conquered willpower.

He was in a profound sleep when he was shocked awake by a painful blow to his ribs. He gasped and opened his eyes. Porky had kicked him, and was now bending over him, eyes wide with craziness, screaming: "You stole my dope, motherfucker! ^{you fucking rapist} Where d'you stash it, where? Give it up right now or you're a dead man!"

Steve reacted without thinking. He came up off the floor like a spring uncoiling, his right arm outstretched rigid, and poked two fingers into Porky's eyes. Porky yelled in pain and stepped backwards. Steve followed, trying to push his fingers right through Porky's brain to the back of his head. Somewhere in the distance, he could hear a voice that sounded a lot like his own, screaming abuse.

Steve reacted without thinking. He came up off the floor like a spring uncoiling, his right arm outstretched rigid, and poked two fingers into Porky's eyes. Porky yelled in pain and stepped backwards. Steve followed, trying to push his fingers right through Porky's brain to the back of his head. Somewhere in the distance, he could hear a voice that sounded a lot like his own, screaming abuse.

Porky took another step back and sat down hard on the toilet, covering his eyes with his hands.

Steve put both hands behind Porky's neck, pulled his head forward, and kned him in the face. Blood spurted from Porky's mouth. Steve grabbed him by the shirt, yanked him off the toilet seat and dropped him on the floor. He was about to kick him, when sanity began to return. He hesitated, staring down at Porky bleeding on the floor, and the red mist of rage cleared. "Oh, no," he said. "What have I done?"

The gate of the ^{cell} jail flew open and two cops burst in, brandishing nightsticks.

Steve held up his hands in front of him.

"Just calm down," said one of the cops.

"I'm calm, now," Steve said.

The cops handcuffed him and took him out of the cell. One of them punched him in the stomach, hard. He doubled over, gasping. "That's just in case you were thinking of starting any more trouble," the cop said.

He heard the sound of the cell door crashing shut, and the voice of Spike the turnkey in his habitual humorous mood. "You need medical attention, Porky?" Spike said. "Cause there's a veterinarian on East Baltimore Street." He cackled at his own joke.

Steve straightened up, recovering from the punch. It still hurt but he could breathe. He looked through the bars at Porky. He was sitting upright, rubbing his

eyes. Through bleeding lips he replied to Spike. "Fuck you, asshole."

Steve was relieved: Porky was not badly hurt.

Spike said: "It was time to pull you out of there, anyway, college boy. These gentlemen have come to take you to court." He consulted a sheet of paper. "Let's see, who else is for the Northern District Court? Mr Robert Sample, known as Sniff..." He got three other men out of cells and chained them all together with Steve. Then the two cops took them to the parking garage and put them on a bus.

Steve ~~hoped~~^{swore} he would never have to go back to that place.

It was still dark outside. Steve guessed it must be around six a.m. Courts did not start work until nine or ten o'clock in the morning, so he would have a long wait. They drove through the city for fifteen or twenty minutes then entered a garage door in a court building. They got off the bus and went down into the basement.

There were eight barred pens around a central open area. Each pen had a bench and a toilet, but they were larger than the cells at police headquarters, and all four prisoners were put in a pen that already had six men in it. Their chains were removed and dumped on a table in the middle of the room. There were several turnkeys, presided over by a tall black woman with a sergeant's uniform and a mean expression.

Over the next hour another thirty or more prisoners arrived. They were accommodated twelve to a pen. There was great excitement when a small group of

eyes. Through bleeding lips he replied to Spike. "Fuck you, asshole."

Steve was relieved: Porky was not badly hurt.

Spike said: "It was time to pull you out of there, anyway, college boy. These gentlemen have come to take you to court." He consulted a sheet of paper. "Let's see, who else is for the Northern District Court? Mr Robert Sample, known as Sniff...." He got three other men out of cells and chained them all together with Steve. Then the two cops took them to the parking garage and put them on a bus.

Steve hoped he would never have to go back to that place.

It was still dark outside. Steve guessed it must be around six a.m. Courts did not start work until nine or ten o'clock in the morning, so he would have a long wait. They drove through the city for fifteen or twenty minutes then entered a garage door in a court building. They got off the bus and went down into the basement.

There were eight barred pens around a central open area. Each pen had a bench and a toilet, but they were larger than the cells at police headquarters, and all four prisoners were put in a pen that already had six men in it. Their chains were removed and dumped on a table in the middle of the room. There were several turnkeys, presided over by a tall black woman with a sergeant's uniform and a mean expression.

Over the next hour another thirty or more prisoners arrived. They were accommodated twelve to a pen. There was great excitement when a small group of

Suggest you will also eat

women were brought in. They were put in a pen at the far end of the room.

After that nothing much happened for several hours. Breakfast was brought, but Steve once again refused food: he could not get used to the idea of eating in the toilet. Some prisoners talked noisily, most remained sullen and quiet. Many looked hung over. The banter between prisoners and guards was not quite as foul as it had been in the last place, and Steve wondered idly if that was because there was a woman in charge.

Jails were nothing like what they showed on TV, he reflected. They were much worse. Television shows and movies made prisons seem like low-grade hotels: they never showed the unscreened toilets, the verbal abuse, or the beatings given to those who misbehaved. *and to those who didn't?*

Today might be his last day in jail. If he had believed in God he would have prayed with all his heart.

He figured it was about midday when they began taking prisoners out of the cells.

Steve was in the second batch. They were handcuffed again and ten men were chained together. Then they went up to the court.

The courtroom was like a methodist chapel. The walls were painted green up to a black line at waist level and then cream above that. There was a green carpet on the floor and nine rows of blond wood benches like pews.

women were brought in. They were put in a pen at the far end of the room.

After that nothing much happened for several hours. Breakfast was brought, but Steve once again refused food: he could not get used to the idea of eating in the toilet. Some prisoners talked noisily, most remained sullen and quiet. Many looked hung over. The banter between prisoners and guards was not quite as foul as it had been in the last place, (and Steve wondered idly if that) ^{was} because there was a woman in charge.

Jails were nothing like what they showed on TV, he reflected. They were much worse. Television shows and movies made prisons seem like low-grade hotels: they never showed the unscreened toilets, the verbal abuse, or the beatings given to those who misbehaved.

Today might be his last day in jail. If he had believed in God he would have prayed with all his heart.

He figured it was about midday when they began taking prisoners out of the cells.

Steve was in the second batch. They were handcuffed again and ten men were chained together. Then they went up to the court.

The courtroom was like a methodist chapel. The walls were painted green up to a black line at waist level and then cream above that. There was a green carpet on the floor and nine rows of blond wood benches like pews.

In the back row sat Steve's mother and father.

He gasped with shock.

Dad wore his colonel's uniform, with his hat under his arm. He sat straight-backed, as if standing at attention. He had Celtic coloring, blue eyes and dark hair and the shadow of a heavy beard on his clean-shaven cheeks. His expression was rigidly blank, taut with suppressed emotion. Mom sat beside him, small and plump, her pretty round face puffy with crying.

Are there other visitors, relatives, lawyers?

Steve wished he could fall through the floor. He would have gone back to Porky's cell willingly to escape this moment. He stopped walking, holding up the entire line of prisoners, and stared in dumb agony at his parents, until the turnkey gave him a shove and he stumbled forward to the front bench.

A woman clerk sat at the front of the court, facing the prisoners. A male turnkey guarded the door. The only other official present was a bespectacled black man of about forty wearing a suit coat, tie, and bluejeans. He asked the names of the prisoners and checked them against a list.

Steve looked back over his shoulder. There was no one on the public benches except for his parents. He was grateful he had family that cared enough to show up: none of the other prisoners did. All the same he would have preferred to go through this humiliation unwitnessed.

His father stood up and came forward. The man in bluejeans spoke officiously

At a bail hearing surely some would have lawyers, it only public defenders.

to him. "Yes, sir?"

"I'm Steven Logan's father, I'd like to speak to him," Dad said in an authoritative voice. "May I know who you are?"

"David Purdy, I'm the pre-trial investigator, I called you this morning."

So that was how Mom and Dad found out, Steve realised. He should have guessed. The court commissioner had told him an investigator would check his details. The simplest way to do that would be to call his parents. He winced at the thought of that phone call. What had the investigator said? *I need to check the address of Steven Logan, who is in custody in Baltimore accused of rape. Are you his mother?*

Dad shook the man's hand and said: "How do you do, Mr Purdy." But Steve could tell Dad hated him.

Purdy said: "You can speak to your son, go ahead, no problem."

Dad nodded curtly. He edged along the bench behind the prisoners and sat directly behind Steve. He put his hand on Steve's shoulder and squeezed gently. Tears came to Steve's eyes. "Dad, I didn't do this," he said.

"I know, Steve," his father said.

His simple faith was too much for Steve and he started to cry. Once he began he could not stop. He was weak with hunger and lack of sleep. All the strain and misery of the last two days overwhelmed him, and tears flowed freely. He kept swallowing and dabbing at his face with his manacled hands.

After a while Dad said: "We wanted to get you a lawyer but there wasn't time—we only just made it here."

Steve nodded. He would be his own lawyer if he could just get himself under control.

Two girls were brought in by a woman turnkey. They were not handcuffed. They sat down and giggled. They looked about eighteen.

"How the hell did this happen, anyway?" Dad said to Steve.

Trying to answer the question helped Steve stop crying. "I must look like the guy who did it," he said. He sniffed and swallowed. "The victim picked me out at a lineup. And I was in the neighbourhood at the time, I told the police that. The DNA test will clear me, but it takes three days. I'm hoping I'll get bail today."

"Tell the judge we're here," Dad said. "It will probably help."

Steve felt like a child, being comforted by his father. It brought back a bittersweet memory of the day he got his first bicycle. It must have been his fifth birthday. The bike was the kind with a pair of stabilising wheels at the back to prevent it falling over. Their house had a large garden with two steps leading down to a patio. "Ride around the lawn and steer clear of the steps," Dad had said; but the first thing little Stevie did was try to ride his bicycle down the steps. He crashed, damaging the bike and himself; and he fully expected his father to get mad at him for disobeying a direct order. Dad had picked him up, bathed his wounds gently, and

fixed the bike, and although Stevie waited for the explosion, it did not come. Dad never even said *I told you so*. No matter what happened, Steve's parents were always on his side.

The judge came in.

She was an attractive white woman of about fifty, very small and neat. She wore a black robe and carried a can of Diet Coke which she put on the desk when she sat down.

Steve tried to read her face. Was she cruel or benign? In a good mood or a foul temper? A warm-hearted, liberal-minded woman with a soul, or an obsessive martinet who secretly wished she could send them all to the electric chair? He stared at her blue eyes, her sharp nose, her gray-streaked dark hair. Did she have a husband with a beer gut, a grown son she worried about, an adored grandchild with whom she rolled around on the carpet? Or did she live alone in an expensive apartment full of stark modern furniture with sharp corners? His law lectures had told him the theoretical reasons for granting or refusing bail, but now they seemed almost irrelevant. All that really mattered was whether this woman was kindly or not.

She looked at the row of prisoners and said: "Good afternoon. This is your bail review." Her voice was low but clear, her diction precise. Everything about her seemed exact and tidy—except for that Coke can, a touch of humanity that gave Steve hope.

"Have you all received your statement of charges?" They all had. She went on

MST Justice?

not have to put up any money at all.

That was another soft decision, and Steve's spirits rose a notch.

The defendant was also ordered not to go to the address of the girl she had fought with. That reminded Steve that a judge could attach conditions to the bail. Perhaps he should volunteer to stay away from Lisa Hoxton.

The next defendant was a middle-aged white man who had exposed his penis to women shoppers in the feminine hygiene section of a Rite-Aid drugstore. He had a long record of similar offences. He lived alone but had been at the same address for five years. To Steve's surprise and dismay, the judge refused bail. The man was small and thin: Steve felt he was a harmless nutcase. But perhaps this judge, as a woman, was particularly tough on sex crimes.

She looked at her sheet and said: "Steven Charles Logan."

Steve raised his hand. *Please let me out of her, please.*

"You are charged with rape in the first degree, which carries a possible penalty of life imprisonment."

Behind him, Steve heard his mother gasp.

The judge went on to read out the other charges and penalties, then the pretrial investigator stood up. He recited Steve's age, address and occupation, and said that he had no criminal record and no addictions. Steve thought he sounded like a model citizen by comparison with most of the other defendants. Surely she had to

LL

take note of that?

When Purdy had finished, Steve said: "May I speak, Your Honour?"

"Yes, but remember that it may not be in your interest to tell me anything about the crime."

He stood up. "I'm innocent, Your Honour, but it seems I may bear a resemblance to the rapist, so if you grant me bail I'll promise not to approach the victim, if you want to make that a condition of bail."

"I certainly would."

He wanted to plead with her for his freedom, but all the eloquent speeches he had composed in his cell now vanished from his mind, and he could think of nothing to say. Feeling frustrated, he sat down.

Behind him, his father stood up. "Your Honour, I'm Steven's father, Colonel Charles Logan. I'd be glad to answer any questions you may want to ask me."

She gave him a frosty look. "That won't be necessary."

Steve wondered why she seemed to resent his father's intervention. Maybe she was just making it clear she was not impressed by his military rank. Perhaps she wanted to say *Everyone is equal in my court, regardless of how respectable and middle-class they might be.*

Dad sat down again.

The judge looked at Steve. "Mr Logan, was the woman known to you before

the alleged crime took place?"

"I've never met her," Steve said.

"Had you ever *seen* her before?"

Steve guessed she was wondering whether he had been stalking Lisa Hoxton for some time before attacking her. He replied: "I can't tell, I don't know what she looks like."

The judge seemed to reflect on that for a few seconds. Steve felt as if he was hanging to a ledge by his fingertips. Just a word from her would rescue him. But if she refused him bail it would be like falling into the abyss.

At last she spoke: "Bail is granted in the sum of two hundred thousand ^{dollars} ~~pounds~~."

Relief washed over Steve like a tidal wave, and his whole body relaxed. "Thank God for that," he murmured.

"You will not approach Lisa Hoxton nor go to 1321 Vine Avenue."

Steve felt Dad grasp his shoulder again. He reached up with his manacled hands and touched his father's bony fingers.

It would be another hour or two before he was free, he knew; but he did not mind too much, now that he was sure of freedom. He would eat six Big Macs and sleep the clock around. He wanted a hot bath and clean clothes and his wristwatch back. He wanted to bask in the company of people who did not say "motherfucker"

in every sentence.

?S/ And he realised (somewhat to his surprise) that what he wanted most of all was to call Jeannie Ferrami.

23

Jeannie was in a bilious mood as she returned to her office. Maurice Bell was a coward. An aggressive newspaper reporter had made some inaccurate insinuations, that was all, ^{and} ~~yet~~ the man had crumbled. And Berisford ^{had also} ~~was~~ too weak to defend her effectively.

Her computer search engine was her greatest achievement. It was the one truly outstanding triumph of her life, not counting tennis championships. If she had a particular intellectual talent, it was for solving that kind of tricky logical puzzle. Although she studied the psychology of unpredictable, irrational human beings, she did it by manipulating masses of data on hundreds and thousands of individuals: the work was statistical and mathematical. If her search engine was no good, she felt, she herself would be worthless. She might as well give up and become a stewardess, like Penny Walters.

She was surprised to see Annette Bigelow waiting outside her door. Annette was a graduate student whose work Jeannie supervised as part of her teaching duties. Now she recalled that last week Annette had submitted her proposal for the year's work, and they had an appointment this morning to discuss it. Jeannie decided to cancel the meeting: she had more important things to do. Then she saw the eager

23

Jeannie was in a bilious mood as she returned to her office. Maurice Bell was a coward. An aggressive newspaper reporter had made some inaccurate insinuations, that was all, yet the man had crumbled. And Berisford was too weak to defend her effectively.

Her computer search engine was her greatest achievement. It was the one truly outstanding triumph of her life, not counting tennis championships. If she had a particular intellectual talent, it was for solving that kind of tricky logical puzzle. Although she studied the psychology of unpredictable, irrational human beings, she did it by manipulating masses of data on hundreds and thousands of individuals: the work was statistical and mathematical. If her search engine was no good, she felt, she herself would be worthless. She might as well give up and become a stewardess, like Penny Walters.

She was surprised to see Annette Bigelow waiting outside her door. Annette was a graduate student whose work Jeannie supervised as part of her teaching duties. Now she recalled that last week Annette had submitted her proposal for the year's work, and they had an appointment this morning to discuss it. Jeannie decided to cancel the meeting: she had more important things to do. Then she saw the eager

23

... tell someone in dip 211?

Jeannie was in a bilious mood as she returned to her office. Maurice Bell was a coward. An aggressive newspaper reporter had made some inaccurate insinuations, that was all, yet the man had crumbled. And Berisford was too weak to defend her effectively.

? 8/

Her computer search engine was her greatest achievement. It was the one truly outstanding triumph of her life, not counting tennis championships. If she had a particular intellectual talent, it was for solving that kind of tricky logical puzzle. Although she studied the psychology of unpredictable, irrational human beings, she did it by manipulating masses of data on hundreds and thousands of individuals: the work was statistical and mathematical. If her search engine was no good, she felt, she herself would be worthless. She might as well give up and become a stewardess, like Penny Walters.)

2) *when she returned to her office*

She was surprised to see Annette Bigelow waiting outside her door. Annette was a graduate student whose work Jeannie supervised as part of her teaching duties. Now she recalled that last week Annette had submitted her proposal for the year's work, and they had an appointment this morning to discuss it. Jeannie decided to cancel the meeting: she had more important things to do. Then she saw the eager

expression on the young woman's face, and recalled how important these meetings were when you were a student; and she forced herself to smile and say: "I'm sorry to keep you waiting. Let's get started right away."

Fortunately she had read the proposal carefully and made notes. Annette was planning to trawl through existing data on twins to see if she could find correlations in the areas of political opinions and moral attitudes. It was an interesting notion and her plan was scientifically sound. Jeannie suggested some minor improvements and gave her the go-ahead.

As Annette was leaving, Ted Ransome put his head around the door. "You look as if you're about to cut someone's balls off," he said.

"Not yours, though," Jeannie smiled. "Come in and have a cup of coffee."

"Handsome" Ransome was her favourite man in the department. An associate professor who studied the psychology of perception, he was happily married with two small children. Jeannie knew he found her attractive, but he did not do anything about it. There was a pleasant frisson of sexual tension between them that never threatened to become a problem.

She switched on the coffee maker beside her desk and told him about the *New York Times* and Maurice Bell. "But here's the big question," she finished. "Who tipped off the *Times*?"

"It has to be Sophie," he said.

Sophie Chapple was the only other woman on the faculty of the psychology department. Although she was close to fifty and a full professor, she saw Jeannie as some kind of rival, and had behaved jealously from the beginning of the semester, complaining about everything from Jeannie's miniskirts to the way she parked her car.

"Would she do a thing like that?" Jeannie said.

"Like a shot."

"I guess you're right." Jeannie never ceased to marvel at the pettiness of top scientists. She had once seen a revered mathematician punch the most brilliant physicist in America for jumping the queue in the cafeteria. "Maybe I'll ask her."

He raised his eyebrows. "She'll lie."

"But she'll look guilty."

"There'll be a row."

"There's already a row."

The phone rang. Jeannie picked it up and gestured to Ted to pour the coffee.

"Hello."

"Naomi Freeland here."

Jeannie hesitated. "I'm not sure I should talk to you."

"I believe you've stopped using medical databases for your research."

"No."

"What do you mean, *No*?"

"I mean I haven't stopped. Your phone calls have started some discussions, but no decisions have been made."

"I have a fax here from the university president's office. In it, the university apologizes to people whose privacy has been invaded, and assures them that the program has been discontinued."

Jeannie was aghast. "They sent out that release?"

"You didn't know?"

"I saw a draft and I didn't agree to it."

"It seems like they've cancelled your program without telling you."

"They can't."

"What do you mean?"

"I have a contract with this university. They can't just do whatever the hell they like."

"Are you telling me you're going to continue in defiance of the university authorities?"

"Defiance doesn't come into it. They don't have the power to command me."

Jeannie caught Ted's eye. He lifted a hand and moved it from side to side in a negative gesture. He was right, Jeannie realised: this was not the way to talk to the press. She changed her tack. "Look," she said in a reasonable voice, "you yourself said that the invasion of privacy is *potential*, in this case."

"Yes...."

"And you have completely failed to find anyone who is willing to complain about my program. Yet you have no qualms about getting this research project cancelled."

"I don't judge, I report."

"Do you know what my research is about? I'm trying to find out what makes people criminals. I'm the first person to think of a really promising way to study this problem. If things work out right, what I discover could make America a better place for your grandchildren to grow up in."

"I don't have any grandchildren."

"Is that your excuse?"

"I don't need excuses—"

"Perhaps not, but wouldn't you do better to find a case of invasion of privacy that someone really cares about? Wouldn't that even make a better story for the newspaper?"

^{///}
"You're going to have to let me be the judge of that."

Jeannie sighed. She had done her best. Gritting her teeth, she ended the conversation on a friendly note. "Well, good luck with it."

"I appreciate your cooperation, Dr Ferrami."

"Goodbye." Jeannie hung up and said: "You bitch."

Ted handed her a mug of coffee. "I gather they've announced that your program is cancelled."

"I can't understand it. Berisford said we'd talk about what to do."

Ted lowered his voice. "You don't know Berry as well as I do. Take it from me, he's a snake. I wouldn't trust him out of my sight."

"Perhaps it was a mistake," Jeannie said, clutching at straws. "Maybe Dr Bell's secretary sent the release out in error."

"Possibly," Ted said. "But my money's on the snake theory."

"Do you think I should call the *Times* and say my phone was answered by an impostor?"

He laughed. "I think you should go along to Berry's office and ask him if he meant for the release to go out before he talked to you."

"Good idea." She swallowed her coffee and stood up.

He went to the door. "Good luck. I'm rooting for you."

"Thanks." She thought of kissing his cheek, and decided not to.

She walked along the corridor and up a flight of stairs to Berisford's office. His door was locked. She went along to the office of the secretary who serviced all the professors. "Hi, Julie, where's Berry?"

"He left for the day, but he asked me to fix an appointment for you tomorrow."

Damn. The bastard was avoiding her. Ted's theory was right. "What time

tomorrow?"

"Nine-thirty?"

"I'll be here."

She went down to her floor and stepped into the lab. Lisa was at the bench, checking the concentration of Steven's and Dennis's DNA that she had in the test tubes. She had mixed two microlitres of each sample with two millilitres of fluorescent dye. The dye glowed in contact with DNA, and the quantity of DNA was shown by how much it glowed, measured by a DNA fluorometer, with a dial giving the result in nanograms of DNA per microlitre of sample.

"How are you?" Jeannie asked.

"I'm fine."

Jeannie looked hard at Lisa's face. She was still in denial, that was obvious. Her expression was impassive, as she concentrated on her work, but the strain showed underneath. "Did you talk to your mother yet?" Lisa's parents lived in New York.

"I don't want to worry her."

"It's what she's there for. Call her."

"Maybe tonight."

Jeannie told the story of the *New York Times* reporter while Lisa worked. She mixed the DNA samples with an enzyme called a restriction endonuclease. These enzymes destroyed foreign DNA that might get into the body. They did so by cutting

the long molecule of DNA into thousands of shorter fragments. What made them so useful to genetic engineers was that an endonuclease always cut the DNA at the same specific point. So the fragments from two blood samples could be compared. If they matched, the blood came from the same individual, or from identical twins. If the fragments were different, they must come from different individuals.

It was like cutting an inch of tape from a cassette of an opera. Take a fragment cut five minutes from the start of two different tapes: if the music on both pieces of tape is a duet that goes *Se a caso Madama*, they both come from *The Marriage of Figaro*. To guard against the possibility that two completely different operas might have the same sequence of notes at just that point, it was necessary to compare several fragments, not just one.

The process of fragmentation took several hours, and could not be hurried: if the DNA was not completely fragmented the test would not work.

Lisa was shocked by the story Jeannie told, but she was not quite as sympathetic as Jeannie expected. ~~Perhaps that was because~~ she had suffered a devastating trauma just three days earlier, and Jeannie's crisis seemed minor by comparison. "If you have to drop your project," Lisa said, "what would you study instead?"

"I've no idea," Jeannie replied. "I can't imagine dropping this." Lisa simply did not empathize with the yearning to understand that drove a scientist, Jeannie

realised. To Lisa, a technician, one research project was much the same as another.

Jeannie returned to her office and called the Bella Vista Sunset Home. With all that was going on in her own life she had been lax about talking to her mother. "May I speak to Mrs Ferrami, please," she said.

The reply was abrupt. "They're having lunch."

Jeannie hesitated. "Okay. Would you please tell her that her daughter Jeannie called, and I'll try again later."

"Yeah."

Jeannie had the feeling that the woman was not writing this down. "That's J-E-A-N-N-I-E," she said. "Her daughter."

"Yeah, okay."

"Thank you, I appreciate it."]

"Sure."

Jeannie hung up. She had to get Mom out of there. (She still had not done anything about getting weekend teaching work.)

She picked up her mouse and looked at her screen, but it seemed pointless to work when her project might be cancelled. Feeling angry and helpless, she decided to quit for the day.

She turned off her computer, locked her office and left the building. She still had her red Mercedes. She got in and stroked the steering wheel with a pleasant sense

realised. To Lisa, a technician, one research project was much the same as another.

Jeannie returned to her office and called the Bella Vista Sunset Home. With all that was going on in her own life she had been lax about talking to her mother.

"May I speak to Mrs Ferrami, please," she said.

The reply was abrupt. "They're having lunch."

Jeannie hesitated. "Okay. Would you please tell her that her daughter Jeannie called, and I'll try again later."

"Yeah."

Jeannie had the feeling that the woman was not writing this down. "That's J-E-A-N-N-I-E," she said. "Her daughter."

"Yeah, okay."

"Thank you, I appreciate it."]

"Sure."

Jeannie hung up. She had to get Mom out of there. She still had not done anything about getting weekend teaching work.

She picked up her mouse and looked at her screen, but it seemed pointless to work when her project might be cancelled. Feeling angry and helpless, she decided to quit for the day.

She turned off her computer, locked her office and left the building. She still had her red Mercedes. She got in and stroked the steering wheel with a pleasant sense

This is the only mention since the first chap. Suggest you try to insert one or two in between.

what time is it? weather?

of familiarity.

She tried to cheer herself up. She had a father, that was a rare privilege. Maybe she should spend time with him, enjoy the novelty. They could drive down to the harbour front and walk around together. She could buy him a new sportcoat in Brooks Brothers. She did not have the money, but she would charge it. What the hell, life was short.

Feeling better, she drove home and parked outside her house. "Daddy, I'm home," she called as she went up the stairs. When she entered the living room she sensed something wrong. After a moment she noticed the TV had been moved. Maybe he had taken it into the bedroom to watch. She looked in the next room: he was not there. She returned to the living room. "Oh, no," she said. Her VCR was gone, too. "Daddy, you didn't!" Her stereo had disappeared and the computer was gone from her desk. "No," she said. "No, I don't believe it!" She ran back to her bedroom and opened her jewellery box. The one-carat diamond nose stud Will Temple had given her had gone.

The phone rang and she picked it up automatically.

"It's Steve Logan," the voice said. "How are you?"

"This is the most terrible day of my life," she said, and she began to cry.

Once she learns B is gone, she
needs some thoughts at the beginning
of a plan -- maybe actually over --
as to how she'll deal with this
crisis.

24

Berisford Jones had a plastic card that would open any door in Nut House.

No one else knew. Even the other full professors fondly imagined their rooms were private. They knew the office cleaners had master keys. So did the campus security guards. But it never occurred to faculty that it could not be very difficult to get hold of a key that was even given to cleaners.

28) All the same, Berisford had never used his master key. Snooping was undignified: not his style. (Pete Watson probably had photos of naked boys in his desk drawer, Ted Ransome undoubtedly stashed a little marijuana somewhere, Sophie Chapple might keep a vibrator for those long, lonely afternoons, but Berisford did not want to know about it.)

However, this was different.

The university had ordered Jeannie to stop using her computer search program, and they had announced to the world that it had been discontinued, but how could he be sure it was true? He could not see the electronic messages fly along the phone lines from one terminal to another. Throughout the day the thought had nagged him that she might already be searching another database. And there was no telling what she might find.

24

Berisford Jones had a plastic card that would open any door in Nut House.

No one else knew. Even the other full professors fondly imagined their rooms were private. They knew the office cleaners had master keys. So did the campus security guards. But it never occurred to faculty that it could not be very difficult to get hold of a key that was even given to cleaners.

All the same, Berisford had never used his master key. Snooping was undignified: not his style. Pete Watson probably had photos of naked boys in his desk drawer, Ted Ransome undoubtedly stashed a little marijuana somewhere, Sophie Chapple might keep a vibrator for those long, lonely afternoons, but Berisford did not want to know about it.

However, this was different.

The university had ordered Jeannie to stop using her computer search program, and they had announced to the world that it had been discontinued, but how could he be sure it was true? He could not see the electronic messages fly along the phone lines from one terminal to another. Throughout the day the thought had nagged him that she might already be searching another database. And there was no telling what she might find.

*Then why did he acquire it?
Especially if he's been only
6 weeks a year?*

So he had returned to his office and now sat at his desk, as the warm dusk gathered over the red brick of the campus buildings, tapping a plastic card against his computer mouse and getting ready to do something that went against all his instincts.

His dignity was precious. He had developed it early. As the smallest boy in the class, without a father to tell him how to deal with bullies, his mother too worried about making ends meet to concern herself with his happiness, he had slowly created an air of superiority, an aloofness that protected him. At Harvard he had furtively studied a classmate from a rich old-money family, taking in the details of his leather belts and linen handkerchiefs, his tweed suits and cashmere scarves; learning how he unfolded his napkin and held chairs for ladies; marvelling at the mixture of ease and deference with which he treated the professors, the superficial charm and underlying coldness of his relations with his inferiors. By the time Berisford began work on his master's degree he was widely assumed to be a brahmin himself.

And the cloak of dignity was difficult to take off. Some professors could remove their jackets and join in a game of touch football with a group of undergraduates, but not Berisford. The students never told him jokes or invited him to their parties; but nor did they cheek him or talk during his lectures or question his grades.

In a sense his whole life since the creation of Genetico had been a deception,

So he had returned to his office and now sat at his desk, as the warm dusk gathered over the red brick of the campus buildings, tapping a plastic card against his computer mouse and getting ready to do something that went against all his instincts.

His dignity was precious. He had developed it early. As the smallest boy in the class, without a father to tell him how to deal with bullies, his mother too worried about making ends meet to concern herself with his happiness, he had slowly created an air of superiority, an aloofness that protected him. At Harvard he had furtively studied a classmate from a rich old-money family, taking in the details of his leather belts and linen handkerchiefs, his tweed suits and cashmere scarves; learning how he unfolded his napkin and held chairs for ladies; marvelling at the mixture of ease and deference with which he treated the professors, the superficial charm and underlying coldness of his relations with his ^{social} inferiors. By the time Berisford began work on his master's degree he was widely assumed to be a brahmin himself.

And the cloak of dignity was difficult to take off. Some professors could remove their jackets and join in a game of touch football with a group of undergraduates, but not Berisford. The students never told him jokes or invited him to their parties; but nor did they cheek him or talk during his lectures or question his grades.

In a sense his whole life since the creation of Genetico had been a deception,

but he had carried it off with boldness and panache. There was no stylish way to sneak into someone else's room and search it.

He checked his watch. The lab would be closed now. Most of his colleagues had left, heading for their suburban homes or for the bar of the Faculty Club. This was as good a moment as any. There was no time when the building was guaranteed to be empty: scientists worked whenever the mood took them. If he was seen, he would have to brazen it out.

He left his office, went down the stairs, and walked along the corridor to Jeannie's door. There was no one around. He swiped the card through the card reader and her door opened. He stepped inside, switched on the lights, and closed the door behind him.

It was the smallest office in the building. In fact it had been a storeroom, but Sophie Chapple had maliciously insisted it become Jeannie's office, on the spurious grounds that a bigger room was needed to store the boxes of printed questionnaires the department used. It was a narrow room with a small window. However, Jeannie had livened it up with two wooden chairs painted bright red, a spindly palm in a pot, and a reproduction of a Picasso etching, a bullfight in vivid shades of yellow and orange.

He picked up the framed picture on her desk. It was a black-and-white photograph of a good-looking man with sideburns and a wide tie, and a young woman

with a determined expression: Jeannie's parents in the seventies, he guessed. Otherwise her desk was completely clear. Tidy girl.

He sat down and switched on her computer. While it was booting up he went through her drawers. The top one contained ballpoints and scratchpads. In another he found a box of tampons and a pair of pantihose in an unopened packet. Berisford hated pantihose. He cherished adolescent memories of garter belts and stockings with seams. ~~Pantihose were unhealthy, too, like nylon jockey shorts. If President Proust made him Surgeon General, he planned to put a health warning on all pantihose.~~ The next drawer contained a hand mirror and a brush with some of Jeannie's long dark hair caught in its bristles; the last a pocket dictionary and a paperback book called *A Thousand Acres*. No secrets so far.

✓
TOO
FLIP
FOR
TENSION

Her menu came up on screen. He picked up her mouse and clicked on *Calendar*. Her appointments were predictable: lectures and classes, laboratory time, tennis games, dates for drinks and movies. She was going to Oriole Park at Camden Yards to watch the ball game on Saturday; Ted Ransome and his wife were having her over to brunch on Sunday; her car was due to be serviced on Monday. There was no entry that said *Scan medical files of Acme Insurance*. Her to-do list was equally mundane: *Buy vitamins, call Ghita, Lisa birthday gift, check modem.*

He exited the diary and began to look through her files. She had masses of statistics on spreadsheets. Her word-processing files were smaller: some

correspondence, designs for questionnaires, a draft of an article. Using the Find feature, he searched her entire WP directory for the word *database*. It came up several times in the article, and again in file copies of three outgoing letters, but none of the references told him where she planned to use her search engine next. "Come on," he said aloud, "there has to be something, for God's sake."

She had a filing cabinet but there was not much in it: she had been here only a few weeks. After a year or two it would be stuffed full of completed questionnaires, the raw data of psychological research. Now she had a few incoming letters in one file, departmental memos in another, photocopies of articles in a third.

In an otherwise empty cupboard he found, face down, a framed picture of Jeannie with a tall, bearded man, both of them on bicycles beside a lake. Berisford inferred a love affair that had ended.

He now felt even more worried. This was the room of an organised person, the type who planned ahead. She filed her incoming letters and kept copies of everything she sent out. There ought to be evidence here of what she was going to do next. She had no reason to be secretive about it: until today there had been no suggestion that she had anything to be ashamed of. She must be planning another database sweep. The only possible explanation for the absence of clues was that she had made the arrangements by phone or in person, perhaps with someone who was a close friend. And if that was the case he might not be able to find out anything about it by

searching her room.

He heard a footstep in the corridor outside, and tensed. There was a click as a card was passed through the card reader. Berisford stared helplessly at the door. There was nothing he could do: he was caught red-handed, sitting at her desk, with her computer on. He could not pretend to have wandered in here by accident.

The door opened. He expected to see Jeannie, but in fact it was a security guard.

The man knew him. "Oh, hi, professor," the guard said. "I saw the light on so I thought I'd check: Dr Ferrami usually keeps her door open when she's here."

(?) Berisford struggled ^{to remain calm} not to blush. "That's quite all right," he said. Never apologize, never explain, he thought. "I'll be sure to close the door when I'm through here."

"Great. Well, good night, professor."

"Good night."

The guard left.

No problem, Berisford thought.

He checked that her modem was switched on, then clicked on America OnLine and accessed her mailbox. She had three pieces of mail. He downloaded them all. The first was a notice about increased prices for using the Internet. The second came from the University of Minnesota and read:

searching her room.

He heard a footstep in the corridor outside, and tensed. There was a click as a card was passed through the card reader. Berisford stared helplessly at the door. There was nothing he could do: he was caught red-handed, sitting at her desk, with her computer on. He could not pretend to have wandered in here by accident.

The door opened. He expected to see Jeannie, but in fact it was a security guard.

The man knew him. "Oh, hi, professor," the guard said. "I saw the light on so I thought I'd check: Dr Ferrami usually keeps her door open when she's here."

Berisford struggled not to blush. "That's quite all right," he said. Never apologize, never explain. ~~He said.~~ "I'll be sure to close the door when I'm through here."

"Great. Well, good night, professor."

"Good night."

The guard left.

No problem, Berisford thought.

He checked that her modem was switched on, then clicked on America OnLine and accessed her mailbox. She had three pieces of mail. He downloaded them all. The first was a notice about increased prices for using the Internet. The second came from the University of Minnesota and read:

I'll be in Baltimore on Friday and would like to have a drink with you for old times' sake. Love, Will.

Berisford wondered if Will was the bearded guy in the bike picture. He binned it and opened the third letter.

It electrified him.

You'll be relieved to know that I'm running your scan on our fingerprint file tonight. Call me. Ghita.

It was from the FBI.

"Son of a bitch," Berisford whispered. "This will kill us."

Good scene, but we need to feel
more really how scared he is
both of being caught and of what
he might find. And then he does
find!

I'll be in Baltimore on Friday and would like to have a drink with you for old times' sake. Love, Will.

Berisford wondered if Will was the bearded guy in the bike picture. He binned it and opened the third letter.

~~It electrified him.~~

You'll be relieved to know that I'm running your scan on our fingerprint file tonight. Call me. Ghita.

It was from the FBI.

"Son of a bitch," Berisford whispered. "This will kill us."

25

Steve Logan hung up the phone.

He had showered and shaved and dressed in clean clothes, and he was full of his mother's lasagne. He had told his parents every detail of his ordeal, moment by moment, and he was going to see a lawyer first thing tomorrow morning. He had slept all the way from Baltimore to Washington in the back of his father's Lincoln Mark VIII, and although that hardly made up for the one-and-a-half nights he had stayed awake, nevertheless he felt fine.

And he wanted to see Jeannie.

He had felt that way before he called her. Now that he knew how much trouble she was in, he was even more eager. He wanted to put his arms around her and tell her everything would be all right.

He also felt there had to be a connection between her problems and his.

Everything went wrong for both of them, it seemed to Steve, from the moment she introduced him to her boss, and Berisford freaked.

There is a big discovery - when and how does he make it?

He wanted to know more about the mystery of his origins. He had not told his parents that part. It was too bizarre and troubling. But he needed to talk to Jeannie about it.

He picked up the phone again to call her right back, then he changed his mind. She would say she did not want company. Depressed people usually felt that way, even when they really needed a shoulder to cry on. Maybe he should just show up on her doorstep and say *Hey, let's try to cheer each other up.*

He went into the kitchen. Mom was scrubbing the lasagne dish with a wire brush. Dad had gone to his office for an hour. Steve began to load crockery into the dishwasher. "Mom," he said, "this is going to sound a little strange to you, but...."

"You're going to see a girl," she said.

He smiled. "How did you know?"

"I'm your mother, I'm telepathic. What's her name?"

"Jeannie Ferrami. *Doctor Ferrami.*"

"I'm a Jewish mother now? I'm supposed to be impressed that she's a doctor?"

"She's a scientist, not a physician."

"What's she like?"

"Well, she's kind of striking, you know, she's tall, and very fit—she's a hell of a tennis player—with a lot of dark hair, and dark eyes, and a pierced nostril with this very delicate thin silver ring, and she's, like, forceful, she says what she wants, in a direct way, but she laughs a lot, too, I made her laugh a couple of times, but mainly she's just this..." He sought for a word. "...she's just this *presence*, when she's around you simply can't look anywhere else...." He tailed off.

For a moment his mother just stared at him, then she said: "Oh, boy—you've got it bad."

"Well, not necessarily...." He stopped himself. "Yeah, you're right. I'm crazy about her."

"Does she feel the same?"

"Not yet."

His mother smiled ~~fondly~~. "Go on, go see her. I hope she deserves you."

He kissed her. "How did you get to be such a good person?"

"Practice," she said.

Steve's car was parked outside: they had picked it up from the Jones Falls campus and his mother had driven it back to Washington. Now he got on I-95 and drove back to Baltimore.

Jeannie needed some tender loving care. Her father had let her down, her boss had let her down, and she needed someone to cherish her. Well, that was a job he was qualified to do.

As he drove he pictured her sitting next to him on a couch, laughing, and saying things like *I'm so glad you came over, You've made me feel much better, Why don't we just take off all our clothes and get into bed?*

He stopped at a strip mall in the Mount Washington neighbourhood and bought a seafood pizza, a ten-dollar bottle of chardonnay, a container of Ben &

For a moment his mother just stared at him, then she said: "Oh, boy—you've got it bad."

"Well, not necessarily...." He stopped himself. "Yeah, you're right. I'm crazy about her."

"Does she feel the same?"

"Not yet."

His mother smiled fondly. "Go on, go see her. I hope she deserves you."

He kissed her. "How did you get to be such a good person?"

"Practice," she said.

Steve's car was parked outside: they had picked it up from the Jones Falls campus and his mother had driven it back to Washington. Now he got on I-95 and drove back to Baltimore.

Jeannie needed some tender loving care. Her father had let her down, her boss had let her down, and she needed someone to cherish her. Well, that was a job he was qualified to do.

✓
she
hasn't
told
Lynn M.

As he drove he pictured her sitting next to him on a couch, laughing, and saying things like *I'm so glad you came over, You've made me feel much better, Why don't we just take off all our clothes and get into bed?*

He stopped at a strip mall in the Mount Washington neighbourhood and bought a seafood pizza, a ten-dollar bottle of chardonnay, a container of Ben &

Jerry's ice cream—Rainforest Crunch ~~flavor~~—and ten yellow carnations. The front page of the *Wall Street Journal* caught his eye with a headline about Genetico, Inc. That was the company that funded Jeannie's research into twins, he recalled. It seemed they were about to be taken over by Landsmann, a German conglomerate. He bought the paper.

His delightful fantasies were clouded by the worrying thought that she might have gone out since he talked to her. Or she might be in, but not answering the door. Or she might have visitors.

He was pleased to see a red Mercedes 280C parked near her house: she must be in. Then he realised she might have gone out on foot. Or in a taxi. Or a friend's car. >

She had an entryphone with no video. He pressed the bell and stared at the speaker, willing it to make a noise. Nothing happened. He rang again. There was a crackling noise. His heart leaped. An irritable voice said: "Who is it?"

"It's Steve Logan. I came to cheer you up."

There was a long pause. "Steve, I don't feel like having visitors."

"At least let me give you these flowers."

She did not reply. She was scared, he thought, and he felt bitterly disappointed. She had said she believed he was innocent, but that was when he was safely behind bars. Now that he was on her doorstep and she was alone, it was not

Jerry's ice cream—Rainforest Crunch flavor—and ten yellow carnations. The front page of the *Wall Street Journal* caught his eye with a headline about Genetico, Inc. That was the company that funded Jeannie's research into twins, he recalled. It seemed they were about to be taken over by Landsmann, a German conglomerate. He bought the paper.

His delightful fantasies were clouded by the worrying thought that she might have gone out since he talked to her. Or she might be in, but not answering the door. Or she might have visitors.

He was pleased to see a red Mercedes 280C parked near her house: she must be in. Then he realised she might have gone out on foot. Or in a taxi. Or a friend's car.

She had an entryphone with no video. He pressed the bell and stared at the speaker, willing it to make a noise. Nothing happened. He rang again. There was a crackling noise. ~~His heart leaped.~~ An irritable voice said: "Who is it?"

"It's Steve Logan. I came to cheer you up."

There was a long pause. "Steve, I don't feel like having visitors."

"At least let me give you these flowers."

She did not reply. She was scared, he thought, and he felt bitterly disappointed. She had said she believed he was innocent, but that was when he was safely behind bars. Now that he was on her doorstep and she was alone, it was not

quite dead
Larkin!

so easy. "You haven't changed your mind about me, have you?" he said. "You still believe I'm innocent? If not, I'll just go away."

The buzzer sounded and the door opened.

She was a woman who could not resist a challenge, he thought.

He stepped into a tiny lobby with two more doors. One stood open and led to a flight of stairs. At the top stood Jeannie, in a bright green T-shirt.

"I guess you'd better come up," she said.

It was not the most enthusiastic of welcomes, but he smiled and went up the stairs, carrying his ^{gifts} shopping in a paper sack. She showed him into a little living room with a kitchen nook. She liked black and white with splashes of vivid color, he noted. She had a black-upholstered couch with orange cushions, an electric-blue clock on a white-painted wall, bright yellow lampshades and a white kitchen counter with red coffee mugs.

He put his sack down on the kitchen counter. "Look," he said. "You need something to eat, to make you feel better." He took out the pizza. "And a glass of wine to ease the tension. Then, when you're ready to give yourself a special treat, you can eat this ice cream right out of the carton, don't even put it in a dish. And after the food and drink is all gone you'll still have the flowers. See?"

She stared at him as if he were a man from Mars.

He added: "And anyway, I figured you needed someone to come over here and

tell you that you're a wonderful, special person."

Her eyes filled with tears. ^{Shit!} "Fuck you!" she said. "I never cry!"

He put his hands on her shoulders. It was the first time he had touched her. Tentatively, he drew her to him. She did not resist. Hardly able to believe his luck, he put his arms around her. She was nearly as tall as he. She rested her head on his shoulder, and her body shook with sobs. He stroked her hair. It was soft and heavy. He got a hard-on like a fire hose, and he eased away from her a fraction, hoping she would not notice. "It's going to be all right," he said. "You'll work things out."

She remained slumped in his arms for a long, delicious moment. He felt the warmth of her body and inhaled her scent. He wondered whether to kiss her. He hesitated, afraid that if he rushed her she would reject him. Then the moment passed and she moved away.

She wiped her nose on the hem of her baggy T-shirt, giving him a sexy glimpse of a flat, suntanned stomach. "Thanks," she said. "I needed a shoulder to cry on."

He felt let down by her matter-of-fact tone. For him it had been a moment of intense feeling; for her, no more than a release of tension. "All part of the service," he said ^{quickly.} (facetiously, then wished he had kept quiet.)

She opened a cupboard and took out plates. "I feel better already," she said.

"Let's eat."

He perched on a stool at her kitchen counter. She cut the pizza and took the

cork out of the wine. He enjoyed watching her move around her home, closing a drawer with her hip, squinting at a wine glass to see if it was clean, picking up a corkscrew with her long, capable fingers. He remembered the first girl he ever fell in love with. Her name was Bonnie, and she was seven, the same age as he, and ~~he had~~ stared at her strawberry-blond ringlets and green eyes and thought what a miracle it was that someone so perfect could exist in the playground of Spillar Road Grade School. For some time he had entertained the notion that she might actually be an angel.

He did not think Jeannie was an angel, but there was a fluid physical grace about her that gave him the same awestruck sensation.

"You're resilient," she commented. "Last time I saw you, you looked awful. It was only twenty-four hours ago, but you seem completely recovered."

"I got off lightly. I have a bruise where Porky Butcher kicked me in the ribs at five o'clock this morning, but other than that I'm okay."

He looked at her bookshelf. She had a lot of nonfiction, biographies of Darwin and Einstein and Francis Bacon; some women novelists he had not read, Erica Jong and Joyce Carol Oates; five or six Edith Whartons; some modern classics. "Hey, you have my all-time favourite novel!" he said.

"Let me guess: *To Kill A Mockingbird*."

He was astonished. "How did you know?"

"Come on. The hero is a lawyer who defies social prejudice to defend an innocent man. Isn't that your dream? Besides, I didn't think you'd pick *The Women's Room*."

He shook his head in resignation. "You know so much about me. It's unnerving."

"What do you think is my favorite book?"

"Is this a test?"

"You bet."

"Oh...uh, *Middlemarch*."

"Why?"

"It has a strong, independent-minded heroine."

"But she doesn't *do* anything! Anyway, the book I'm thinking of isn't a novel. Guess again."

He shook his head. "A nonfiction book." Then inspiration struck. "I know. The story of a brilliant, elegant scientific discovery that explained something crucial about human life. I bet it's *The Double Helix*."

"Hey, very good!"

They started to eat. The pizza was still warm. Jeannie was thoughtfully silent for a while, then she said: "I really messed up today. I can see it now. I needed to keep the whole crisis low-key. I should have kept saying *Well, maybe, we can discuss*

"Come on. The hero is a lawyer who defies social prejudice to defend an innocent man. Isn't that your dream? Besides, I didn't think you'd pick *The Women's Room*."

He shook his head in resignation. "You know so much about me. It's unnerving."

"What do you think is my favorite book?"

"Is this a test?"

"You bet."

"Oh...uh, *Middlemarch*."

"Why?"

"It has a strong, independent-minded heroine."

"But she doesn't *do* anything! Anyway, the book I'm thinking of isn't a novel. Guess again."

~~He shook his head. "A nonfiction book." Then inspiration struck. "I know. The~~
 story of a brilliant, elegant scientific discovery that explained something crucial about
 human life. ^{It has to be} I bet it's *The Double Helix*."

"Hey, very good!"

They started to eat. The pizza was still warm. Jeannie was thoughtfully silent for a while, then she said: "I really messed up today. I can see it now. I needed to keep the whole crisis low-key. I should have kept saying *Well, maybe, we can discuss*

that, let's not make any hasty decisions. Instead I defied the university, then made it worse by telling the press.

"You strike me as an uncompromising person," he said.

She nodded. "There's *uncompromising*, and then there's *dumb*."

He showed her the *Wall Street Journal*. "This may explain why your department is oversensitive about bad publicity at the moment. Your sponsor is about to be taken over."

She looked at the first paragraph. "A hundred and eighty million dollars, wow." She read on while chewing a slice of pizza. When she finished the article she shook her head. "Your theory is interesting, but I don't buy it."

"Why not?"

"It was Maurice Bell who seemed to be against me, not Berisford. Although Berisford can be sneaky, they say. Anyway, I'm not that important. I represent such a tiny fraction of the research Genetico sponsors. Even if my work really did invade people's privacy, that wouldn't be enough of a scandal to threaten a multi-million-dollar takeover."

Steve wiped his fingers on a paper napkin and picked up a framed photograph of a woman with a baby. The woman looked a bit like Jeannie with straight hair. "Your sister?" he guessed.

"Yes. Patty. She has three kids now—all boys."

that, let's not make any hasty decisions. Instead I defied the university, then made it worse by telling the press.

"You strike me as an uncompromising person," he said.

She nodded. "There's *uncompromising*, and then there's *dumb*."

He showed her the *Wall Street Journal*. "This may explain why your department is oversensitive about bad publicity at the moment. Your sponsor is about to be taken over."

She looked at the first paragraph. "A hundred and eighty million dollars, wow." She read on while chewing a slice of pizza. When she finished the article she shook her head. "Your theory is interesting, but I don't buy it."

"Why not?"

"It was Maurice Bell who seemed to be against me, not Berisford. ~~Although Berisford can be sneaky, they say.~~ Anyway, I'm not that important. I represent such a tiny fraction of the research Genetico sponsors. Even if my work really did invade people's privacy, that wouldn't be enough of a scandal to threaten a multi-million-dollar takeover."

Steve wiped his fingers on a paper napkin and picked up a framed photograph of a woman with a baby. The woman looked a bit like Jeannie with straight hair. "Your sister?" he guessed.

"Yes. Patty. She has three kids now—all boys."

"I don't have any brothers or sisters," he said. Then he remembered. "Unless you count Dennis Pinker." Jeannie's face changed, and he said: "You're looking at me like a specimen."

"I'm sorry. Want to try the ice cream?"

"You bet."

She put the tub on the table and got out two spoons. That pleased him. Eating out of the same container was one step closer to kissing. She ate with relish. He wondered if she made love with the same kind of greedy enthusiasm.

He swallowed a spoonful of Rainforest Crunch and said: "I'm so glad you believe in me. The cops sure don't."

"If you're a rapist, my whole theory falls to pieces."

"Even so, not many women would have let me in tonight. Especially believing I have the same genes as Dennis Pinker."

"I hesitated," she said. "But you proved me right."

"How?"

She gestured to indicate the remains of their dinner. "If Dennis Pinker is attracted to a woman, he pulls a knife ^{on her} ~~and orders her to take off her panties~~. You bring pizza."

Steve laughed.

"It may sound funny," Jeannie said, "but it's a world of difference."

I think you should
"There's something ~~you ought to~~ know about me," Steve said. "A secret."

She put down her spoon. "What?"

"I almost killed someone once."

"How?"

He told her the story of the fight with Tip Hendricks. "That's why I'm so bothered by this stuff about my origins," he said. "I can't tell you how disturbing it is to be told that Mom and Dad may not be my parents. What if my real father is a killer?"

Jeannie shook her head. "You were in a schoolboy fight that got out of hand. That doesn't make you a psychopath. And what about the other guy? Tip?"

"Someone else killed him a couple of years later. By then he was dealing dope. He got into an argument with his supplier, and the guy shot him through the head."

"He's the psychopath, I figure," Jeannie said. "That's what happens to them. They can't stay out of trouble. A big strong kid like you might clash with the law once, but you survive the incident and go on to lead a normal life. Whereas Dennis will be in and out of jail until someone kills him."

"How old are you, Jeannie?"

"You didn't like me calling you a big strong kid."

"I'm twenty-two."

"I'm twenty-nine. It's a big difference."

"Do I seem like a kid to you?"

"Listen, I don't know, a man of thirty probably wouldn't drive here from Washington just to bring me pizza. It was kind of impulsive."

"Are you sorry I did it?"

"No." She touched his hand. "I'm real glad."

He still did not know where he was with her. But she had cried on his shoulder. You don't use a kid for that, he thought.

"When will you know about my genes?" he said.

She looked at her watch. "The blotting is probably done. Lisa will make the film in the morning."

"You mean the test is completed?"

"Just about."

"Can't we look at the results now? I can't wait to find out if I have the same DNA as Dennis Pinker."

"I guess we could," Jeannie said. "I'm pretty curious myself."

"Then what are we waiting for?"