

Friday

38

Jeannie woke up in her compact white-walled living room, on her black couch, in Steve's arms, wearing only her fuschia pink towelling bathrobe.

How did I get here?

They had spent half the night rehearsing for today's hearing. Jeannie's heart lurched: her fate was to be decided this morning.

But how come I'm lying in his lap?

Around three o'clock she had yawned and closed her eyes for a moment.

And then...?

She must have fallen asleep.

At some point he had gone into the bedroom and taken the blue-and-red striped quilt off the bed and brought it in here, for she was snug beneath it.

But Steve could not be responsible for the way she was lying, with her head on his thigh and her arm around his waist. She must have done that herself, in her sleep. (It was a bit embarrassing: her face was vey close to his crotch. She wondered what he thought of her. Her behaviour had been very off the wall. Undressing in front of him then falling asleep on him: she was behaving as you would with a longtime lover.

Well, I've got an excuse for acting weird: I've had a weird week.

? 8/ She had been ill-treated by patrolman McHenty, robbed by her father, accused by the *New York Times*, threatened with a knife by Dennis Pinker, fired by the college and attacked in her car (She felt damaged)

? 8/ Her face throbbed gently where she had been punched yesterday, but the injuries were not merely physical. The attack had bruised her psyche, too. When she recalled the fight in the car, her anger returned and she wanted to get the man by the throat. (Even when she was not remembering, she felt a low background hum of unhappiness, as if her life was somehow of less value because of the attack.)

It was surprising she could trust any man; astonishing that she could fall asleep on a couch with one who looked exactly like her attackers. But now she could be even more sure of Steve. Neither of the others could have spent the night like this, alone with a girl, without forcing himself on her.

She frowned. Steve had done something in the night, she recalled vaguely; something nice. Yes: she had a dreamy memory of big hands rhythmically caressing her hair, it seemed for a long time, while she dozed, as comfortable as a stroked cat.

She smiled and stirred, and he spoke immediately. "Are you awake?"

She yawned and stretched. "I'm sorry I fell asleep on you. Are you okay?"

"The blood supply to my left leg was cut off at about five a.m., but once I got used to that I was fine."

She sat upright so that she could see him better. His clothes were creased, his hair was mussed and he had a growth of fair stubble, but he looked good enough to eat. "Did you sleep?"

He shook his head. "I was enjoying myself too much, watching you."

"Don't say I snore."

"You don't snore. You dribble a little, that's all." He dabbed at a damp spot on his pants.

"Oh, gross!" She stood up. The bright blue clock on the wall caught her eye: it was eight-thirty. "We don't have much time," she said in alarm. "The hearing starts at ten."

"You shower while I make coffee," Steve said generously.

She stared at him. He was unreal. "Did you come from Santa Claus?"

He laughed. "According to your theory, I come from a test-tube." Then his face went solemn again. ~~"What the hell, who knows."~~

Her mood darkened along with his. She went into the bedroom, dropped her clothes on the floor, and got into the shower. As she washed her hair she brooded over how hard she had struggled over the last ten years: the contest for scholarships, the intensive tennis training combined with long hours of study; the peevish nitpicking of her doctoral supervisor. She had worked like a robot to get where she was today, all because she wanted to be a scientist and help the human race

She sat upright so that she could see him better. His clothes were creased, his hair was mussed and he had a growth of fair stubble, but he looked good enough to eat. "Did you sleep?"

He shook his head. "I was enjoying myself too much, watching you."

"Don't say I snore."

"You don't snore. You dribble a little, that's all." He dabbed at a damp spot on his pants.

"Oh, gross!" She stood up. The bright blue clock on the wall caught her eye: it was eight-thirty. "We don't have much time," she said in alarm. "The hearing starts at ten."

"You shower while I make coffee," Steve said generously.

She stared at him. He was unreal. "Did you come from Santa Claus?"

He laughed. "According to your theory, I come from a test-tube." Then his face went solemn again. "What the hell, who knows."

Her mood darkened along with his. She went into the bedroom, dropped her clothes on the floor, and got into the shower. (As she washed her hair she brooded over how hard she had struggled over the last ten years: the contest for scholarships, the intensive tennis training combined with long hours of study; the peevish nitpicking of her doctoral supervisor. She had worked like a robot to get where she was today, all because she wanted to be a scientist and help the human race

?
we know
her feelings
?

understand itself better. And now Berisford Jones was about to throw it all away.

The shower made her feel better. As she was towelling her hair, the phone rang. She picked up the bedside extension. "Yeah."

"Jeannie, it's Patty."

"Hi, Sis, what's happening?"

"Daddy showed up."

Jeannie sat on the bed. "How is he?"

"Broke, but healthy."

"He came here on Monday. Tuesday he got a little ticked off at me because I didn't cook him dinner. Wednesday he took off, with my computer and my TV and my stereo. He must have already spent or gambled whatever he got for them."

Patty gasped. "Oh, Jeannie, that's awful!"

"Ain't it just. So lock up you valuables."

"To steal from his own family! Oh, God, if Zip finds out he'll throw him out."

"Patty, I have even worse problems. I may be fired from my job today."

"Jeannie, why?"

"I don't have time to explain now, but I'll call you later."

"Okay."

"Have you talked to Mom?"

"Every day."

"Oh, good, that makes me feel better. I only called once and she was at lunch."

"The people who answer the phone are really unhelpful. We have to get Mom out of there soon."

She'll be there a lot longer if I get fired today. "I'll talk to you later."

"Good luck!"

Jeannie hung up and she noticed there was a steaming mug of coffee on the bedside table. She shook her head in amazement. It was only a cup of coffee, but what astonished her was the way Steve knew what she needed. It seemed to come naturally to him to be supportive. And he didn't want anything in return. In her experience, on the rare occasions when a man put a woman's needs ahead of his own, he expected her to act like a geisha for a month in gratitude.

Steve was different. I didn't realise men came in this version, she thought. If I'd known, I would have ordered one years ago.

She had done everything alone, all her adult life. Her father had never been around to support her. Mom had always been strong, but in the end her strength had become almost as much a problem as Daddy's weakness. Mom had plans for Jeannie and she was not willing to give them up. She wanted Jeannie to be a hairdresser. She had even got Jeannie a job, two weeks before her sixteenth birthday, washing hair and sweeping the floor at the Salon Alexis in Adams-Morgan. Jeannie's desire to be a scientist was utterly incomprehensible to her. "You could be a qualified stylist before

"Oh, good, that makes me feel better. I only called once and she was at lunch."

"The people who answer the phone are really unhelpful. We have to get Mom out of there soon."

She'll be there a lot longer if I get fired today. "I'll talk to you later."

"Good luck!"

? 8 | Jeannie hung up (and she noticed) there was a steaming mug of coffee on the bedside table. She shook her head in amazement. It was only a cup of coffee, but what astonished her was the way Steve knew what she needed. It seemed to come naturally to him to be supportive. And he didn't want anything in return. In her experience, on the rare occasions when a man put a woman's needs ahead of his own, he expected her to act like a geisha for a month in gratitude.

Steve was different. I didn't realise men came in this version, she thought. If I'd known, I would have ordered one years ago.

She had done everything alone, all her adult life. Her father had never been around to support her. Mom had always been strong, but in the end her strength had become almost as much a problem as Daddy's weakness. Mom had plans for Jeannie and she was not willing to give them up. She wanted Jeannie to be a hairdresser. She had even got Jeannie a job, two weeks before her sixteenth birthday, washing hair and sweeping the floor at the Salon Alexis in Adams-Morgan. Jeannie's desire to be a scientist was utterly incomprehensible to her. "You could be a qualified stylist before

"Oh, good, that makes me feel better. I only called once and she was at lunch."

"The people who answer the phone are really unhelpful. We have to get Mom out of there soon."

She'll be there a lot longer if I get fired today. "I'll talk to you later."

"Good luck!"

Jeannie hung up and she noticed there was a steaming mug of coffee on the bedside table. She shook her head in amazement. It was only a cup of coffee, but what astonished her was the way Steve knew what she needed. It seemed to come naturally to him to be supportive. And he didn't want anything in return. In her experience, on the rare occasions when a man put a woman's needs ahead of his own, he expected her to act like a geisha for a month in gratitude.

Steve was different. I didn't realise men came in this version, she thought. If I'd known, I would have ordered one years ago.

She had done everything alone, all her adult life. Her father had never been around to support her. Mom had always been strong, but in the end her strength had become almost as much a problem as Daddy's weakness. Mom had plans for Jeannie and she was not willing to give them up. She wanted Jeannie to be a hairdresser. She had even got Jeannie a job, two weeks before her sixteenth birthday, washing hair and sweeping the floor at the Salon Alexis in Adams-Morgan. Jeannie's desire to be a scientist was utterly incomprehensible to her. "You could be a qualified stylist before

the other girls have graduated college!" Mom had said. She never understood why Jeannie threw such a tantrum and refused to even take a look at the salon.

She was not alone today. She had Steve to support her. It did not matter to her that he was not qualified—a hotshot Washington lawyer was not necessarily the best choice to impress five professors. The important thing was that he would be there.

She put on her bathrobe and called to him. "You want the shower?"

"Sure." He came into the bedroom. "I wish I had a clean shirt."

"I don't have a man's shirt—wait a minute, I do." She had remembered the white Ralph Lauren button-down Lisa had borrowed after the fire. It belonged to someone in the math department. Jeannie had sent it to the laundry and now it was in the closet, wrapped in cellophane. She gave it to Steve.

"My size, seventeen thirty-six," he said. "Perfect."

"Don't ask me where it came from, it's a long story," she said. "I think I have a tie here somewhere, too." She opened a drawer and took out a blue silk spotted man's tie that she sometimes wore with a white blouse, for a snappy mannish look.

"Here."

"Thanks." He went into the tiny bathroom.

She felt a twinge of disappointment. She had been looking forward to seeing him take off his shirt. Men, she thought; the creeps expose themselves without being asked, the hunks are as shy as nuns.

"Can I borrow your razor?" he called.

"Sure, be my guest." Memo to self, she thought: Remember to do sex with this guy before he becomes too much like a brother.

She looked for her best black suit and remembered she had thrown it in the trash yesterday. "Damn fool," she muttered to herself. She could probably retrieve it but it would be creased and stained. She had a longline electric-blue jacket: she could wear that with a white T-shirt and black pants. It was a bit too bright, but it would serve.

She sat at her mirror and did her makeup. Steve came out of the bathroom, looking handsomely formal in the shirt and tie. "There are some cinnamon buns in the freezer," she said. "You could defrost them in the microwave if you're hungry."

"Great," he said. "You want something?"

"I'm too tense to eat. I could drink another cup of coffee, though."

He brought the coffee while she was finishing her makeup. She drank it quickly and put on her clothes. When she went into the living room he was sitting at the kitchen counter. "Did you find the buns?"

"Sure."

"What happened to them?"

"You said you weren't hungry, so I ate them all."

"All four?"

"Uh...in fact there were two packets."

"You ate *eight* cinnamon buns?"

He looked embarrassed. "I get hungry."

She laughed. "Let's go."

As she turned away he grabbed her arm. "One minute."

"What?"

"Jeannie, it's fun being friends and I really like just hanging out with you, you know, but you have to understand this isn't all I want."

"I do know that."

"I'm falling in love with you."

She looked into his eyes. He was very sincere. "I'm getting kind of attached to you, too," she said lightly.

"I want to make love to you, and I want it so bad it hurts."

I could listen to this kind of talk all day, she thought. "Listen," she said, "if you fuck like you eat, I'm yours."

His face fell, and she realised she had said the wrong thing.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I didn't mean to make a joke of it."

He gave a never-mind shrug.

She took his hand. "Listen. First we're going to save me. Then we're going to save you. Then we'll have some fun."

John on 11/11/11

He squeezed her hand. "Okay."

They went outside. "Let's drive together," she said. "I'll bring you back to your car later."

They got into her Mercedes. The car radio came on as she started the engine. Easing into the traffic on 41st Street she heard the newsreader mention Genetico, and she turned up the volume. "Senator Jim Proust, a former director of the CIA, is expected to confirm today he will seek the Republican nomination in next year's presidential election. His campaign promise: ^{10%} zero income tax, paid for by the abolition of welfare. Finance will not be a problem, commentators say, as he stands to make sixty million dollars from an agreed takeover of his medical research company Genetico. In sports, the Philadelphia Rams—"

Jeannie switched off. "What do you think of that."

Steve shook his head in dismay. "The stakes keep getting higher," he said. "If we break the true story of Genetico, and the takeover bid is cancelled, Jim Proust won't be able to pay for a presidential campaign. And Proust is a serious bad guy: a spook, ex-CIA, against gun control, everything. You're standing in the way of some dangerous people, Jeannie."

She gritted her teeth. "That makes them all the more worth fighting against. I was raised on welfare, Steve. If Proust becomes president, girls like me will always be hairdressers."

EARLIER you say 10% I
 think who is to pay
 a demand Proust
 10%

39

There was a small demonstration outside Hillside Hall, the administrative office building of Jones Falls University. Thirty or forty students, mostly women, stood in a cluster in front of the steps. It was a quiet, disciplined protest. Getting closer, Steve read a banner:

Reinstate Ferrami Now!

It seemed like a good omen to Steve. "They're supporting you," he said to Jeannie.

She looked closer, and a flush of pleasure spread across her face. "So they are. My God, someone loves me after all."

Another placard read:

U

can't do

this to

JF

A cheer went up when they spotted Jeannie. She went over to them, smiling. Steve followed, proud of her. Not every professor would get such spontaneous support from students. She shook hands with the men and kissed the women. Steve noticed a pretty blonde woman staring at him.

Jeannie hugged an older woman in the crowd. "Sophie!" she said. "What can I say?"

"Good luck in there," the woman said.

Jeannie detached herself from the crowd, beaming, and they walked toward the building. He said: "Well, *they* think you should keep your job."

"I can't tell you how much that means to me," she said. "That older woman is Sophie Chapple, a professor in the psychology department. I thought she hated me. I can't believe she's standing up for me."

"Who was the pretty girl at the front?"

Jeannie gave him a curious look . "You don't recognise her?"

"I'm pretty sure I've never seen her before, but she couldn't take her eyes off me." Then he guessed. "Oh, my God, it must be the victim."

"Lisa Hoxton."

"No wonder she stared." He could not help glancing back. She was a pretty, lively-looking girl. How could someone have attacked her and thrown her to the floor and forced her to have sex? A small knot of disgust twisted inside Steve. He despised

his noble.

The administrative building was a grand old house. Jeannie led him across the marbled hall and through a door marked Old Dining Room into a gloomy chamber in the baronial style: high ceiling, narrow Gothic windows and thick-legged oak furniture. There was a long table in front of a carved stone fireplace.

Four men and a middle-aged woman sat along one side of the table. Steve recognised the bald man in the middle as Jeannie's tennis opponent, Jack Budgen. This was the committee, he presumed: the group that held Jeannie's fate in its hands. He took a deep breath.

Leaning over the table, he shook Jack Budgen's hand and said: "Good morning, Dr Budgen. I'm Steven Logan. We spoke yesterday." Some instinct took over and he found himself exuding a relaxed confidence that was the opposite of how he felt. He shook hands with each of the committee members, and they told him their names.

SE 103 - 1011771

Two more men sat on the near side of the table, at the far end. The little guy in the navy vested suit was Berisford Jones, whom Steve had met last Monday. The thin, sandy-haired man in a charcoal double-breasted pinstripe had to be Henry Quinn. Steve shook hands with both.

Quinn looked ^{Indulgently} ~~superciliously~~ at him and said: "What are your legal qualifications, young man?"

Steve gave him a friendly smile and spoke in a low voice that no one else could hear. "Go fuck yourself, Henry."

Quinn flinched as if he had been struck, and Steve thought: That will be the last time the old bastard condescends to me.

He held a chair for Jeannie and they both sat down.

"Well, perhaps we should begin," Jack said. "These proceedings are informal. I believe everyone has received a copy of the rubric, so we know the rules. The charge is laid by Professor Berisford Jones, who proposes that Dr Jean Ferrami be dismissed because she has brought Jones Falls University into disrepute."

As he spoke, Steve ^{saw} watched the committee members, looking eagerly for signs of sympathy. He was not reassured. Only the woman, Jane Edelsborough, would look at Jeannie: the others did not meet her eye. Four against, one in favor, at the start, he thought. It was not good.

Jack said: "Berisford is represented by Mr Quinn."

Two more men sat on the near side of the table, at the far end. The little guy in the navy vested suit was Berisford Jones, whom Steve had met last Monday. The thin, sandy-haired man in a charcoal double-breasted pinstripe had to be Henry Quinn. Steve shook hands with both.

(Quinn ^{'s gaze was caught} looked superciliously at him and said: "What are your legal qualifications, young man?"

Steve gave him a friendly smile and spoke in a low voice that no one else could hear. "Go fuck yourself, Henry."

Quinn flinched as if he had been struck, and Steve thought: That will be the last time the old bastard condescends to me.

He held a chair for Jeannie and they both sat down.

"Well, perhaps we should begin," Jack said. "These proceedings are informal. I believe everyone has received a copy of the rubric, so we know the rules. The charge is laid by Professor Berisford Jones, who proposes that Dr Jean Ferrami be dismissed because she has brought Jones Falls University into disrepute."

As he spoke, Steve watched the committee members, looking eagerly for signs of sympathy. He was not reassured. Only the woman, Jane Edelsborough, would look at Jeannie: the others did not meet her eye. Four against, one in favor, at the start, he thought. It was not good.

Jack said: "Berisford is represented by Mr Quinn."

Quinn got to his feet and opened his briefcase. Steve noticed that his fingers were stained yellow from cigarettes. He took out a sheaf of blowup photocopies of the *New York Times* piece about Jeannie and handed one to every person in the room. The result was that the table was covered with pieces of paper saying GENE RESEARCH ETHICS: DOUBTS, FEARS AND A SQUABBLE. It was a powerful visual reminder of the trouble Jeannie ^{allegedly} had caused. Steve wished he had brought some papers to give out, so that he could have covered up Quinn's.

This simple, effective opening move by Quinn intimidated Steve. How could he possibly compete with a man who had probably thirty years of courtroom experience? I can't win this, he thought in a sudden panic.

Quinn began to speak. His voice was dry and precise, with no trace of a local accent. He spoke slowly and pedantically. Steve hoped that might be a mistake with this jury of intellectuals who did not need things spelt out for them in words of one syllable. Quinn summarised the history of the discipline committee and explained its position in the university government. He defined "disrepute" and produced a copy of Jeannie's employment contract. Steve began to feel a better as Quinn droned on.

At last he wound up his preamble and started to question Berisford. He began by asking when Berisford had first heard about Jeannie's computer search program.

"Last Monday afternoon," Berisford replied. He recounted the conversation he and Jeannie had had. His story tallied with what Jeannie had told Steve.

Then Berisford said: "As soon as I clearly understood her technique, I told her that in my opinion what she was doing was illegal."

(?)
 Jeannie ^{gasped} burst out: "What?"

Quinn ignored her and asked Berisford: "And what was her reaction?"

"She became very angry—"

"You damn liar!" Jeannie said.

(unintentionally?) 35 (Berisford flushed at this accusation).

Jack Budgen intervened. "Please, no interruptions," he said.

Steve kept an eye on the committee. They had all looked at Jeannie: they could hardly help it. He put a hand on her arm, as if restraining her.

"He's telling barefaced lies!" she protested.

"What did you expect?" Steve said in a low voice. "He's playing hardball."

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Don't be," he said in her ear. "Keep it up. They could see your anger was genuine."

Berisford went on: "She became petulant, just as she is now. She told me she could do what she liked, she had a contract."

One of the men on the committee, Tenniel Biddenham, frowned darkly, obviously disliking the idea of a junior member of faculty quoting her contract to her professor. Berisford was clever, Steve realised. He knew how to take a point scored

Then Berisford said: "As soon as I clearly understood her technique, I told her that in my opinion what she was doing was illegal."

Jeannie burst out: "*What?*"

Quinn ignored her and asked Berisford: "And what was her reaction?"

"She became very angry—"

"You damn liar!" Jeannie said.

Berisford flushed at this accusation. *He made a face M*

Jack Budgen intervened. "Please, no interruptions," he said.

Steve kept an eye on the committee. They had all looked at Jeannie: they could hardly help it. He put a hand on her arm, as if restraining her.

"He's telling barefaced lies!" she protested.

"What did you expect?" Steve said in a low voice. "He's playing hardball."

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

"Don't be," he said in her ear. "Keep it up. They could see your anger was genuine."

Berisford went on: "She became petulant, just as she is now. She told me she could do what she liked, she had a contract."

One of the men on the committee, Tenniel Biddenham, frowned darkly, obviously disliking the idea of a junior member of faculty quoting her contract to her professor. Berisford was clever, Steve realised. He knew how to take a point scored

against him and turn it to his advantage.

Quinn asked Berisford: "What did you do?"

"Well, I realised I might be wrong. I'm not a lawyer, So I decided to take legal advice. If my fears were confirmed, I could show her independent proof. But if it turned out that what she was doing was harmless, I could drop the matter without a confrontation."

"And did you take advice?"

"As things turned out, I was overtaken by events. Before I had a chance to see a lawyer, the *New York Times* got on the case."

Jeannie whispered: "Bullshit."

"Are you sure?" Steve asked her.

"Positive."

He made a note.

"Tell us what happened on Wednesday, please," Quinn said to Berisford.

"My worst fears came true. The university president, Maurice Bell, summoned me to his office and asked me to explain why he was getting aggressive phone calls from the press about the research in my department. We drafted a press announcement as a basis for discussion and called in Dr Ferrami."

?)
("Jesus Christ!" muttered Jeannie.

Berisford went on.) "She refused to talk about the press release. Once again she

blew her top, insisted she could do what she liked, and stormed out."

Steve looked an inquiry at Jeannie. She said in a low voice: "A clever lie. They presented me with the press announcement as a *fait accompli*, saying it would be released regardless of what I thought."

Steve nodded, but he decided not to take up this point in cross-examination. The committee would probably feel Jeannie should not have stormed out anyway.

"The reporter told us she had a deadline of noon that day," Berisford continued smoothly. "Dr Bell felt the university had to say something decisive, and I must say I agreed with him one hundred per cent."

"And did your announcement have the effect you hoped for?"

"No. It was a total failure. But that was because it was completely undermined by Dr Ferrami. She told the reporter that she intended to ignore us and there was nothing we could do about it."

"Did anyone outside the university comment on the story?"

"They certainly did."

Something about the way Berisford answered that question rang a warning bell in Steve's head and he made a note.

"I got a phone call from Paul Barck, the president of Genetico, which is an important donor to the university, and in particular funds the entire twins research program," Berisford continued. "He was naturally concerned about the way his money

was being spent. The article made it look as if the university authorities were impotent. Paul said to me: 'Who's running the damn school, anyway?' It was very embarrassing."

"Was that your principal concern? The embarrassment of having been defied by a junior member of the faculty?"

"Certainly not. The main problem was the damage to Jones Falls that would be caused by Dr Ferrami's work."

Nice move, Steve thought. In their hearts all the committee members would hate to be defied by an assistant professor, and Berisford had drawn their sympathy. But Quinn had moved quickly to put the whole complaint on a more high-minded level, so that they could tell themselves that by firing Jeannie they would be protecting the university, not just punishing a disobedient subordinate.

Berisford said: "A university should be sensitive to privacy issues. Donors give us money, and students compete for places here, because this is one of the nation's most venerable educational institutions. The suggestion that we are careless with people's civil rights is very damaging."

It was a quietly eloquent formulation, and all the panel would approve. Steve nodded to show that he agreed too, hoping they would notice and conclude that this was not the point at issue.

Quinn asked Berisford: "So how many options faced you at that point?"

"Exactly one. We had to show that we did not sanction invasion of privacy by university researchers. We also needed to demonstrate that we had the authority to enforce our own rules. The way to do that was to fire Dr Ferrami. There was no alternative."

"Thank you, professor," said Quinn, and he sat down.

Steve felt pessimistic. Quinn was every bit as skilful as expected. Berisford had been dreadfully plausible. He had presented a picture of a reasonable, concerned human being doing his best to deal with a hot-tempered, careless subordinate. It was the more credible for having a tinge of reality: Jeannie *was* quick-tempered.

But it was not the truth. ~~It was a clever confection of lies.~~ That was all Steve had going for him. Jeannie was in the right. He just had to prove it.

Jack Budgen said: "Have you any questions, Mr Logan?"

"I sure do," said Steve. He paused for a moment, collecting his thoughts.

This was his fantasy. He was not in a courtroom, and he was not even a real lawyer, but he was defending an underdog against the injustice of a mighty institution. The odds were against him but truth was on his side. It was what he dreamed about.

He stood up and moved behind Jeannie's chair, so that they would all have to look at her. It was much harder to think evil of someone who returned your gaze with an open, fearless expression.

Then he looked hard at Berisford. If Jeannie's theory was right, the man had to feel strange in this situation. It must be like Dr Frankenstein being questioned by his monster. Steve wanted to play on that a little, to shake Berisford's composure, before starting on the material questions.

"You know me, don't you, Professor?" Steve said.

Berisford looked unnerved. "Ah...I believe we met on Monday, yes."

"And you know all about me."

"I...don't quite follow you."

"I underwent a day of tests in your laboratory, so you have a great deal of information on me."

"I see what you mean, yes."

Berisford looked thoroughly discomfited. Satisfied, Steve moved on. "Professor, let me begin with the first claim you made, that you intended to seek legal advice after your conversation with Dr Ferrami on Monday."

"Yes."

"You didn't actually see a lawyer."

"No, I was overtaken by events."

"You didn't make an appointment to see a lawyer."

"There wasn't time—"

"In the two days between your conversation with Dr Ferrami and your

conversation with Dr Bell about the *New York Times*, you didn't even ask your secretary to make an appointment with a lawyer."

"No."

"Nor did you ask around, or speak to any of your colleagues, to find out the name of someone suitable."

"No."

"In fact you're quite unable to substantiate this claim."

Berisford smiled confidently. "However, I have a reputation as an honest man."

"Dr Ferrami recalls the conversation very vividly."

"Good."

"She says you made no mention of legal problems or privacy worries, your only concern was whether the search engine worked."

"Perhaps she's forgotten."

"Or perhaps you have," Steve felt he had won that point, and he changed tack abruptly. "Did the *New York Times* reporter, Ms Frelander, say how she heard about Dr Ferrami's work?"

"If she did, Dr Bell never mentioned it to me."

"So you didn't ask."

"No."

"Did it occur to you to *wonder* how she knew?"

"I guess I assumed that reporters have their sources."

"Since she hasn't published anything about this project, the source must have been an individual."

Berisford hesitated, and looked to Quinn for guidance. Quinn stood up. "Sir," he said, addressing Jack Budgen. "The witness shouldn't be called upon to speculate."

Budgen nodded.

Steve said: "But this is an informal hearing—we don't have to be constrained by rigid courtroom procedure."

Jane Edelsborough spoke for the first time. "The questions seem interesting and relevant to me, Jack."

Berisford threw her a black look, and she made a little shrug of apology. It was an intimate exchange, and Steve wondered what the relationship was between those two.

Budgen waited, perhaps hoping another committee member would offer a contrary view so that he could make the decision as chair; but no one else spoke. "All right," he said after a pause. "Proceed, Mr Logan."

Score one for me, Steve thought. Professors would not like a fancy lawyer telling them what was or was not a legitimate line of questioning.

He turned again to Berisford and said: "Ms Frelander knew more than just the general nature of Dr Ferrami's work, didn't she?"

has been under awful tension. This is a huge relief -- even though he's only getting started. Does he need water?

"I guess I assumed that reporters have their sources."

"Since she hasn't published anything about this project, the source must have been an individual."

Berisford hesitated, and looked to Quinn for guidance. Quinn stood up. "Sir," he said, addressing Jack Budgen. "The witness shouldn't be called upon to speculate."

Budgen nodded.

Steve said: "But this is an informal hearing—we don't have to be constrained by rigid courtroom procedure."

Jane Edelsborough spoke for the first time. "The questions seem interesting and relevant to me, Jack."

Berisford threw her a black look, and she made a little shrug of apology. It was an intimate exchange, and Steve wondered what the relationship was between those

two.

Budgen waited, perhaps hoping another committee member would offer a contrary view so that he could make the decision as chair; but no one else spoke. "All right," he said after a pause. "Proceed, Mr Logan."

Score one for me, Steve thought. Professors would not like a fancy lawyer telling them what was or was not a legitimate line of questioning.

He turned again to Berisford and said: "Ms Freeland knew more than just the general nature of Dr Ferrami's work, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"She knew exactly how Dr Ferrami searched for raised-apart twins by scanning databases. This is a new technique, developed by her, known only to you and a few other colleagues in the psychology department."

"If you say so."

"It looks as if her information came from within the department, doesn't it?"

"Maybe."

"What motive could a colleague possibly have for creating bad publicity about Dr Ferrami and her work?"

"I really couldn't say."

"But it seems like the doing of a malicious, perhaps jealous, rival—wouldn't you say?"

"Perhaps."

Steve nodded in satisfaction. He felt he was getting into the swing of this, *excited, even a little happy?* developing a rhythm. He began to feel that maybe he *could* win, after all.

Don't get complacent, he told himself. Scoring points is not the same as winning the case.

"Let me turn to the second claim you made. When Mr Quinn asked you if people outside the university had commented on the newspaper story, you replied:

'They certainly did.' Do you want to stick by that assertion?"

"Yes."

"Exactly how many phone calls did you receive from donors, other than the one from Paul Barck?"

"Well, I spoke with Herb Abrahams—"

Steve could tell he was dissembling. "Pardon me for interrupting you, Professor." Berisford looked surprised but he stopped speaking. "Did Mr Abrahams call you, or vice versa?"

"Uh, I believe I called Herb."

"We'll come to that in a moment. First, just tell us how many important donors called *you* to express their concern about the *New York Times* allegations."

Berisford looked rattled. "I'm not sure anyone called me specifically about that."

"How many calls did you receive from potential students?"

"None."

"Did anyone at all call you to talk about the article?"

"I guess not."

"Did you receive any mail on the subject?"

"Not yet."

"It doesn't appear to have caused *much* of a fuss, then."

"I don't think you can draw that conclusion."

It was a feeble response, and Steve paused to let that sink in. Berisford appeared embarrassed. The committee were alert, following every cut and thrust. Steve looked at Jeannie. Her face was alight with hope.

He resumed. "Let's talk about the one phone call you did receive, from Paul Barck, the president of Genetico. You made it sound as if he was simply a donor concerned about the way his money is being used, but he's more than that, isn't he? When did you first meet him?"

"When I was at Harvard, forty years ago."

"He must be one of your oldest friends."

"Yes."

"And in later years I believe you and he set up Genetico together."

"Yes."

"So he's also your business partner."

"Yes."

"The company is in the process of being taken over by Landsmann, the German pharmaceuticals conglomerate."

"Yes."

"No doubt Mr Barck will make a lot of money out of the takeover."

"No doubt."

"How much?"

"I think that's confidential."

Steve decided not to press him on the amount. His reluctance to disclose the figure was damaging enough.

"Another friend of yours stands to make a killing: Senator Proust. According to the news today, he's going to use his payout to finance a presidential election campaign."

"I didn't watch the news this morning."

"But Jim Proust is a friend of yours, isn't he? You must have known he was thinking of running for president."

"I believe everyone knew he was *thinking* of it."

"Are you going to make money from the takeover?"

"Yes."

Steve moved away from Jeannie and towards Berisford, so that all eyes would be on Berisford. "So you're a shareholder, not just a consultant."

"It's common enough to be both."

"Professor, how much will you make from this takeover?"

"I think that's private."

 Steve was not going to let him get away with it this time. "At any rate, the price being paid for the company is one hundred and eighty million dollars, according to the *Wall Street Journal*."

"Yes."

Steve repeated the amount. "One hundred and eighty million dollars." It was the kind of money that professors never saw, and he wanted to give the committee members the feeling that Berisford was not one of them at all, but a being of a different kind altogether. "You are one of three people who will share one hundred and eighty million dollars."

Berisford nodded.

"So you had a lot to be nervous about when you learned of the *New York Times* article. Your friend Paul is selling his company, your friend Jim is running for president, and you're about to make a fortune. Are you sure it was the reputation of Jones Falls that was on your mind when you fired Dr Ferrami? Or was it all your other worries? Let's be frank, Professor—you panicked."

"I most certainly—"

"You read a hostile newspaper article, you envisioned the takeover melting away, and you reacted hastily. You let the *New York Times* scare you."

"It takes more than the *New York Times* to scare me, young man. I acted quickly and decisively, but not hastily."

"You made no attempt to discover the source of the newspaper's information."

"No."

"How many days did you spend investigating the truth, or otherwise, of the

allegations?"

"It didn't take long—"

"Hours rather than days?"

"Yes—"

"Or was it in fact *less than an hour* before you had approved a press release saying that Dr Ferrami's program was cancelled?"

"I'm quite sure it was more than an hour."

Steve shrugged emphatically. "Let us be generous and say it was two hours. Was that long enough?" He turned and gestured towards Jeannie, so that they would look at her. "After two hours you decided to jettison a young scientist's entire research program?" The pain was visible on Jeannie's face. ~~Seeing it, Steve felt an agonising pang of pity for~~ her. But he had to play on her emotion, for her own good. He twisted the knife in the wound. "After two hours you knew enough to make a decision to destroy the work of years? Enough to end a promising career? Enough to ruin a woman's life?"

"I asked her to defend herself," Berisford said indignantly. "She lost her temper and walked out of the room!"

Steve hesitated, then decided to take a theatrical risk. "She walked out of the room!" he said in mock amazement. "She walked out of the room! You showed her a press release announcing the cancellation of her program. No investigation of the

source of the newspaper story, no appraisal of the validity of the allegations, no time for discussion, no due process of any kind—you simply declared to this young scientist that her entire life was ruined—and all she did was *walk out of the room*?" Berisford opened his mouth to speak but Steve overrode him. "When I think of the injustice, the illegality, the sheer *foolishness* of what you did on Wednesday morning, Professor, I cannot imagine how Dr Ferrari summoned the restraint and self-discipline to confine herself to such a simple, eloquent protest." He walked back to his seat in silence, then turned to the committee and said: "No more questions."

Jeannie's eyes were lowered, but she squeezed his arm. He leaned over and whispered: "How are you?"

"I'm okay."

He patted her hand. He wanted to say *I think we've won it* but that would have been tempting fate.

Henry Quinn stood up. He seemed unperturbed. He should have looked more worried after Steve made mincemeat of his client. But no doubt it was part of his skill to remain unruffled no matter how badly his case was going.

Quinn said: "Professor, if the university had not discontinued Dr Ferrami's research program, and had not fired her, would that have made any difference to the takeover of Genetico by Landsmann?"

"None at all," Berisford replied.

"Thank you. No more questions."

That was pretty effective, Steve thought sourly. It kind of punctured his whole cross-examination. He tried not to let Jeannie see the disappointment on his face.

It was Jeannie's turn, and Steve stood up and led her through her evidence. She was calm and clear as she described her research program and explained the importance of finding raised-apart twins who were criminals. She detailed the precautions she took to ensure that no one's medical details became known before they had signed a release.

He expected Quinn to cross-examine her, and try to show that there was a minuscule chance that confidential information would be revealed by accident. Steve and Jeannie had rehearsed this last night, with him playing the role of prosecution lawyer. But to his surprise Quinn did not have any questions. Was he afraid she would defend herself too ably? Or was he confident he had the verdict sewn up?

Quinn summed up first. He repeated much of Berisford's evidence, once again being more tedious ~~and~~ than Steve would have thought wise. His concluding speech was short enough, however. "This is a crisis that should never have happened," he said. "The university authorities behaved judiciously throughout. It was Dr Ferrami's impetuosity and intransigence that caused all the drama. Of course she has a contract, and that contract governs her relations with her employer. But senior faculty are, after all, required to supervise junior faculty; and junior faculty, if they

minuscule

L

have any sense at all, will listen to wise counsel from those older and more experienced than they. Dr Ferrami's stubborn defiance turned a problem into a crisis, and the only solution to the crisis is for her to leave the university." He sat down.

It was time for Steve's speech. He had been rehearsing it all night. He stood up.

"What is Jones Falls University for?"

He paused for dramatic effect.

"The answer may be expressed in one word: knowledge. If we wanted a nutshell definition of the role of the university in American society, we might say its function is to *seek* knowledge and to *spread* knowledge."

He looked at each of the committee, inviting their agreement. Jane Edelsborough nodded. The others were impassive.

He resumed: "Now and again, that function comes under attack. There are always people who want to hide the truth, for one reason or another: political motives, religious prejudice..." He looked at Berisford. "...or commercial advantage. I think everyone here would agree that the school's intellectual independence is crucial to its reputation. That independence has to be balanced against other obligations, obviously, such as the need to respect the civil rights of individuals. However, a vigorous defence of the university's right to pursue knowledge would enhance its reputation among all thinking people."

He waved a hand to indicate the university. "Jones Falls is important to everyone here. The reputation of an academic may rise and fall with that of the institution where he or she works. I ask you to think about the effect your verdict will have on the reputation of JFU as a free, independent academic institution. Will the university be cowed by the intellectually shallow assault of a daily newspaper? Will a program of scientific research be cancelled for the sake of a commercial takeover bid? I hope not. I hope the committee will bolster JFU's reputation by showing that what matters here is one simple value: truth." He looked at them, letting his words sink in. He could not tell, from their expressions, whether his speech had touched them or not. After a moment he sat down.

"Thank you," said Jack Budgen. "Would everyone except committee members step outside while we deliberate, please."

Steve held the door for Jeannie and followed her into the hallway. They left the building and stood in the shade of a tree. Jeannie was pale with tension. "What do you think?" she said.

"We have to win," he said. "We're right."

"What am I going to do if we lose?" she said. "Move to Nebraska? Get a job as a schoolteacher? Become a stewardess, like Penny Walters?"

"Who's Penny Walters?"

Before she could answer him, she saw something over his shoulder that made

her hesitate. Steve turned around and saw Henry Quinn, smoking a cigarette. "You were very sharp in there," Quinn said. "I hope you won't think me condescending if I say I enjoyed matching wits with you."

(?) Jeannie ^{snorted} made a disgusted noise and turned away.

Steve was able to be more detached. Lawyers were supposed to be like this, friendly with their opponents outside the courtroom. Besides, one day he might find himself asking Quinn for a job. "Thank you," he said politely.

"You certainly had the best of the arguments," Quinn went on, surprising Steve by his frankness. "On the other hand, in a case like this people vote their self-interest, and all those committee members are senior professors. They'll find it hard to support a youngster against someone of their own group, regardless of the arguments."

"They are all intellectuals," Steve said. "They're committed to rationality."

Quinn nodded. "You might be right," he said. He gave Steve a speculative look then said: "Have you any idea what this is *really* about?"

"What do you mean?" Steve said cautiously.

"Berisford is obviously terrified of *something*, and it isn't bad publicity. I wondered if you and Dr Ferrami might know what."

"I believe we do," Steve said. "But we can't prove it, yet."

"Keep trying," Quinn said. He dropped his cigarette and trod on it. "God forbid that Jim Proust should be president." He turned away.

What about that, Steve thought; a closet liberal.

Jack Budgen appeared in the entrance and made a summoning gesture. Steve took Jeannie's arm and they went back in.

He studied the faces of the committee. Jack Budgen met his eye. Jane Edelborough gave him a little smile.

That was a good sign. His hopes soared.

They all sat down.

Jack Budgen shuffled his papers unnecessarily. "We thank both parties for enabling this hearing to be conducted with dignity." He paused solemnly. "Our decision is unanimous. We recommend to the Senate of this university that Dr Jean Ferrami be dismissed. Thank you."

Jeannie buried her head in her hands.

40

When at last Jeannie was alone, she threw herself on her bed and cried.

25) (She cried for a long time) She pounded her pillows, shouted at the wall, and uttered the filthiest words she knew; then she buried her face in the quilt and cried some more. Her sheets were wet with tears and streaked black with mascara.

After a while she got up and washed her face and put coffee on. "It's not like you've got cancer," she said to herself. "Come on, shape up." But it was hard. She was not going to die, okay, but she had lost everything she lived for.

She thought of herself at twenty-one. She had graduated *summa cum laude* and won the Mayfair Lites Challenge the same year. She saw herself on the court, holding the cup high in the traditional gesture of triumph. The world had been at her feet. When she looked back she felt as if a different person had held up that trophy.

She sat on the couch drinking coffee. Her father, that old bastard, had stolen her TV, so she could not even watch dumb soap operas to take her mind off her misery. She would have pigged out on chocolate if she had any. She thought of booze but decided it would make her more depressed. Shopping? She would probably burst into tears in the fitting room, and anyway she was now even more broke than before.

At around two o'clock the phone rang.

Jeannie ignored it

However, the caller was persistent, and she got fed up with listening to the ring, so in the end she picked it up.

It was Steve. After the hearing he had gone back to Washington for a meeting with his lawyer. "I'm at the law office now," he said. "We want you to take legal action against Jones Falls for recovery of your FBI list. My family will pay the costs. They think it will be worth it for the chance of finding the third twin."

Jeannie said ^{nothing} ("I don't give a shit about the third twin.")

There was a pause, then he said: "It's important to me."

She sighed. (*With all my troubles, I'm supposed to worry about Steve? Then she caught herself. He worried about me, didn't he? She felt ashamed*) "Steve, forgive me," she said. I'm feeling sorry for myself. Of course I'll help you. What do I have to do?

"Nothing. The lawyer will go to court, provided you give your permission."

She began to think again. "Isn't it a little dangerous? I mean, I presume JFU will have to be notified of our application. Then Berisford will know where the list is. And he'll get to it before we do."

"Damn, you're right. Let me tell him that."

A moment later another voice came on the phone. "Dr Ferrami, this is Russell Brewer, we're on a conference link with Steve now. Where exactly is this data?"

"In my desk drawer, on a floppy disk marked SHOPPING.LST."

"We can apply for access to your room without specifying what we're looking for."

"Then I think they might just wipe everything off my computer and all my disks."

"I just don't have a better idea."

Steve said: "What we need is a burglar."

2
Jeannie said: "Oh, my God."

"What?"
Daddy

The lawyer said: "What is it, Dr Ferrami?"

"Can you hold off on this court application?" Jeannie said.

"Yes. We probably couldn't get rolling before Monday, anyway. Why?"

"I just had an idea. Let me see if I can work it out. If not, we'll go down the legal road next week. Steve?"

"Still here."

"Call me later."

"You bet."

Jeannie hung up.

Daddy could get into her office.

He was at Patty's house now. He was broke, so he wasn't going anywhere. And

he owed her. Oh, boy, did he owe her.

Her career was ruined, but Steve's wasn't, not yet. Maybe she could rescue him even though she could not save herself.

Could she ask her father to do this? It was against the law. He could end up in jail if things went wrong. He took that risk constantly, of course; but this time it would be her fault.

She told herself they would not get caught.

The doorbell rang. She lifted the handset. "Yes."

"Jeannie?"

It was a familiar voice. "Yes," she said. "Who's this?"

"Will Temple."

"Will?"

"I sent you two e-mails, didn't you get them?"

What the hell was Will Temple doing here? "Come in," she said, and she pressed the button.

He came up the stairs wearing tan chinos and a navy blue polo shirt. His hair was shorter, and although he still had the fair beard she had loved so much, instead of growing wild and bushy it was now a neatly trimmed goatee. The heiress had tidied him up.

She could not bring herself to let him kiss her cheek: he had hurt her too

he owed her. Oh, boy, did he owe her.

Her career was ruined, but Steve's wasn't, not yet. Maybe she could rescue him even though she could not save herself.

Could she ask her father to do this? It was against the law. He could end up in jail if things went wrong. He took that risk constantly, of course; but this time it would be her fault.

She told herself they would not get caught.

The doorbell rang. She lifted the handset. "Yes."

"Jeannie?"

It was a familiar voice. "Yes," she said. "Who's this?"

"Will Temple."

"Will?"

"I sent you two e-mails, didn't you get them?"

What the hell was Will Temple doing here? "Come in," she said, and she pressed the button.

He came up the stairs wearing tan chinos and a navy blue polo shirt. His hair was shorter, and although he still had the fair beard she had loved so much, instead of growing wild and bushy it was now a neatly trimmed goatee. The heiress had tidied him up.

She could not bring herself to let him kiss her cheek: he had hurt her too

Why is he here?
like

badly. She put out her hand to shake. "This is a surprise," she said. "I haven't been able to retrieve my e-mail for a couple of days."

"I'm attending a conference in Washington," he said. "I rented a car and drove out here."

"Want some coffee?"

"Sure."

"Have a seat." She put fresh coffee on.

He looked around. "Nice apartment."

"Thanks."

"Different."

"You mean different from our old place." The living room of their apartment in Minneapolis had been a big, untidy space full of overstuffed couches and bicycle wheels and tennis rackets and guitars. This room was pristine by comparison. "I guess I reacted against all that clutter."

"You seemed to like it at the time."

"I did. Things change."

He nodded and changed the subject. "I read about you in the *New York Times*. That article was bullshit."

"It's done for me, though. I was fired today."

"No!"

She poured coffee and sat opposite him and told him the story of the hearing. When she had finished he said: "This guy Steve—are you serious about him?"

"I don't know. I have an open mind."

"You're not dating?"

"No, but he wants to, and I really like him. How about you? Are you still with Gerogina Tinkerton Ross?"

"No." He shook his head regretfully. "Jeannie, what I really came here to do is tell you that breaking up with you was the greatest mistake of my life."

Jeannie was touched by how sad he looked. Part of her was pleased that he regretted losing her, but she did not wish him unhappy.

"You were the best thing that ever happened to me," he said. "You're strong, but you're good. And you're smart: I have to have someone smart. We were right for each other. We loved each other.

"I was very hurt at the time," she said. "But I got over it."

"I'm not sure I did."

She gave him an appraising look. He was a big man, not cute like Steve but attractive in a more rugged way. She prodded her libido, like a doctor touching a bruise, but there was no response, no trace left of the overwhelming physical desire she had once felt for Will's strong body.

He had come to ask her to go back to him, that was clear now. And she knew

what her answer was. She did not want him any more. He was about a week too late.

It would be kinder not to put him through the humiliation of asking and being rejected. She stood up. "Will, I have something important to do and I have to run. I wish I'd got your messages, then we could have spent more time together."

He read the subtext and looked sadder. "Too bad," he said. He stood up.

She held out her hand to shake. "Thanks for dropping by."

He pulled her to him to kiss her. She offered her cheek. He kissed it softly, then released her. "I wish I could rewrite our script," he said. "I'd give it a happier ending."

"Goodbye, Will."

"Goodbye, Jeannie."

She watched him walk down the stairs and out the door.

Her phone rang.

She picked it up. "Hello?"

"Getting fired is not the worst thing that can happen to you."

It was a man, his voice slightly muffled as if he was speaking through something to disguise it.

Jeannie said: "Who is this?"

"Stop nosing into things that don't concern you."

Who the hell was this? "What things?"

"The one you met in Philadelphia was supposed to kill you."

Jeannie stopped breathing. Suddenly she was very scared.

The voice went on: "He got carried away and messed up. But he could visit you again."

Jeannie whispered: "Oh, God...."

"Be warned."

There was a click then the dialling tone. He had hung up.

Jeannie cradled the handset and stood staring at the phone.

No one had ever threatened to kill her. It was horrifying to know another human being wanted to end her life. She felt paralysed. What are you supposed to do?

She sat on her couch, struggling to regain her strength of will. She felt like giving up. She was too bruised and battered to carry on fighting these powerful, shadowy enemies. They were too strong. They could get her fired, have her attacked, search her office, steal her e-mail; they seemed to be able to do anything. Perhaps they really could kill her.

It was so unfair. What right did they have? She was a good scientist, and they had ruined her career. They were willing to see Steve sent to jail for the rape of Lisa. They were threatening to kill her. She began to feel angry. Who did they think they were? She was not going to have her life ruined by these arrogant creeps who thought

"The one you met in Philadelphia was supposed to kill you."

Jeannie stopped breathing. Suddenly she was very scared.

The voice went on: "He got carried away and messed up. But he could visit you again."

Jeannie whispered: "Oh, God...."

"Be warned."

There was a click then the dialling tone. He had hung up.

Jeannie cradled the handset and stood staring at the phone.

No one had ever threatened to kill her. It was horrifying to know another human being wanted to end her life. She felt paralysed. What are you supposed to do?

She sat on her couch, struggling to regain her strength of will. She felt like giving up. She was too bruised and battered to carry on fighting these powerful, shadowy enemies. They were too strong. They could get her fired, have her attacked, search her office, steal her e-mail; they seemed to be able to do anything. Perhaps they really could kill her.

Need to feel her pain and exhaustion.

It was so unfair. What right did they have? She was a good scientist, and they had ruined her career. They were willing to see Steve sent to jail for the rape of Lisa. They were threatening to kill her. She began to feel angry. Who did they think they were? She was not going to have her life ruined by these arrogant creeps who thought

"The one you met in Philadelphia was supposed to kill you."

Jeannie stopped breathing. Suddenly she was very scared.

The voice went on: "He got carried away and messed up. But he could visit you again."

Jeannie whispered: "Oh, God...."

"Be warned."

There was a click then the dialling tone. He had hung up.

Jeannie cradled the handset and stood staring at the phone.

(?) No one had ever ^{before} threatened to kill her. It was horrifying to know another human being wanted to end her life. (She felt paralysed) What are you supposed to do?

? She sat on her couch, struggling to regain her strength of will. (She felt like giving up) She was too bruised and battered to carry on fighting these powerful, shadowy enemies. They were too strong. They could get her fired, have her attacked, search her office, steal her e-mail; they seemed to be able to do anything. Perhaps they really could kill her.

? (It was so unfair. What right did they have? She was a good scientist, and they had ruined her career. They were willing to see Steve sent to jail for the rape of Lisa. They were threatening to kill her.) ^{Then} She began to feel angry. Who did they think they were? She was not going to have her life ruined by these arrogant creeps who thought

"The one you met in Philadelphia was supposed to kill you."

Jeannie stopped breathing. Suddenly she was very scared.

The voice went on: "He got carried away and messed up. But he could visit you again."

Jeannie whispered: "Oh, God...."

"Be warned."

There was a click then the dialling tone. He had hung up.

Jeannie cradled the handset and stood staring at the phone.

No one had ever threatened to kill her. It was horrifying to know another human being wanted to end her life. She felt paralysed. What are you supposed to do?

She sat on her couch, struggling to regain her strength of will. She felt like giving up. She was too bruised and battered to carry on fighting these powerful, shadowy enemies. They were too strong. They could get her fired, have her attacked, search her office, steal her e-mail; they seemed to be able to do anything. Perhaps they really could kill her.

It was so unfair. What right did they have? She was a good scientist, and they had ruined her career. They were willing to see Steve sent to jail for the rape of Lisa. They were threatening to kill her. She began to feel angry. Who did they think they were? She was not going to have her life ruined by these arrogant creeps who thought

manipulate
they could arrange everything ^{and everyone} for their own benefit (and to hell with the everyone else)

②
② The more she thought about it, the angrier she got. ^{more determined} I won't let them win, she thought.

I have the power to hurt them—I must have, or they wouldn't feel the need to warn me off and threaten to kill me. I'm going to use that power. I don't care what happens to me so long as I can mess things up for them. I'm smart, (and) I'm determined, and I'm Jeannie Fucking Ferrami, so look out, you bastards, here I come.

they could arrange everything for their own benefit and to hell with the everyone else. The more she thought about it, the angrier she got. I won't let them win, she thought. I have the power to hurt them—I must have, or they wouldn't feel the need to warn me off and threaten to kill me. I'm going to use that power. I don't care what happens to me so long as I can mess things up for them. I'm smart, and I'm determined, and I'm Jeannie Fucking Ferrami, so look out, you bastards, here I come.

41

Jeannie's father was sitting on the couch in Patty's untidy living room, with a cup of coffee in his lap, watching *General Hospital* and eating a slice of carrot cake.

When she walked in and saw him, Jeannie ^{snapped} lost it. "How could you do it?" she screamed. "How could you rob your own daughter?"

He jumped to his feet, spilling his coffee and dropping his cake.

Patty followed Jeannie in. "Please, don't make a scene," she said. "Zip will be home soon."

Daddy said: "I'm sorry, Jeannie, (I'm ashamed!)"

Patty got down on her knees and started mopping the spilled coffee with a clutch of kleenex. On the screen, a handsome doctor in surgeon's coveralls was kissing a pretty woman.

"You know I'm broke," Jeannie yelled. "You know I'm trying to raise enough money to pay for a decent nursing home for my mother—your wife! And still you could steal my fucking TV!"

"You shouldn't swear—"

"Jesus, give me strength."

"I'm sorry."

Jeannie said: "I don't get it. I just don't get it."

Patty said: "Leave him alone, Jeannie."

② (165) "But I have to know. How could you do such a thing?" Jeannie said.

? "All right, I'll tell you," Daddy said with a sudden (access of) force that surprised her. "I'll tell you why I did it. Because I've lost my goddamn nerve." Tears came to his eyes. "I robbed my own daughter because I'm too old and scared to rob anyone else, so now you know the truth."

He was so pathetic that ^k Jeannie's anger evaporated in a moment. "Oh, Daddy, I'm sorry," she said. "Sit down, I'll get the Dustbuster."

She picked up the overturned cup and took it into the kitchen. She came back with the Dustbuster and hoovered up the cake crumbs. Patty finished mopping up the coffee.

"I don't deserve you girls, I know that," Daddy said as he sat down again.

Patty said: "I'll get you another cup of coffee."

(The TV surgeon said *Let's go away together, just the two of us, somewhere wonderful,* and the woman said *But what about your wife?* and the doctor looked sulky.) Jeannie turned the ^{TV} set off and sat beside her father.

"What do you mean, you've lost your nerve?" she asked, curious. "What happened?"

He sighed. "When I got out of jail I cased a building in Georgetown. It was a

small business, an architecture partnership that had just re-equipped the entire staff with fifteen or twenty personal computers and some other stuff, printers and fax machines. The guy who supplied the equipment to the company tipped me off: he was going to buy it from me and sell it back to them when they got the insurance money. I would have got ten thousand dollars."

Patty said: "I don't want my boys to hear this." She checked they were not in the hallway, and closed the door.

Jeannie said to Daddy: "So what went wrong?"

"I reversed the van up to the back of the building, disarmed the burglar alarm and opened the loading bay door. Then I started to think about what would happen if a cop came along. I never used to give a damn, in the old days, but I guess it's ten years since I did something like that. Anyway, I was so scared I started to shake. I went inside, unplugged one computer, carried it out, put it in the van and drove away. Next day I came to your place."

"And robbed me."

"I never intended to, honey. I thought you'd help me get on my feet and find a legitimate job of some kind. Then, when you were out, the old feeling came over me. I'm sitting there, I'm looking at the stereo and thinking I could get a couple hundred bucks for that, and maybe a hundred for the TV, and I just did it. After I sold it all I wanted to kill myself, I swear."

"But you didn't."

Patty said: "Jeannie!"

Daddy said: "I had a few drinks and got into a poker game and by the morning I was broke again."

"So you came to see Patty."

"I won't do it to you, Patty. I won't do it to anyone again. I'm going to go straight."

"You better!" Patty said.

"I have to, I got no choice."

Jeannie said: "But not yet."

They both looked at her. Patty said nervously: "Jeannie, what are you talking about?"

"You have to do one more job," Jeannie said to Daddy. "For me. A burglary. Tonight."

42

It was getting dark as they entered the Jones Falls campus. "Pity we don't have a more anonymous car," her father said as Jeannie drove the red Mercedes into the student parking lot. "A Ford Taurus is good, or a Buick Regal. You see fifty of those a day, nobody remembers them."

He got out of the car, carrying a battered tan leather briefcase. In his checked shirt and rumpled pants, with untidy hair and worn shoes, he looked just like a professor.

Jeannie felt strange. She had known for years that her Daddy was a thief, but she herself had never done anything more illegal than driving at seventy miles an hour. Now she was about to break into a building. It felt like crossing an important line. (She did not think she was doing wrong but, all the same, her self-image was shaken) She had always thought of herself as a law-abiding citizen. Criminals, including her father, had always seemed to belong to another species. Now she was joining them.

Most of the students and faculty had gone home, but there were still a few people walking around: professors working late, students going to social events, janitors locking up and security guards patrolling. Jeannie hoped she would not see

anyone she knew.

She was wound up tight like a guitar string, ready to snap. She was afraid for her father more than herself. If they were caught it would be deeply humiliating for her, but that was all: the courts did not send you to jail for breaking into your own office and stealing one floppy disk. But Daddy, with his record, would go down for years. He would be an old man when he came out.

The street lamps and exterior building lights were beginning to come on. Jeannie and her father walked past the tennis court, where two women were playing under floodlights. Jeannie remembered Steve speaking to her after the game last Sunday. She had given him the brush-off automatically, he had looked so confident and pleased with himself. How wrong she had been in her first judgement of him. ~~I~~
~~five days he had become the most important man in her life.~~

She nodded towards the Ruth W. Acorn Psychology Building. "That's the place," she said. "Everyone calls it Nut House."

"Keep walking at the same speed," he said. "How do you get in that front door?"

"A plastic card, same as my office door. But my card doesn't work any more. I might be able to borrow one."

"No need. I hate accomplices. How do we get around the back?"

"I'll show you." A footpath across a lawn led past the far side of Nut House

towards the visitors' parking lot. Jeannie followed it, then turned off to a paved yard at the back of the building. Her father ran a professional eye over the rear elevation. "What's that door?" he said, pointing.

"I think it's a fire door."

He nodded. "It probably has a crossbar at waist level, the kind that opens the door if you push against it."

"I believe it does. Why do they have those?"

"People panic in a fire. They're hysterical and coughing and they can't see for the smoke. A door handle can be too much for them to deal with. This kind of door, all they have to do is crash into it and it comes open."

"Is that where we're going to get in?"

"Yes."

Jeannie remembered a sign on the inside of it that read THIS DOOR IS ALARMED. "You'll set off an alarm," she said.

"No, I won't," he replied. He looked around. "Do many people come around the back here?"

"No. Especially at night."

"Okay. Let's go to work." He put his briefcase on the ground, opened it, and took out a small black plastic box with a dial. Pressing a button, he ran the box all around the door frame, watching the dial. The needle jumped in the top right-hand

corner. He gave a grunt of satisfaction.

He returned the box to the briefcase and took out another similar instrument, plus a roll of electrician's tape. He taped the instrument to the top right-hand corner of the door and threw a switch. There was a low hum. "That should confuse the burglar alarm," he said.

He took out a long piece of wire that had once been a laundry shirt hanger. He bent it carefully into a twisted shape then inserted the hooked end into the crack of the door. He wiggled it for a few seconds, then pulled.

The door came open.

The alarm did not sound.

He picked up his briefcase and stepped inside.

"Wait," Jeannie said. "This isn't right. Close the door and let's go home."

"Hey, come on, don't be scared."

"I can't do this to you. If you're caught you'll be in jail until you're seventy years old."

~~"Jeannie, I want to do this. I've been a rotten father to you for so long. This is my chance to help you for a change. It's important to me. Come on, please."~~

Jeannie stepped inside.

He closed the door. "Lead the way."

She ran up the fire stairs to the second floor and hurried along the corridor to

her office. He was right behind her. She pointed to the door.

He took yet another electronic instrument out of his briefcase. This one had a metal plate the size of a charge card attached to it by wires. He inserted the plate into the card reader and switched on the instrument. "It tries every possible combination," he said.

She was amazed by how easily he had entered a building that had such up-to-date security.

"You know something?" he said. "I ain't scared!"

"Jesus, I am," Jeannie said.

"No, seriously, I got my nerve back, maybe because you're with me." He grinned. "Hey, we could be a team."

She shook her head. "Forget it. I couldn't stand the tension."

It occurred to her that Berisford might have come in here and carried away her computer and all her disks. It would be dreadful if she had taken this awful risk for nothing. "How long will this take?" she said impatiently.

"Any second now."

A moment later the door gently swung open.

"Won't you step inside?" he said proudly.

She went in and turned on the light. Her computer was still on the desk.

Jeannie opened the drawer. There was her box of backup disks. She flipped through

them frenziedly. SHOPPING.LST was there. She picked it up. "Thank God," she said.

Now that she had the disk in her hand she could not wait to read the information on it. Desperate though she was to get out of Nut House, she was tempted to look at the file right here and now. She did not have a computer at home:

② Daddy had sold it. ^{stolen} To read the disk she would have to borrow a PC. That would take time and explanations.

She decided to take a chance.

She switched on the computer on her desk and waited for it to boot up.

"What are you doing?" Daddy said.

"I want to read the file."

"Can't you do that at home?"

"I don't have a computer at home, Daddy. It was stolen."

He missed the irony. "Hurry up, then." He went to the window and looked out.

The screen flickered and she clicked on WP. She slid the floppy into the disk drive and switched on her printer.

The alarms went off all at once.

Jeannie thought her heart had stopped. The noise was deafening. "What happened?" she yelled.

Her father was white with fear. "That damn emitter must have failed, or maybe someone took it off the door," he yelled. "We're finished, Jeannie, run!"

She wanted to snatch the disk out of the computer and bolt, but she forced herself to think coolly. If she were caught now and the disk taken from her, she would have lost everything. She had to look at the list while she could. She grabbed her father's arm. "Just a few more seconds!"

He glanced out of the window. "Damn, that looks like a security man!"

"I just have to print this! Wait for me!"

He was shaking ~~with~~ ⁱⁿ fear. "I can't Jeannie, I can't! I'm sorry!" He snatched up his briefcase and ran.

Jeannie felt pity for him but she could not stop now. She retrieved the A-drive directory, highlighted the FBI file, and clicked on Print.

Nothing happened. Her printer was still warming up. She cursed.

She went to the window. Two security guards were entering the front of the building.

She closed her office door.

She stared at her inkjet printer. "Come on, come *on*."

At last it ticked and whirred and sucked up a sheet from the paper tray.

She sprung the floppy out of the disk drive and slipped it into the pocket of her electric-blue jacket.

The printer regurgitated four sheets of paper then stopped.

Heart pounding, Jeannie snatched up the pages and scanned the lines of print.

There were thirty or forty pairs of names. Most were male, but this was not surprising: almost all crimes were committed by men. In some cases the address was a prison. The list was exactly what she had hoped for. But now she wanted something special. She looked for either *Steven Logan* or *Dennis Pinker*.

Both were there.

And they were linked with a third: *Wayne Stattner*.

"Yes!" Jeannie shouted exultantly.

There was an address in New York city and a 212 phone number.

She stared at the name. *Wayne Stattner*. This was the man who had raped Lisa right here in the gym and attacked Jeannie in Philadelphia. "You bastard," she whispered vengefully. "We're going to get you."

First she had to escape with the information. She stuffed the papers into her pocket, switched out the lights and opened the door.

She heard voices in the corridor, raised against the noise of the alarm which was still wailing. She was too late. Carefully, she closed the door again. Her legs felt weak, and she leaned on the door, listening.

She heard a man's voice shout: "I'm sure there was a light on in one of these."

Another voice replied: "We better check each one."

Jeannie glanced around her room in the dim light from the street lamps outside. There was nowhere to hide.

Either here or some other point, wouldn't she wonder about a New Yorker being in Philadelphia, and about the odd connections -- her being attacked by the

She opened the door a crack. She could not see or hear anything. She poked her head out. At the far end of the corridor was an open with light streaming out. She waited and watched. The guards came out, killed the light, closed the door and went into the next room, which was the laboratory. It would take them a minute or two to search that. Could she slip past the door unseen and make it to the stairwell?

Jeannie stepped out into the corridor and closed the door behind her with a shaky hand.

She walked along the corridor. By an effort of will she restrained herself from breaking into a run.

She passed the lab door. She could not resist the temptation to glance inside. Both guards had their backs to her: one was looking inside a stationery closet and the other was staring curiously at a row of DNA test films on a light box. They did not see her.

Almost there.

She walked on to the end of the corridor and opened the swing door.

As she was about to step through, a voice called out: "Hey! You! Stop!"

Every nerve strained to make a run for it, but she controlled herself. She let the door swing closed, turned, and smiled.

Two guards ran along the corridor towards her. They were both men in their late fifties, probably retired cops.

Her throat seemed tight and she seemed to have trouble breathing. "Good evening," she said. "How can I help you gentlemen?" The sound of the alarm covered the tremor in her voice.

"An alarm has gone off in the building," said one.

It was a stupid thing to say, but she let it pass. "Do you think there's an intruder?"

"There may be. Have you seen or heard anything unusual, professor?"

The guards assumed she was a member of faculty: that was good. "As a matter of fact, I thought I heard breaking glass. It seemed to come from the floor above, although I couldn't be sure."

The two guards looked at one another. "We'll check it out," said one.

The other was less suggestible. "May I ask what you have in your pocket?"

"Some papers."

"Obviously. May I see them?"

Jeannie was not going to hand them over to anyone: they were too precious. Improvising, she pretended to agree then change her mind. "Sure," she said, taking them out. Then she folded them and put them back in. "On second thoughts, no, you can't. They're personal."

"I have to insist. In our training we're told that papers can be as valuable as anything else in a place like this."

"I'm afraid I'm not going to let you read my private correspondence just because an alarm goes off in a college building."

"In that case, I must ask you to come with me to our security office and speak to my supervisor."

"All right," she said. "I'll meet you outside." She backed quickly through the swing door and went light-footed down the stairs.

The guards came running after her. "Wait!"

She let them catch up with her in the ground floor lobby. One took her arm while the other opened the door. They stepped outside.

"No need to hold me," she said.

"I prefer to," he said. He was panting from the effort of chasing her down the stairs.

She had been here before. She grasped the wrist of the hand that was holding her and squeezed hard. The guard said "Ow!" and released her.

Jeannie ran.

"Hey! You bitch, stop!" They gave chase.

They had no chance. She was twenty-five years younger and as fit as a racehorse. Her fear left her as she got farther away from the two men. She ran like the wind, ~~laughing~~. They chased her for a few yards then gave up. She looked back and saw them both bent over, panting.

She ran all the way to the car park.

Her father was waiting beside her car. She unlocked it and they both got in. She tore out of the parking lot with her lights off.

"I'm sorry, Jeannie," he said. "I thought even if I couldn't do it for myself, maybe I could do it for you. But it's no use. I've lost it. I'll never rob again."

"That's good news!" she said. "And I got what I wanted!"

"I wish I could be a good father to you. I guess it's too late to start."

She drove out of the campus into the street and turned on her headlights. "It's not too late, Daddy. Really it's not."

"Maybe. I tried for you, anyway, didn't I?"

"You tried, and you succeeded! You got me in! I couldn't have done it alone."

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

She drove home fast. She was anxious to check the phone number on the printout. If it was out of date she had a problem. And she wanted to hear Wayne Stattner's voice.

As soon as they got inside her apartment she picked up the phone.

A man answered. "Hello?"

She could not tell anything from one word. She said: "May I speak to Wayne Stattner, please?"

"Yeah, Wayne speaking, who's this?"

It sounded just like Steve's voice. *You son of a bitch, why did you rip my tights?* She suppressed her resentment and said: "Mr Stattner, I'm with a market research company that has chosen you to receive a very special offer—"

"Fuck off and die," Wayne said, and he hung up.

"It's him," Jeannie said to her father. "He even sounds like Steve, except Steve is ^{more} polite."

She had briefly explained the scenario to her father. He grasped the broad outlines although he found it somewhat bewildering. "What are you going to do next?"

"Call the cops." She dialled the Sex Crimes Unit and asked for Sergeant Delaware.

Daddy shook his head in amazement. "This is hard for me to get used to: the idea of working with the police. I sure hope this sergeant is different from every other detective I've ever met."

"I believe she probably is."

She did not expect to find Mish at her desk—it was nine o'clock. She planned to ask them to get an urgent message to her. But by good luck Mish was still in the building. "Catching up with my paperwork," she explained. "What's up?"

"Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker are not twins."

"But I thought—"

It sounded just like Steve's voice. *You son of a bitch, why did you rip my tights?*
She suppressed her ^{anger} resentment and said: "Mr Stattner, I'm with a market research company that has chosen you to receive a very special offer—"

"Fuck off and die," Wayne said, and he hung up.

"It's him," Jeannie said to her father. "He even sounds like Steve, except Steve is politer."

She had briefly explained the scenario to her father. He grasped the broad outlines although he found it somewhat bewildering. "What are you going to do next?"

"Call the cops." She dialed the Sex Crimes Unit and asked for Sergeant Delaware.

Daddy shook his head in amazement. "This is hard for me to get used to: the idea of working with the police. I sure hope this sergeant is different from every other detective I've ever met."

"I believe she probably is."

She did not expect to find Mish at her desk—it was nine o'clock. She planned to ask them to get an urgent message to her. But by good luck Mish was still in the building. "Catching up with my paperwork," she explained. "What's up?"

"Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker are not twins."

"But I thought—"

It sounded just like Steve's voice. *You son of a bitch, why did you rip my tights?* She suppressed her resentment and said: "Mr Stattner, I'm with a market research company that has chosen you to receive a very special offer—"

"Fuck off and die," Wayne said, and he hung up.

"It's him," Jeannie said to her father. "~~He even sounds like Steve, except Steve~~
~~is politer."~~

She had briefly explained the scenario to her father. He grasped the broad outlines although he found it somewhat bewildering. "What are you going to do next?"

"Call the cops." She dialed the Sex Crimes Unit and asked for Sergeant Delaware.

Daddy shook his head in amazement. "This is hard for me to get used to: the idea of working with the police. I sure hope this sergeant is different from every other detective I've ever met."

"~~I believe~~ she probably is."

She did not expect to find Mish at her desk—it was nine o'clock. She planned to ask them to get an urgent message to her. But by good luck Mish was still in the building. "Catching up with my paperwork," she explained. "What's up?"

"Steve Logan and Dennis Pinker are not twins."

"But I thought—"

"They're triplets."

There was a long pause. When Mish spoke again, her tone was guarded. "How do you know?"

"You remember I told you how I found Steve and Dennis—by searching a dental database for pairs of similar records?"

"Yes."

"This week I searched the FBI's fingerprint file for similar fingerprints. The program gave me Steve, Dennis and a third man in a group." L

"They have the same fingerprints?"

"Not exactly the same. Similar. But I just called the third man. His voice is like Steve's. I'll bet my life they look alike. Mish, you have to believe me."

"Do you have an address?"

"Yeah. In New York."

"Give."

"There's a condition."

Mish's voice hardened. "Jeannie, this is the police. You don't make conditions, you just answer the goddamn questions, now give me the address."

"I have to satisfy myself. I want to see him."

"Do you want to stay out of jail, that 's the question for you right now."

"I want us both to go see him together. Tomorrow."

There was a pause. "I ought to throw you in the slammer for abetting a felon."

"We could catch the first plane to New York in the morning."

"Okay."

Jurisdiction? Can a Baltimore
car I don't
think so.

Saturday

43

They caught the USAir flight to New York at 6.40 in the morning.

Jeannie was full of hope. This might be the end of the nightmare for Steve. She had called him last night to bring him up to date and he had been ecstatic. He had wanted to come to New York with them but Jeannie ^{why?} had talked him out of it. She had promised to call him as soon as she had more news.

Mish was maintaining a kind of tolerant scepticism. She found it hard to believe Jeannie's story but she had to check it out.

Jeannie's data did not reveal why Wayne Stattner's fingerprints were on file with the FBI, but Mish had checked overnight, and she told Jeannie the story as they took off from Baltimore-Washington International Airport. Four years ago, the distraught parents of a missing fourteen-year-old girl had tracked her down to Stattner's New York apartment. They accused him of kidnap. He denied it, saying the girl had not been coerced. The girl herself said she was in love with him. Wayne was only nineteen at the time, so in the end there had been no prosecution.

The story suggested that Stattner needed to dominate women, but to Jeannie it did not quite fit in with the psychology of a rapist. However, Mish said there were no strict rules.

Jeannie had not told Mish about the man who attacked her in Philadelphia. She knew Mish would not take her word for it that the man was not Steve. Mish would want to question Steve herself and Steve did not need that. So Jeannie kept quiet about it. In consequence she also had to keep quiet about the man who had called yesterday and threatened her life. She had not told anyone about that, not even Steve: she did not want to add to his worries.

Jeannie wanted to like Mish, but there was always a tension between them. Mish as a cop expected people to do what she told them, and Jeannie hated that in a person. To try to get closer to her, Jeannie asked her how she came to be a cop.

"I used to be a secretary, and I got a job with the FBI," she replied. "I was there ten years. I began to think I could do the job better than the agent I worked for. So I applied for police training. Went to the academy, became a patrol officer, then volunteered for undercover work with the drugs squad. That was scary, but I proved I was tough."

For a moment Jeannie felt alienated from her companion. She smoked a little weed herself now and again, and she resented people who wanted to throw her in jail for it.

"Then I moved to the Child Abuse Unit," Mish went on. "I didn't last long there. Nobody does. It's important work, but a person can only see so much of that stuff. You ~~W~~ go crazy. So finally I came to Sex Crimes."

Jeannie had not told Mish about the man who attacked her in Philadelphia. She knew Mish would not take her word for it that the man was not Steve. Mish would want to question Steve herself and Steve did not need that. So Jeannie kept quiet about it. In consequence she also had to keep quiet about the man who had called yesterday and threatened her life. She had not told anyone about that, not even Steve: she did not want to add to his worries.

Jeannie wanted to like Mish, but there was always a tension between them. *what about the racial difference?* Mish as a cop expected people to do what she told them, and Jeannie hated that in a person. To try to get closer to her, Jeannie asked her how she came to be a cop.

"I used to be a secretary, and I got a job with the FBI," she replied. "I was there ten years. I began to think I could do the job better than the agent I worked for. So I applied for police training. Went to the academy, became a patrol officer, then volunteered for undercover work with the drugs squad. That was scary, but I proved I was tough."

For a moment Jeannie felt alienated from her companion. She smoked a little weed herself now and again, and she resented people who wanted to throw her in jail for it.

"Then I moved to the Child Abuse Unit," Mish went on. "I didn't last long there. Nobody does. It's important work, but a person can only see so much of that stuff. You'd go crazy. So finally I came to Sex Crimes."

? 8/

Jeannie had not told Mish about the man who attacked her in Philadelphia. She knew Mish would not take her word for it that the man was not Steve. Mish would want to question Steve herself and Steve did not need that. (So Jeannie kept quiet about it. In consequence) She also had to keep quiet about the man who had called yesterday and threatened her life. She had not told anyone about that, not even Steve: she did not want to add to his worries.

②

Jeannie wanted to like Mish, but there was always a tension between them. Mish as a cop expected people to do what she told them, and Jeannie hated that ^{arrogance} in a person. To try to get closer to her, Jeannie asked her how she came to be a cop.

"I used to be a secretary, and I got a job with the FBI," she replied. "I was there ten years. I began to think I could do the job better than the agent I worked for. So I applied for police training. Went to the academy, became a patrol officer, then volunteered for undercover work with the drugs squad. That was scary, but I proved I was tough."

For a moment Jeannie felt alienated from her companion. She smoked a little weed herself now and again, and she resented people who wanted to throw her in jail for it.

"Then I moved to the Child Abuse Unit," Mish went on. "I didn't last long there. Nobody does. It's important work, but a person can only see so much of that stuff. You'd go crazy. So finally I came to Sex Crimes."

"Doesn't sound much of an improvement."

"At least the victims are adults. And after a couple of years they made me a sergeant and put me in charge of the unit."

"I think all rape detectives should be women," Jeannie said.

"I'm not sure I agree."

Jeannie was surprised. "Don't you think victims would talk more easily to a woman?"

"Elderly victims, perhaps; women over seventy, say."

Jeannie shuddered at the gruesome thought of women over seventy being raped.

Mish went on: "But, frankly, most victims will tell their story to a lamppost."

"Men always think the woman asked for it."

"But the report of rape must be challenged at some point, if there's going to be a fair trial. And when it comes to that kind of interrogation, women can be more brutal than men, especially to other women."

Jeannie found that hard to believe, and wondered whether Mish was simply defending her male colleagues to an outsider.

When they ran out of things to talk about, Jeannie fell into a reverie, wondering what the future held for her. She could not get used to the idea that she might not continue to be a scientist for the rest of her life. In her dream of the future

wouldn't she think of herself
in terms of a specific
career? A scientist?

"Doesn't sound much of an improvement."

"At least the victims are adults. And after a couple of years they made me a sergeant and put me in charge of the unit."

"I think all rape detectives should be women," Jeannie said.

"I'm not sure I agree."

Jeannie was surprised. "Don't you think victims would talk more easily to a woman?"

"Elderly victims, perhaps; women over seventy, say."

Jeannie shuddered at the gruesome thought of women over seventy being raped.

Mish went on: "But, frankly, most victims will tell their story to a lamppost."

"Men always think the woman asked for it."

"But the report of rape must be challenged at some point, if there's going to be a fair trial. And when it comes to that kind of interrogation, women can be more brutal than men, especially to other women."

Jeannie found that hard to believe, and wondered whether Mish was simply defending her male colleagues to an outsider.

When they ran out of things to talk about, Jeannie fell into a reverie, wondering what the future held for her. She could not get used to the idea that she might not continue to be a scientist for the rest of her life. In her dream of the future

thoughts wandered

②

she was a famous old woman, grey-haired and cantakerous but world-renowned for her work, and students were told *We did not understand human criminal behaviour until the publication of Jean Ferrami's revolutionary book in the year 2000.* But now that would not happen. She needed a new fantasy.

They arrived at LaGuardia a few minutes after eight o'clock and took a battered yellow New York taxi to the city. The cab had busted springs, and it bounced and rattled across Queens and through the Midtown Tunnel into Manhattan. Jeannie would have been uncomfortable in a Cadillac: she was on her way to see the man who had attacked her in her car, and her stomach felt like a cauldron of hot acid.

Wayne Stattner's address turned out to be a downtown loft building just ^{south} ~~north~~ of Houston Street. It was a sunny Saturday morning and already there were young people on the streets, shopping for bagels and drinking cappuccino in the sidewalk cafes and looking in the windows of art galleries.

A detective from the Sixth Precinct was waiting for them, double-parked outside the building in a tan Ford Escort with a dented rear door. He shook hands and grumpily introduced himself as Herb Reitz. Jeannie guessed that babysitting out-of-town detectives was a chore.

Mish said: "We appreciate your coming out on a Saturday to help us." She gave him a warm, flirtatious smile.

she was a famous old woman, grey-haired and cantakerous but world-renowned for her work, and students were told *We did not understand human criminal behaviour until the publication of Jean Ferrami's revolutionary book in the year 2000*. But now that would not happen. She needed a new fantasy.

~~This is the beginning of rush hour. Long delays.~~
 They arrived at LaGuardia a few minutes after eight o'clock and took a battered yellow New York taxi to the city. The cab had busted springs, and it bounced and rattled across Queens and through the Midtown Tunnel into Manhattan. Jeannie would have been uncomfortable in a Cadillac: she was on her way to see the man who had attacked her in her car, and her stomach felt like a cauldron of hot acid.

Wayne Stattner's address turned out to be a downtown loft building just north of Houston Street. It was a sunny Saturday morning and already there were young people on the streets, shopping for bagels and drinking cappuccino in the sidewalk cafes and looking in the windows of art galleries. — All south of Houston

A detective from the Sixth Precinct was waiting for them, double-parked outside the building in a tan Ford Escort with a dented rear door. He shook hands and grumpily introduced himself as Herb Reitz. Jeannie guessed that babysitting out-of-town detectives was a chore. Big, small?

Mish said: "We appreciate your coming out on a Saturday to help us." She gave him a warm, flirtatious smile.

she was a famous old woman, grey-haired and cantakerous but world-renowned for her work, and students were told *We did not understand human criminal behaviour until the publication of Jean Ferrami's revolutionary book in the year 2000*. But now that would not happen. She needed a new fantasy.

They arrived at LaGuardia a few minutes after eight o'clock and took a battered yellow New York taxi to the city. The cab had busted springs, and it bounced and rattled across Queens and through the Midtown Tunnel into Manhattan. Jeannie would have been uncomfortable in a Cadillac: she was on her way to see the man who had attacked her in her car, and her stomach felt like a cauldron of hot acid.

Wayne Stattner's address turned out to be a downtown loft building just north of Houston Street. It was a sunny Saturday morning and already there were young people on the streets, shopping for bagels and drinking cappuccino in the sidewalk cafes and looking in the windows of art galleries.

A detective from the Sixth Precinct was waiting for them, double-parked outside the building in a tan Ford Escort with a dented rear door. He shook hands and grumpily introduced himself as Herb Reitz. Jeannie guessed that babysitting out-of-town detectives was a chore.

Mish said: "We appreciate your coming out on a Saturday to help us." She gave him a warm, flirtatious smile.

He mellowed a little. "No problem."

"Any time you need help in Baltimore I want you to call me personally."

"I sure will."

Jeannie wanted to say *For Christ's sake let's get on with it!*

They went into the building and took a slow freight elevator to the top. "One apartment on each floor," Herb said. "This is an affluent suspect. What did he do?"

"Rape," Mish said.

The elevator stopped. The door opened directly on to another door, so that they could not get out until the apartment door was opened. Mish rang a bell. There was a long silence. Herb held open the elevator doors. Jeannie prayed Wayne would not have gone out of town for the weekend: she could not stand the anticlimax. Mish rang again and kept her finger on the button.

At last a voice came from within. "Who the fuck is it?"

It was him. The voice made Jeannie go cold with horror.

Herb said: "The police, that's who the fuck it is. Now open the door."

The tone changed. "Please hold your ID up to the glass panel in front of you."

Herb showed his detective's shield to the panel.

"Okay, just a minute."

This is it, Jeannie thought. Now I'm going to see him.

The ^{door} was opened by a tousled, barefoot young man in a faded black towelling

He mellowed a little. "No problem."

"Any time you need help in Baltimore I want you to call me personally."

"I sure will."

Jeannie wanted to say *For Christ's sake let's get on with it!*

They went into the building and took a slow freight elevator to the top. "One apartment on each floor," Herb said. "This is an affluent suspect. What did he do?"

"Rape," Mish said.

The elevator stopped. The door opened directly on to another door, so that they could not get out until the apartment door was opened. Mish rang a bell. There was a long silence. Herb held open the elevator doors. Jeannie prayed Wayne would not have gone out of town for the weekend: she could not stand the anticlimax. Mish rang again and kept her finger on the button.

At last a voice came from within. "Who ^{snapped} (the fuck) is it?"

It was him. The voice made Jeannie go cold with horror.

Herb said: "The police, (that's who the fuck it is. Now) open the door."

The tone changed. "Please hold your ID up to the glass panel in front of you."

Herb showed his detective's shield to the panel.

"Okay, just a minute."

This is it, Jeannie thought. Now I'm going to see him.

The was opened by a tousled, barefoot young man in a faded black towelling

bathrobe.

Jeannie stared at him, feeling disoriented.

He was Steve's double—except that he had black hair.

Herb said: "Wayne Stattner?"

"Yes."

He must have dyed it, she thought. He must have dyed it yesterday, or Thursday night.

"I'm Detective Herb Reitz from the Sixth Precinct."

"I'm always keen to cooperate with the police, ^{Detective Reitz} ~~Herb~~," said Wayne. He glanced at Mish and Jeannie. Jeannie saw no flicker of recognition in his face. "Won't you all come in?"

They stepped inside. The windowless lobby was painted black with three red doors. In a corner stood a human skeleton of the type used in medical schools, but this one was gagged with a red scarf and had steel police handcuffs on its bony wrists.

Wayne led them through one of the red doors into a big, high-ceilinged loft. Black velvet curtains were drawn across the windows, and the place was lit by low lamps. On one wall was a full-size Nazi flag. A collection of whips stood in an umbrella stand, displayed under a spotlight. A large oil painting of a crucifixion rested on an artist's easel: looking closer, Jeannie saw that the naked figure being crucified was not Christ but a voluptuous woman with long blond hair. She shuddered with

disgust.

This was the home of a sadist: that could not have been more obvious if he had put a sign out.

Herb was staring around in amazement. "What do you do for a living, Mr Stattner?"

"I own two nightclubs here in New York. Frankly, that's why I'm so keen to cooperate with the police. I have to keep my hands spotlessly clean, for business purposes.

Herb clicked his fingers. "Of course, Wayne Stattner. I read about you in *New York* magazine. *Manhattan's Young Millionaires*. I should have recognised the name."

"Won't you sit down?"

Jeannie headed for a seat then saw it was an electric chair of the type used for executions. She did a double-take, grimaced and sat elsewhere.

Herb said: "This is Sergeant Michelle Delaware of the Baltimore City Police."

"Baltimore?" said Wayne, showing surprise. Jeannie was watching his face for signs of fear, but he seemed to be a good actor. "They have crime in Baltimore?" he said sarcastically.

Jeannie said: "Your hair's dyed, isn't it?"

Mish flashed her a look of annoyance: Jeannie was supposed to observe, not interrogate the suspect.

However, Wayne did not mind the question. "Smart of you to notice."

I was right, Jeannie thought triumphantly. It is him. She looked at his hands and remembered them tearing her clothes. You've had it, you bastard, she thought.

"When did you dye it?" she asked.

"When I was fifteen," he said.

Liar.

"Black has been fashionable ever since I can remember."

You hair was fair on Thursday, when you pushed your big hands up my skirt, and on Sunday, when you raped my friend Lisa in the gym at JFU.

But why was he lying? Did he know they had a fair-haired suspect?

He said: "What's this all about? Is my hair colour a *clue*? I love mysteries."

"We won't keep you long," Mish said briskly. "We need to know where you were last Sunday evening at eight o'clock."

Jeannie wondered if he would have an alibi. It would be so easy for him to claim he had been playing cards with some lowlife types, then pay them to back him up, or say he had been in bed with a hooker who would perjure herself for a fix.

But he surprised her. "~~That's easy,~~" he said, "I was in California."

"Can anyone corroborate that?"

He laughed. "About a hundred million people, I guess."

Jeannie was beginning to get a bad feeling about this. He couldn't have a real

However, Wayne did not mind the question. "Smart of you to notice."

I was right, Jeannie thought triumphantly. It is him. She looked at his hands and remembered them tearing her clothes. You've had it, you bastard, she thought.

"When did you dye it?" she asked.

"When I was fifteen," he said.

Liar.

"Black has been fashionable ever since I can remember."

You hair was fair on Thursday, when you pushed your big hands up my skirt, and on Sunday, when you raped my friend Lisa in the gym at JFU.

But why was he lying? Did he know they had a fair-haired suspect?

He said: "What's this all about? Is my hair colour a *clue*? I love mysteries."

"We won't keep you long," Mish said briskly. "We need to know where you were last Sunday evening at eight o'clock."

Jeannie wondered if he would have an alibi. It would be so easy for him to claim he had been playing cards with some lowlife types, then pay them to back him up, or say he had been in bed with a hooker who would perjure herself for a fix.

But he surprised her. "That's easy," he said. "I was in California."

"Can anyone corroborate that?"

He laughed. "About a hundred million people, I guess."

Jeannie was beginning to get a bad feeling about this. He couldn't have a real

5

alibi. He *had* to be the rapist.

Mish said: "What do you mean?"

"I was at the Emmies."

Jeannie remembered that the Emmy awards dinner had been showing on TV in Lisa's hospital room. How could Wayne have been at the ceremony? He could hardly have got to the airport in the time it took Jeannie to reach the hospital.

"I didn't win anything, of course," he added. "I'm not in that business. But Salina Jones did, and she's an old friend."

He glanced at the oil painting, and Jeannie realised that the woman in the picture resembled the actress who played Babe, the daughter of grouchy Brian in the restaurant sitcom *Too Many Cooks*. She must have posed.

Wayne said: "Salina won best actress in a comedy, and I kissed her on both cheeks as she came off the stage with her trophy in her hand. It was a beautiful moment, caught forever by the television cameras and beamed instantly to the world. I have it on video. And there's a photo in this week's *People* magazine."

He pointed to a magazine lying on the carpet.

With a sinking heart, Jeannie picked it up. There was a picture of Wayne, looking incredibly dashing in a tuxedo, kissing Salina as she grasped her Emmy statuette.

His hair was black.

Memoirs
S. J. L.

leaping 2
smiley = 1

The caption read *New York nightclub impresario Wayne Stattner congratulates old flame Salina Jones on her Emmy for Too Many Cooks in Hollywood Sunday night.*

It was about as impregnable as an alibi could be.

How was this possible?

Mish said: "Well, Mr Stattner, we don't need to take up any more of your time."

"What did you think I might have done?"

"We're investigating a rape that took place in Baltimore on Sunday night."

"Not me," Wayne said.

Mish glanced at the crucifixion and he followed her gaze. "All my victims are volunteers," he said, and he gave her a long, suggestive look.

She flushed dark and turned away.

Jeannie was desolate. All her hopes were dashed. But her brain was still working, and as they got up to leave she said: "May I ask you something?"

"Sure," said Wayne, ever obliging.

"Do you have any brothers or sisters?"

"I'm an only child."

"Around the time you were born, was your father in the military?"

"Yes, he was a helicopter pilot instructor at Fort Bragg."

"Do you happen to know if your mother had difficulty conceiving?"

"These are funny questions for a cop."

Mish said: "Dr Ferrari is a scientist at Jones Falls University. Her research is closely connected with the case I'm working on."

Jeannie said: "Did your mother ever say anything about having fertility treatment?"

"Not to me."

"Would you mind if I asked her?"

"She's dead."

"I'm sorry to hear that. How about your father?"

He shrugged. "You could call him."

"I'd like to."

"He lives in Miami. I'll give you the number."

Jeannie handed him a pen. He scribbled a number on a page of *People* magazine and tore off the corner.

They went to the door. Herb said: "Thank you for your cooperation, Mr Stattner."

"Any time."

As they went down in the lift, Jeannie said: "Do you believe his alibi?"

"I'll check it out," Mish said. "But it feels solid."

"I can't believe he's innocent."

"He's guilty as hell, honey—but not of this one."

Make a little more of her
disappointment, pain, confusion.

44

Steve was waiting by the phone. He sat in the big kitchen of his parents' home in Georgetown, watching his mother making meatloaf, waiting for Jeannie to call. He wondered if Wayne Stattner really was his double. He wondered if Jeannie and Sergeant Delaware would find him at his New York address. He wondered if Wayne would confess to raping Lisa Hoxton.

Mom was chopping onions. She had been dazed and astonished when first told what had been done to her at the Cotswold Clinic in December 1972. She had not really believed it, but had accepted it provisionally, as it were for the sake of argument, while they spoke to the lawyer. Last night Steve had sat up late with Mom and Dad, talking over their strange history. Mom had got angry then: the notion of doctors experimenting on patients without permission ^{mess} was just the kind of thing to ~~make her mad~~. In her column she talked a lot about women's right to control their ~~own bodies~~.

Surprisingly, Dad was calmer. Steve would have expected a man to have a stronger reaction to the cuckoo aspect of the whole story. But Dad had been tirelessly rational, going over Jeannie's logic, speculating about other possible explanations for the phenomenon of the triplets, concluding in the end that she was probably right.

44

Steve was waiting by the phone. He sat in the big kitchen of his parents' home in Georgetown, watching his mother making meatloaf, waiting for Jeannie to call. He wondered if Wayne Stattner really was his double. He wondered if Jeannie and Sergeant Delaware would find him at his New York address. He wondered if Wayne would confess to raping Lisa Hoxton.

Mom was chopping onions. She had been dazed and astonished when first told what had been done to her at the Cotswold Clinic in December 1972. She had not really believed it, but had accepted it provisionally, as it were for the sake of argument, while they spoke to [?] the lawyer. Last night Steve had sat up late with Mom and Dad, talking over their strange history. Mom had got angry then: the notion of doctors experimenting on patients without permission was just the kind of thing to make her mad. In her column she talked a lot about women's right to control their own bodies.

Surprisingly, Dad was calmer. Steve would have expected a man to have a stronger reaction to the cuckoo aspect of the whole story. But Dad had been tirelessly rational, going over Jeannie's logic, speculating about other possible explanations for the phenomenon of the triplets, concluding in the end that she was probably right.

However, reacting calmly was part of Dad's code. It did not necessarily tell you how he was feeling underneath. Right now he was out in the yard, placidly watering a flower bed, but inside ^{he} he might be boiling.

Mom started frying onions, and the smell made Steve's mouth water. "Meatloaf with mashed potatoes and ketchup," he said. "One of the great meals."

She smiled. "When you were five years old you wanted it every day."

"I remember. In that little kitchen in Hoover Tower."

"Do you remember that?"

"Just. I remember moving out, and how strange it felt having a house instead of an apartment."

"That was about the time I started to make money from my first book, *What to Do when You Can't Get Pregnant*." She sighed. "If the truth about how I got pregnant ever comes out, that book is going to look pretty silly."

"I hope all the people who bought it don't ask for their money back."

She put minced beef into the frying pan with the onions and wiped her hands. "I've been thinking about this stuff all night, and you know something? I'm glad they did that to me in the Cotswold Clinic."

"Why? Last night you were mad."

"And in a way I'm still mad, about being used like a laboratory chimpanzee. But I realised one simple thing: if they hadn't experimented on me, I wouldn't have

you. Beside that, nothing else matters."

"You don't mind that I'm not really yours?"

She put her arm around him. "You're mine, Steve. Nothing can change that."

The phone rang and Steve snatched it up. "Hello?"

"This is Jeannie."

"What happened?" Steve said breathlessly. "Was he there?"

"Yes, and he's your double, except he dyes his hair black."

"My God—there *are* three of us."

"Yes. Wayne's mother is dead, but I just spoke with his father, in Florida, and he confirmed that she was treated at the Cotswold Clinic."

It was good news, but she sounded dispirited, and Steve's elation was checked.

"You don't seem as pleased as you ought to be."

"He has an alibi for Sunday."

"Shit." His hopes sank again. "How can he? What sort of an alibi?"

"Watertight. He was at the Emmies in Los Angeles. There are photographs."

"He's in the movie business?"

"Nightclub owner. He's a minor celebrity."

Steve could see why she was so down. Her discovery of Wayne had been brilliant—but it had got them no farther forward. But he was mystified as well as downcast. "Then who raped Lisa?"

'Improbable' ?

of her...
of her...
of her...

485
485

"Do you remember what Sherlock Holmes says? 'When you have eliminated the impossible, what remains—no matter how implausible—must be the truth.' Or maybe it was Hercule Poirot." *Of course that involves a possibility*

His heart went cold. Surely she did not believe *he* had raped Lisa? "What's the truth?" *What is the realistic possibility?*

"There are four twins."

"*Quadruplets?* Jeannie, this is getting crazy."

"Not quadruplets. I can't believe this embryo divided into four by *accident*. It had to be deliberate, part of the experiment."

"Is that possible?"

"It is nowadays. You've heard of cloning. Back in the seventies it was just an idea. But Genetico seems to have been years ahead of the rest of the field—perhaps because they were working in secret and *could experiment on* experimenting on humans." *could experiment on*

"You're saying I'm a clone."

"You have to be. I'm sorry, Steve. I keep giving you shattering news. It's a good thing you have the parents you have."

"Yeah. What's he like, Wayne?"

"Creepy. He has a painting that shows Salina Jones being crucified naked. I couldn't wait to get out of his apartment."

Steve was silent. *One of my clones is a murderer, the other is a sadist, and the*

36
Sadist

hypothetical fourth is a rapist. Where does that leave me?

Jeannie said: "The clone idea also explains ^{why} ~~how~~ come you all have different birthdays. The embryos were kept in the laboratory for varying periods before being implanted in the women's wombs."

Why did this happen to me? why couldn't I be like everyone else?

"They're closing the flight, I have to go."

"I want to see you. I'll drive to Baltimore."

"Okay. Bye."

Steve hung up the phone. "You got that," he said to his mother.

"Yeah. He looks just like you, but he's got an alibi, so she thinks there must be four of you, and you're clones."

"If we're clones, I must be like them."

"No. You're different, because you're mine."

"But I'm not." He saw the spasm of pain pass across his mother's face, but he was hurting too. "I'm the child of two complete strangers selected by research scientists employed by Genetico. That's my ancestry."

"You must be different from the others, you *behave* differently."

"But does that prove that my nature is different from theirs? Or just that I've learned to hide it, like a domesticated animal? Did you make me what I am? Or did Genetico?"

"I don't know, my son," said Mom. "I just don't know."

45

Jeannie took a shower and washed her hair, then made up her eyes carefully. She decided not to use lipstick or blush. She dressed in a V-neck purple sweater and skin-tight gray leggings, with no underwear or shoes. She put in her favorite nose jewel, a small sapphire in a silver mount. In the mirror she looked like sex on a stick. "Off to church, young lady?" she said aloud. Then she winked at herself and went into the living room.

Her father had gone again. He preferred to be at Patty's where he had his three grandchildren to keep him amused. Patty had come to pick him up while Jeannie was in New York.

She had nothing to do but wait for him. She tried not to think of the day's great disappointment. She had had enough. She felt hungry: she had kept going on coffee all day. She wondered whether to eat now or hang on until he got here. She smiled as she remembered his eating eight cinnamon buns for breakfast. Was that only yesterday? It seemed a week ago.

Suddenly she realised she did not have any food in the refrigerator. How awful if he arrived hungry and she could not feed him! She hurriedly pulled on a pair of Doc Marten boots and ran outside. She drove to the ⁷⁻¹¹ ~~Seven-Eleven~~ on the corner of

45

Jeannie took a shower and washed her hair, then made up her eyes carefully. She decided not to use lipstick or blusher. She dressed in a V-neck purple sweater and skin-tight gray leggings, with no underwear or shoes. She put in her favorite nose jewel, a small sapphire in a silver mount. (In the mirror she looked like sex on a stick. "Off to church, young lady?" she said aloud. Then she winked at herself and went into the living room.)

Her father had gone again. He preferred to be at Patty's where he had his three grandchildren to keep him amused. Patty had come to pick him up while Jeannie was in New York.

She had nothing to do but wait for him. She tried not to think of the day's great disappointment. She had had enough. She felt hungry: she had kept going on coffee all day. She wondered whether to eat now or hang on until he got here. She smiled as she remembered his eating eight cinnamon buns for breakfast. Was that only yesterday? It seemed a week ago.

Suddenly she realised she did not have any food in the refrigerator. How awful if he arrived hungry and she could not feed him! She hurriedly pulled on a pair of Doc Marten boots and ran outside. She drove to the Seven-Eleven on the corner of

J 60
affordant

? 8/

Steve

?

Falls Road and 36th street and bought eggs, ~~Canadian~~ bacon, milk, a loaf of ~~seven-grain~~ bread, ready-washed salad, Dos Equis beer, Ben & Jerry's Rainforest Crunch flavor ice-cream, and four more packets of frozen cinnamon buns.

While she was standing at the checkout she realised he might arrive while she was out. He might even go away again! She ran out of the store with her arms full and drove home like a maniac, imagining him waiting impatiently on the doorstep.

There was no one outside her house and no sign of his rusty Datsun. She went inside and put the food in the refrigerator. She took the eggs out of the carton and put them in the egg tray, undid the six-pack of beer, and loaded the coffee machine ready to start. Then she had nothing to do again.

It occurred to her that she was behaving uncharacteristically. She had never before worried about whether a man might be hungry. Her normal attitude, even with Will Temple, had been that if he's hungry he'll fix himself something to eat, and if the refrigerator is empty he'll go to the store, and if the store is closed he'll get drive-through. But now she was suffering an attack of domesticity. ~~Was it possible that~~ Steve was having a bigger impact on her than other men? ~~Surely not:~~ ^{yet} she had only known him a few days—

The doorbell sounded like an explosion.

Jeannie leaped up, heart pounding, and spoke into the entryphone. "Yes?"

"Jeannie? It's Steve."

Falls Road and 36th street and bought eggs, Canadian bacon, milk, a loaf of seven-grain bread, ready-washed salad, Dos Equis beer, Ben & Jerry's Rainforest Crunch flavor ice-cream, and four more packets of frozen cinnamon buns.

While she was standing at the checkout she realised he might arrive while she was out. He might even go away again! She ran out of the store with her arms full and drove home like a maniac, imagining him waiting impatiently on the doorstep.

There was no one outside her house and no sign of his rusty Datsun. She went inside and put the food in the refrigerator. She took the eggs out of the carton and put them in the egg tray, undid the six-pack of beer, and loaded the coffee machine ready to start. Then she had nothing to do again.

It occurred to her that ~~she~~ she was behaving uncharacteristically. She had never before worried about whether a man might be hungry. Her normal attitude, even with Will Temple, had been that if he's hungry he'll fix himself something to eat, and if the refrigerator is empty he'll go to the store, and if the store is closed he'll get drive-through. But now she was suffering an attack of domesticity. ~~Was it possible that Steve was having a bigger impact on her than other men? Surely not, she had only known him a few days~~

The doorbell sounded like an explosion.

Jeannie leaped up, heart pounding, and spoke into the entryphone. "Yes?"

"Jeannie? It's Steve."

Falls Road and 36th street and bought eggs, Canadian bacon, milk, a loaf of seven-grain bread, ready-washed salad, Dos Equis beer, Ben & Jerry's Rainforest Crunch flavor ice-cream, and four more packets of frozen cinnamon buns.

While she was standing at the checkout she realised he might arrive while she was out. He might even go away again! She ran out of the store with her arms full and drove home like a maniac, imagining him waiting impatiently on the doorstep.

There was no one outside her house and no sign of his rusty Datsun. She went inside and put the food in the refrigerator. She took the eggs out of the carton and put them in the egg tray, undid the six-pack of beer, and loaded the coffee machine ready to start. Then she had nothing to do again.

(It occurred to her that she was behaving uncharacteristically. She had never before worried about whether a man might be hungry. Her normal attitude, even with Will Temple, had been that if he's hungry he'll fix himself something to eat, and if the refrigerator is empty he'll go to the store, and if the store is closed he'll get drive-through. But now she was suffering an attack of domesticity. Was it possible that Steve was having a bigger impact on her than other men? Surely not: she had only known him a few days—

The doorbell sounded like an explosion.

Jeannie leaped up, heart pounding, and spoke into the entryphone. "Yes?"

"Jeannie? It's Steve."

She touched the button that unlocked the door. She stood still for a moment, feeling foolish. She was acting like a teenage girl. She watched Steve come up the stairs in a gray T-shirt and loose-fitting bluejeans. His face showed the pain and disappointment of the last twenty-four hours. She threw her arms around him and embraced him. His strong body felt tense and strained.

She led him into the living room. He sat down on the sofa and she switched on the coffee machine. She felt very close to him. They had not done the usual things, dated and gone to restaurants and watched movies together, the way Jeannie had previously ^{learned} got to know a man. Instead they had fought battles side by side and puzzled over mysteries together and been persecuted by half-hidden enemies. It had made them friends very quickly.

"Want some coffee?"

He shook his head. "I'd rather hold hands."

She sat beside him on the couch and took his hand. He leaned towards her. She turned up her face and he kissed her lips. It was their first real kiss. She squeezed his hand hard and parted her lips. The taste of his mouth made her think of woodsmoke. For a moment her passion was derailed as she asked herself if she had brushed her teeth; then she remembered that she had, and she relaxed again. He touched her breasts through the soft wool of her sweater, his big hands surprisingly gentle. She did the same to him, rubbing the palms of her hands across his chest.

She touched the button that unlocked the door. She stood still for a moment, feeling foolish. She was acting like a teenage girl. She watched Steve come up the stairs in a gray T-shirt and loose-fitting bluejeans. His face showed the pain and disappointment of the last twenty-four hours. She threw her arms around him and embraced him. His strong body felt tense and strained.

She led him into the living room. He sat down on the sofa and she switched on the coffee machine. She felt very close to him. They had not done the usual things, dated and gone to restaurants and watched movies together, the way Jeannie had previously got to know a man. Instead they had fought battles side by side and puzzled over mysteries together and been persecuted by half-hidden enemies. ~~It had~~ ~~made them friends very quickly.~~

"Want some coffee?"

He shook his head. "I'd rather hold hands."

She sat beside him on the couch and took his hand. He leaned towards her. She turned up her face and he kissed her lips. It was their first real kiss. She squeezed his hand hard and parted her lips. The taste of his mouth made her think of woodsmoke. For a moment her passion was derailed as she asked herself if she had brushed her teeth; then she remembered that she had, and she relaxed again. He touched her breasts through the soft wool of her sweater, his big hands surprisingly gentle. She did the same to him, rubbing the palms of her hands across his chest.

It got serious very quickly.

He pulled away from her just far enough so that he could look at her. He stared into her face as if he wanted to burn her features into her memory. With his fingertips he touched her eyebrows, her cheekbones, the tip of her nose, and her lips, as gently as if he was afraid of breaking something. He shook his head from side to side slightly, as if he could not believe what he saw.

In his gaze she saw profound longing. This man yearned for her with all his being. It turned her on. Her passion blew up like a sudden wind from the south, hot and tempestuous. She felt the sensation of melting in her loins that she had not had for a year and a half. She wanted everything all at once, his body on top of her and his tongue in her mouth and his hands everywhere.

She held his head and pulled his face to her and kissed him again, this time with her mouth open wide. She leaned backward on the couch until he was half lying on her, his weight crushing her chest. Eventually she pushed him away, panting, and said: "Bedroom."

She untangled herself from him and went into the bedroom ahead of him. She pulled her sweater over her head and threw it on the floor. He came into the room and closed the door behind him with his heel, ~~the way all the clones did~~. Seeing her undressing, he took off his T-shirt with one swift movement.

They all do that, she thought; they all close the door with their heel.

He pulled off his shoes, unbuckled his belt, and took off his bluejeans. His body was perfect, broad shoulders and a muscular chest and narrow hips in white jockey shorts.

But which one is he?

He moved towards her and she took two steps back.

The man on the phone said: "He could visit you again."

He frowned. "What's the matter?"

She was suddenly scared. "I can't do this," she said.

He took a deep breath and blew hard. "Wow," he said. He looked away.

"Wow."

She crossed her arms on her chest, covering her breasts. "I don't know who you are."

Comprehension dawned. "Oh, my God." He sat on the bed with his back to her, and his big shoulders slumped dispiritedly. ~~But it could have been an act.~~ "You think I'm the one you met in Philadelphia."

"I thought he was Steve."

"But why would he pretend to be me?"

"It doesn't matter."

"He wouldn't just do it in the hope of a sly fuck," he said. "My doubles have peculiar ways of getting their kicks, but this isn't one of them. If he wanted to fuck

you he'd pull a knife on you, or rip your stockings, or set fire to the building, wouldn't he?"

Need more of a transition here. she's just the shaker, feels cold etc.

"I got a phone call," Jeannie said. "Anonymous. He said: 'The one you met in Philadelphia was supposed to kill you. He got carried away and messed up. But he could visit you again.' That's why you have to leave, now." She snatched her sweater up off the floor and pulled it on hastily. It did not make her feel any safer.

There was sympathy in his gaze. "Poor Jeannie," he said. "The bastards have scared you good. I'm sorry." He stood up and pulled on his jeans.

Suddenly she felt sure she was wrong. The Philadelphia clone, the rapist, would never start dressing again in this situation. He would throw her on the bed and tear off her clothes and try to take her by force. This man was different. This was Steve. She felt an almost irresistible desire to fling her arms around him and make love to him. "Steve...."

He smiled. "That's me."

But was this the aim of his act? When he had won her confidence, and they were naked in bed, and he was lying on top of her, would he change, and reveal his true nature, the nature that loved to see women in fear and pain? She shuddered with dread.

Make her fear more physical

It was no good She averted her eyes. "You'd better go," she said.

"You could question me," he said.

you he'd pull a knife on you, or rip your stockings, or set fire to the building, wouldn't he?"

"I got a phone call," Jeannie said. "Anonymous. He said: 'The one you met in Philadelphia was supposed to kill you. He got carried away and messed up. But he could visit you again.' That's why you have to leave, now." She snatched her sweater up off the floor and pulled it on hastily. It did not make her feel any safer.

There was sympathy in his gaze. "Poor Jeannie," he said. "The bastards have scared you good. I'm sorry." He stood up and pulled on his jeans.

Suddenly she felt sure she was wrong. The Philadelphia clone, the rapist, would never start dressing again in this situation. He would throw her on the bed and tear off her clothes and try to take her by force. ~~This man was different.~~ This was Steve. She felt an almost irresistible desire to fling her arms around him and make love to him. "Steve...."

He smiled. "That's me."

But was this the aim of his act? When he had won her confidence, and they were naked in bed, and he was lying on top of her, would he change, and reveal his true nature, the nature that loved to see women in fear and pain? She shuddered with dread.

It was no good. She averted her eyes. "You'd better go," she said.

"You could question me," he said.

"All right. Where did I first meet Steve?"

"At the tennis court."

~~It was the right answer.~~ "But both Steve and the rapist were at JFU that day."

"Ask me something else."

"How many cinnamon buns did Steve eat on Friday morning?"

He grinned. "Eight, I'm ashamed to say."

She shook her head despairingly. "This place could be bugged. They've searched my office and downloaded my e-mail, they could be listening to us now. It's no good. I don't know Steve Logan that well, and what I do know, others might know too."

"I guess you're right," he said, putting his T-shirt back on.

He sat on the bed and put on his shoes. She went into the living room, not wanting to stand in the bedroom and watch him dress. Was this a terrible mistake? Or was it the smartest move she had ever made? She felt a bereft ache in her loins: she had wanted so badly to make love to Steve. Yet the thought that she might have found herself in bed with someone like Wayne Stattner made her shaky with fear.

He came in, fully dressed. She looked into his eyes, searching for something there, some sign that would assuage her doubts, but she did not find it. *I don't know who you are, I just don't know!*

He read her mind. "It's no use, I can tell. Trust is trust, and when it's gone, it's

gone." He let his ^{feelings} anger show for a moment. "What a downer, what a motherfucking downer."

His anger scared her. She was strong, but he was stronger. She wanted him out of the apartment, and fast.

He sensed her urgency. "Okay, I'm leaving," he said. He went to the door. "You realise *he* wouldn't leave."

She nodded.

He said what she was thinking. "But until I really leave, you can't be sure. And if I leave and come right back, that doesn't count either. For you to know it's me, I have to *really* go away."

"Yes." She was sure now that this was Steve, but her doubts would return unless he really went away.

"We need a secret code, so you know it's me."

"Okay."

"I'll think of something."

"Okay."

"Goodbye," he said. "I won't try to kiss you."

He went down the stairs. "Call me," he shouted.

She stood still, frozen to the spot, until she heard the slam of the street door.

She bit her lip. She felt like crying. She went to the kitchen counter and

poured coffee into a mug. She raised the mug to her lips but it slipped through her fingers and fell to the floor, where it smashed on the tiles. "Fuck," she said.

Her legs went weak, and she slumped on the couch. She had felt in terrible danger. Now she knew the danger had been imaginary, but she still felt profoundly grateful that it had passed. Her body felt swollen with unfulfilled desire. She touched her crotch: her leggings were damp. "Soon," she breathed. "Soon." She thought about how it would be the next time they met, how she would embrace him and kiss him and apologise, and how tenderly he would forgive her; and as she envisioned it she touched herself with her fingertips, and after a few moments a spasm of pleasure went through her.

Then she slept for a while.

But it could have been emphasized more at the time.

496

poured coffee into a mug. She raised the mug to her lips but it slipped through her fingers and fell to the floor, where it smashed on the tiles. "Fuck," she said.

Her legs went weak, and she slumped on the couch. She had felt in terrible danger. Now she knew the danger had been imaginary, but she still felt profoundly grateful that it had passed. Her body felt swollen with unfulfilled desire. She touched her crotch: her leggings were damp. "Soon," she breathed. "Soon." She thought about how it would be the next time they met, how she would embrace him and kiss him and apologize, and how tenderly he would forgive her; and as she envisioned it she touched herself with her fingertips, and after a few moments a spasm of pleasure went through her.

Then she slept for a while.

② poured coffee into a mug. She raised the mug to her lips but it slipped through her fingers and fell to the floor, where it smashed on the tiles. "Fuck," she said. ^{shit}

Her legs went weak, and she slumped on the couch. She had felt in terrible danger. Now she knew the danger had been imaginary, but she still felt profoundly grateful that it had passed. Her body felt swollen with unfulfilled desire. She touched her crotch: her leggings were damp. "Soon," she breathed. "Soon." She thought about how it would be the next time they met, how she would embrace him and kiss him and apologise, and how tenderly he would forgive her; and as she envisioned it she touched herself with her fingertips, and after a few moments a spasm of pleasure went through her.

Then she slept for a while.

46

It was the humiliation that got to Berisford.

He kept defeating Jeannie Ferrami, but he was never able to feel good about it. She had forced him to go sneaking around like a petty thief. He had surreptitiously leaked a story to a newspaper, crept into her room and searched her desk drawers, and now he was watching her house.

He would never have thought he would be doing this a few weeks from his sixtieth birthday: sitting in his car, parked at the ~~kerb~~^{curb}, watching someone else's front door like a grubby private eye. What would his mother think? She was still alive, a slim, well-dressed woman of eighty-four, living in a small town in Maine, writing witty letters to the local newspaper and determinedly hanging on to her post as chief flower-arranger for the Episcopalian church. She would shudder with shame to know what her son had been reduced to.

God forbid he should be seen by anyone he knew. He was careful not to meet the eyes of passers-by. His car was unfortunately conspicuous. He thought of it as a discreetly elegant automobile, but there were not many silver Lincoln Town Cars parked along this street: ageing Japanese compacts and lovingly-preserved Pontiac Firebirds were the local favorites. Berisford himself was not the kind of person to fade

into the background, with his distinctive grey hair. For a while he had held a street map open in front of him, resting on the steering wheel, for camouflage, but this was a friendly neighbourhood, and two people had tapped on the window and offered to give him directions, so he had to put the map away. He consoled himself with the thought that anyone who lived in such a low-rent area could not possibly be important.

The problem was that they now had no idea what Jeannie was up to. The FBI had failed to find that list in her apartment. Berisford had to assume the worst: the list had led her to another clone.

It was Jim Proust who had suggested that Berisford watch Jeannie's house. "See what she's up to, who comes and goes," Jim had said, and Berisford had reluctantly agreed because he could not think of a better idea. Berisford had got here early, and nothing had happened until around midday when Jeannie was dropped off by a black woman Berisford recognised as one of the detectives investigating the rape. She had interviewed Berisford briefly on Monday. He had found her rather attractive. He managed to remember her name: Sergeant Delaware.

He called Proust from the pay phone in the Macdonald's on the corner, and Proust promised to get his FBI friend to find out whom they had been to see. Berisford imagined the FBI man saying *Sergeant Delaware made contact today with a suspect we have under surveillance, for security reasons I can't reveal any more than that, but*

it would be helpful to us to know exactly what she did this morning and what case she was working on.

An hour or so later Jeannie had left in a rush, looking heartbreakingly sexy in a purple sweater. Berisford had not followed her car: ~~that would be too undignified.~~ But she had come back a few minutes later carrying a couple of brown paper sacks full, presumably, of groceries. The next arrival was ~~one of the clones,~~ presumably Steve Logan.

He had not stayed long. If it had been me, Berisford thought, with Jeannie dressed like that, I would have been there all night and most of Sunday.

He checked the car's clock for the twentieth time and decided to call Jim again.

He might have heard from the FBI by now.

Berisford left his car and walked to the corner. The smell of French fries made him hungry but he did not like to eat hamburgers out of styrofoam containers. He got a cup of black coffee and went to the payphone.

"They went to New York," Jim told him.

"Wayne Stattner," Berisford said.

"Yup. Asked him to account for his movements last Sunday, and like that. He was at the Emmies. Had his picture in *People* magazine. End of story. What's happening now?"

"Not a lot. I can see her door from here. She did some shopping, Steve Logan

NO
CAR
FINDS?

it would be helpful to us to know exactly what she did this morning and what case she was working on.

An hour or so later Jeannie had left in a rush, looking heartbreakingly sexy in a purple sweater. Berisford had not followed her car: ~~that would be too undignified.~~ ^{that would be too undignified.} But she had come back a few minutes later carrying a couple of brown paper sacks full, presumably, of groceries. The next arrival was one of the clones, presumably Steve Logan.

He had not stayed long. ~~If it had been me,~~ ^{In his shoes} Berisford thought, with Jeannie dressed like that, I would have been there all night and most of Sunday.

He checked the car's clock for the twentieth time and decided to call Jim again. He might have heard from the FBI by now.

Berisford left his car and walked to the corner. The smell of French fries made him hungry but he did not like to eat hamburgers out of styrofoam containers. He got a cup of black coffee and went to the payphone.

"They went to New York," Jim told him.

"Wayne Stattner," Berisford said.

"Yup. Asked him to account for his movements last Sunday, and like that. He was at the Emmies. Had his picture in *People* magazine. End of story. What's happening now?"

"Not a lot. I can see her door from here. She did some shopping, Steve Logan

came and went, nothing. Maybe they've run out of ideas."

"And maybe not. All we know is that firing her didn't do the trick."

"I guess not. Wait—she's coming out." She had changed her clothes: she was wearing white jeans and a royal blue sleeveless blouse that showed her strong arms.

"Follow her," Jim said.

"The hell with that. She's getting into her car."

"Berry, we have to know where she goes."

"I'm not a cop, goddamn it!"

A little girl on her way to the ladies' room with her mother said: "That man shouted, Mommy."

"Hush, darling," her mother said.

Berisford lowered his voice. "She's pulling away."

"Get in your damn car!"

"Fuck you, Jim."

"Follow her!" Jim hung up.

Berisford cradled the phone.

Jeannie's red Mercedes went by and turned south on Falls Road.

~~Berisford ran to his car.~~

came and went, nothing. Maybe they've run out of ideas."

"And maybe not. All we know is that firing her didn't do the trick."

"I guess not. Wait—she's coming out." She had changed her clothes: she was wearing white jeans and a royal blue sleeveless blouse that showed her strong arms.

"Follow her," Jim said.

"The hell with that. She's getting into her car."

"Berry, we have to know where she goes."

"I'm not a cop, goddamn it!"

A little girl on her way to the ladies' room with her mother said: "That man shouted, Mommy."

"Hush, darling," her mother said.

Berisford lowered his voice. "She's pulling away."

"Get in your damn car!"

"Fuck you, Jim."

"Follow her!" Jim hung up.

Berisford cradled the phone.

Jeannie's red Mercedes went by and turned south on Falls Road.

Berisford ran to his car.

The prevailing emotion here should be fear. He should be concerned by it -- his whole world tumbling down, disgracing his mother if he succeeds.

came and went, nothing. Maybe they've run out of ideas."

"And maybe not. All we know is that firing her didn't do the trick."

"I guess not. Wait—she's coming out." She had changed her clothes: she was wearing white jeans and a royal blue sleeveless blouse that showed her strong arms.

"Follow her," Jim said.

"The hell with that. She's getting into her car."

"Berry, we have to know where she goes."

"I'm not a cop, goddamn it!"

A little girl on her way to the ladies' room with her mother said: "That man shouted, Mommy."

"Hush, darling," her mother said.

Berisford lowered his voice. "She's pulling away."

?) ("Get in your damn car!")

"Fuck you, Jim."

"Follow her!" Jim hung up.

Berisford cradled the phone.

Jeannie's red Mercedes went by and turned south on Falls Road.

Berisford ran to his car.