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Jeannie studied Steve's father. Charles was dark-haired, with the shadow of a heavy beard on his jaw. His expression was dour and his manner rigidly precise. Although it was Saturday and he had been gardening, he wore neatly pressed dark pants and a short-sleeved shirt with a collar. He did not look like Steve in any way. The only thing Steve might have got from him was a taste for conservative clothes. Most of Jeannie's students wore ripped denim and black leather, but Steve favored khakis and buttondowns.

Steve had not yet come home, and Charles speculated that he might have dropped by his law school library to read up on rape trials. Steve's mother was lying down. Charles made fresh lemonade, and he and Jeannie went out on the patio of the Georgetown house, and sat on lawn chairs.

Jeannie had woken up from her doze with a brilliant idea in the forefront of her mind. She had thought of a way to find the fourth ^{1 2 3}clone. But she would need Charles's help. And she was not sure he would be willing to do what she had to ask him.

Charles passed her a tall, cold glass, then took one himself and sat down. "May I call you by your first name?" he said.

"Please do."

"And I hope you'll do the same."

"Sure."

They sipped their lemonade, then he said: "Jeannie—what is this all about?"

She put down her glass. "I think it's an experiment," she said. "Berisford and Proust were both in the military until shortly before they set up Genetico. I suspect the company was originally a cover for a military project."

"I've been a soldier all my adult life, and I'm ready to believe almost anything crazy of the army. But what interest could they have in women's fertility problems?"

"Think of this. All four ^{men} clones are tall, strong, fit and handsome. They're also very smart, although their propensity to violence gets in the way of their achievements. But Steve and Dennis have IQ scores off the scale, and I suspect the other two would be the same: Wayne is already a millionaire at the age of twenty-two, and the fourth one has at least been clever enough to totally evade detection."

"Where does that get you?"

"I don't know. I wonder if the army was trying to breed the perfect soldier."

It was no more than an idle speculation, and she said it casually, but it electrified Charles. "Oh, my God," he said, and an expression of shocked comprehension spread over his face. "I think I remember hearing about this."

"What do you mean?"

"Please do."

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"Sure."

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"What do you mean?"

"There was a rumour, back in the seventies, that went all around the military. The Russians had a breeding program, people said. They were making perfect soldiers, perfect athletes, perfect chess players, everything. Some people said we should be doing the same. Others said we already were."

"So that's it." Jeannie felt that at last she was beginning to understand. "They picked a healthy, aggressive, intelligent, blond-haired man and woman and got them to donate the sperm and egg that went together to form the embryo. But what they were really interested in was the possibility of *duplicating* the perfect soldier once they had created him. The crucial part of the experiment was the multiple division of the embryo and the implanting into the host mothers. And it worked." She frowned. "I wonder what happened next."

"I can answer that," Charles said. "Watergate. All those crazy secret schemes were cancelled after that."

"But Genetico went legitimate, like the Mafia. And because they really did find out how to make test-tube babies, the company was profitable. The profits financed the research into genetic engineering that they've been doing ever since. I suspect that my own project is probably part of their grand scheme."

"Which is what?"

"A breed of perfect Americans: intelligent, aggressive, and blond. A master race." She shrugged. "It's an old idea, but it's possible now, with modern genetics."

"So why would they sell the company? It doesn't make sense."

"Maybe it does," Jeannie said thoughtfully. "When they got the takeover bid, perhaps they saw it as an opportunity to move into high gear. The money will finance Proust's run at the presidency. If they get into the White House they can do all the research they want—and put their ideas into practice."

Charles nodded. "There's a piece about Proust's ideas in today's *Washington Post*. I don't think I want to live in his kind of world. If we're all aggressive, obedient soldiers, who's going to write the poems and play the blues and go on anti-war protest marches?"

Jeannie raised her eyebrows. It was a surprising thought to come from a career soldier. "There's more to it than that," she said. "Human variation has a purpose. There's a reason we're born different from both our parents. Evolution is a trial-and-error business. You can't prevent nature's failed experiments without eliminating the successes too."

Charles sighed. "And all this means I'm not Steve's father."

"Don't say that."

He opened his billfold and took out a photo. "I have to tell you something, Jeannie. I never suspected any of this stuff about clones, but I've often looked at Steve and wondered if there was anything at all of me in him."

"Can't you see it?" she said. "You're blind."

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"You see a resemblance?"

"No physical resemblance. But Steve has a profound sense of duty. None of the other clones could give a darn about duty. He got it from you!"

Charles still looked grim. "There's bad in Steve, Jeannie. I know it."

She touched his arm. "Charles, listen to me. Steve was what I call a wild child—disobedient, impulsive, fearless, bursting with energy—wasn't he?"

Charles smiled ruefully. "That's the truth."

"So were Dennis Pinker and Wayne Stattner. Such children are almost impossible to raise right. That's why Dennis is a murderer and Wayne a sadist. But *Steve isn't like them*—and you're the reason why. Only the most patient, understanding and dedicated of parents can bring up such children to be normal human beings. But Steve is normal."

"I pray you're right." Charles opened his billfold to replace the photo.

Jeannie forestalled him. "May I see it?"

"Sure."

Jeannie studied the picture. It had been taken quite recently. Steve was wearing a blue checked shirt and his hair was a little too long. He was grinning shyly at the camera. "I don't have a photo of him," Jeannie said regretfully as she handed it back.

"Have that one."

"I couldn't. You keep it next to your heart."

"I have a million photos of Steve. I'll put another one in my billfold."

"Thanks, I really appreciate it."

"You seem very fond of him."

"I love him, Charles."

"You do?"

Jeannie nodded. "When I think he might be sent to jail for this rape, I want to offer to go instead of him."

Charles gave a wry smile. "So do I."

"That's love, isn't it?"

"Sure is."

Jeannie felt self-conscious. She had not meant to say all this to Steve's father. She had not really known it herself: it had just come out, and then she realised it was true.

He said: "How does Steve feel about you?"

She smiled: "I could be modest...."

"Don't bother."

"He's crazy for me."

"That doesn't surprise me. Not just because you're beautiful, though you are. You're strong, too: that's obvious. He needs someone strong—especially with this

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accusation over his head."

Jeannie gave him a ^{long} calculating look. It was time to ask him. "There is something you could do, you know."

"Tell me what it is."

Jeannie had rehearsed this speech in the car all the way to Washington. "If I could search another database, I might find the real rapist. But after the publicity in the *New York Times*, no government agency or insurance company is going to take the risk of working with me. Unless...."

"What?"

Jeannie leaned forward in her lawn chair. "Genetico experimented on soldiers' wives who were referred to them by army hospitals. Therefore most or all of the clones were probably born in army hospitals."

He nodded slowly.

"The babies must have had army medical records, twenty-two years ago. Those records may still exist."

"I'm sure they do. The army never throws anything away."

Jeannie's hopes rose a notch. But there was another problem. "That long ago, they would have been paper files. Might they have been transferred to computer?"

"I'm sure they have. It's the only way to store everything."

"Then it is possible," Jeannie said, controlling her excitement.

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He looked thoughtful.

She gave him a hard stare. "Charles, can you get me access?"

"What, exactly, do you need to do?"

"I have to load my program into the computer then let it search all the files.

It takes an hour or so, depending on the size of the database."

"Does it interfere with normal data retrieval?"

"No."

"Then it's possible."

"Will you do it?"

"If we're caught, it's the end of my career."

"Will you?"

"Hell, yes."

Good!
You may need to make clear
why this missing clone didn't
show up on the FBI tape.

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48

Steve was thrilled to see Jeannie sitting on the patio drinking lemonade and talking earnestly to his father as if they were old friends. This is what I want, he thought; I want Jeannie in my life. Then I can deal with anything.

He crossed the lawn from the garage, smiling, and kissed her lips softly. "You two look like conspirators," he said.

Jeannie explained what they were planning, and Steve allowed himself to feel hopeful again.

Dad said to Jeannie: "I'm not computer-literate. I'll need help loading your program into the computer."

"I'll come with you."

"I'll bet you don't have your passport here."

"I sure don't."

"I can't get you into the data center without it."

"I could go home and get it."

"I'll come with you," Steve said. "I'm sure I could load the program."

Dad looked a query at Jeannie.

She nodded. "The process is simple. If there are any glitches you can call me

*It is an entry document
is needed, it would
be a Pentagon issued ID,
not a passport*

Getting it would be the same problem for him.

from the data center and I'll talk you through it."

"Okay."

Dad went into the kitchen and brought out the phone. He dialed a number. "Don, this is Charlie. Who won the golf?....I knew you could do it. But I'll beat you next week, you watch. Listen, I need a favor, kind of unusual. I want to check my son's medical records from way back when....Yeah, he's got some kind of rare condition, not life-threatening but ~~painful~~^{sarving}, and there may be a clue in his early history. Would you arrange security clearance for me to go into the Control Data Center?"

There was a long pause. Steve could not read his father's face. At last he said: "Thanks, Don, I really appreciate it."

Steve punched the air and said: "Yes!"

Dad put a finger to his lips then went on speaking into the phone. "Steve will be with me. We'll be there in fifteen or twenty minutes, if that's all right....Thanks again." He hung up.

Steve ran up to his room and came back with his passport.

Jeannie had the disks in a small plastic box. She handed them to Steve. "Put the one marked No. 1 in the disk drive and the instructions will come up on the screen."

He looked at his father. "Ready?"

"Let's go."

"Good luck," Jeannie said.

They got in the Lincoln Mark VIII and drove to the Pentagon. They parked in the biggest car park in the world. In the midwest there were towns smaller than the Pentagon car park. They went up a flight of steps to a second-floor entrance.

When he was thirteen Steve had been taken on a visitor's tour of the place by a tall young man with an impossibly short haircut. The building consisted of five concentric rings linked by ten corridors like the spokes of a wheel. There were five floors and no elevators. He had lost his sense of direction within seconds. The main thing he remembered was that in the middle of the central courtyard was a building called Ground Zero which was a hot-dog stand.

Now his father led the way past a closed barbershop, a restaurant and a Metro entrance to a security checkpoint. Steve showed his passport and was signed in as a visitor and given a pass to stick to his shirt front.

There were relatively few people here on a Saturday evening, and the corridors were deserted but for a few late workers, mostly in uniform, and one or two of the golf carts used for transporting bulky objects and VIPs. Last time he was here Steve had been reassured by the monolithic might of the building: it was all there to protect him. Now he felt differently. Somewhere in this maze of rings and corridors a plot had been hatched, the plot that ^{had} created him and ^{several} ~~three~~ clones. This bureaucratic

haystack existed to hide the truth he sought, and the men and women in crisp army, navy and air force uniforms were now his foes.

They went along a corridor, up a staircase and around a ring to another security point. This one took longer. Steve's full name and address had to be keyed in and they waited a minute or two for the computer to clear him. For the first time in his life he felt that a security check was aimed at him, he was the one they were looking for. (He felt furtive and guilty, although he had done nothing wrong. It was a weird sensation. Criminals must feel like this all the time, he thought. And spies, and smugglers, and unfaithful husbands.)

? 8 |

They passed on, turned several more corners and came to a pair of glass doors. Beyond the doors, a dozen or so young soldiers were sitting in front of computer screens, keying in data, or feeding paper documents into optical character recognition machines. A guard outside the door checked Steve's passport yet again, then let them in.

The room was carpeted and quiet, windowless and softly lit, with the characterless atmosphere of purified air. The operation was being run by a colonel, a gray-haired man with a pencil-line moustache. He did not know Steve's father but he was expecting them. His tone was rather brisk as he directed them to the terminal they would use: perhaps he regarded their visit as a nuisance.

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military hospitals ~~around~~ twenty-two years ago."

"Those records are not held here."

Steve's heart sank. Surely they could not be defeated that easily?

"Where are they held?"

"In St Louis."

"Can't you access them from here?"

"You need priority clearance to use the data link. You don't have that."

"I didn't anticipate this problem, colonel," Dad said testily. "Do you want me to call General ~~Don~~ Krohner again? He may not thank us for bothering him unnecessarily on a Saturday night, but I will if you insist."

The colonel weighed a minor breach of rules against the risk of irritating a general. "I guess that'll be okay. The line isn't being used, and we need to run a test some time this weekend."

"Thank you."

The colonel called over a woman in lieutenant's uniform and introduced her as Caroline Gambol. She was about fifty, overweight and corseted, with the manner of a headmistress. Dad repeated what he had told the colonel.

Lieutenant Gambol said: "Are you aware that those records are governed by the Privacy Act, sir?"

"Yes, and we have authorisation."

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"Yes, and we have authorisation."

She sat at the terminal and touched the keyboard. After a few minutes she said: "What kind of search do you want to run?"

"We have our own search program."

"Yes, sir. I'll be glad to load that for you."

Dad looked at Steve. Steve shrugged and handed the woman the floppy disks.

As she was loading the program she looked curiously at Steve. "Who wrote this software?"

"A professor at Jones Falls."

"It's very clever," she said. "I've never seen anything quite like it." She looked at the colonel, who was watching over her shoulder. "Have you, sir?"

He shook his head.

"It's loaded. Shall I run the search?"

"Go ahead."

Lieutenant Gambol pressed Enter.

We get the facts but little of the excitement and emotion. Steve's future is hanging by a thread. New hope sends him to the moon. Every hitch and obstacle scares the shit out of him.

49

A hunch made Berisford follow Colonel Logan's black Lincoln Mark VIII when it emerged from the driveway of the Georgetown house. He was not sure whether Jeannie was in the car: he could see only the colonel and Steve in the front, but it was a coupé, and she might have been in the back.

How does he experience feeling tired? Let's see this temptation
 He was glad to have something to do. The combination of inactivity and pressing anxiety was wearying. He was constantly tempted to give it all up and go. He *on stage* could be sitting in a restaurant with a good bottle of wine, or at home listening to a CD of Mahler's Ninth Symphony, or undressing Vivvie Harpenden. But then he thought of the rewards that the takeover would bring. First there would be the money: sixty million dollars was his share. Then the chance of political power, with Jim Proust in the White House and himself as Surgeon-General. Finally, if they succeeded, a new and different America for the twenty-first century, America as it used to be, strong and brave and pure. And so he gritted his teeth and persisted with this grubby exercise in spying. *Better if he has one elaborate fantasy rather than three. Which does he want most?*

For a while he found it relatively easy to track Logan through the slow-moving Washington traffic. He stayed two cars behind, like in the spy movies. The Mark VIII was elegant, he thought idly. Maybe he should trade in his Town Car. The sedan had

Unclear. Are these two the same?

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Then the Mark VIII turned went through a light and around a corner, the light turned red, the car in front of Berisford stopped, and he lost sight of Logan's car. He *Let's feel his upset more.* cursed and leaned on his horn. He had been woolgathering. He shook his head to clear it. The tedium of surveillance was sapping his concentration. When the light turned green again he screeched around the corner and accelearted hard.

A few moments later he saw the black coupé waiting at a light, and he breathed easier.

They drove around the Lincoln Memorial then crossed the Potomac by Arlington Bridge. Were they heading for National Airport? They took Washington Boulevard, and Berisford realised their destination must be the Pentagon.

He followed them down the off-ramp into the Pentagon's immense parking lot. He found a slot in the next lane, turned off his engine, and watched. Steve and his father got out of the car and headed for the building.

He checked the Mark VIII. There was no one left inside. Jeannie must have stayed behind at the house in Georgetown. What were Steve and his father up to?

He walked twenty or thirty yards behind them. He hated this. He dreaded being spotted. What would he say if they confronted him? It would be unbearably

Suggest we feel his visceral tension.

*And Jeannie? Is he not
about her too?*

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Thankfully, neither of them looked back. They went up a flight of steps and entered the building. He stayed with them until they passed through a security barrier and he had to turn back.

→ He found a pay phone and called Jim Proust. "I'm at the Pentagon. I followed Jeannie to the Logan house, then trailed Steve Logan and his father here."

"The colonel works at the Pentagon, doesn't he?"

"Yeah. It could be innocent. On the other hand, why would he go to his office on a Saturday afternoon?"

"For a poker game in the General's office, if I remember my army days."

"You don't take your kid to a poker game, no matter what age he is."

"What's at the Pentagon that could harm us?"

"Records."

"No," Jim said. "The army has no record of what we did. I'm sure of that."

"All the same, I'd like to know what they're doing. Isn't there some way you can find out?"

"I guess. If I don't have friends at the Pentagon, I don't have them anywhere. I'll make some calls. Stay in touch."

Berisford hung up and went back to his car.

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I'll make some calls. Stay in touch."

Berisford hung up and went back to his car. *feeling how?*

But will he be able to reach people on a Saturday?

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Steve waited in a fever of impatience. If this worked, it would tell him who raped Lisa Hoxton, and then he would have a chance of proving his innocence. But what if it went wrong? The search might not work, or medical records might have been lost or wiped from the database. Computers were always giving you dumb messages: *Not found* or *Out of memory* or *Error protection failure*.

The terminal made a doorbell sound. Steve looked at the screen. The search had finished. On the screen was a list of names and addresses in pairs. Jeannie's program had worked. ~~But were the clones on the list?~~

He controlled his eagerness. The first priority was to make a copy of the list.

He found a box of new diskettes in a drawer and slid one into the disk drive. He copied the list on to the disk, ejected it and slid it into the back pocket of his jeans.

Only then did he begin to study the names.

He did not recognise any of them. He scrolled down: there seemed to be several pages. It would be easier to scan a piece of paper. He called Lieutenant Gambol. "Can I print from this terminal?"

"Sure," she said. "You can use that laser printer." She came over and showed

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him how.

Steve stood over the laser printer, watching avidly as the pages came out. He was hoping to see his own name listed alongside three others: Dennis Pinker, Wayne Stattner, and the man who raped Lisa Hoxton. His father watched over his shoulder.

The first page contained only pairs, no groups of three or four.

The name *Steven Logan* appeared half way down the second page. Dad spotted it at the same time. "There you are," he said with suppressed excitement.

But there was something wrong. There were too many names grouped together. Along with *Steven Logan*, *Dennis Pinker* and *Wayne Stattner* were *Henry King*, *Per Ericson*, *Murray Claud*, *Harvey Jones* and *George Dassault*. Steve's elation turned to bafflement.

~~Dad frowned. "Who are they all?"~~

Steve counted. "There are eight names."

"Eight?" Dad said. "Eight?"

Then Steve saw it. "That's how many Genetico made," he said. "Eight of us."

"Eight ~~clones~~!" Dad said in amazement. "What the hell did they think they were doing?"

"I wonder how the search found them," Steve said. He looked at the last sheet out of the printer. At the foot it said *Common characteristic: Field 14*. He got the lieutenant's attention. "Can you tell what Field 14 is on these records?"

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She leaned over the monitor and touched a few keys. "Electrocardiogram," she said.

"That's right, I remember," Dad said. "You had an electrocardiogram when you were a week old, I never knew why."

"We all did. And identical twins have similar hearts."

"I still can't believe it," Dad said. "There are eight boys in the world exactly like you."

"Look at these addresses," Steve said. "All army bases."

"Most of those people won't be at the same address now. Doesn't the program pull out any other information?"

"No. That's ^{why} ~~how~~ ~~come~~ it doesn't invade people's privacy."

"So how does she track them down?"

"I asked her that. At the university they have every phone book on CD-rom. If that fails they use driving licence registries, credit reference agencies and other sources."

"The heck with privacy," Dad said. "I'm going to pull these people's full medical histories, see if we get any clues."

"I could use a cup of coffee," Steve said. "Is there any around?"

"No beverages are allowed in the data center. Spilled liquids play havoc with computers. There's a little rest area with a coffee maker and a Coke machine around

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"No beverages are allowed in the data center. Spilled liquids play havoc with computers. There's a little rest area with a coffee maker and a Coke machine around

the corner."

"I'll be right back." He left the data center with a nod to the guard at the door. The rest area had a couple of tables and a few chairs, and machines selling soda and candy. He ate two Snickers bars and drank a cup of coffee then headed back to the data center.

He stopped outside the glass doors. Several new people were inside, including a general and two armed military policemen. The general was arguing with Dad, and the colonel with the pencil-line moustache seemed to be speaking at the same time. Their body language made Steve wary. Something bad was happening. He stepped into the room and stood by the door. Instinct told him not to draw attention to himself.

He heard the general say: "I have my orders, Colonel Logan, ~~and~~ you're under arrest."

Steve went cold.

How had this happened? It was not just that they had discovered Dad was peeking at people's medical records. That might be a serious matter but it was hardly an arresting offence. There was more to this. Somehow Genetico had arranged it.

~~What should he do?~~

Dad was saying angrily: "You don't have the right!"

The general shouted back at him: "Don't lecture me about my goddamn *rights*,

the corner."

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I doubt you'll find one there on a Saturday. A colonel maybe.

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Let's feel his new nervousness.

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Move, please

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colonel."

There was no point in Steve joining in the argument. He had the floppy disk with the list of names right in his pocket. Dad could look after himself. Steve should just get out of there.

He turned and went out through the glass doors.

He walked briskly, trying to look as if he knew where he was going. He felt like a fugitive. He struggled to remember how he had got here through the maze. He turned a couple of corners and walked through a security checkpoint.

"Just a minute, sir!" the guard said.

Steve stopped and turned, heart racing. "Yes?" he said, trying to sound like a busy person impatient to get on with his work.

"I need to log you out on the computer. May I see your identification?"

"Of course." Steve handed over his passport.

The guard checked his picture then keyed his name into the computer. "Thank you, sir," he said, handing back the passport.

Steve walked away along the corridor. One more checkpoint and he was out.

Behind him he heard the voice of Caroline Gambol. "Mr Logan! One moment, please!"

He glanced back over his shoulder. She was running along the corridor behind him, red-faced and puffing.

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Terror? Panic? Desperation?

He glanced back over his shoulder. She was running along the corridor behind him, red-faced and puffing.

wouldn't she refer to him by name?

"Oh, shit," he said.

He darted around a corner and found a staircase. He ran down the steps to the next floor. He had the names that could clear him of the rape charge: he was not going to let anyone stop him getting out of here with the information, not even the U.S. Army.

To leave the building he needed to get to ring E, the outermost. He hurried along a spoke corridor, passing ring C. A golf cart loaded with cleaning materials went by in the opposite direction. When he was half way to ring D he heard Lieutenant

Has
a

Gambol's voice again. "Mr Logan! The general wishes to speak with you!" A man in air force uniform glanced curiously through an office door. Fortunately there were relatively few people around on a Saturday evening. Steve found a staircase and went

up. That ought to slow down the podgy lieutenant.

We

On the next floor he hurried along the corridor to ring D, followed the ring around two corners, then went down again. There was no further sign of Lieutenant Gambol. He had shaken her off, he thought with relief.

He was pretty sure he was on the exit level. He went clockwise around ring D to the next corridor. It looked familiar this was the way he had come in. He followed the corridor outwards and came to the security checkpoint where he had entered. He was almost free.

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She was standing at the checkpoint with the guard, looking triumphant.

Steve cursed. He had not shaken her off after all. She had simply got to the exit ahead of him.

He decided he would try to brazen it out.

He walked up to the guard and took off his visitor's badge.

"You can keep that on," Lieutenant Gambol said. "The general would like to speak with you."

Steve put the badge down on the counter. "I'm afraid I don't have time," he said. "Goodbye, lieutenant, and thank you for your cooperation."

"I must insist," she said."

Steve pretended to be impatient. "You're not in a position to insist," he said. "I'm a civilian: you can't command me. ~~I've done nothing wrong, so you can't arrest me.~~ I'm not carrying any military property, as you can see." He hoped the floppy disk in his back pocket was not visible. "It would be illegal of you to attempt to detain me."

She spoke to the guard, a man of about thirty who was three or four inches shorter than Steve. "Don't let him leave," she said.

Steve smiled at the guard. "If you touch me, soldier, it will be assault. I'll be justified in punching you out, and believe me, I'll do it."

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But underneath, how scared and shook up and out of breath is he?

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sight were two cleaners and an electrician working on a light fitting.

Steve walked toward the entrance.

Lieutenant Gambol cried: "Stop him!"

Behind him he heard the guard shout: "Stop, or I'll shoot!"

Steve turned. The guard had drawn a pistol and was pointing it at him.

The cleaners and the electrician froze, watching.

The guard's hands were shaking as he pointed the gun at Steve.

Steve felt his muscles seize up as he stared down the barrel. With an effort he shook off his paralysis. A Pentagon guard would not fire at an unarmed civilian, he was sure. "You won't shoot me," he said. "It would be murder."

He turned and walked to the door.

It was the longest walk of his life. The distance was only three or four yards but it felt as if it took years. The skin of his back seemed to burn with anticipation.

As he put his hand on the door, a shot rang out.

Someone screamed.

The thought flashed through Steve's mind *He fired over my head* but he did not look back. He flew through the door and ran down the long flight of steps. Night had fallen while he was inside and the car park was lit by street lamps. He heard shouting behind him, then another shot. He reached the bottom of the stairway and veered off the footpath into the bushes.

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He emerged on to a road and kept running. He came to a row of bus stops. He slowed to a walk. A bus was pulling up at one of the stops. Two soldiers got off and a woman civilian got on. Steve boarded right behind her.

The bus pulled away.

~~The~~ bus drove out of the car park and on to the expressway, leaving the Pentagon behind.

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51

In a couple of hours Jeannie had come to like Lorraine Logan enormously.

She was ~~fat~~^{quite}, much fatter than she seemed in the photograph that appeared at the top of her lonelyhearts column in the newspapers. She smiled a lot, causing her chubby face to crease up. She talked of the problems people wrote to her about: domineering in-laws, violent husbands, impotent boyfriends, bosses with wandering hands, daughters who took drugs. Whatever the subject, Lorraine managed to say something that made Jeannie think *Of course—how come I never saw it that way before?*

They sat on the patio as the day cooled, and Jeannie told her about the rape of Lisa. "She'll try for as long as she can to act as if it never happened," Lorraine said.

"Yes, that's exactly how she is now."

"That phase can last six months. But sooner or later she'll realise she has to stop denying what happened and come to terms with it. That stage often begins when the woman tries to resume normal sex and finds she doesn't feel the way she used to. That's when they write to me."

"What do you advise?"

"Counselling. There isn't an easy solution. Rape damages a woman's soul, and it has to be mended."

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Is Steve concerned about what
and his father may or may
not find? About their safety?

"The detective recommended counselling."

Lorraine raised her eyebrows. "He's a pretty smart cop."

Jeannie smiled. "She."

Lorraine laughed. "We reprove men for that. I beg you, don't tell anyone what I just did."

"I promise."

There was a short silence, then Lorraine said: "Steve loves you."

Jeannie nodded. "Yeah, I think he really does."

"A mother can tell."

"Has he been in love before?"

"Smart question. Yes, he has. But only once."

"Tell me about her—if you think he wouldn't mind."

"~~Okay~~. Her name was Fanny Gallaher. She had green eyes and wavy dark-red hair. She was vivacious and careless and she was the only girl in high school who *wasn't* interested in Steve. He pursued her, and she resisted him, for months. But he won her in the end, and they dated for about a year."

"Do you think they slept together?"

"I know they did. They used to spend nights together here. I don't believe in forcing kids to make out in car parks."

"What about her parents?"

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"I talked to Fanny's mother. She felt the same way about it."

"I lost my virginity in the alley behind a punk rock club at the age of fourteen. It was such a depressing experience that I didn't have sexual intercourse again until I was twenty-one. I wish my mother had been more like you."

"I don't think it really matters whether parents are strict or lenient, as long as they're consistent. Kids can live with more or less any set of rules so long as they know what they are. It's arbitrary tyranny that gets them mixed up."

"Why did Steve and Fanny break up?"

"He had a problem....He should probably tell you about it himself."

"Are you talking about the fight with Tip Hendricks?"

Lorraine raised her eyebrows. "He already told you. My goodness, he *really* trusts you."

They heard a car outside. Lorraine got up and went to the corner of the house to look out into the street. "Steve's come home in a taxicab," she said in a puzzled tone. A moment later he appeared on the patio. "Where's your father?" she asked him.

"Dad got arrested."

"Oh, my God. Why?"

"I'm not sure. I think the Genetico people somehow found out, or guessed, what we were up to, and pulled some strings. They sent two military police to grab him. But I got away."

Keep Teraise, her reactions, thoughts
and feelings at the center.

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"Dad got arrested."

"Oh, my God. Why?"

"I'm not sure. I think the Genetico people somehow found out, or guessed, what we were up to, and pulled some strings. They sent two military police to grab him. But I got away."

Lorraine said suspiciously: "Stevie, there's something you aren't telling me."

"A guard fired two shots."

Lorraine gave a small scream.

"I think he was aiming over my head. Anyway, I'm fine."

Jeannie's mouth went dry. The thought of bullets being fired at Steve horrified her. He might have died!

"The sweep worked, though." Steve took a diskette from his back pocket.

"Here's the list. And wait till you hear what's on it."

Jeannie swallowed hard. "What?"

"There aren't four clones."

"~~How come?~~"

"There are eight."

Jeannie's jaw dropped. Genetico had split the embryo seven times, and implanted eight unknowing women with the children of strangers. The arrogance was unbelievable.

Steve went on: "The addresses are the places where their parents lived at the time they were born. That means they're almost certainly out of date."

"We have to try to track them down. That's Lisa's specialty." Jeannie stood up.

"I'd better get back to Baltimore. This is going to take most of the night."

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"What about your father? You have to get him out of the hands of the military police."

Lorraine said: "You're needed here, Steve. I'm going to call our lawyer right now—I have his home number—but you'll have to tell him what happened."

"All right," he said reluctantly.

"I should call Lisa before I leave, so she can get ready," Jeannie said. The phone was on the patio table. "May I?"

"Of course."

She dialled Lisa's number. The phone rang four times, then there was the characteristic pause of an answering machine kicking in. "Damn," Jeannie said as she listened to Lisa's message. When it finished she said: "Lisa, please call me. I'm leaving Washington now, I'll be home around ten. Something really important has happened." She hung up.

Steve said: "I'll walk you to your car."

She said goodbye to Lorraine, who hugged her warmly.

Outside, Steve handed her the diskette. "Take care of that," he said. "There's no copy, and we won't get another chance."

She put it in her bag. "Don't worry. It's my future, too." She kissed him hard.

"Oh boy," he said after a while. "Could we do a lot of this, quite soon?"

"Yes. But don't endanger yourself meanwhile. I don't want to lose you. Be

careful."

He smiled. "I love it that you're worried about me. It's almost worth it."

She kissed him again, softly this time. "I'll call you."

She got in the car and pulled away.

She drove fast and got home in under an hour.

She was disappointed to find there was no message from Lisa on her machine. She worried that maybe Lisa was asleep, or watching TV and not listening to her messages. *Don't panic, think.* She ran out again and drove to Lisa's place, an apartment building in Charles Village. She rang the entry phone at the street door but there was no answer. Where the hell was she? She did not have a boyfriend to take her out on a Saturday night. *Please God she hasn't gone to see her mother in Pittsburgh.*

Lisa lived in 12B. Jeannie rang the bell of 12A. Again there was no reply. Maybe the damn system was not working. Seething with frustration, she tried 12C.

A grouchy male voice said: "Yeah, who is it?"

"I'm sorry to trouble you, but I'm a friend of Lisa Hoxton next door to you and I need to reach her really urgently. Would you happen to know where she is?"

The voice replied: "Where do you think you are, lady—Hicksville, USA? I don't even know what my neighbour *looks* like." *Click.*

"Where are you from, New York?" she said angrily to the unheeding loudspeaker.

She went home, driving as if she were in a race, and called Lisa's answering machine again. "Lisa, please call me *the second* you get in, *no matter what time of night*. I'll be waiting by the phone."

After that there was no more she could do.

She took a shower and wrapped herself in her pink bathrobe. She felt hungry and microwaved a frozen cinnamon bun, but eating nauseated her, so she threw it away and drank coffee with milk in it. She wished she had a TV to distract her.

She got out the picture Charles had given her of Steve. She would have to get a frame for it. She stuck it to the refrigerator door with a fridge magnet.

That started her looking at her photograph albums. She smiled to see Daddy in a brown chalk-stripe suit with broad lapels and flared pants, standing beside the turquoise Thunderbird. There were several pages of Jeannie in tennis whites, triumphantly holding a series of silver cups and shields. Here was Mom pushing Patty in an old-fashioned stroller, there was Will Temple in a cowboy hat, cutting up and making Jeannie laugh—

The phone rang.

She leaped up, dropping the album on the floor, and snatched up the handset.

"Lisa?"

"Hi, Jeannie, what's the big emergency?"

She collapsed on the couch, weak with gratitude. "Thank God! I called you

hours ago, where have you been?"

"I went to a movie with Catherine and Bill. Is that a crime?"

"I'm sorry, I have no right to cross-examine you—"

"It's okay. I'm your friend. You can get ratty with me. I'll do it to you one day."

Jeannie
Lisa laughed. "Thanks. Listen, I have a list of five names of people who might be Steve's double." She was deliberately understating the case: the truth was too hard to swallow in one lump. "I need to track them down tonight. Will you help me?"

There was a pause. "Jeannie, I almost got into serious trouble when I tried to get into your room. I could have got myself and the security guard fired. I want to help you, but I need this job."

Jeannie felt ^{cold} coldly fearful. (No, you can't let me down, not when I'm this close.)

"Please." she said

"I'm scared."

2.8) (Fear was replaced by fierce determination. Hell, I'm not going to let you get away with this. "Lisa, it's almost Sunday." I don't like doing this to you but I have to.) "A week ago I walked into a burning building to look for you."

"I know, I know."

"I was scared then."

There was a long silence. "You're right," Lisa said at last. "Okay, I'll do it."

Jeannie suppressed a whoop of triumph. ^{relief} "How soon can you get there?"

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16

"Fifteen minutes."

"I'll meet you outside."

Jeannie hung up. She ran into the bedroom, dropped her robe on the floor, and pulled on black jeans and a turquoise T-shirt. She threw on a black Levi jacket and ran downstairs.

She left the house at midnight.

What happened to Benford?
 Did he leave the Pentagon and
 go home? Did he wait outside
 and miss Steve where he
 left?

Sunday

52

She reached the university before Lisa. She parked in the visitors' lot, not wanting her distinctive car to be seen outside Nut House, then walked across the dark, deserted campus. While she waited impatiently outside the front of the building she wished she had stopped off to buy something to eat. She had had nothing all day. She thought wistfully of a cheeseburger with french fries, a slice of pizza with peperoni, apple pie with vanilla ice cream, or even a big garlicky caesar salad. At last Lisa drove up in her smart white Honda.

She got out of the car and took Jeannie by the hands. "I feel ashamed," she said. "You shouldn't have had to remind me what a friend you've been to me."

"I understand, though," Jeannie said.

"I'm sorry."

Jeannie hugged her.

They went inside and turned on the lights in the lab. Jeannie started the coffee machine while Lisa booted up her computer. Jeannie had never been here in the middle of the night. It felt weird. The antiseptic white decor, the bright lights and the silent machines all around made her think of a morgue.

She thought they would probably get a visit from security sooner or later. After

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Given what happened at the Pentagon, shouldn't J. feel possible menace lurking?

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Jeannie's break-in they would be keeping an eye on Nut House, and they would see the lights. But it was not unusual for scientists to work odd hours in the lab, and there would be no trouble, unless a guard happened to recognise Jeannie from last night. "If a security guard comes to check on us, I'm going to hide in the stationery cupboard," she said to Lisa. "Just in case the guard is someone who knows I'm not supposed to be here."

"I hope we get enough warning of his approach," Lisa said nervously.

"We should arrange some kind of alarm." Jeannie was eager to get on with searching for the clones, but she contained her impatience: this would be a sensible precaution. She looked around the lab thoughtfully and her eye fell upon a small flower arrangement on Lisa's desk. "How much do you love that glass vase?" she said.

Lisa shrugged. "I got it in K-mart. I can get another."

Jeannie dumped the flowers and emptied the water into a sink. She took from a shelf a copy of *Identical Twins Reared Apart* by Susan L. Farber. She went to the end of the corridor where a pair of swing doors gave on to the staircase. She pulled the doors a little inwards and used the book to wedge them there, then she balanced the vase on the top edge of the doors, straddling the gap. ~~There was no way anyone could come in without causing the vase to fall and smash.~~

Watching her, Lisa said: "What'll I say if they ask me why I did that?"

"You didn't want anyone to sneak up on you," Jeannie replied.

Lisa nodded, satisfied. "God knows I have reason enough to be paranoid."

"Let's get going," Jeannie said.

They went back into the lab, leaving the door open to be sure they would hear the glass breaking. Jeannie put her precious floppy disk into Jeannie's computer and printed the Pentagon results. There were the names of the eight babies whose electrocardiograms were as similar as if they had all come from one person. Eight tiny hearts beating exactly the same way. Somehow Berisford had arranged for the army hospitals to give these babies this test. No doubt copies had been sent to the Cotswold Clinic, where they had remained until they were shredded on Friday. But Berisford had forgotten, or perhaps never realised, that the army would keep the original graphs.

"Let's start with Henry King," she suggested. "Full name Henry Irwin King."

On her desk Lisa had two CD-rom drives, one on top of the other. She took two CDs from her desk drawer and put one in each drive. "We have every residential phone in the United States on those two discs," she said. "And we have software that enables us to search both discs at the same time."

A Windows screen appeared on the monitor. "People don't always put their full name in the phone book, unfortunately," she said. "Let's just see how many H. Kings there are in the USA." She typed

*I outwardly goes about her business,
but we need to feel inwardly
what's so fierce that her mouth
is dry.*

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H King*

and clicked on *Count*. After a moment a *Count* window appeared with the number 1,129.

Jeannie was discouraged. "It will take all night to call that many numbers!"

"Wait, we may be able to do better." Lisa typed

Henry I. King OR Henry Irwin King

and clicked on the *Retrieve* icon, a picture of a dog. After a moment a list appeared on the screen. "We have three Henry Irwin Kings and seventeen Henry I. Kings. What's his last known address?"

Jeannie consulted her printout. "Fort Devens, Massachusetts."

"Okay, we have one Henry Irwin King in Amherst and four Henry I. Kings in Boston."

"Let's call them."

"You do realise it's one o'clock in the morning."

"I can't wait until tomorrow."

"People won't talk to you at this time of night."

"Sure they will," Jeannie said. It was bravado. She knew she would have

trouble. She just was not prepared to wait until morning. This was too important. "I'll say I'm from the police, tracking down a serial killer."

"That has to be against the law."

"Give me the Amherst number."

Lisa highlighted the listing and pressed F2. There was a rapid series of beeps from the computer's modem. Jeannie picked up the phone.

She heard seven rings, then a sleepy voice answered: "Yes?"

"This is Detective Susan Farber of the Amherst Police Department," she said. She half-expected him to say *The hell it is*, but he made no response, and she went on briskly: "We're sorry to call you in the middle of the night but it's an urgent police matter. Am I speaking to Henry Irwin King?"

"Yes—what's happened?"

It sounded like the voice of a middle-aged man, but Jeannie persisted just to be sure. "This is just a routine inquiry."

That was a mistake. "Routine?" he said tetchily. "At this time of night?"

Improvising hastily, she said: "We're investigating a serious crime and we need to eliminate you as a suspect, sir. Could you tell me your date and place of birth?"

"I was born in Greenfield, Massachusetts, on the fourth of May, nineteen forty-five. Okay?"

"You don't have a son of the same name, do you?"

"No, I have three daughters. Can I go back to sleep now?"

"We don't need to trouble you any further. Thank you for cooperating with the police, and have a good night's rest." She hung up and looked triumphantly at Lisa.

"See? He talked to me. He didn't like it, but he talked."

Lisa laughed. "Dr Ferrami, you have a talent to deceive."

Jeannie grinned. "All it takes is chutzpah. Let's do the Henry I. Kings. I'll call the first two, you take the last two."

Only one of them could use the automatic dialling feature. Jeannie found a scratch pad and a ballpoint and scribbled the two numbers, then she picked up a phone and dialled manually. A male voice answered and she went into her spiel. "This is Detective Susan Farber of the Boston city police—"

"What the fuck are you doing calling me at this time of night?" the man burst out. "Do you know who I am?"

"I assume you're Henry King—"

"Assume you just lost your fucking job, you dumb cunt," he raged. "Susan who did you say?"

"I just need to check on your date of birth, Mr King—"

"Put me on to your lieutenant right away."

"Mr King—"

"Do as I say!"

(7)

"Goddamn gorilla," Jeannie said, and she hung up. She felt quite shaky. "I hope it's not going to be a night of conversations like that."

Lisa had already hung up. "Mine was Jamaican, and had the accent to prove it," she said. "I gather yours was unpleasant."

"Very."

"We could stop now, and carry on in the morning."

Jeannie was not going to be defeated by one rude man. "Hell, no," she said. "I can take a little verbal abuse."

"Whatever you say."

"He sounded a lot older than twenty-two, so we can forget him. Let's try the other two."

Bracing herself, she dialled again.

Her third Henry King had not yet gone to bed: there was music in the background and other voices in the room. "Yeah, who's this?" he said.

He sounded about the right age, and Jeannie felt hopeful. She did her impersonation of a cop again, but he was suspicious. "How do I know you're the police?"

He sounded just like Steve, and Jeannie's heart missed a beat. This could be one of the clones. But how should she deal with his suspicions? She decided to brazen it out. "Would you like to call me back here at police headquarters?" she

"Would you just give me that phone number so I can confirm your alibi?"

"I don't recall the number, but it's in the book. What am I supposed to have done?"

"We're investigating a case of arson."

"I'm glad I have an alibi."

She found it unnerving to hear Steve's voice and know she was listening to a stranger. She wished she could see Henry King, to check the visual resemblance. ~~When would they invent videophones?~~ Reluctantly she drew the conversation to a close. "Thank you again, sir. Good night." She hung up and blew out her cheeks, drained by the effort of deception. "Whew!"

Lisa had been listening. "You found him?"

"Yes, he was born in Fort Devens and he's twenty-two today. He's the Henry King we're looking for, sure enough."

"Good work!"

"But he seems to have an alibi. He says he was working at a bar in Cambridge." She looked at her scratch pad. "The Blue Note."

"Shall we check it out?" Lisa's hunting instinct had been aroused and she was keen.

Jeannie nodded. "It's late, but I guess a bar should still be open, especially on a Saturday night. Can you get the number from your CD-rom?"

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"We only have residential numbers. Business listings are another set of discs."

Jeannie called information, got the number and dialled it. The phone was answered right away.

"This is Detective Susan Farber of the Boston police. Let me speak to the manager, please."

"This is the manager, what's wrong?" The man had a Hispanic accent and he sounded worried.

"Do you have an employee named Henry King?"

"Hank, yeah, what he do now?"

It sounded as if Henry King had been in trouble with the law before. "Maybe nothing. When did you last see him?"

"Today, I mean yesterday, Saturday, he was working the day shift."

"And before that?"

"Lemme see, last Sunday, he worked the four-to-midnight."

"Would you swear to that if necessary, sir?"

"Sure, why not? Whoever got killed, Hank didn't do it."

"Thank you for your cooperation, sir."

"Hey, no problem." The manager seemed relieved that was all she wanted. If I were a real cop, Jeannie thought, I'd guess he had a guilty conscience. ~~"Call me any time." He hung up.~~

Jeannie said disappointedly: "Alibi stands up."

"Don't be downhearted," Lisa said. "We've done very well to eliminate him so quickly—especially as it's such a common name. Let's try Per Ericson. There won't be so many of them."

The Pentagon list said Per Ericson had been born in Fort Rucker, but twenty-two years later there were no Per Ericsons in Alabama. Lisa tried

P Ericson*

in case it should be spelled with a double s, then she tried

P Ericson*

to include the spellings *Ericson* and *Ericson*, but the computer found nothing.

"Try Philadelphia," Jeannie suggested. "That's where he attacked me."

There were three in Philadelphia. The first turned out to be a Peder, the second was a frail elderly voice on an answering machine, and the third was a woman, Petra. Jeannie and Lisa began to work their way through all the P. Ericsons in the USA, thirty-three listings.

Lisa's second P. Ericson was bad-tempered and abusive, and she was white-

faced as she hung up the phone, but she drank a cup of coffee then carried on determinedly.

Each call was a small drama. Jeannie had to summon up the nerve to pretend to be a cop. It was agony wondering if the voice answering the phone would be the man who had said *Now give me a hand job, otherwise I'll beat the shit out of you*. Then there was the strain of maintaining her impersonation of a police detective against the scepticism or ~~rudeness~~^{anger} of the people who answered the phone. And most calls ended in disappointment.

As Jeannie was hanging up from her sixth fruitless call, she heard Lisa say: "Oh, I'm terribly sorry. Our information must be out of date. Please forgive this intrusion, Mrs Ericson. Goodbye." She hung up, looking crushed. "He's the one, all right," she said solemnly. "But he died last winter. That was his mother. She burst into tears when I asked for him."

It had not occurred to Jeannie that not all eight might be alive. She wondered momentarily what Per Ericson had been like. Was he a psychopath, like Dennis, or was he like Steve? "How did he die?"

"He was a ski champion, apparently, and he broke his neck trying something risky."

A daredevil, without fear. "That sounds like our man."

"It's hard making these calls," Lisa said.

"Do you want to take a break?"

"No." Lisa shook herself. "We're doing well. We've eliminated two of the five and it's not yet three a.m. Who's next?"

"George Dassault."

Jeannie was beginning to believe they would find the rapist, but they were not so lucky with the next name. There were only seven George Dassaults in the USA, but three of them did not answer their phones. None had any connection with either Baltimore or Philadelphia—one was in Buffalo, one in Sacramento and one in Houston—but that did not prove anything. There was nothing they could do but move on. Lisa printed the list of phone numbers so they could try again later.

There was another snag. "I guess there's no guarantee that the man we're after is on the CD-rom," Jeannie said.

"That's true. He might not have a phone. Or his number could be unlisted."

"He could be listed under a nickname, Spike Dassault or Flip Jones."

~~Lisa giggled.~~ "He could have become a rap singer and changed his name to Icey Creamo Creamy."

"He could be a wrestler called Iron Billy."

"He could be writing westerns under the name Buck Remington."

"Or pornography as Heidi Whiplash."

"Dick Swiftly."

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*When did she not believe?
It she had doubts earlier,
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"He could be a wrestler called Iron Billy."

"He could be writing westerns under the name Buck Remington."

"Or pornography as Heidi Whiplash."

"Dick Swiftly."

"Henrietta Pussy."

Their laughter was abruptly cut off by the crash of breaking glass. Jeannie shot off her stool and darted into the stationery cupboard. She closed the door behind her and stood in the dark, listening. *Let's feel how worried, terrified she is.*

She heard Lisa say nervously: "Who is it?"

"Security," came a man's voice. "Did you put that glass there?"

"Yes."

"May I ask why?"

"So nobody could sneak up on me. I get nervous working here late."

"Well, I ain't gonna sweep it up. I ain't a cleaner."

"Okay, just leave it."

"Are you on your own, miss?"

"Yes."

"I'll just look around."

"Be my guest."

Jeannie took hold of the door handle with both hands. If he tried to open it she would prevent him.

She heard him walking around the lab. "What kind of work are you doing, anyway?" His voice was very close.

Lisa was farther away. "I'd love to talk, but I just don't have time, I'm really

Keep the tension going

busy."

If she wasn't busy, buster, she wouldn't be here in the middle of the goddamn night, so why don't you just butt out and leave her be?

"Okay, no problem." His voice was right outside the door. "What's in here?"

Jeannie grasped the handle firmly and pulled upwards, ready to resist pressure.
And she feels how?

"That's where we keep the radioactive virus chromosomes," Lisa said. "It's probably quite safe though, you can go in if it's not locked."

Jeannie suppressed a hysterical laugh. There was no such thing as a radioactive virus chromosome.

"I guess I'll skip it," the guard said. Jeannie was about to relax her grip on the door handle when she felt sudden pressure. She pulled upward with all her might. "It's locked, anyway," he said.

There was a pause. When next he spoke his voice was distant, and Jeannie relaxed. "If you get lonely, come on over to the guardhouse. I'll make you a cup of coffee."

"Thanks," Lisa said.

Jeannie stayed where she was. After a couple of minutes Lisa opened the door.

"He's left the building," she said.

They went back to the phones.

Murray Claud was another unusual name, and they tracked him down quickly.

*Need to feel her coming
down from her tension,
starting to breathe
normally*

It was Jeannie who made the call. Murray Claud senior told her, in a voice full of bitterness and bewilderment, that his son had been jailed, three years ago, for assault with a deadly weapon, and would not be released until January at the earliest. "That boy could have been anything," he said. "Astronaut. Nobel prizewinner. Movie star. President of the United States. He has brains, charm and good looks. And he threw it away. Just threw it all away."

She understood the father's pain. He thought he was responsible. She was sorely tempted to tell him the truth, but she was unprepared, and anyway there was no time. She promised herself she would call him again, one day, and give him what consolation she could. Then she hung up.

They left Harvey Jones until last because they knew he would be the ^{hardest} ~~worst~~.

Jeannie was daunted to find there were almost a million Joneses in America, and H. was a common initial. His middle name was John. He had been born at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC, so Jeannie and Lisa began by calling every Harvey Jones, every H.J. Jones, and every H. Jones in the Washington phone book. They did not find one who had been born approximately twenty-two years ago at Walter Reed; but worse, they accumulated a long list of maybes: people who did not answer their phones.

Once again Jeannie began to doubt whether this would work. They had three unresolved George Dassaults and now twenty or thirty H. Joneses. Her approach was

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theoretically sound, but if people did not answer their phones she could not question them. Her eyes were getting bleary and she was feeling jumpy from too much coffee and no sleep.

At four a.m. she and Lisa began on the Philadelphia Joneses.

At four-thirty Jeannie found him.

She thought it was going to be another maybe. The phone rang four times, then there was the characteristic pause and click of an answering machine. But the voice on the machine was eerily familiar. "You've reached Harvey Jones's place," the message said, and the hairs on the back of her neck stood up. It was like listening to Steve: the pitch of the voice, the diction, and the phrasing were all Steve's. "I can't come to the phone right now, so please leave a message after the long tone."

she needs to calm herself before she can check addresses.

Jeannie hung up and checked the address. It was an apartment on Spruce Street, in University City, not far from the Cotswold Clinic. She noticed her hands were shaking. It was because she wanted to get him by the throat.

"I've found him," she said to Lisa.

"Oh, my God."

"It's a machine, but it's his voice, and he lives in Philadelphia, near where I was attacked."

"Let me listen." Lisa dialled the number. As she heard the message her pink cheeks turned white. "It's him," she said. She hung up. "I can hear him now. *Take off*

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those pretty panties, he said. Oh, God."

Jeannie picked up the phone and called police headquarters.

Miss? Philadelphia?

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(7)

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53

Berisford Jones did not sleep on Saturday night.

He remained in the Pentagon car park, watching Colonel Logan's black Lincoln Mark VIII, until midnight, when he called Proust and learned that Logan had been arrested but Steve had escaped, presumably by subway or bus as he had not taken his father's car.

"What were they doing in the Pentagon?" he asked Jim.

"They were in the Control Data Center. I'm in the process of finding out exactly what they were up to. See if you can track down the boy, or the Ferrami girl."

Berisford no longer objected to doing surveillance. The situation was desperate. This was no time to stand on his dignity: if he failed to stop Jeannie he would have no dignity left anyway.

When he returned to the Logan house it was dark and deserted, and Jeannie's red Mercedes had gone. He waited there for an hour but no one arrived. Assuming she had returned home, he drove back to Baltimore and cruised up and down her street, but the car was not there either.

It was getting light when at last he pulled up outside his house in Roland Park. He went inside and called Jim, but there was no reply from his home or his office.

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How long did he wait?
 How long would he have
 waited without calling?

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Would Proust not have called him earlier on his car phone?

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But does he have the strength? How many hours has he been at this? How's his health?

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He went inside and called Jim, but there was no reply from his home or his office.

Need to feel more of his tension and worry.

Berisford lay on the bed in his clothes, with his eyes shut, but although he was exhausted he stayed awake, worrying.

At seven o'clock he got up and called again, but he still could not reach Jim. He took a shower, shaved, and dressed in black cotton chinos and a striped polo shirt. He squeezed a big glass of orange juice and drank it standing in the kitchen. He looked at the Sunday edition of the *Baltimore Sun* but the headlines meant nothing to him, it was as if they were written in Finnish.

Proust called at eight.

Jim had spent half the night at the Pentagon with a friend who was a general, questioning the data center personnel, under the pretext of investigating a security breach. The general, a buddy from Jim's CIA days, knew only that Logan was trying to expose an undercover operation from the seventies, and Jim wanted to prevent him. *How does he know this?*

Colonel Logan, who was still under arrest, would not say anything except *my?* want a lawyer. However, the results of Jeannie's sweep were on the computer terminal Steve had been using, so Jim had been able to find out what they had discovered. "I guess you must have ordered electrocardiograms on all the babies," Jim said.

Berisford had forgotten, but now it came back. "Yes, we did."

"Logan found them."

"All of them?"

Does the general put these two things together or did Jim clue him in? Would Jim risk showing up on the scene -- then revealing his involvement?

"All eight."

"Oh, my God." It was the worst possible news. The electrocardiograms, like those of identical twins, were as similar as if they had been taken from one person on different days. Steve and his father, and presumably Jeannie, must now know that Steve was one of eight clones. "Hell," Berisford said. "We've kept this secret for twenty-two years, and now this damn girl has found it out." *Pain, anguish?*

"I told you we should have made her vanish."

~~Jim was at his most offensive when under pressure. After a sleepless night~~
~~Berisford had no patience.~~ "If you say *I told you so* I'll blow your goddamn head off, I swear to God."

"All right, all right!"

"Does Paul know?"

"Yes. He says we're finished, but he always says that."

"This time he could be right."

Jim's voice took on its parade-ground tone. "You may be ready to wimp out, Berry, but I'm not," he grated. "All we have to do is keep the lid on this until the press conference tomorrow. If we can manage that, the takeover will go through."

"But what happens after that?"

"After that we'll have a hundred and eighty million dollars, and that buys a lot of silence."

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more

Berisford wanted to believe him. "You're such a smartass, what do you think we should do next?"

would prefer refer to him as Steve -> Maybe young Logan or the Logan kid

"We have to find out how much they know. No one is sure whether Steve had a copy of the list of names and addresses in his pocket when he got away. The woman lieutenant in the data center swears he did not, but her word isn't enough for me. Now, the addresses he has are twenty-two years old. But here's my question. With just the names, can she track them down?"

"The answer is yes," Berisford said. "We're experts at that in the psychology department. We have to do it all the time, track down identical twins. If she got that list last night she could have found some of them by now."

"I was afraid of that. Is there any way we can check?"

"I guess I could call them and find out if they've heard from her."

"You'd have to be discreet."

"You aggravate me, Jim. Sometimes you act like you're the only guy in America with half a fucking brain. Of course I'll be discreet. I'll get back to you." He hung up with a bang.

The names of the clones and their phone numbers, written in a simple code, were in his Wizard. He took it out of his desk drawer and turned it on.

He had kept track of them over the years. He felt more paternal towards them than either Paul or Jim. In the early days he had written occasional letters from the

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Cotswold Clinic, asking for information under the pretext of follow-up studies on the hormone treatment. Later, when that became implausible, he had employed a variety of subterfuges, such as pretending to be a real estate broker and calling to ask if the family was thinking of selling the house, or whether the parents were interested in buying a book that listed scholarships available to the children of former military personnel. He had watched with ever-increasing dismay as most of them progressed from bright but disobedient children to fearless delinquent teenagers to brilliant, unstable adults. They were the unlucky byproducts of a historic experiment. He had never regretted the experiment, but he felt guilty about the boys. He had cried when

Will we ever learn about the original sperm-donor and why they were chosen?

Per Ericson killed himself doing somersaults on a ski slope in Vail. He looked at the list while he dreamed up a pretext for calling today. Then he picked up the phone and dialled Murray Claud's father. The phone rang and rang but no one answered. Eventually Berisford figured this was the day he went to visit his son in jail.

He called George Dassault next. This time he was luckier. The phone was answered by a familiar young voice. "Yeah, who's this?"

Berisford said: "This is Bell Telephone, sir, and we're checking up on fraudulent phone calls. Have you received any odd or unusual calls in the last twenty-four hours?"

"Nope, can't say I have. But I've been out of town since Friday, so I wasn't here

to answer the phone anyway."

"Thank you for cooperating with our survey, sir. Goodbye."

Jeannie might have George's name, but she had not reached him. That was inconclusive.

Berisford tried Hank King in Boston next.

"Yeah, who's this?"

It was astonishing, Berisford reflected, that ^{most of them} ~~they all~~ answered the phone in the same charmless way. There could not be a gene for phone manners. But twins research was full of such phenomena. "This is A.T. & T.," Berisford said. "We're doing a survey of fraudulent phone use and we'd like to know whether you have received any strange or suspicious calls in the last twenty-four hours."

Hank's voice was slurred. "Jeez, I've been partying so hard I wouldn't remember." Berisford rolled up his eyes. It was Hank's birthday yesterday, of course. He was sure to be drunk or drugged or both. "No, wait a minute! There was something. I remember. It was the middle of the fucking night. She said she was with the Boston police."

"She?" That could have been Jeannie, Berisford thought with a premonition of bad news.

"Yeah, it was a woman."

"Did she give her name? That would enable us to check her bona fides."

"Sure she did, but I can't remember. Sarah or Carol or Margaret or—Susan, that was it, Detective Susan Farber."

That settled it. Susan Farber was the author of *Identical Twins Reared Apart*, the only book on the subject. Jeannie had used the first name that came into her head.

"What did she say, sir?"

"She asked my date and place of birth."

Start his feeling awful here.

That would establish that she was talking to the right Henry King.

"I thought it was, like, a little weird," Hank went on. "Was it some kind of scam?"

Berisford invented something on the spur of the moment. "She was prospecting for leads for an insurance company. It's illegal, but they do it. A.T. & T. is sorry you were bothered, Mr King, and we thank you for cooperating with our investigation."

"Sure."

Berisford hung up, feeling completely desolate. Jeannie had the names. It was only a matter of time before she tracked them all down.

Berisford was in the deepest trouble of his life.

Then have it from now on.

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Mish Delaware refused point-blank to drive to Philadelphia and interview Harvey Jones. "We did that yesterday, honey," she said when Jeannie finally got her on the phone at seven-thirty a.m. "Today's my granddaughter's first birthday. I have a life, you know?"

"But you *know* I'm right!" Jeannie protested. "I ^a ~~was~~ right about Wayne Stattner—he *was* a double for Steve."

"Except for his hair. And he had an alibi."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to call the Philadelphia police and talk to someone on the Sex Crimes Unit there and ask them to go see him. I'll fax them the E-fit picture. They'll check whether Harvey Jones resembles the picture and ask him if he can account for his movements last Sunday afternoon. If the answers are *Yes* and *No*, we got *another* suspect."

Jeannie banged the phone down in a fury. After all she had been through! After she had stayed up all night tracking down the clones!

She sure as hell was not going to sit around waiting for the police to do something. She decided she would go to Philadelphia and check Harvey out. She

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would not accost him or even speak to him. But she could park outside his home and see if he came out. Failing that she could speak to his neighbours and show them the picture of Steve that Charles had given her. One way or another she would establish

Even though she knows how violent he is and that he was Steve's double. he probably was the one who threatened her life?

She got to Philadelphia around ten-thirty. In University City there were smartly-dressed black families congregating outside the gospel churches and idle teenagers smoking on the stoops of the aging houses, but the students were still in bed, their presence betrayed only by rusty Toyotas and sagging Chevrolets with stickers hailing college sports teams and local radio stations.

Harvey Jones's building was a huge, ramshackle Victorian house divided into apartments. Jeannie found a parking slot across the street and watched the front door for a while.

At eleven o'clock she went in.

Feeling how?

The building was hanging on grimly to the vestiges of respectability. A threadbare runner climbed the stairs wearily, and there were dusty plastic flowers in cheap vases on the windowledges. Neat paper notices, written in the cursive hand of an elderly woman, asked tenants to shut their doors quietly, put out their garbage in securely closed plastic sacks, and not let children play in the hallways.

He lives here, Jeannie thought, and her skin crawled. *I wonder if he's here now.*

Harvey's address was 5B, which had to be the top floor. She knocked on the

first door on the ground floor. A bleary-eyed man with long hair and a tangled beard came to the door barefoot. She showed him the photo. He shook his head and slammed the door. She remembered the apartment house resident in ^{Louis building} Baltimore who had said to her *Where do you think you are, lady—Hicksville, USA? I don't even know what my neighbour looks like.*

She clenched her teeth and walked up four flights to the top of the house. There was a card in a little metal frame attached to the door of 5B, saying simply *Jones*. The door had no other features.

Jeannie stood outside, listening. All she could hear was the frightened beating of her heart. No sound came from inside. He probably was not there.

She rapped on the door of 5A. A moment later the door opened and an elderly white man came out. He was wearing a chalk-stripe suit that had once been dashing, and his hair was so ginger it had to be dyed. He seemed friendly. "Hi," he said.

"Hi. Is your neighbour home?"

"No."

Jeannie was relieved and disappointed at the same time. She took out the photo of Steve that Charles had given her. "Does he look like this?"

The neighbour took the photo from her and squinted at it. "Yeah, that's him."

I was right! Vindicated again! My computer search engine works.

"Gorgeous, ain't he?"

The neighbour was gay, Jeannie guessed. An ^{lucky} elegant old gay man. She smiled.

"I think so too. Any idea where he might be this morning?"

"He goes away most Sundays. Leaves around ten, comes back after supper."

"Did he go away last Sunday?"

"Yes, young lady, I believe he did."

He's the right one, he has to be.

"Do you know where he goes?"

"No."

I do, though. He goes to Baltimore.

The man went on: "He doesn't talk much. In fact he doesn't talk at all. You a detective?"

"No, although I feel like one."

"What's he done?"

Jeannie hesitated, then thought *Why not tell the truth?* "I think he's a rapist," she said.

The man was not surprised. "I could believe that. He's peculiar. I've seen girls leave here sobbing. Twice, that's happened."

"I wish I could look inside."

He gave her a sly look. "I can get you in."

"You can?"

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"No."

I do, though. He goes to Baltimore.

The man went on: "He doesn't talk much. In fact he doesn't talk at all. You a detective?"

"No, although I feel like one."

"What's he done?"

Jeannie hesitated, then thought *Why not tell the truth?* "I think he's a rapist," she said.

The man was not surprised. "I could believe that. He's peculiar. I've seen girls leave here sobbing. Twice, that's happened."

"I wish I could look inside."

He gave her a sly look. "I can get you in."

"You can?"

what does she have to find?
any reason why?
he would want to do this?
what's in it for him?

"The previous occupant gave me a key. We were friendly. I never returned it after he left. And this guy didn't change the locks when he moved in. Figures he's too big and strong to be robbed, I guess. Wait there. I'll be right back."

What would she find inside? A temple of sadism like Wayne Stattner's home? A gruesome slum full of half-finished takeaway meals and dirty laundry? The excessive neatness of an obsessional personality?

The neighbour reappeared. "I'm Maldwyn, by the way."

"I'm Jeannie."

"My real name is Bert, actually, but that's so unglamorous, don't you think? I've always called myself Maldwyn." He turned a key in the door of 5B and went in.

Jeannie followed.

It was a typical student apartment, a bedsitting room with a kitchen nook and a small bathroom. It was furnished with an assortment of junk: a pine dresser, a painted table, three mismatched chairs, a sagging sofa and a big old TV set. It had not been cleaned for a while, and the bed was unmade. It was disappointingly typical.

Jeannie closed the apartment door behind her. *I hope to God he doesn't come back now.*

Maldwyn said: "Don't touch anything. Just look."

Jeannie asked herself what she was looking *for*. She hoped there would be something here that would prove Harvey was the one who had raped Lisa. But what

*How tense, doing something so illegal?
what if King returns?*

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did she expect to find? A plan of the gymnasium building, the pool machine room marked *Rape her here?* He had not taken Lisa's underwear as a grotesque souvenir. Perhaps he had stalked her and photographed her for weeks before he pounced. He might have a little collection of pilfered items: a lipstick, a restaurant check, the discarded wrapping from a candy bar, junk mail with her address on it.

As she looked around, she began to see Harvey's personality in the details. On one wall was a centerfold, torn from a men's magazine, showing a naked woman with shaved pubic hair and a ring through the flesh of her labia. It made Jeannie shudder.

She inspected the bookcase. She saw the marquis de Sade's *One Hundred Days of Sodom* and a series of X-rated videotapes with titles like *Pain* and *Extreme*. There were also some textbooks on economics and business: Harvey seemed to be doing an MBA.

"Can I look at his clothes?" she said. She did not want to offend Maldwyn.

"Sure, why not?"

She opened his drawers and closets. Harvey's clothes were like Steve's, somewhat conservative for his age: chinos and polo shirts, tweed sportcoats and buttondowns, oxford shoes and loafers. The refrigerator was empty but for two six-packs of beer and a bottle of milk: Harvey ate out. Under the bed was a sports bag containing a squash racket and a dirty towel.

Jeannie felt a sense of anti-climax. This was where the monster lived, but it was

depressed, weary, hopeless →

not a palace of perversion, just a grubby room with some nasty pornography in it.

"I'm done," she said to Maldwyn. "I'm not sure what I was looking for, but it's not here."

Then she saw it.

Hanging on a hook behind the apartment door was a red baseball cap.

~~Jeannie's spirits soared.~~ *I was right, and I found the bastard, and here's the proof!*

She looked closer. The word SECURITY was printed the front in white letters. She *felt like doing* could not resist the temptation to do a triumphant war-dance around Harvey Jones's apartment. • ?

"Found something, huh?"

Jeannie "The creep was wearing that hat when he raped my friend. Let's get out of here." *she actually does
a war dance*

They left the apartment, closing the door. Jeannie shook hands with Maldwyn.

"I can't thank you enough. This is really important."

"What are you going to do now?" he asked.

"Go back to Baltimore and call the police," she said.

Driving home on I-95, she thought about Harvey Jones. Why did he go to Baltimore on Sundays? To see a girlfriend? Perhaps, but the likeliest explanation was that his parents lived there. A lot of students took their laundry home at weekends. He was probably in the city now, eating his mother's pot roast or watching a football

game on TV with his father. Would he assault another girl on his way home?

How many Jones families were there in Baltimore: a thousand? She knew one of them, of course: her former boss, Professor Berisford Jones—

Oh, my God. Jones.

She was so shocked she had to pull over on the Interstate.

Harvey Jones could be Berisford's son.

She suddenly remembered the little gesture Harvey had made, in the coffee shop in Philadelphia where she had met him. He had smoothed his eyebrows with the tip of his index finger. It had bothered her at time, because she knew she had seen it before. She could not recall who else did it, and she had thought vaguely that it must have been Steve or Dennis, for the clones did have identical gestures. But now she remembered. *It was Berisford.* Berisford smoothed his eyebrows with the tip of his index finger. There was something about the action that irritated Jeannie, something annoyingly smug, or perhaps vain. (This was not a gesture that all the clones had in common, like closing the door with their heel when they came into a room.) Harvey had learned it from his father, as an expression of self-satisfaction.

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More elaborate

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Excitement, terror, confusion?

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