

# The Sabrina Series

Repaged

A Novel

By

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PROLOGUE

## CAMBRIDGE

They walked in silence through the bleak basement corridor until they reached the steel door of the storage room. Bill St. John, of the biology department at Harvard University, took a copper colored square key from the pocket of his lab coat and inserted it into the lock. Mort Drucker, of the psychology department, looked at his friend's face, at the sharp features like the nose and chin, the wrinkles around the hazel eyes, the ruddy complexion. He was a fifty-seven-year-old preppy involved in a corrupted experiment. This was a far cry from the idealistic work he had imagined as a pre-med long ago at Exeter. St. John turned the key and opened the door.

He turned the lights on. "There they are."

"Christ."

Fifty-three gleaming aluminum cryogenic cases, arranged in seven unequal rows, faced them. On the lid of each case, in the center, were a pair of gauges and a thermometer. Each case worked perfectly. Twenty degrees exactly.

"Do you want to look inside one?" St. John asked.

Drucker nodded.

"How about the "B" series?" They walked to the second row and opened the first case. A tag affixed at one end labeled it "B-9001." The biologist undid the latch and lifted the lid. The nude body of a young Black man, twenty-one years old, lay in the cold, bare interior.

"I half expected a light to go on when you opened the lid."

"It's not a refrigerator, Mortie. Touch the skin." Drucker complied. "He's been dead for three weeks, but the flesh is perfectly preserved and, more importantly, so is the brain. It's amazing, isn't it?"

"Yeah." In spite of his moral objections, the psychologist was fascinated.

"Let's take a look at another." They moved to the next case and opened the lid. "This is Thomas Lewis"

Another Black man, identical to the first. Identical to the seven others in the row.

"He just finished his first year at Berkeley Law School."

"Hmm. Well, do you want to look at the other series?"

"I don't think my stomach could take it."

They heard the creak of the door. St. John let the lid drop and whipped around.

"It is only I, doctor."

"You scared me to death."

Antonio Boyoga smoothed the short, black hair back on his head. "You shouldn't leave this door open."

"Mortie this is Antonio Boyoga. He..."

"I and my brother were responsible for bringing these people here. An unusual assignment. So many people who looked just alike, and they had to be killed in so many different ways. He smiled and his mustache widened across his face.

"What are you doing here?" St. John demanded.

"I was just checking the room. Doctor, I leave late tonight for Munich. I must round up the remaining young ladies in the 'A' series." He pointed to one row with only a single case. "She must be lonely."

"Is that the Sabrina series?" Drucker asked.

St. John nodded.

"Where are the other four?"

"There have been some problems," St. John answered, evasively.

"None that I will be unable to solve." Boyoga stared momentarily at the single case. "I'll check with you before my flight," he said, and left the room.

"He killed them all?"

"He and his brother."

"And you knew about it all along?"

The biologist arched his back and stretched. It had been a long morning. "Yeah, Mortie, I did." He walked toward the door. "Let's get the hell out of here."

PART ONE

HOLLYWOOD/RIO

It had been a good day for Craig Phillips. He was thrown out of only six parties, and only three people threatened to break his nose. One was a butler, one a can-can girl, and one a macho movie star who had recently appeared in a film called "The Twin Brother of Ghengis Khan." Craig was used to violent reaction. The Hollywood beat was the most dangerous for a National Enquirer reporter, but also the most exciting.

Safe in his little apartment atop a boutique on Sunset Strip, he settled his six foot frame into a worn wooden chair in front of his gray metal typing desk. It was one o'clock in the morning and he had until eight the next morning to hammer out four articles. It would be a breeze, he thought. He could whip off these Enquirer articles in no time.

He began to type:

### **Late Night N.C. Maxwell in Lover's Tiff With Bombshell Brigitte Bradley**

After swearing "I'll love her forever," late night talk show host Dick Maxwell has apparently dumped pretty actress Brigitte Bradley--and she doesn't have a clue why!

"Just yesterday he sent her a dozen white roses with a card reading, 'You make me feel like a boy of twenty. Please say yes,'" reported a close friend of Brigitte. "He meant say yes to his offer of marriage, of course," the source confided. "Naturally, that's only if Dick's divorce comes through."

The love struck Maxwell, still in shock over his wife Llana's multi-million dollar divorce demands, may be experiencing cold feet, however. And his nerves are making him do bizarre things! One waiter at a swank party in Beverly Hills said, "Dick Maxwell was standing next to Miss Bradley, and he asked me for two glasses of champagne. He drank one, and then dumped the second on Miss Bradley's head!"

Craig stopped typing to check over his notes. His eyelids drooping, he searched the tiny room for the Styrofoam cup of coffee he had picked up at Rubin's Deli on the way home. There were at least fifteen partially filled cups within reach, and he couldn't remember which was fresh. Arbitrarily, he reached for one next to his typewriter and took a sip. "Shit!" he muttered, and spit the liquid from his mouth. The cup was filled with cigarette butts he had put out in the half-filled cup.

He looked around for the fresh cup; he needed it to stay awake. "Why," he asked himself, "do I always wait until the last minute?" The orange touch-tone telephone rang.

"Hey Craig, what's going on?" It was his editor, calling from Enquirer headquarters in Florida. "When are you getting the stuff to me? We're holding the presses just for the Maxwell-Bradley story you promised."

"It's in the typewriter now, Michael. I'll send it Federal Express in the morning."

"We're saving the cover for it. It's good, huh?"

"Great! I've got a hotel clerk who signed them in for a sex weekend in San Francisco, a maid who's kept a list of diamonds he's given Briggite and, get this, a studio chauffeur who claims that Maxwell and Bradley cooked up this split just to get Lana off his back."

"Swell. What else have you got for me?"

"A couple of short articles. They're already written," he lied. "One's about an actress who's hired some quack scientist to bring her beloved, and deceased, poodle back to life. Then I've got one about a guy who dropped 150 pounds by eating coconuts, and a profile on Timmy Grays."

"That little squirt who's on TV?"

"Little squirt? He's thirteen years old, three feet tall, and he's raking in 900,000 bucks a year."

"O.K. I expect to get this stuff later today."

"You can bet on it. I always come through for you, don't I?"

"Yeah, you always come through all right. Say, when are you going to Rio?"

"Tomorrow. I'm booked on the same flight as Maxwell. Bradley's supposed to come in on the flight after that. Unless I miss my guess, he'll get one of those quickie divorces from Lana and be married to Briggite within the week."

"Make sure you don't miss the 'cause you're on the beach."

He laughed. "Michael, you know my dedication to this rag knows no bounds--I'd even give up a tan for a story. Talk to you when I get back."

Craig hung up the receiver and renewed his search for the coffee. After finding it in a soggy paper bag along with a pineapple Danish, he infused the caffeine into his system. But the coffee only made him restless and he stood up to stretch, arching his back and reaching his arms toward the ceiling. He wished he wasn't always in these situations, having to crank out articles so quickly. It was pretty good money, though, and a pile of rejection letter from The New York Times, The New Yorker, Esquire, and a dozen other respectable publications made him face the reality that he was lucky to have any writing job. To cheer himself, he looked at a travel brochure filled with picture of bikini-clad women in a long, gorgeous beach. "Rio, Rio, Rio." As usual, he came through in the clutch, and by five o'clock he was halfway through the fourth and final story. Looking forward to a couple of hours sleep before packing, he finished the article and proofed it quickly. The phone rang again.

"Hello, Craig, it's your mother. I just wanted to check up on you before you went to South America. Now where is it you're going? Not to that Nicaragua for some story, are you? I don't think you should go there."

"Mom, I'm going to Rio de Janeiro. Do you know what time it is?"

"Of course. It's seven-thirty my time, that's four-thirty your time. Isn't that right, Mr. Harvard graduate?"

"Yes, Mom. Why are you calling so early--is anything wrong?"

"Wrong? What could be wrong in Queens? I figured you'd be up writing if you're leaving today. I wanted to say good-bye to you before you left. And I wanted to make sure that you'll be back in time to go to the award ceremony for Professor St. John. He called the house to make sure you'd come--he didn't have your Hollywood number."

Craig leafed through the pile of papers on his desk and found the engraved invitation:

The honor of your presence is requested at a ceremony  
honoring Professor William St. John with the Whitney  
MacDonald Award for Excellence in Research in Biology.  
May 9, 1985. The President's House. Harvard University.  
Cambridge. Massachusetts.

"Professor St. John called, huh?"

"Two nights ago. He's very anxious that you come to the ceremony. He's always liked you so much. We were talking, and he told me he still thinks you should go into research. He says you were one of the best students he ever had at Harvard. What a nice man."

"It was nice of him to call. I'll definitely go to the ceremony. I'll be back from Brazil in a week, probably."

"So you'll be coming home for a little while too. Good. You know, I wish you'd think about going back to biology. You've been doing this writing stuff for three years now. I don't want to criticize what you're doing, but to be honest, I get embarrassed telling my friends you write for the National Enquirer."

"Mom, you and your friends all read the Enquirer."

"That doesn't mean I want my son writing for it."

"I've sent a couple of articles into the Times and some magazines. I think they might come through. Don't worry, I'm not going to stay with the Enquirer forever."

"Just do what makes you happy. Have a good, safe time in South America."  
"Thanks, Mom." He hung up the phone, ate a Nestles crunch bar he had discovered leafing through his papers, and put the four articles into a Federal Express envelope. Quickly, he typed up a list of leads to check out while in Rio. There was a hotel in the heart of Rio rumored to be haunted, a twelve year old boy who could knock shotgun bullets out of the air with a baseball bat, and a country scientist who claimed that through gene splicing he had developed a cow with two udders. They seemed promising.

Satisfied that he had put in a good days and night's work, he set his alarm for eight o'clock and dropped onto his unmade bed, falling asleep within seconds.

With two minutes to spare, Craig made it aboard Pan Am flight 525 from Los Angeles to Rio de Janeiro. The plane was small, a DC12, and, as in moat planes, the first class section was made up of the first eight rows of the cabin. Those in tourist class, like Craig, had to walk through the elite section to get to their own humble, more crowded spaces.

This was fine with Craig, because it gave him a chance to check out the seat occupied by Dick Maxwell. There he was, three rows in on the aisle. In the few seconds it took to walk through first class, Craig was able to note the clothing Maxwell wore--a seersucker jacket and white linen pants, the brand of cigarette he smoked--Carlton Reds, the brand of scotch he drank--Glenlivet, and the passenger to his side. She was a young, blonde woman with lively blue eyes, and Maxwell had already struck up a conversation with her. What a smooth talker. Well, that was his job.

Craig had hoped for an aisle seat as well, but he was stuck next to the window. Luckily, he was close to the front of the section and he could see Maxwell clearly. Immediately, he pulled down the little tray table in front of him, laid down his yellow legal pad, and noted all that he had seen.

"You should buckle your seatbelt."

"Huh?" Craig cocked his head toward the passenger at his left. She was an elderly woman, about 80 years old, with blue hair, and she wore a lime green, polyester pants suit.

"You should wear your seatbelt," she repeated. "And why don't you slip your shoes off? You'll be more comfortable."

"Jesus Christ," he said, under his breath.

The plane took off and within moments lunch was served. Craig ignored the woman, who talked almost continuously about her 35 years of owning a small jewelry store in Los Angeles, and the 25 years of owning a small jewelry store in Budapest before that. "Owning a jewelry store in Los Angeles is wonderful. So many nice Mexicans, with so much nice money." Intently, he watched Maxwell, who, by the end of lunch, had finished four shots of scotch. The

plane hit a long stretch of turbulence, and Craig watched as Maxwell put his hand over his mouth, jumped from his seat and bolted into the restroom. With a smile on his face, the reporter made his way over the blue haired woman and into the first class section, where he sat in Maxwell's empty chair.

"Hi," he said to the blonde, making himself comfortable. "I couldn't help noticing that you're sitting next to Dick Maxwell."

"Oh, is that Dick Maxwell? He looked so big. I'm only used to seeing eight inches of him."

"Craig's cheeks flushed, slightly. "On TV, you mean."

"Of course. Unlike their movie star counterparts, these TV stars are always so much smaller than life."

"I bet you feel just like you're on a talk show. What's Maxwell like?"

"He's in the restroom now, vomiting--why don't you go and find out."

"Ha, ha. That's very funny. Really, it's all right, you can talk to me. I'm a reporter doing a profile on Mr. Maxwell. Has he mentioned Brigitte Bradley by any chance?"

She paused, taking a moment to look Craig over. "No. We talked about the Inca Indiana who inhabited Rio in the fifteenth century."

"Nothing about Briggitte? Well, did he mention his wife, Uses?"

"What paper do you work for?"

"The..." he began, and coughed over the rest of the name.

She squinted her eyes. "I beg your pardon?"

"The National- Enquirer. But that's not important. Did he mention his reason for going to Rio?"

"Why don't you ask him?" She looked over his head to Maxwell, who stood next to the seat. "Dick, this men's from the National-Enquirer. He says he knows you." Craig squirmed in his seat, looking at her imploringly. She smiled and continued. "If you'd like, I can switch seats with him, and you two old friends can chat."

"I don't think that will be necessary," said Craig, trying to maneuver out of his seat. "Is there some problem, Mr. Maxwell?" It was the stewardess, who stood holding a tray with a

glass of water and an seltzer tablet, effectively blocking Craig's exit.

"This man," said the young woman, very loudly, so that all the people in the first class section, and some in coach, turned their heads to listen, "is from the National-Enquirer, the noted newspaper. He'd like to speak to all of us in the general area to find out if we know anything personal about Mr. Maxwell."

"Lady, will you shut the fuck up," Craig pleaded, softly.

"Hey, we don't need your kind in this section," a burly man across the aisle said.

A middle-aged woman sitting in the seat in front of him said, "I think you and your newspaper are just disgusting."

"I think you'd better take your seat, air," the stewardess coaxed him. She handed Maxwell the glass. "Here's your seltzer," she said perkily, and Craig slipped out of the section and back into his seat.

"Dammit, now my cover's blown," he said to himself.

"You write for the National Enquirer?" asked the blue-haired woman, reverently. "Yes, as a matter of fact I do. Would you mind holding your voice down? If there's anybody on this plane who doesn't know what I do for a living, I'd just as soon keep it from them."

"I love the Enquirer. I have a lifetime subscription. You know, I've always meant to write to you."

"You have?"

"Yes. You remember the jewelry store I had in Budapest? Well it was right under the apartment that the Gabor sisters lived in before they came to America and there was all this hoopty-doo about them." She looked Craig straight in the eye and waved her finger at him. "They're a bunch of phonies. I saw Zsa Zsa Gabor on Merv Griffin, and she said that when they lived in Budapest they lived in a mansion and had a Mercedes Benz. Ha! When I knew them they didn't even have enough money for a bicycle." She spit lightly on the floor for emphasis. "And 'Zsa Zsa' ain't no Hungarian name."

Craig took out his notebook and started scribbling notes. "Well, maybe this won't be a total loss after all."

Undaunted, Craig followed Maxwell closely through the airport after the plane landed. The blonde stayed close to Maxwell's side, and they went through customs together after the luggage came off the plane. Maxwell even bought her a monkey puppet from a raggedy-dressed urchin selling toys in the lobby of the airport. She laughed at the gift, and gave the talk show

host a kiss on the cheek.

A fleet of Audi taxis waited for tourists on the hot street just outside the exit. The couple boarded a red cab and they ripped away from the airport on the dusty two lane road that led into Rio. Craig jumped into a yellow cab and followed.

The road was still lined with lush greenery. Sinking into his seat, Craig caught the perfumed scent of the ( ) hanging like moss from the ( ) trees. Involuntarily, he lost himself in the beauty surrounding him, the mammoth leaves of the palms casting huge arm-like shadows on the road, a tiny hummingbird that for a moment flew alongside Craig's window, cocking his head for just an instant as if to look in on him. Craig laughed at the bird and stuck his tongue out at it. It flew ahead of the cab, and once again the reporter saw the red Audi carrying Maxwell; he was reminded that he was in Rio to carry out an assignment. He shook his head and said, "Why do I do it?"

"Que?" the Portuguese driver asked.

"Oh, just that I'd rather not be in Rio snooping around on some poor guy who's just trying to have a little innocent affair. I'd rather not throw my pride away at every opportunity just for the sake of the goddamned National Enquirer."

"No comprendo, Señor."

"I know, I know."

In a few minutes he could see the gleaming towers of Rio, steel trees rising high from the jungle. The red cab took the road in the direction of Copacabana, the most expensive and beautiful district in the city. The dirt road turned into a paved expressway and soon they were driving past street-level storefronts at the bottom of pastel colored stucco hotels and offices. Women in striped and patterned cotton dresses sat in cafes sipping cool glasses of lemon and mineral water, accompanied by men in linen suits and black-rimmed sunglasses drinking German beers.

A wide black and white marble parkway, patterned in diamonds and stripes, ran next to the street, across from the row of buildings, and beyond it, the long, pristine beach of Copacabana. As far as the eye could see, the white sand was dotted with rows of tanned bodies. Topless women wearing the bottoms of once two-piece string bikinis and men wearing as little lay on colorful beach blankets, jumping into the Atlantic whenever the midday sun warmed them past comfort. On the water, children splashed each other and threw red and white beach balls. Just past the line where swimming ended, two or three motorboats zipped back and forth pulling water skiers experimenting with the newest sport to hit the South American Riviera—parasailing. Tethered on long nylon ropes high above the water, two beauties, laughing from the thrill, were pulled in the air by the motorboats as colorful parachutes tugged at their harnesses kept them flying.

The red taxi turned right into the most beautiful of the beachfront hotels, the Copacabana Palace. The two Audis drove alongside the long row of palm trees leading up to the great bronze fountain of Neptune in the center of the circular driveway at the entrance to the hotel. Craig had his driver stop thirty yards from the fountain and he watched as Maxwell emerged from the red cab and directed a porter to carry his bags into the hotel. The celebrity leaned into the cab and kissed the blonde on the cheek, then ripped off a piece of paper from a small notebook he carried in the breast pocket of his seersucker jacket and handed it to her. He pulled away from the taxi and waved as it drove out again.

Craig had no justification for following the woman--he knew he should have stayed at the Copacabana Palace and tried to ascertain whether Brigitte Bradley had arrived--but he commanded his driver to continue his pursuit of the red cab. Craig covered his face with his hat as they drove around the circle past Maxwell, who was still following the red cab with his eyes.

The yellow Audi followed the red down the other side of the row of palms and onto the beachfront street once more. After six blocks, they turned right at the casino onto a smaller street and then another eight blocks. Abruptly, the red cab halted in front of a very modern apartment building. The yellow cab stopped a half a block back. When she emerged, the blonde was smoking a cigarette, still holding onto the puppet monkey Maxwell had bought for her in the airport. She reached into her purse for her wallet, paid the driver, and swept her thick hair back with one hand as the doorman carried her luggage into the building. Craig stayed in his cab for two minutes and then went inside the building.

"Habla Ingles?" he asked the doorman.

"Sure. Who are you here to see?" he answered in clear, though accented English.

"No one really. I'd like to know whom the young lady went to visit."

"It would be very immoral for me to tell you unless you paid me 10 (\_\_\_\_\_)." He smiled and held out his hand. Craig handed him the money and the doorman said, "The American woman is staying with Mr. Cavalcanti--Roberto Cavalcanti."

"Roberto Cavalcanti the reporter repeated. "Thanks."

He returned to his cab and wrote the name in his pad. The yellow Audi headed up the street.

Craig was staying four blocks from Maxwell's hotel, at a brown and yellow fleabag called La Samba. After registering and showering, he headed on foot to the Copacabana Palace. Knowing the best place to make a contact would be in the hotel bar, he sat down and ordered a (\_\_\_\_\_) and a (\_\_\_\_\_). Most of the people seated around him seemed to be well-to-do tourists from the United States, Germany, and Japan. He struck up a conversation with a middle

aged couple at the table next to him. She wore a scarf labeled "Yves Saint Laurent," a striped sport shirt signed "Calvin Klein," and a belted skirt with the name "Anne Claiborne" emblazoned on the pocket; her husband wore a turquoise alligator shirt and trousers from L. L. Bean. They were just the sort of people he was looking for.

"Did you see? Dick Maxwell is staying in this hotel," Craig said, trying to sound infectiously excited.

"No!" screamed the woman, gleefully. "Really? I love him. Oh, what luck. Did you see him, Claremont?" she said to her husband.

"Nope," he answered.

"He's hysterical. Oh, I hope we get to talk to him."

Craig smiled. "I wonder if his beautiful wife, Lana, is here too."

"Lana?" asked the woman. "I don't think she'll be here. I read in The National Enquirer that they're getting a divorce."

"You did? That's great!" said Craig.

"Of course. He's going with that actress who's on Dallas now, isn't that right, Claremont?"

"E yup."

"Brigitte Bradley? Now that I think about it, I remember hearing that too. I wonder if she's staying at this hotel. You folks didn't happen to see her, did you?"

"That would be a dream come true oh my God there she is!" The woman pointed a finger, trembling with excitement, toward the hotel desk through the door between the lobby and the bar.

"Thanks a million," he said and walked to the door. He watched as the television star walked into the elevator. Craig's heart pounding, he went the desk to try to catch a glance at the register. The last entry read "Mrs. Bradley Bridges, room 700." A few lines above it, he saw the entry, "Mr. Maximilian Richards, room 702."

"Yes, can I help you?" asked the bell man.

"As a matter of fact, I was wondering if you could give me some information. I'm supposed to meet a friend of mine for dinner, a Mr. Cavalcanti, and I was wondering if you could suggest a good restaurant."

"Mr. Cavalcanti?" asked the man.

"You know the name?"

"Of course. Mr. Cavalcanti owns the Copacabana Palace."

"Mr. Roberto Cavalcanti?"

"Ah, Roberto. That's his son. I'm sure you have no need to worry-Mr. Cavalcanti knows all the best restaurants in Rio de Janeiro."

Craig thanked the man and went back to his seat in the bar. Why would the blonde be staying in the apartment of the hotel owner's son, he wondered, and what was her relation to Maxwell?"

"This is just too exciting," the woman, still thrilled, said to him. "First Dick Maxwell, and now Briggite Bradley!"

"Eyup, " said Claremont.

The next day, Craig was in the Copacabana Palace lobby by eight-thirty in the morning stalking his story. In the bar, he sipped a strong cup of (\_\_\_\_\_) coffee, keeping an alert eye on the ornate lobby. By nine o'clock it was already quite hot, and the wooden fans overhead were set in motion. Still, there was no sign of the celebrity couple.

Gradually, his concentration lagged and his mind wandered. He thought about an Art Buchwald style essay on California politics he was writing to send into The New York Times. It was in his suitcase in the hotel--too bad he hadn't brought it with him now, to work on it while he waited. If only he could get just one piece published in a respectable paper, then he could consider leaving the Enquirer.

"He jumped from the table. Maxwell and Bradley were just exiting through the front door of the hotel. Quickly, he paid his bill and ran through the lobby in hot pursuit. Hand in hand, the couple strolled along the path next to the palm trees and out onto the street, where tourists were already promenading in and out of the beachfront stores. They walked into the old section of town, where the Taira, the open air market, was being held in the square, the praca. A little town made of wooden stands with blue and orange cloth roofs was formed in front of the cathedral, and farmers and merchants sold fresh fruits--mangos and papayas--nuts, live chickens, candy, cookies.

Briggite bought a straw hat and put it on, fending off the now powerful sun. Maxwell was apparently being very entertaining, for Craig could see that Briggite was constantly smiling and laughing. They were in the market for over an hour, buying trinkets and fresh strawberries, and pausing to watch the nimble acrobats, who performed at almost every corner.

At 11:30 Maxwell glanced at his watch and the couple boarded a taxi. Once again, Craig found himself in a cab following Maxwell's, and they drove into the next district, Epanema. This district had an extension of Copacabana's famous beach, but had fewer stores, more office buildings. The first cab stopped at a small gray building with a sign on the door--Miguel Estofado-Advogado. Craig flipped through his dictionary; this was a lawyer's office.

Maxwell and Bradley got out of the cab and walked to the door, but didn't enter. Maxwell looked out onto the street, and stared straight at Craig's taxi. Deftly, the reporter crouched down and, peeking through a corner of the window, could see Maxwell looking elsewhere. Then another cab drove up to the building and the blonde woman got out. She kissed Maxwell on the cheek and shook Bradley's hand, warmly. The trio went into the office building and were there for almost half an hour. When they came out, they spoke a few words to each other, Maxwell looked at his watch, and he and Bradley hailed a cab and drove off. The blonde went on foot in the opposite direction, walked two blocks, and went into another office building. Intrigued, Craig had the cab drive up to where he could see the sign on the door--Alfredo Marracas-Obstetriziano Craig was puzzled. Why would anyone fly down to Rio to see an obstetrician?

Patiently, he waited over an hour for the woman to come out. When she did, she seemed upset. She was smoking a cigarette again, her slender fingers holding it tightly. She stood for a long while in front of the office building, seeming to decide what to do. Craig studied her face, her high forehead and her thin, delicate nose. All her features seemed delicate, in fact. Her cheekbones were high, graceful, and her chin was long, with a sculptural quality. It was an unusual face.

Finally, she hailed a cab and drove in the direction of Copacabana. Remembering his assignment, he decided to head back to Maxwell's hotel. The visit to the lawyer verified Craig's hunch about the divorce, and he knew it was important to follow the couple--he felt that their marriage was imminent, and he had no intention of missing the event. The excitement of a glamour wedding quickened his pulse slightly. Back at the Copacabana Palace he went to the bell desk. The same bell man was on duty. "Yes, can I help you?" he asked.

"Is Mr. Richards, in room 700, here, by any chance?"

"He was in for just a few moments, sir, to arrange for some concert tickets."

"Tonight?"

"Yes. Helena Valensia, the pianist, is playing at the Municipal Theater. It should be a very exciting concert.

"Helena Valensia. Doesn't ring a bell."

"She is from Rio de Janeiro. She has been in the Soviet Union, where she won a great

award for her playing, and now she is back for the first time to play in her own city."

"Ah, yes, I've read about her. Can I get a ticket here?"

"Certainly. Would you like to sit with Mr. Richards?"

"Where is he seated?"

"In one of the grand boxes," said the bell man.

"I think I'd prefer to sit in an orchestra seat--the sound's better there."

"As you wish."

Craig paid for his ticket, and as an afterthought asked, "How many tickets did Mr. Richards buy?"

"Four."

He left the hotel humming. He guessed he would see the blonde woman more than once that day.

The Teatro Municipal is the main symphony hall of the city. In the heart of downtown Rio, it is an exact reproduction of the (\_\_\_\_) in (\_\_\_\_). The interior is full of Roman columns, and baroque statuettes of cupids and the muses are set into the walls. All of Rio society was in sparkling display at this concert given by the city's newly celebrated daughter.

Amid the sea of black-tied concertgoers in the orchestra section, Craig found his seat. He took out a pair of opera glasses he had rented in the lobby, and searched the three tiers of boxes for Maxwell and company. But with fifteen minutes until curtain time, many of the boxes were still empty and he couldn't find them.

To kill a few minutes, Craig studied the program. First, the orchestra would play a short piece by Ravel, and then the pianist would join it and they would play Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto. Following intermission, she would play two solo pieces: Chopin's First Sonata, and the Suite Bergmanesque, by Debussy. He looked at the small picture of Valensia. It was a very dramatic picture, with artistic lighting, and the really clear features were the deep blue eyes, blazing with passion.

He lifted his glasses to renew his search for the talk show host and his party and found them in the second tier, on the left side of the stage. Good seats for a piano concert, for they would have a clear view of Valensia's hands. Maxwell and Bradley were sitting close to one another, snuggling together and paying little attention to the couple with them. Craig's guess was right--the blonde woman was there, too, and she was accompanied by a tall, dark man, a

Brazilian it looked like, with slicked back hair. They seemed to be chatting amiably, but the woman was holding her cigarette tightly.

The lights dimmed and the conductor came on stage, greeted by applause. The Ravel was excellently played, but it only made the audience long for Valensia's appearance even more. Craig looked up to the box; the blonde didn't seem to be concentrating on the concert.

As soon as the applause died down for the Ravel, there was an expectant hush, for the audience knew that Rio's own Helena Valensia was about to come on stage. Like proud parents, all of the city was thrilled with the pianist's victory in Moscow, and felt that it reflected on their own city. When she came out she was greeted with wild cheering and cries of "Brava." Lovingly, she waved at her audience, facing them for almost a full minute.

Craig focused on Valensia's face, amazed at what he saw. Then he turned his glasses quickly toward the box, to catch the blonde's expression. Her face was white, as if her heart had stopped pumping, and her elegant mouth was agape. The cigarette had fallen from her fingers onto the marble floor.

Valensia was her exact double, and judging from her expression, it came as a complete surprise to her.

The pianist sat down to play, her back toward the box, but Craig had a direct view of both women's faces. He marveled at the likeness of the features, the similar way both women wore their hair, as if they had both come to the conclusion that with their faces, that was the most flattering length and style. He watched as the blonde stared intently at the pianist's hands--even the long fingers were the same.

In the box, the others noticed the likeness, too, smiling at what they perceived to be an incredible coincidence. The blonde wasn't taking the sudden appearance of her double so lightly, however. She chain smoked during the entire concerto, and sat on the edge of her seat, trying to catch another glimpse of the pianist's face. Finally the Beethoven ended and Valensia stood triumphantly to face the audience once more. The blonde didn't clap, she just stared ahead as her companions looked back and forth between the two women's faces and smiled delightedly.

Craig's mind reeled. Almost by instinct, he thought of the situation in terms of an Enquirer article. The headline formed in his mind: "Long Lost Twins Reunited in Rio." What a great story, he thought, just the sort of human interest stuff the readers love. Now he had to find out the identity and background of this blonde. Maybe this was the very reason she had come to Rio--it would explain the obstetrician. Craig only wished that he hadn't alienated the woman on the plane. He could get an interview--he had faith in his charms.

After calling Valensia back for six bows, the audience finally let her leave the stage, and the curtain was lowered for intermission. The audience, clearly delighted with the performance thus far, chatted and left their seats for the lobby. Craig kept his glasses focused on the box,

where the blonde waited a hesitant minute, then stood and left the box alone. He guessed where she was headed and he made his way past the black-tie crowd into the aisle. He looked around, searching for the exit leading backstage, and dodged by an usher who guarded the way.

The area behind the stage was crowded with technical assistants, orchestra members, and friends of the pianist, who were watching from the wings. Workmen adjusted lights from tall ladders, while one person adjusted the piano bench. A technician gave Craig directions to Valensia's dressing room; it was past a wide storage room to the right of the stage, and through a long white corridor. There were a number of small open closets off the corridor, and great piles of music stands and chairs in the storage room. He looked across the stage and could see the blonde walking toward the corridor. The workmen and musicians smiled and nodded at her, apparently mistaking her for Valensia.

Wanting desperately to be there the moment the doubles met, Craig bounded across the stage, deftly making his way through the maze of people milling around. He made it to the door of the storage room by the time the woman was half-way to the corridor and found himself only ten feet behind her.

"Watch out!" he yelled to her.

She turned around suddenly and looked at him. "You!" They heard a gunshot, and a single bullet brushed her shoulder, knocking her to the ground.

Craig ran to the corridor. He saw a small man in a tuxedo sprint halfway down the hallway and turn into a doorway on the right. Craig turned back to the woman. "You all right?" Stunned, she couldn't talk, but nodded silently. He saw the tear in her dress where the bullet had passed--the skin was bruised, but there was no blood. A dozen workmen ran to her side, and Craig ran down the corridor to the door the gunman had run through. It was a long, narrow storage room filled with file cabinets for music. There was an open window at the end with a chair under it. He looked out onto an alley--no one was there.

By the time he returned to the stage, a pair of policemen had brought the blonde woman to a chair and were questioning her. Meanwhile, two other policemen had whisked Valensia out of the theater and the audience was being directed to file out as well. A small, dark, muscular man wearing a green police uniform came up to Craig. "I am Lt. Lopes, " he told him. with very good English. "You saw the shooting?"

"Yes," Craig answered, looking over to the blonde woman.

"Do you know her?" asked the lieutenant.

"Sort of. Not really."

"Why were you backstage, Mr ....?"

"Phillips. Craig Phillips. I wanted to talk to this woman. I ... saw that she was coming back here."

"Did you perhaps mistake her for Miss Valensia? The resemblance is remarkable, no?"

"No, I didn't mistake the two. Actually, I'm a reporter, and I thought that there might be a story when they met."

"A reporter... I see. Did you see the man with the gun?"

"Yeah, ah, he was kind of tall, about five eleven, and maybe 180 pounds. He had dark hair and was wearing a tux."

"You tried to stop him, Mr. Phillips?"

"No, I, there wasn't time. I yelled to the woman to get out of the way and she ducked. That was the best I could do."

The lieutenant nodded his head. "You perhaps saved her life. Would you mind coming to the estacion to answer just a few more questions, Mr. Phillips?"

"No, I don't mind. That would be fine."

"Good. By the way, since this case involves one of Rio de Janeiro's most famous people, there will no doubt be many reporters interested in talking to you. Until we have more information, however, I must ask you not to comment to any of them. I hope that does not go against any of your own journalistic ethics."

"Not at all," Craig replied. "I'll keep my mouth shut."

"Good."

The lieutenant walked over to one of the policemen standing ,with the blonde and said a few words to him, gesturing slightly in Craig's direction. "Mr. Phillips, would you come over here?" he called to him. Craig walked over, catching the woman's eye momentarily. "This is Corporal Augustancio; he will drive you and the young lady to the station if that is convenient."

"That's fine," he replied, looking uneasily at her.

"You know each other, of course," the lieutenant said.

"I believe we've met," the woman answered, rising from her seat.

Lopes noted the slight friction between them. "I have only a few details to attend to here, and I'll meet you in the station shortly."

The policeman lead them through the rear exit of the theater to a waiting car. A crowd of people had formed in the street, and when they saw the blonde, there was an excited cheer. "Helena!" a few of them yelled out. "Brava Helena!" Augustancio opened the car door and motioned for the pair to get in. Through the crowd's cheers, the woman heard one man cry, "Jessica!" She looked up and saw her companion to the concert, the man with the slicked hair.

"Roberto. "

"Thank God you're all right. Where are they taking you?" he yelled across the sea of heads between them.

"To the police station," she yelled back. "It shouldn't take too long."

"Por favor, Senorita the corporal asked, motioning her once more into the car.

Soon, they were driving through the center of Rio, the ornate street lights casting half moons onto the pavement. The pair rode together in the back seat of the car, silent until they were well past the crowd. The woman reached into her small lamet purse and said, "You don't mind if I smoke, do you?"

"Not at all. I guess you deserve it, after what you've been through."

"The lieutenant informs me that you saved my life--thanks," she said, looking straight into his green eyes. She took a Dunhill from a silver cigarette case and lit it. "I can't say at the time I was glad to see you, but it seems to have worked out for the best."

Craig smiled. "What's your name?"

"Jessica Nicholson. Yours?"

"Craig Phillips." She nodded and drew in on her cigarette, then turned toward the open window to blow out the smoke. "Say, I'm sorry about that scene on the plane, yesterday," he said. "I didn't realize that you were a friend of Maxwell's. Most people like to talk about celebrities they've met."

"Do they?"

"Yeah. Makes them feel important."

"I suppose you learn a lot about human nature in your job, Mr. Phillips," she said, slightly sarcastically.

"Call me Craig. I do, a little. That's why I came backstage when I did. I saw your face when you saw Valensia's. I figured there might be a story when you two met. " She didn't respond, but fingered the strap of her purse. "The resemblance is amazing. Have you ever seen her before?"

"You're a reporter--find out for yourself," she snapped, and extinguished her cigarette in the ash tray. She raised her hand and wiped away a tear.

The car pulled into the police station, and the two were ushered into a small waiting room, where they sat quietly, awaiting the lieutenant. He arrived within minutes and called Jessica Nicholson into his office first. He interviewed her for only twenty minutes. Then he called in Craig.

"Sit down, Mr. Phillips." He motioned to a small wooden seat next to the desk. "Tell me, why are you in Rio de Janeiro?"

"Ah, for your newspaper. What story is that, Mr. Phillips?"

Craig shifted uncomfortably in his chair. "It's sort of hard to explain. See, the newspaper I work for deals mostly with personalities, and I'm here to do a story on Dick Maxwell, the talk show host, who happens to be in Rio."

"Dick Maxwell. Yes, he was at the theater tonight."

"Right, that's how I happened to see Miss Nicholson. She was seated with Maxwell."

Lopes tapped his pencil lightly on his desk and changed his line of questioning. "Do you have anything to add to the description of the man who shot at Miss Nicholson?"

"No, I don't think so. I only saw him for a split second. He stepped through a doorway and aimed at her, but I guess he didn't see me. That's when I yelled at her to duck."

"Then what happened?"

"I checked to see if she was alright, then I ran after him. He got away. I came back and talked to you."

"You didn't see where the man ran to?"

"No. I'm afraid not."

The detective stared straight into Craig's eye and said, sharply, "Have you ever met Helena Valensia before."

Craig shrugged his shoulder. "Nope. this evening."

"Mr. Phillips, I'm afraid that I must ask you to stay in Rio de Janeiro until we catch the man who did the shooting."

"But I've got to get back to the States by next week."

"I'm sure we'll find him before then. You see, we need you to identify him." He paused, and added, "That's all. You are free to go as soon as my assistant notes the name of your hotel and some other information from you." He looked down at the papers on his desk, and Craig left the office.

Jessica had left the waiting room, and by the time he gave the policeman the required information, it was too late to try to find her. He returned to his room and wrote down all the events of his day in his journal. During the cab ride to the hotel, he had noticed that a police car followed close behind. That hadn't worried him, but he was slightly upset when, just before going to bed, he looked out onto the street and saw a man wearing a white suit and a red tie standing across the street, staring up at his window.

Craig jumped from his bed and looked out the window--the man was gone. He reviewed the journal entry he had made the night before, his eyes skimming over the notes, and his mind reconstructing the events of the day:

Found Maxwell and Bradley and the Copacabana Palace... Followed them to the lawyer's office, where they met that gorgeous woman... I suspect that Maxwell obtained a divorce at the lawyer's office, and that Bradley and the woman were witnesses. When will the wedding be? Check the office of the justice of the Peace. Is that what they have in this country?...The beautiful blonde is named Jessica Nicholson and I saved her life...-I'd give anything to be there when she and Valensia meet. (Double your pleasure, double your fun--man. I'm turning into a real lecher) ...Why are the Goddamned Rio Police following me? They sure as hell better not think I shot Jessica!

He took a quick shower and put on a pair of linen slacks and a blue cotton shirt, rolling the sleeves up as he left the hotel room. A morning rainfall had left the streets slightly damp, and the air dry. Now the storekeepers were putting their goods on wooden stands in front of their shops, hoping that the beautiful day would put the tourists in a buying mood. Craig walked to the Copacabana Palace to continue his celebrity watch. Thinking that he was being paranoid, he ignored the feeling that he was being followed.

In the hotel bar he found himself seated next to the same tourist couple he had met two days before. "Oh, hello there," the woman said. "We've seen Dick Maxwell and Briggitte

Bradley four times, now. Isn't that right, Claremont?"

Claremont nodded in assent and drank from his coffee cup.

"Really?" said Craig.

"Yes. This has been our best vacation yet, and Claremont and I have been all over. Let's see. This is our third visit to Rio--we just love it here--and our fifth visit to South America. We've been to Europe twice, and even to Australia. Am I forgetting anyplace, Claremont?"

"Nope."

Craig swallowed a corner of his croissant and said, "I heard that Maxwell and Bradley are getting married."

"Oh, how wonderful! When?"

"Anytime. Here in Rio."

"You know, that makes perfect sense. Yesterday, Claremont and I were in that cute little jewelry store down the street and those two lovebirds came in holding hands. Dick Maxwell's so good-looking, I couldn't take my eyes off him. And Claremont couldn't stop looking at Briggite Bradley, could you Claremont. Well, Dick bought her just the most beautiful gold ring. It must be for the wedding."

"That's very interesting," said Craig.

"If I see anything else, I'll be sure to tell you."

"Good."

After a few minutes, the woman leaned over to Craig and said, in a hushed tone, "Do you know that man over there?"

Craig looked through the bar door into the lobby, where he saw a tall Brazilian man with a mustache sitting on the couch. It was the same man who was watching his window the night before. He wore the same white suit and red tie. "No, I don't think so," he answered, a slight quiver in his voice.

"I noticed him staring in at you the last few minutes. I thought that he might be a friend of yours."

"No, he's no friend of mine."

The couple finished their breakfast and left Craig in the bar, uneasily looking out at the lobby for any sign of Maxwell, while the Brazilian looked from the lobby in at him. Craig considered his options. He could pretend that the man in the lobby wasn't there and could continue waiting for Maxwell, he could confront the man, or, he could simply leave the hotel and try to ditch him. He preferred the third option, wanting to shake this mustached Brazilian, but he was afraid of missing Maxwell and Bradley when they came down. He continued his watch of the lobby.

Twenty minutes passed. Craig was growing restless as he watched the man, whom he still assumed was a Brazilian policeman, calmly stroke his mustache. Then he saw Jessica come into the lobby, seemingly recovered from her ordeal the night before. She wore a strapless yellow cotton dress and an orange sun hat, dressed nicely enough for a wedding, Craig thought. With a quick stride, she crossed the lobby to the elevator and pressed the call button. When she walked by the Brazilian man, he looked up at her, his eyes opening with surprise, and while she waited by the elevator he didn't once look at Craig. Seeing his chance, Craig dashed out of the bar and took a right out of the door, bypassing the lobby, and he slipped through a door leading to a small staircase just behind the bell desk. He had a pretty good idea where Jessica was headed, and he bounded up to the seventh floor, taking the stairs two at a time. He beat the elevator and stood waiting for her in front of room 707.

The elevator door opened. "Good grief. Do you go everywhere I go?" Jessica asked, stepping into the hallway.

"I'm sorry. This time, I had no idea that I'd see you. It's just that down in the lobby there's some Brazilian police goon who's been following me, and when you came in he practically fell off his chair. It's all really strange, and I thought that maybe you might know what's going on."

"I haven't a clue about what you're talking about."

"Just try to remember: were any of the policemen that spoke to you after the shooting about five eleven, maybe 170 pounds and wearing a mustache?"

She shook her head. "No, none of them looked at all like that. What's your name again?"

"Craig Phillips."

"Well, Phillips, I think your imagination's running away with you. I only spoke to three policemen--the lieutenant, and two of his assistants, both of whom were short and fat. Now, if you'll excuse me..." she said, pushing his shoulder aside lightly with the back of her hand and walking by. Then she whipped around and said, "There -s this really weird workman at the theater who fits that description."

"Yeah?" Craig said, excitedly.

"He gave me directions to Valensia's dressing room before the shooting, and then, after, he kept on crowding me, trying to touch my arm. I'd almost forgotten him."

"He's no policeman. We'd better leave the hotel. Let's try going down the stairwell. Be might not have seen me go up, and we may be able to slip by him."

Jessica bit her top lip lightly. She put her hand on top of her hat, her eyes looking slightly past Craig. "I can't go with you right now-- I'm busy."

"Busy? This guy could be dangerous. What do you have to do?"

"I can't say."

"Come on, Jessica..."

"All right, I'll tell you. But you have to promise to keep this out of that disgusting newspaper you work for."

"You keep my disgusting newspaper out of this."

"I have to go and be witness at a wedding."

Craig smiled. "Ah! Well, I'll go with you. If we're with Maxwell and Bradley, there's bound to be at least a few gawking tourists around, and Mister Mustache won't dare touch us."

"Damn you. What am I going to tell Dick?"

"Try the truth."

"Your specialty."

"I'll have you know that everything I've ever printed in the Enquirer has been completely honest. I've never made up a single affair."

"Your journalistic ethics overwhelm me. Alright, you can come to the wedding, but if you so much as mention the National Enquirer to Dick... I just hope he doesn't remember your face from the plane. Be was so airsick, he probably won't."

"Don't worry, I'll be as secretive about my profession as a Mafia chief at a Senate hearing." He smiled slyly and pulled out a small thirty-five millimeter camera. "You don't mind if I take pictures, do you?"

Caught up in the happiness of the day, Maxwell and Bradley gladly agreed to let Craig, "an old friend whom I just happened to bump into in Rio" according to Jessica, come to the

wedding. The four took the elevator to the lobby, where Craig and Jessica found the man with the mustache waiting in the same seat. He looked at Craig, slightly surprised to have found him again. And he was confused to see Craig and Jessica together, and in the company of another couple. They tried to ignore the man as they walked to the hotel door.

Just a few steps away from the exit, the bell man yelled to them, "Mr. Richards, there is a phone call for you."

"That'll be my producer," Maxwell told them. "I'll be back in a minute," he added, and walked toward the desk, accompanied by his fiancée.

Craig and Jessica were left alone by the door. Craig practically lost his breath when the mustached man appeared at his side and said, in a very low voice, "You and the lady will come with me."

Craig could see the point of a knife pushing against the man's coat pocket. "We'd better go with him," he said to Jessica.

The man opened the door for them but, before they could step toward it, the tourist couple pushed their way through and into the lobby. The woman practically crashed into Craig. "Oh, hello, I see you're still here," she said.

"Am I glad to see you," Craig responded. He pointed to the bell desk. "Look, there's Dick Maxwell and Brigitte Bradley. They're about to be married, and I'm going to the wedding. Would you like to go, too?"

"Me!" she screamed out delightedly, causing the mustached man to cover his ear. "Oh, I don't believe it! Me, at Dick Maxwell's wedding. This is the most exciting thing that's ever happened to me." The man glared at Craig. "Can Claremont go, too?"

"Absolutely."

Just then, Maxwell and Bradley rejoined the group, and Jessica, trying to muster a smile, told him, "Dick, we have some more people for the wedding party."

"The more the merrier!" Brigitte chirped, and they all went through the door, leaving the Brazilian man behind.

The wedding was bigger than anyone had expected, but the nuptial couple seemed blissfully in their own private world. They didn't notice Craig as he shot two rolls of film, or the tourist woman who cried from the beginning until the end. Jessica, too, seemed to become lost in the event, acting as witness and friend at the small civil ceremony, held at the home of the justice of the peace. As the newly married couple walked out of the house onto the street, Jessica reached into her purse and pulled out a small plastic bag filled with rice, which she and the others

scattered over their heads.

Maxwell and his bride got into a cab and drove off and the tourist couple got into another. As the door closed, Craig could hear the woman say, "Claremont, as soon as we get back to the hotel, I've got to sit down and write Myrrhene and Felicia and tell them all about the wedding."

"I wonder if our friend followed us here," Craig said.

"I don't think he did. I saw him go the other way after we left the hotel. He was probably completely disgusted."

Craig nodded. "I'd better not go back to my hotel. Do you think he knows where you're staying?"

"I think I'm safe where I am. I'm staying at a friend's apartment. I'll have to find a new hotel. At least now that I've been to this wedding, I won't have to hang around the Copacabana Palace any longer."

"Will you go back to the States?" she asked.

"I can't. Not until they find the guy who took that shot at you. You know, we should go in and talk to Lieutenant Caracos." She nodded in agreement. "Let's go to the police station now."

"I'd rather go later this afternoon. I still have one more errand to run. I'm sure nothing will happen before then. Say, 4:30 at the station?"

Craig asserted, although he knee- that it would be better to talk to the detective immediately. Silently, he watched as Jessica got into one of the cabs and drove off. He hesitated a moment, then took the next taxi, telling the driver, "Follow that cab."

The taxicabs went through the small winding streets into Fpanema. "Is she going back to the obstetrician?" Craig wondered. Through the window, he could watch Jessica light a cigarette and smoke it quickly. By the time they reached their destination, a luxurious condominium in the elite (\_\_\_) section of the district, she had smoked three.

Parked a half a block away, Craig could see her get out of the cab and, turning her back toward the building, bend over to pay the driver. He glanced over at the door of the condominium as it was pushed open by two men. Craig saw them clearly. They were like brothers--both were tall and thin, with dark hair, but one wore a mustache. "Jessica!" he yelled out.

She looked up. "Phillips, did you follow me? You have some goddamned nerve."

"Just duck, dammit, duck!"

She looked behind her and saw the mustached man froze in her place, then she saw the gun. held by the clean-shaven son pointed at her. She dropped to the ground. Above, the bullet flew past her and through the open window, into the head of the taxi driver. Blood spurted from the wound in the side of his head, spraying into the cab. He fell forward, causing the horn to blare, unceasingly.

"Stupido!" the mustached man yelled at his companion and hit him on the chest. "Vamanos!"

The pair darted down the street and around a corner. Hearing the shot and the horn, people in the buildings above poked their heads through their windows, trying to look inside the cab.

Craig ran to Jessica and lifted her up. "It's alright. They're gone."

They heard a siren, and a (black and white) police car ripped down the street toward them. Two policemen jumped out and one examined the dead man, lifting his head off the horn, while the other radioed for more help. In a moment, three more squad cars had pulled up, and Lieutenant Caracos stepped out of one of them. He looked in surprise at Craig and Jessica, and conferred with one of his men. Seeing that she was shaken up, he went to Jessica and said, "Are you all right, Miss Nicholson?"

She nodded.

"He missed her," Craig said.

"Mr. Phillips, it is lucky that you were in just the right spot at just the right time--again." The lieutenant looked around him, shouting orders to his men in Portuguese. They snapped to action, four of them running off in various directions, the other two getting back on their radios to call for more men. Caracos looked once more at the dead man. "The shot came from there?" he asked the pair, pointing to the condominium.

"Yes," said Craig. "There were two men this time."

"Two?" said the lieutenant, then turned toward one of his men and shouted more orders in Portuguese. An ambulance turned the corner onto the street and stopped in back of the taxi. Two attendants lifted the driver's body onto a stretcher. By now a large crowd had formed in the street, and more policemen had arrived, who immediately set up barriers around the taxi and urged the people to make room for the medics.

From the top floor of the condominium, a woman screamed. All heads turned upward to see a middle-aged woman push her head through the open window and cry, "Ella es muerta!"

## Helena es Muerta!"

Jessica lifted her hand to her mouth, her body tensing with horror.

"Quién viva aquí?" Lieutenant Caracas asked a boy standing next to him.

"Esta es la casa de Helena Valensia."

"Dios," he said, and barked more orders to his men, who ran into the condominium.

Jessica stared up at the building. "Now I'll never know," she said.

Caracas turned to Craig. "You and Miss Nicholson had better go to the estación. I have many questions for you." He motioned to one of his men to let them into a police car.

For two hours, they waited in the station for Caracas, Craig silently reading an English language newspaper, and Jessica chain-smoking her Dunhills, staring blankly at the administrators filling out forms at the front desk. Finally, she finished the cigarettes in her case and asked Craig, "You don't have any cigarettes, do you?" He shook his head "no." "Shit." She went to the desk, flipping through the Berlitz phrase book in her purse. "Tiene Ud. cigarettes?" she asked a policeman. He pointed to an ancient, chrome vending machine in the corner of the room and Jessica walked over, looked over the selection, and chose Marlboros. Not waiting until she was back in her seat, she lit up once more and stood by the machine, inhaling the yellow smoke.

Lieutenant Caracas came into the station, accompanied by an assistant and talked quickly to him in Portuguese. He stopped when he saw Jessica. "Miss Nicholson, thank you for waiting. I'm sorry to have kept you so long, but there was much to attend to, as I'm sure you can imagine."

He nodded to Craig. "Mr. Phillips, thank you for your patience." He gave his assistant a few more orders and sent him off. "Mr. Phillips, you wont mind waiting while I question Miss Nicholson in my office, will you?"

"No, that's fine," he said.

For almost an hour, Craig sat alone in the waiting room, unable to concentrate on his newspaper. The whole day was a complete muddle in his mind. First he had seen the man with the mustache in the lobby, then he had gone to Maxwell and Bradley's wedding to escape him, only to find him at the apartment of Helena Valensia with the man he had seen take a shot at Jessica at the concert. He would have a hard time explaining his presence at both crimes to the lieutenant without sounding criminal himself. Now that he had the Maxwell story he just wanted to get out of Brazil.

Caracos opened the door for Jessica and she stepped into the lobby. She had stopped

smoking, her pack of Marlboros had run out, and she held her orange straw hat in her hat, nervously fingering it. "Mr. Phillips, would you step into my office, please?"

Craig took the seat he had occupied the right before. "I'm getting to feel right at home here," he joked.

"I hope not, Mr. Phillips," Caracas replied. With the palms of his hands, he pushed back his hair at the temples, pausing for a minute to collect his thoughts. "There have been many curious events in Rio de Janeiro the past two days, and you and Miss Nicholson seem to be in attendance at all of them." Craig did not reply. "As you probably noticed, I had a very long chat with Miss Nicholson but, unfortunately, she seems just as puzzled as I am. She told me that before last night she had never seen Helena Valensia, although there is a striking resemblance between them. So striking that perhaps a killer mistook the two and tried to shoot her. It has been, it seems, Miss Nicholson's unhappy coincidence to have been present at both attempts on Helena Valensia's life--one of which was, unfortunately, successful. It is a very strange story, seemingly too coincidental, but I believe her. She shares, however, one particular point of confusion with me. She was not able to explain why you were at the scene of the crime both times."

Lopes looked straight into Craig's eyes, causing him to shift uneasily. "I guess it does look kind of suspicious," he said.

"I wouldn't necessarily say 'suspicious.' Odd, perhaps. Can you explain it?"

"Well, I told you last night why I happened to be backstage at the concert. As for this afternoon, I guess I could only say that I followed Miss Nicholson."

"Followed her? Why."

"As she probably told you, we were together at a wedding this morning--Dick Maxwell and Briggite Bradley finally did it--and then Jessica, I mean Miss Nicholson drove off. There was something I wanted to ask her, and so I followed her."

"What was that?"

"Her phone number. I didn't have it, and I wanted to call her to arrange a time when we could come to the station and tell you about the creep who followed us in the hotel."

Caracos scratched his forehead lightly. "That was the man with the mustache?" Craig nodded. "Did my assistant get a full description of him and the other man who was at Valensia's home?"

"Yes. Well, it sure was lucky I followed Miss Nicholson, because I could warn her to duck."

"Yes, it certainly was good luck." The inspector put on a pair of wire-rimmed glasses and glanced at a typed sheet of gray paper in front of him. "I think that is all that I need to know from you now, but perhaps I will call on you tomorrow. Will you be returning to the same hotel?"

"No, actually I'd better not, since the guy with the mustache knows where I am. I'll have to find another place."

"That seems wise. One of my men will drive you to a different hotel where we can keep an eye on you, for your own protection of course. You may go."

Jessica was seated in the waiting room when he returned. She was already halfway through the pack of Marlboros.

"I thought you'd be gone by now," Craig said to her.

"I wanted to talk to you." She looked around her and said, "There were a few things that I didn't tell the lieutenant that I think I should tell you."

"O.K. An, I have to find a new hotel. Why don't you come with me, and we can have a drink in the bar. God knows I can use it."

Jessica nodded and put her cigarette out in the tall aluminum ashtray next to the couch.

Craig drank Scotch on the rocks in a clear tumbler, and Jessica drank a Vodka Collins in a tall frosted glass. Within an hour after leaving the police station, Craig found a small hotel in (\_\_\_\_\_), a commercial district of Rio far away from the sea and from his hotel in Copacabana. The hotel bar had an Italian motif, with plastic grape leaves wired to green trellises on the walls, and long bunches of plastic onions, peppers and garlics in little straw baskets on the table. A red candle stuck into an empty (valpolicella) bottle burned on their table.

"The lieutenant told me I had to stay in Rio until they found the murderer," Jessica said.

"Looks like we're in the same boat."

"Too bad we can't jump ship," she replied, and smiled at her own joke.

"You seem to be holding up pretty well for a woman who's been shot at twice in two days. personally, I'm scared as hell."

"Lieutenant Caracas doesn't seem to be that concerned. He tells me that I was shot at only because they mistook me for Helena Valensia."

"And now that they got her, they won't be after you?"

"That's what he says." She pulled her hair back from her face. "But I don't think so. Why would they have shot at me in the street if they had just killed Helena?"

Craig took a sip of his drink. "Good point. Did you tell that to Caracas?"

She shook her head. "No. If he thought that the murderers were after me too, the lieutenant would start prying into my reason for being in Rio. At this time, I'd just as soon he didn't."

"I don't understand," said Craig. "Are you trying to protect Maxwell and Bradley's privacy?"

"I don't think that's worth the bother," she answered drily, "considering the fact that a National Enquirer reporter was at the wedding taking snapshots." She lit a cigarette. "Phillips, I need your help. I'm going to tell you something, and I want your promise that what I say isn't going to end up in that sleazy rag of yours."

"I came to Rio to talk to a doctor, an obstetrician. I think he has some information about my past, some medical records from when I was very young."

"Did you live in Rio when you were a girl?"

She took a swallow of her Vodka Collins. "Yes, when I was just a baby. According to my doctor at home, this obstetrician is the only one with these particular records."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Phillips, you're a snoop. That's not a quality I admire, particularly, but right now it's my only hope. I want you to get those records from him."

"Why don't you get them yourself?"

"I already tried. I went to his office yesterday."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes," she said. "But he wouldn't give them to me. It was weird. I waited in his office for about half an hour, and when he came in he started talking in Portuguese, as if he knew me."

"Maybe he remembers you from when you were a baby."

"There's no way. I told him in English that I didn't understand. He looked at me for a long time. I remember he just stared at me, chewing on his nail, as if he were deciding what to do. I told him that I had come for my records, and he said he would check on them. He left his

office for maybe fifteen minutes, and when he came back he told me that he didn't have them anymore, that they were lost, and there was no way of finding them. And then," she made a face, "he made a pass at me."

"A pass?"

"Yes. All these Brazilians are the same. They can't keep their hands off. Anyway, I think he has those records. Can you get them?"

Craig shrugged his shoulders. "Maybe. I've had to get my hands on this kind of stuff before. What makes you think he really didn't lose then?"

"Just a hunch. Here, let me write down his address." She took a small leather bound notepad and a silver pen from her purse and scratched down the information. "I'd better give you my address, too."

"Who's the guy you're staying with?"

"Just an old friend from school. He once told me, 'if you're ever in Rio de Janeiro, stay with me.' So I am."

"You don't have family here anymore?"

"No."

"Alright, I'll give it a try. But only if you tell me one thing." She looked up at him. "Why did you go to Valensia's building?"

"Funny, the lieutenant asked me the same thing."

"What did you tell him?"

"That she had called me to make sure I was alright after the shooting. That she invited me to her apartment for tea."

"Is that the truth?" he asked. Jessica shrugged her shoulders. "I followed you to the apartment," Craig said, "because I couldn't figure out what could be so important that you would put off telling Caracos about the man with the mustache."

"You didn't tell the lieutenant that, did you?" she asked, her voice slightly tense.

"No, I made something else up. Tea, however, doesn't sound that important to me."

"Well, Phillips, if you have to know, I went to her apartment because I wanted to find out

whether it was just coincidence that Helena Valensia and I looked exactly alike." She coughed. "I've been smoking too many of these goddamned cigarettes."

"I guess I'll try the doctor's office today," he said, and finished the rest of his Scotch.

Craig had broken into offices only three times before in his career. Twice, he picked the lock of Beverly Hills' top divorce lawyer to search for information concerning a palimony suit filed by one star of a night time soap opera against another. The third time, he broke into one of L.A.'s top plastic surgeons to find out if Morgan Fairchild had come to him for a nose job. She hadn't, which Craig found frustrating, but he found himself with a bit of guilt, the only guilt he had felt about his job. As far as he was concerned the private lives of public people were fair game for a newspaper, but thereafter, he refused to break into any other offices. Every man has his limit, he told himself, and his editor.

Picking locks was a talent Craig happened to possess, however, and, as soon as night fell in Rio and the doctor's building emptied, he made it into Alfredo Carracos' office in less than thirty seconds. There were five tall filing cabinets along one wall of the reception room, all unlocked. Craig pulled a long, black flashlight from his briefcase and searched the labels on the cabinets. The files were well organized, and Craig found Jessica's easily. It was a thin file, only four pages, but it was written in English and packed with information written in small handwriting, single-spaced.

Carefully, he read the first page:

Jessica Marshall Nicholson

Born 10:47, a.m. April 9, 1960, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston,

MA

Sex: Female

Weight: 8 lbs, 4oz

Height: 18 inches

Blood Type: AB

Pulse at birth: (120/60)

Temperature at birth: 99.4

Eyes: Green

Mother: Helen West Nicholson

Father: William Cabot Nicholson

Socio-economic class: Wealthy, top 2% annual net income

Born by Caesarean section ....Required oxygen immediately ...kept in respirator for two days ...given hydropraloxxygen--2cc every four hours while in respirator, 2cc every twelve hours for two weeks after

Lactose intolerance. Given soy milk substitute. Normal feeding schedule. Accepted milk every time.

See attached sheet for hour by hour observations of temperature, pulse, etc.

Left hospital April 20, 1960.

May 1, 1960--Office visit

Health--very good, no problems breathing, accepting milk substitute.

Disposition--generally disinterested in surroundings, quiet

June 10, 1960--Office visit

Health--slight cold, temperature--100.3, given glycomaxiniocin--1 tablet every 6 hours for 3 days

Disposition--cried during entire visit

Craig skimmed through the next three pages. The file followed Jessica's progress through age two. It was remarkably complete, Craig noticed, and included much more information than usually gathered by an obstetrician. Two entries particularly caught his eye:

April 10, 1961--Office visit

Baby is 1 year and 1 day old.

Health--perfect, temperature 98.5, pulse 130/65

Weight--20lbs 8 oz

Height--27 inches

Hair--very fine, blonde

Skin--unblemished, porcelain

Disposition--passive, allowed thorough examination without crying

First year report: Jessica Marshall Nicholson is developing very well, and, with the exception of three colds suffered within the first six months, has been in perfect health. She has started eating solid foods, preferring, according to her mother, diced pears and broccoli. Her lactose intolerance is subsiding, and she has taken as much as a box at a time of cow's milk.

Jessica began to crawl at 9 months, and stood at 10 months. She has a ten-word vocabulary, knowing "yes," "hi," "bye-bye," "uh-huh," "da," "mom," "cat," "me," "pears," "no." She has a very good memory, always feeling at ease around me. She allows others to hold her without crying. In general, she is quiet, and quite passive. She does not show a great amount of curiosity, but seems to like playing with toys with which she has grown familiar.

April 15, 1962--Final office visit

Baby is 2 years and 6 days old.

Health--slight cold, temperature 99.8, pulse 120/70

Weight--28lbs

Height--38 inches

Disposition--impatient, cried during examination

Second year report: Jessica Nicholson has been in good health this year, although she suffered from a minor case of mumps. She has also had occasional colds, but none have lasted more than 4 days. She is a picky eater, preferring canned and sugared fruits as well as bread. She has two friends whom she plays with, both are older boys who live next door-- one is 3 years old, one is 4. She is generally indifferent to the children her own age in her nursery school. She likes to have her mother hold her and stroke her hair.

Craig put the four pages into his briefcase, and carefully replaced the empty folder into the file cabinet. Excited at his success, he decided to play a hunch and searched the cabinets for Helena Valensia's file. "Ha!" he cried out, finding the folder with her name typed onto the tab, but it was empty. Quickly, he fingered through the neighboring folders, checking to see if it was misplaced. After a few minutes, he gave up and walked to the receptionist's desk, finding the appointment book in the flashlight's beam. Perhaps, he thought, she had been in recently and the file had been taken out. He flipped through the book. She hadn't been to the office for at least five weeks. He searched the desk and then pointed his flashlight into the doctor's office, considering checking it for the missing file.

Then the overhead lights flashed on. "Quién es?" Craig looked to the door, where a tall balding man with a beard stood with his hand on the light switch.

Craig dropped his flashlight. "Ah, shit."

"Who are you?" the man asked, in English. "What are you doing here?"

Craig fumbled for the flashlight, trying to use the time to stall. "Are you Dr. Carracos?" he said, finally.

"Yes." He stepped into the office. "If you don't tell me why you are here I will have to call the policia."

"That won't be necessary. I'm perfectly harmless, I promise you. Dr. Carracos, I might as well tell you: I'm here on behalf of a friend, Jessica Nicholson."

"Oh," he said, squinting his eyes to see Craig better. "What did she ask you to do?"

"Get her file. She came to you yesterday and you said you didn't have it. She thought you were holding out on her, and apparently she was right."

"Alright, you have your file. Why don't you leave now?"

Craig unzipped his briefcase and put in the flashlight. "I wasn't as successful looking for something else, Dr. Carracos. Where is Helena Valensia's file?"

The doctor's eyes widened. "You knew Helena Valensia?"

"Yes. I know you have the file, Doctor, I saw the folder. Where is it?"

Carracos sat on the couch in the waiting room and collapsed in front of the reporter, burying his face in his hands. "I didn't know they would kill her. Such a beautiful girl. And she had such a gift--with her playing she made so many people happy."

"You know who killed her?"

He shook his head. "I can't be sure."

"Why don't you go to the police. We can go together, now. I know the lieutenant who's investigating the case."

"No!" he yelled. "I cannot be involved." He shook his head. "The poor girl."

"If you don't go to the police, I will."

"No, you must not do that. It is too dangerous. But I will help you. I have Helena Valensia's file."

"Where?"

"It is at my home. I brought it there after I heard the news of her killing."

"Let's go and get it."

He shook his head. "No, it would not be safe. I will bring it to you, tomorrow. Meet me at the top of Corcovado tomorrow afternoon, at one o'clock. There is a small café next to the tourist shop. It is safe there."

The reporter walked to door. "I guess I don't have much choice. One o'clock, then."

The top of Corcovado offers the most spectacular view of Rio. Just outside the city borders, about three miles from the sea, it is a great mountain covered with lush tropical forest. Tourists ride up the side in glass enclosed gondolas, made famous in Moonraker, to the peak, where a 600-foot-tall stone statue of Jesus, his arms outstretched, looks over the picturesque landscape.

Jessica and Craig arrived at the top, where they found themselves in the middle of a large group of Japanese tourists. Craig was asked by at least five couples to take their picture in front of the famous statue. Jessica watched, amused, as Craig fumbled with the complicated controls of each of the cameras, and as he playfully attempted to get his subjects to say "cheese."

"Phillips," she said with a laugh, as they sat down in the coffee shop, "why have them say 'cheese?' They should say 'saki,' or something."

"This is America," he retorted, with a smile, "and dammit, in America you say 'cheese' when you have your picture taken."

"This is Brazil, for your information."

"Well, South America. Its all the same thing." He looked at his watch. "1:05. He should be here any minute."

"I wonder what's in that file," she mused, her blue eyes momentarily staring into the space behind Craig. He noticed that in the daylight, they were precisely the color of the turquoise necklace she wore around her neck, over a simple white dress with a square neck.

"I don't know. It must have something in it that's important if he took it home with him." Jessica nodded in agreement. "It certainly must have more information than yours did."

"I hope so. Mine barely told me anything."

"What did you expect to find?"

"Oh, I don't know for sure." A waitress brought them each a glass of bubbling mineral water. "I guess I thought it might tell me that my mother isn't really my mother, or that Helena Valensia is my twin sister. But the file seems to show that neither is the case. It said on the birth record that Helen West Nicholson is my mother, and that's who I always thought she was, and there was no mention of a twin sister. There would have been if I had one."

"Jessica, I hope you don't think I'm just snooping for a story..."

"Oh, I don't think that," she interrupted.

"But what made you believe those things?"

She took in a deep breath and exhaled it slowly. "I don't know what kind of childhood you had, but mine was very secure. I never doubted for a minute that my parents adored me, and I never wanted for anything. Daddy owned an investment bank in Boston, so there was plenty of money, and my mother didn't work, so she had lots of time to spend with me." She reached into her purse for a cigarette. "I'm cutting down--this is only my tenth today." Craig took the book of matches lying on the glass table and lit it for her. "Anyway," she continued, "my parents were so possessive that they refused to send me away to boarding school, which was O.K., because I liked it at home. But it wasn't what all my friends were doing. Everyone I knew went to Exeter, or Andover, Choate or wherever. It was a really tearful scene when I finally left home to go to Yale.

Well, everything went well, until two years ago, when I went to Berkeley for Anthropology grad school."

"What happened?"

"I was called home in October, just a month after starting there, because Daddy had died suddenly. My mother was pretty distraught about the whole thing, so I took care of all of the arrangements, including sorting through his papers and things. I came across some of his journals, which I started reading." She puffed on her Dunhill. "About two years before I was born, which was about five years after my parents were married, I think, there was a long series of entries Daddy had written about his health. Apparently, he and my mother had been trying to have children ever since they were married. They couldn't, and at the time he wrote the entry, Daddy found out he was sterile and that there was nothing he could do about it. Well mother wasn't the sort of woman who would fool around, so I asked her if I was adopted."

"You couldn't have been," Craig said, "The birth record wouldn't have given their names as parents."

"As I said, my mother was very upset following the funeral, and when I started asking her if I was adopted, she wouldn't talk about it. A few months later, at Christmas break, I think, I asked her again, and she told me that I wasn't adopted, that she had gone to a specialist who had magically made her pregnant and that Daddy was the father."

"Artificial insemination?"

"My mother didn't know for sure, but that's what I assumed it was. But my mother was so vague that I started thinking that she wasn't telling me the whole truth. She refused to talk about it after that, but I continued looking into it. After a while, I convinced myself that I was adopted and I had to find out who my real parents were."

"Why didn't it say on the birth record?"

"My parents were rich, Phillips, and that means they could change any documents to say whatever they wanted them to say. I went to my family doctor, Doctor Rogers. He was really vague about the whole thing, which only cemented my belief that my adoption was being covered up. Finally, I made him show me my records, but they only went back to age two. After pressuring him, he eventually told me that Dr. Carracos possessed the records before then."

"So you came to Rio."

"I came to Rio. And without a clue why my files were here."

"Didn't you say you once lived in here?"

She extinguished her cigarette in the ceramic ashtray on the table. "Sorry. I shouldn't have lied. But I didn't want to go into the whole story yesterday."

"I understand. Maybe Helena Valensia's records will help you find out the truth."

"If only I could have spoken with her. I have to find out if I had a sister!" Craig nodded. "Christ," he said, looking at his watch, "it's a quarter to two. Where the hell is Carracos?"

"Maybe we should call his office. He might have changed his mind."

"I don't think so. I pretty much had his back up against the wall. If he doesn't give us the files, he knows we're going to the police."

"There's a phone at the bottom of the hill. Let's ride down and call him. We can watch for him in the parking lot."

Jessica opened the window of the gondola on the way down the mountain, breathing in the fresh, scented air. Her blonde hair blew in the breeze, and the sun hit it through the glass, highlighting its streaks.

At the bottom of the hill they heard a siren in the parking lot, and the commotion of hundreds of people, including the Japanese tourist group, chattering and pointing to a corner of the lot. They saw a number of police cars, and, amidst the havoc, the figure of Lieutenant Lopes, giving orders to his men. They walked toward the crowd and the detective spotted them. "I might have suspected I would see you here," he said to Craig. "Hello, Miss Nicholson."

"What's going on?" Craig asked.

"How long have you two been here?" the lieutenant countered.

"We just came down the hill," Jessica answered. "We were in the café next to the statue for the last hour."

Craig put his hand on Jessica's shoulder. "Look."

"Carracos," she said, softly.

The doctor's body lay in the brush at the side of the parking lot.

"Somebody ran him over," the detective said. "Probably with a medium size truck. The tire marks are from a Volkswagen bus." He shook his head.

"My God," Craig whispered.

"You knew him?" Caracos asked Jessica.

She nodded. "He was coming here to meet us, to give us some information.

"Information?"

"Just some medical records. He wanted to bring it here. Poor man."

"Yes, well, there have been many unlucky souls in Rio de Janeiro this week." One of the lieutenant's aides ran up to him and he spoke to him quickly in Portuguese. An ambulance had arrived, and two medics jumped out and lifted the corpse onto a stretcher. "I hope we can keep track of this man's body," Caracos said.

"What do you mean?" Jessica asked.

"Last night, Helena Valencia's body was stolen from the morgue. This morning, we found the boat, terribly burned, in a warehouse on the wharf. It was only through luck that she was wearing a very unique silver bracelet around her wrist and we were able to identify her. These are very bad days in this city." He looked at the pair. "I'm afraid I will have to ask you to come to the station once more."

"Well, Mr. Phillips, once again you were at the scene of a terrible crime." Lieutenant Caracos sat behind the paper-laden desk in his office, his eyelids red from little sleep the last two nights.

"It's just a knack, I guess."

"An unfortunate one. Actually, I'm rather glad you were at Corcovado this afternoon, for it enables us to link the death of Dr. Carracos with that of Helena Valensia and Rudolfo Commons."

"Rudolfo Commons?"

"The cab driver. You said that you were to meet Dr. Carracos at San Paolo?"

"Yes, he was going to bring us a file."

"What file?"

"Miss Nicholson's medical records from when she was a child."

"Why bring them to San Paolo? Surely you could have gone to his office.

"It seemed rather odd, but he insisted."

"Peculiar. Had you ever met the doctor before?"

"No ."

"Alright, Mr. Phillips, you may go. Please ask Miss Nicholson to step in here." Lopes turned his attention to the papers on his desk, and began to write on a white notepad. In the waiting room, Craig found Jessica holding a cup of coffee she had bought from the vending machine in the corner. "Your turn," he said.

"You told him what we agreed on?"

He nodded his head. "I'll wait for you out here. I'm going to make a phone call while you're with Lopes." Jessica went into the detective's office, and Craig walked across the waiting room and searched his pocket for the few (centavos) necessary to place a collect call to Florida. "Hey Michael, it's your ace reporter checking in."

"Craig, what's the scoop?" the editor shouted into his phone at Enquirer headquarters. "Did Maxwell and Bradley come through?"

"They sure did. Less than 24 hours ago they tied the knot."

"Did you talk to any witnesses?"

"Better than that. I went to the wedding and took pictures."

"You're a wunderkind! When can you get the stuff to me? We'll push Madame Jerricault's predictions for the next year to page three."

"I wrote up the article and I'll send it to you along with the film by special courier."

"Swell. Hold on a sec, Craig." The phone was silent for a minute. "Sorry 'bout that, I had to take a look at a pic of a kitten cuddling up to a rhino at the Bronx zoo. It's real cute; we'll run it on page five."

"That's beautiful, Michael."

"When are you coming back to the States?"

"I'm not sure."

"Whaddaya mean your not sure?" he yelled into the telephone. "Who's gonna cover the big feud on the Dynasty set?"

"I can't do it right now. I happened to witness a murder, and I have to stay in the country

until they find the guy, so I can identify him."

"Jesus, Craig. Well, there must be a story in it. Anybody famous get killed?"

"A pianist--Helena Valensia."

"Never heard of her. Write it up anyway; we can always run it on page ten."

"O.K. Michael. Talk to you soon."

In the lieutenant's office, Jessica stood next to the window, smoking a cigarette and answering the Lieutenant's questions.

"Miss Nicholson, why were you waiting for Dr. Carracos?"

"He was going to bring me my medical file."

"Why did he have it?"

"He was my doctor when I was a baby."

"Here in Rio?"

"No, he had a practice in Boston then."

"Why did he want to meet you at Corcovado? Surely you could have gone to his office."

"I did go to his office, two days ago, and he told me he didn't have the file. Yesterday, he called me and said that he had found it and wanted to bring it to the mountain. I didn't ask why. I asked Mr. Phillips to come with me just for ...safety's sake."

"I see. Well, your story seems to match his. Tell me, had you seen Dr. Carracos between the time you were a baby and two days ago?"

"No, I didn't even remember him when I saw him." She walked to the desk and sat in the chair opposite the detective. "Did you find my file on the body?"

"No. There was no file. Perhaps you could call his office. They might know its whereabouts." She shrugged her shoulders. "I think that I have asked all of the questions I need to ask. You may go now. I hope that I will not be speaking to you again until we have caught the murderers."

"Lieutenant, two people have taken shots at me and I was at the scene of three murders. I don't feel very safe and, to be honest, I don't think you're doing very much to protect me." Her

eyes looked intensely into his. "What should I do? Go back to my host's apartment and just wait for you to catch these men? I can't stay in Rio indefinitely."

"I truly don't believe you have anything to fear, Miss Nicholson. You merely had the bad fortune to be present at the scene of these gruesome deeds. However, if it would make you feel more secure, I will have my men check your apartment house regularly. Perhaps it would be best for you to stay there as much as possible. As for the inconvenience, I can only apologize."

"Very well," she said crisply, and left the office.

When she returned to the waiting room, Craig had a wide piece of black lace in his hand. "I just bought this for you," he said. "Put it on."

She took it from him and examined the delicate pattern. "It's beautiful. But what's it for?"

"We're going to Helena Valensia's funeral. You have to cover your head when you walk into a Cathedral. If you walk in without it, people will mistake you for Valensia and start screaming that the dead have come back to life."

She placed the fine fabric over her head, letting the border hang just above her eyes. "Why are we going to the funeral?"

"I think we should talk to Valensia's family. They might have the clue to Valensia's past that we might have found in the file."

"I'm glad we're going. I feel close to Helena, even though I never got to meet her."  
"We've got to hurry. It started half an hour ago." They walked through the door to a taxi stand. "I hired an interpreter. He'll meet us at the cathedral."

When a famous person dies in Rio, her body is brought to the Cathedral del Anunciación, an enormous 18th century neo-Romanesque church in the heart of the city. Along the facade, a program of saints march along the portal, while gargoyles and devils carved into the stone towers, meant to horrify people into joining the Christian church, scowl down on those in the square below. Inside, two rows of larger than life wooden statues of the apostles and figures from the Old Testament line the nave, and a gold and red carpet leads up the aisle to the resplendent altar, where gold chalices and candelabra are set carefully on a white silk cloth and gleam in the light from a thousand candles stuck into black, cast-iron holders throughout the church. To the side of the altar is the largest of the wooden statues, that depicting the Virgin Mary, dressed in an ultramarine blue robe, a tear in her eye. She holds in her sensitive hands a string of rosary beads, and she looks up to the massive wooden cross, with the gnarled figure of Jesus nailed to it, red paint smeared on the palms and feet.

The cathedral was full of mourners for the city's daughter as Craig and Jessica entered. Just to the right of the great bronze doors they met Feragn Gomesano, the interpreter and guide

whom Craig had hired. He was about twenty years old, a small man with a scraggly beard and a large red birthmark over his left eye. He wore an old gray woolen suit, slightly frayed in the pants, and a new, blue silk tie. His English was perfect.

"Mr. Phillips, I am Fernan Gomesano." He made a slight bow.

Craig shook his hand and said, "Hello. This is Miss Jessica Nicholson." The interpreter bowed once more.

Jessica looked into the church, watching in awe the hundreds of people lined up to pay their respects. Because of the fire in the warehouse, the casket was closed, but a framed photograph of the pianist was set on top, and the people looked at it reverently as they passed by, as if it were one of the saints along the aisle. "She must have been loved very much in this city," Jessica said.

"It is not just in Rio de Janeiro that the death of Helena Valensia is mourned," Fernan said, "but in all of Brazil." They stepped to a wooden bin filled with candles, and the interpreter removed one and deposited a ten centavo piece into a small box. He took the candle and brought its wick to the flame of another one and lit it, then placed it along with the rest on a holder near the door.

"What is this for?" Jessica asked.

"To show our respect for God, and for the deceased," he answered. Jessica took ten centavos from her purse and followed the same procedure. "Have you ever been to a Roman Catholic church ceremony, Miss Nicholson?"

"No, I was raised as a Protestant."

"I see. Well, let me explain it to you then. Out of respect, women must cover their heads when they enter a church. I see you are wearing a scarf." The flickering candle light accented the strong bone structure of her face, giving it a dramatic quality it didn't usually possess. "You resemble, somewhat, the deceased."

"Do I?"

"A little. Anyway, when a member of the church comes into the aisle, he must kneel and cross himself, then he may sit in the church and pray. You will notice that many people pray at the feet of the statue of the Blessed Virgin as well as toward the cross. For many, the spirit of the Virgin is as strong a comfort as that of Jesus." He nodded toward the statue of Mary next to the altar. "Do you see that old woman kneeling there? That is Helena Valensia's mother. The family of the deceased always kneels there during the funeral. That is a custom of this particular church."

"Where's the rest of her family?" Jessica asked.

"I do not know. Would you like to pay your respects to the body?" Both nodded their heads. "Then we should join the line." As they walked across the aisle, Farago knelt and crossed himself, and then they joined the procession leading to the casket.

As they neared the casket, Jessica could see the face of Helena's mother clearly. It was wrinkled, and from the way the woman's mouth turned in, Jessica could see that her teeth were very poor; she probably had only eight or ten left. She was lost in mourning, rocking back and forth and fingering her rosary beads, chanting a silent prayer, oblivious to the hundreds filing by her. Jessica wanted to put out her hand and touch her, try to comfort her somehow.

They reached the casket. Fernan crossed himself, and Craig bowed his head in respect, his mind flashing back to the scene in the street in front of the condominium two days before. Jessica stood in front of the body for a long time, staring at the picture which lay on the casket, the same photograph that had been used on the concert program. She brought two fingers to her lips and kissed them, then touched the oaken lid with them. "Rest peacefully," she whispered.

They regrouped in a small garden just off the apse of the cathedral. Jessica and Craig sat on a stone bench, and a tiny brown lizard sunning on the concrete path, darted into the grass. "Can we speak to the mother now?" she asked.

"No, we cannot disturb her," Fermin answered. "I will talk to one of the priests and find out when we will be able to speak to her." He left them in the courtyard and walked through the arched doorway into the church.

"If nothing else, I only wish the body were intact, so that I could actually see her up close," Jessica said. She lifted the lace from her head. "Christ, do you think it would be alright for me to smoke here?"

"What the hell," Craig answered. "How are you feeling?"

"O.K. This will make me feel better." She lit the cigarette and inhaled deeply. "Her mother's face is amazing. She probably isn't any older than my own mother, but she looks twice her age."

Fernan returned. "The Father suggests that we wait until tomorrow and then go to the mother's home and speak to her there."

"Did she live with Helena?" Craig asked.

"No. She lives in the district of Vidigal, in what we call a flavella, a slum. We should go early in the morning, because in the afternoon it is very hot and dirty there. Perhaps we could meet at eight o'clock?"

The next morning, they rendezvoused at Craig's hotel in (\_\_\_\_\_). Fernan had a car, a ten-year-old yellow Ford Mustang convertible with red vinyl upholstery. "Do you like it?" the guide asked.

"It's very cool," Craig said. "Reminds me of California."

"We can ride with the top down. It's a beautiful ride to Vidigal."

The sky was perfectly blue as they beaded across the flat part of the city and into the mountains. The road began to twist as they passed through Epanema and into Gases, a district of Rio in the midst of the forest. The road took them through the double peaks of (\_\_\_\_\_), the great mountain overlooking the Atlantic. They drove through the pass and onto a plain. To the right, they saw a few shacks made out of corrugated metal built into the side of the mountain. "Is that it?" Jessica asked.

"No," Fernan answered. "That is the Flavella do Caves. It is the poorest of the flavellas--look." Re pointed to a two-inch copper pipe sticking out from the hill. Around it, women carrying buckets waited their turn to collect water from the gentle trickle. The road took them over another mountain, and through a lush valley with a clear stream that ran from the top of the mountain to the ocean. They turned onto a dirt road that took them to group of tiny houses, the walls made out of concrete blocks, the roof of pieces of tin. None of the houses had windows, although each had an opening on one wall covered with a piece of fabric to serve as a door. Fernan stopped the car. "This is Vidigal. It is richer than Gavea, but not by much. Because of the stream, the women can collect wash from people in the nearby district and make a few (centavos). Some of the people sell souvenirs to the tourists in the city. Some even work as servants in Epanema and Copacabana."

"And this is where Helena's mother lives?" asked Jessica.

"That is what the priest said. We will have to ask to find her home." They got out of the Mustang. A group of children, clothed in ragged shirts and pants, grouped around the car to look at it. Fernan spoke a few words to them in Portuguese, and one of them ran to a shack next to the road and brought out his father. Fernan said a few words to him and the man pointed to a house standing under a great (\_\_\_\_\_) tree next to the mountain. The trio walked to the doorway and Fernan called into the house, "Ola-: Senora Valensia?"

A woman's voice answered, "Sutra."

The guide pushed the curtain aside and they went in. An oil lamp set on a wooden table provided the only light in the dank interior. Helena's mother was seated in chair by a wood stove in the middle of the room.

The ceiling was low, just under six feet, and Craig had to stoop slightly to avoid hitting

his head. "Señora Valensia, estes personas quieren hablar consigo," Fernan said to her.

The woman pulled a black shawl tightly around her shoulders, although it was stifflingly hot under the tin roof. She looked at them carefully, squinting her eyes when they fell on Jessica. She stared at her intently, cocking her head forward for a better look. "Ouién es ella?"

"What did she say?" Jessica asked.

"She wants to know who you are," Fernan answered.

She walked toward the woman. "My name is Jessica."

"Se llama Jessica," the translator told the woman.

Slowly, the woman lifted her hand to Jessica's face, touching her eyes and nose and mouth with delicate fingers. "Diablo," she said, softly.

"That means 'devil,' doesn't it," Craig said. Fernan nodded his head.

"I want to know about your daughter," Jessica said.

Fernan translated. The woman answered. "She says that her daughter is dead."

"Ask her about Helena's birth--when was she born, and where?"

He complied and Senora Valensia spoke a few words. "She does not remember. A long time ago, she says. She thinks it was in this room, but she is not sure."

"Ask her if Helena had a sister."

"Tiene Helena una hermana?"

The woman stared at him for a long time. "No," she answered, finally.

"Ask her if she's sure," Jessica insisted.

Fernan asked again. "No, she is not sure."

With great effort, the woman stood and took the lamp in her hand. She brought it close to Jessica's face and examined it closely. "Diablo," she repeated, loudly this time. "Que quieres, diablo? Porque esta Ud. en mi casa?"

"What is she saying," Jessica asked.

"She calls you the devil," Fernan answered. "She asks why you are in her house."

"I think we should go," Craig said. "She can't help us."

Jessica nodded. She took a hundred peso note from her purse and handed it to the woman. The woman looked suspiciously at Jessica, but accepted the money. Jessica turned and left the house. Craig and Fernan followed.

Outside of the shack, the air seemed fresh. Jessica took in the scents of the (\_\_\_\_) and (\_\_\_\_) trees, tinged with the smell of ocean air, which somehow rose into the mountain. In the morning, the smells of the rotting garbage and human waste in the slum were not so pungent. Across the dirt road from the edge of the flavella, she saw a group of children playing kickball with a yellow plastic ball. Among them was a tall, auburn haired woman, wearing a striped cotton pants suit, as out of place in the flavella as Jessica. "Who is that, do you suppose?" she asked Fernan.

"She is probably with a social program in Rio de Janeiro that brings people to the flavellas to play with the children. Most of them are foreigners."

"Lets go and talk to her. Maybe she can tell us something about Mrs. Valensia."

The three walked over and stood at the side of the road, watching the woman, who was fluent in Portuguese, instruct the children and then join in the game with them. When she noticed them watching her, she left the children and walked to them. "Hello," she said, in English.

"Are you American?" Jessica asked.

"Canadian.. You looked American, though. You're not with the program-what brings you to the flavella?"

"We came to speak to Mrs. Valensia," Jessica said.

"An, Mrs. Valensia."

"Do you know her?" asked Craig.

"A little. Too bad about her daughter. She was a wonderful woman. You-re the spitting image of her," she said to Jessica. "Are you related?"

"I don't think so. What car. you tell us about Mrs. Valensia?"

"Well, if you talked to her, you know that she's extremely superstitious. From living in the flavella, I suppose. I've been coming here for over ten years, and I've seen her go a little more

crazy every year."

"Ten years? Then you must have known Helena."

"Not really. When she was a girl, her talent as a pianist was discovered, God knows how, and she was adopted as a foster child by a wealthy family in the city who sponsored her lessons and training in the conservatory. After she won the Moscow competition and signed a recording contract, Helena tried to get her mother to move out of here, but she refused."

"Is Helena's father here? Maybe he could help us."

"He died before I started coning here."

"Did she have any brothers and sisters?"

"I don't think so. She was an only child, I believe."

"Penelope!" a little girl wearing a ragged, flower print dress called to her.

"Well, I've got to get back to the game," the woman said. "Sorry I couldn't be more help to you." She turned around, just in time to intercept the ball rolling toward her.

Jessica took a long look back at Señora Valensia's house. "Let's go," she said, finally.

A chilly breeze swept through the solitary window in his hotel room, and Craig pulled the white cotton sheet tightly up to his neck. He had lain awake in bed for three hours, unable to sleep, and the cold wind only made him more fully awake. There were no distractions in his room. The four small walls were pale yellow, undecorated save for a small, graphic picture of Christ nailed to the cross. A sink and an armoire stood in the opposite corner from the ancient bed. Craig's opened blue Samsonite suitcase lay on the floor by the bed, next to the tiny writing desk. There was nothing to look at, nothing to stake his mind stop thinking about the murders, and about Jessica.

Taking the bed sheet with him, wrapped around his shoulders, he walked to the window and closed it. Then he turned the light on and went to the desk. to stare at his open journal. Before trying to go to sleep he had sat at the desk for two hours, charting out the events of the last four days, trying to make them make sense. His eyes surveyed the lists:

#### Deaths

Helena Valensia, shot in apartment

Rudolfo Commons, shot in street

Dr. Pinhos, run down in Corvocado parking lot

#### Incidences of Violence not Resulting in Deaths

Shot at theater--clean-shaven man

Threat with knife at Copacabana Palace--man with mustache

<u>Suspects, Suspicious Persons</u>	<u>Possible Motive</u>
Man with mustache \ Brothers? /	?
Clean-shaven man	?
Doctor Pinhos--but he's dead too	Covering something up, but he seemed pretty grieved at Helena's death
Me--according to Lieutenant Lopes --fuck him	Anything for a story

He had written Jessica's name under "suspicious persons" as well, but crossed it out. Between the names and columns, he drew various lines connecting them, trying different combinations. Craig glanced at the bottom of the lined sheet, where he had scrawled a few notes:

Why would anyone want to kill Helena Valensia--she was a veritable saint? Why would anyone want to kill Jessica, she's just a harmless grad student. Is it coincidence that Helena was killed just h Jessica arrived in Rio? Is it coincidence that Helena and Jessica are doubles? Are they really doubles? They haven't been side by side. Maybe they don't look all that much alike. Is Jessica telling the truth about everything?

Craig looked at the last note for a long time, thumping the eraser end of his pencil on the question mark. He turned the page and started a new list:

What I know about Jessica

- 1) Came down to Rio from Hollywood, next to Maxwell (seems to be an old friend--how?)
- 2) Staying at luxurious apartment of Roberto Cavalcade, He doesn't seem to have anything to do with all this. Friend from Yale.
- 3) Looking for birth records to see if she's adopted.
- 4) Says she had never seen Valensia before concert. Both times she tried, the killer was there. Does this mean he was following her rather than Valensia?
- 5) Keeps her cool.

- 6) Thinks she is in danger. Says she doesn't know why.
- 7) Smokes a hell of a lot of cigarettes.
- 8) Smooth liar. Lied to Lt. Caracas about her reason for going to Valensia's apartment. Lied to me about living in Rio when she was a child.  
Can I believe anything she tells me?

There it was again.

All this was out of his league, he thought. He should be in Hollywood, trying to catch the stars fooling around with each other. He should be getting kicked out of parties, not trying to solve murders.

He needed some fresh air. He went to the window and opened it again, this time welcoming the crisp wind on his face. Across the street, he noticed a figure standing under a streetlight. Craig's muscles tensed. It was the man who had shot at Jessica in the theater, the clean-shaven man, and he was looking straight into Craig's window.

Adrenalin pumped through his veins, causing him to jump back from the window. His mind reeled with ideas. He had to call Lt. Caracas, but there was no phone in the room. He remembered seeing one in the hall. Could he get to it before the man came up to get him? Craig inched slowly toward the window and looked out through a hole in the curtain. The man was still there. Maybe there was time.

He slipped on his pants, went to the door and opened it.

"Mr. Phillips." The man with the mustache stood in the hallway facing him. "I'm glad to see you are up; it saves me the trouble of waking you."

"What do you want?"

"Miss Nicholson. She isn't as easy to locate as you were. You shouldn't always stay at these fleabag hotels."

"I don't know where she is."

"I think you do. And you are going to take my partner and me to her." He took a long gun from a holster inside his jacket and stroked his mustache lightly with the barrel. "This time, you have no fat, loud American woman to come to your rescue."

Roberto Cavalcanti's apartment building in Capacabana was among the most expensive and secure in the city. A doorman was at his post 24 hours a day. But for 100 pesos, he allowed anyone into the elevator and up to the penthouse apartment. It wasn't necessary to offer a bribe this time, however, because he was asleep in his chair.

Craig knocked on the door of the apartment. There was no answer. Would Cavalcanti come to the door? He tried again. This time the door opened, just enough for Jessica to peer through the space, the chain lock not allowing it to go further. "Craig, what are you doing here?"

"I have to talk to you. Can you let me in."

"Yeah, sure. Just a minute." She closed the door and Craig could hear her unhook the lock. The door opened again, wide this time. "Come in." She wore a robe over her nightgown. Craig stepped aside, and she saw the man behind him. "Lieutenant Lopes, you're here too." He nodded his head. "I'm sorry to disturb you so late at night. Mr. Phillips called me only an hour ago. The man who shot at you and who was at Helena Valensia's apartment has been found. I need to have you identify the body."

"The body?"

"He's dead."

"I killed him," said Craig.

"Which one--the man with the mustache?"

"Nope, the other one. The clean-shaven guy."

Jessica dressed and in the police car he explained, "Both of those goons showed up at my hotel and told me to bring them to you. Mr. Mustache had a gun, and didn't mind showing it to me. Well, I pretty much thought that I was a goner for sure. I wasn't sure about you, because I didn't know if I'd bring them here or not. My first instinct was to lead them on a wild goose chase, not bring them, but I figured they'd catch on pretty soon. Then. I had a lucky break. While we were walking down the street, the guy with the mustache decided he had to take a leak, so he turned into an alley. I saw that for a minute the other guy wasn't paying attention, so I attacked."

"With what?" Jessica asked, mesmerized by the story.

"You've heard that 'the pen is mightier than the sword?' Well, I happened to be holding onto my ball-point pen the whole time and at that second I rammed it into his gut."

"That killed him?"

"Apparently. At 69 cents, the Bic fine point is a bargain. He fell to the ground, I reached inside his coat and got his gun and fired it at Mr. Mustache. I didn't hit him, but he went running down the alley and I'm happy to say that I haven't seen him since."

At the morgue, Lopes pulled the sheet from the man's face. "Mr. Phillips did well--he

severed the pancreas and the liver, with one stroke of his pen."

Jessica nodded her head. "That's him. Without a doubt."

"His name is Jorge Boyoga," the detective told them, "a notorious international criminal from Spain. He is responsible for more deaths than we know about, I'm sure. I need you both to sign depositions identifying him as the man you saw at the concert and at Helena Valensia's home, and then you will be free to leave Brazil."

"What about the other one?" asked Craig. "Don't we have to identify the man with the mustache?"

"Since we have Jorge Boyoga, we know the identity of the his partner. It is his brother, Antonio."

"Why would they have killed Helena?" Jessica asked.

"Because someone paid them to. If we find Antonio, he might tell us who, but it is unlikely. They are professionals, I'm afraid."

They took a cab to Jessica's apartment. Dawn had long past, and the shops along the street were open. They went into a café next to the apartment house and each had a cup of strong, black ( ) coffee.

"There's some information I didn't tell Lieutenant Caracos," Craig said.

"Information?"

"Yeah, something I found on Boyoga's body after I stabbed him. I looked in his pockets for i.d., and I happened to find this." He handed her a yellowed newspaper clipping.

She stared at it. "Oh, God."

It was a small clipping, just a picture and a caption. The picture was of a young woman with blonde hair. It could have been Jessica. Or Helena. The caption read, "Victoria Quincy Downes, daughter of the British envoy to Calcutta, William Downes, will marry the son of the Majorajah Kashmir, it was announced yesterday." On the back of the clipping was a fragment of a story which seemed to be about Gladys Knight and the Pips on tour.

"What paper is this from?" Jessica asked.

"No idea. And I don't know from when, either. All I know is that Boyoga had it, which means he probably either planned on going to India to find Victoria Quincy Downes, or he's found her already."

"Christ, you're right. Whoever wanted Helena killed ...and me, maybe... might want to kill this woman too." She stared at the picture again. "Maybe she knows."

"It's worth asking her."

"What'll we do?"

"Go to India."

PART TWO

KASHMIR

Having to fly tourist class from Rio to Frankfurt, and standby from Frankfurt to New Delhi, taxed Jessica's patience, but sharing a wooden bench at the back of a double-decker bus from New Delhi to Srinagar with a fat Indian man carrying three chickens on his lap gave her a tremendous headache. She and Craig had taken the crowded, double-decker bus rather than the luxurious train to the capital of India's Kashmir province in order to save ten hours, but as a curious chicken pecked at the sleeve of her blouse, Jessica began to regret the decision.

"Phillips, this is not my idea of a good time."

"That's what I like about you, Jess-your thick hide." Craig laughed.

"Very funny." Jessica, her eyes red with the exhaustion of twenty-six hours of continuous travel since their departure from Brazil, brought her hand to her forehead and massaged her temple. "Compared to this bus, the black hole of Calcutta must be a paradise." She glared at the small Indian man sitting next to her. "Will you get your goddamned chicken away from me!" The man, accustomed to subservient Moslem women, muttered a few rude words under his breath and pulled the bird away from her.

"This is a wonderful country we're in," she said to Craig, drily.

"You're going to love Kashmir, honest. It's beautiful."

"Have you been there?"

"No, but Elizabeth Taylor went there on two of her honeymoons, and so did Mickey Rooney."

"It figures you'd know that."

"Hey, it's my job. I'm a professional."

"Is that what they call reporters for the National Enquirer?"

"Don't knock it. It's thanks to the Enquirer that we got here."

"Correction," Jessica said. "It's thanks to my American Express Gold Card that we got here."

He nodded. "You've got a point there. However, we are greatly indebted to the archives of the grand and glorious National Enquirer, the only paper in the western hemisphere that has the details of every glamour wedding in the free world at the touch of a finger. All the details of Victoria Quincy Downes' wedding were already on the computer--it's going to take place in Srinagar in three days. They weren't going to bother sending a reporter, but I convinced my editor it was worth it." "Well, if Elizabeth Taylor went there, it must be nice."

By nightfall, the bus had climbed 3000 feet into the Himalayas and the air had thinned and cooled considerably. Jessica had long since succumbed to exhaustion, and Craig quietly watched her sleeping face as her head lay against the back of the bus. Beneath their lids, he could see the faint movement of her eyes, scanning her dreams. Her body quivered, and Craig took off his own jacket and lay it over her body, tucking it around her shoulders. On Jessica's other side, the chickens cooed faintly on the lap of their slumbering owner.

Without waking, Jessica pulled the jacket tightly against her body, and turned her head sideways in the seat, her head falling forward slightly.

Craig slept.

By morning, the bus stirred with the waking crowd, restless to get onto level ground. They were near the Balai pass, through a cleft in the mighty Himalayas, 7000 feet above sea level. The single lane road wound through a spruce and pine forest, which became sparser, until gray and white rocks, baking in the ever closer sun, dominated the landscape as they neared the peak. After slowing over the final incline, the bus leveled off for a few yards and began its descent.

The passengers stuck their heads out the open bus windows to stare at the sight below, the Vale of Kashmir.

Guidebook in hand, Craig, too, stared at the lush, rich land. "In India, they call this the valley of peace and happiness," he said, quoting from the book.

"Look!" shouted Jessica, pointing to a clearing. A shepherd was driving his flock of Kashmiri goats, with their gray long manes, along a mountain stream.

Abruptly, the bus halted and the driver jumped out of his seat and through the door. A single female ibex lay resting in the road, unconcernedly blocking the path. The driver yelled at the animal, but she turned her head the other way and stared into the clearing at the flock of goats. A few Indian men joined the driver and they grabbed sticks from the side of the road and prodded the ibex to run off, leaving her domesticated cousins with the shepherd.

The men reboarded and the bus rumbled off.

As the bus neared the floor of the vale, the forest changed from fir trees to poplar, cedar, and chinar trees, the deep green of the leaves accented by the occasional clumps of vivid red oleander flowers growing high off the ground.

"Well, Mister Reporter, what have you learned from your guidebook?" Jessica asked Craig, who had been poring through the Fodor's manual for over an hour. "I'm glad you asked that question," he answered, with a smile. "The Kashmir valley is nestled between the Himalayan range," Craig pointed behind the bus, "and the Pit Panjal range," he pointed to an

equally impressive mountain range far ahead. "It's a state, officially called 'Jammu and Kashmir,' and is disputed between Pakistan and India. It's under Indian control now, even though the Kashmiri people are primarily Moslem, and India is primarily Hindu. The vale of Kashmir 'flowery pleasure land' which was the vacationland of the maharajas and after them the British who occupied India."

"Kind of like Martha's Vineyard."

"Kind of. We're going to Srinagar, the capital of the state."

"That's where the majarajah lives?"

"There's not really a majarajah anymore, just his son," Craig corrected her. "How, he's powerless, except for the fact that he's fabulously wealthy."

"And we all know moneys power. Victoria Quincy Downes seems to be doing well for herself."

"This is the valley of happiness."

As the bus approached Srinagar, it stopped at a few small towns at the periphery of the city, agricultural towns whose business it was to grow produce to bring to Srinagar. Most of the passengers disembarked, including the man with the chickens. The road began to follow a wide, still river, the Jhelum, where vegetable gardens built on reed mats floated on the surface, and the Jhelum flowed into Dal Lake in the heart of the city.

In the mountains, the bus had made the only sound in the still forest, but in the busy capital city, taxis honked loudly at vendors, wheeling wooden carts laden with vegetables grown on the floating gardens through the narrow streets. Pigeons rustled in nooks in the wooden buildings, rising to three and four stories on either side of the streets.

The pair made their way to the New York hotel, a great hotel with wooden columns in the facade, built in the 1920s to cater to wealthy European and American tourists. "F. Scott Fitzgerald stayed here once," Craig told Jessica as they walked through the front door.

"I just hope they have two rooms free."

"Maybe we'll really be lucky and they'll only have o-a room," he said, raising one eyebrow lecherously.

"Do you have a penchant for sleeping on the floor, Phillips?" she countered and walked to the desk, where she paid for two rooms on the third floor.

In the afternoon, they walked through the street. Vendors were packing their carts to

wheel back to their homes outside the city. They found a restaurant with a balcony overlooking the lake and they stopped for dinner. They eat at a square, copper table and a handsome young waiter, wearing a white Nehru jacket, immediately brought them a loaf of poori, a puffy, delicious bread.

"Did you call her from the hotel?" Craig asked her.

"No, I put it off. I thought she might be out."

"You really should do it as soon as possible. She may be in danger."

He paused. "Do you want me to call?"

"No," Jessica sighed, "I'll do it now." She rose from the table and walked into the sheltered part of the restaurant. Craig could see her talking to a waiter and then walking into another room.

By the time she returned, Craig had almost finished the bread. "I ordered us both Tandori chicken. I tried to get a beer, too, but the waiter wasn't very appreciative of the request. It figures we'd have to go to the one Moslem state in India." Jessica pulled at the remaining bit of the poori and ate a piece. "Did you talk to her?"

"Yes, she was there."

"Well?"

"She'll see me tonight. She said that she had a lot of preparations to take care of for the wedding, but I insisted it was important. She sounds nice."

"Did you tell her who you are?"

"I told her my name. It didn't mean anything to her."

"Hmm," said Craig. "And did you get directions to Hiss Downes' house?"

"She said any cab driver would know it." Jessica took a sip of tea. "You know, it was funny talking to her. I kept wondering if that's how I sound on the phone."

The waiter arrived with their feast of spicy barbecued chicken, along with another loaf of poori and a small bowl of d-1, sauce for the bread. Along with the main course, they were served mango chutney and little onion pancakes on side dishes. At the end of their meal they savor mango, papaya ice cream, served in small, silver bowls.

"I'm beginning to like this place a little more," said Jessica.

"I have an incredible weakness for ice cream."

"Me too. I hardly ever got it as a kid. My mom thought it was bad for us."

"Not mine. I had ice cream all the time."

"I think the best thing about going to Harvard," said Craig, "was having so many amazing ice cream parlors. There must be fifteen in Cambridge alone."

"You went to Harvard?" she asked.

"You don't have to sound so surprised."

"I didn't think that most National Enquirer reporters came from Harvard."

"You'd be surprised."

"Makes me glad I went to Yale."

"They all write for the Star."

"Touché, Phillips." She took a cigarette from its case and lit it. "What did you study at Hahvahd?"

"Biology, and English. You?"

"Oh, I must have switched majors ten different times. It was English for a while, then psych, German language and lit, French lit, and finally anthropology."

"You must have liked anthro--you went on to grad school."

"It was all right. Mostly I went because I had a boyfriend at Berkeley."

Craig swallowed. "A boyfriend? Are you still seeing him?"

"Always interested in personal details, aren't you? No, I don't see him anymore." She finished her cigarette and extinguished it in the ashtray. "Well, I'd better go--I'm anxious to meet Victoria Downes."

"Should I go with you?"

"No, I'd rather do it alone. However, you probably should talk to her, too--its kind of a far-fetched story--just to back me up. But you can do that tomorrow."

She rose from the table and went to the exit, where she had the doorman hail a cab for her.

Craig lingered over his tea for a few minutes then walked a bit through Srinagar. After nightfall, the streets were empty, save for a few men with tasks that brought them outdoors. No women were out of their houses. Craig passed one doorway opened onto a one-room house, where a group of very young boys sat around an old bearded man, leading them in chants from the Koran. This particular area reminded him of the Casbah in a movie he'd seen a long time before, Angiers. Pepe Is Koko could be lingering in any of these old doorways, ready to spring.

He returned to his hotel room to wait for Jessica. He wished he could be at Victoria Downes' house with her. He didn't like the idea of her traveling alone.

The taxi took Jessica past the outskirts of Srinagar into an elite compound, long the area where the British in India built their homes. A resort within a resort. Here the forest was domesticated, and cedar trees and tropical flowers, reds and yellows, lined the driveways leading to stately summer mansions.

Victoria Downes lived in a Georgian style mansion set back from the road and fronted by a beautifully tended formal garden. On the door, an engraved silver plate read "The British Consulate." Jessica was greeted by an Indian servant. He seemed confused when he saw her. The servant nodded and led her into a sitting room off the entryway. Jessica glanced around the room. It was luxuriously appointed, with antique French chairs upholstered in silk and embroidered fabric. A grand piano stood in the corner. Jessica wondered if Victoria played it. She thought about Helena.

A row of pictures hung on the wall behind it and Jessica moved closer to examine them. The one that caught her eye was of a sixteen-year-old girl standing with a middle-aged man, a rather distinguished gentleman. She knew the girl had to be Victoria and assumed that the man was her father. She looked closely at their faces.

She heard the door open. "Hello, I'm Vicki Downes."

Jessica turned around and faced her. Their eyes met and she gasped slightly. The first thing she noticed was the hair--a short, stylish cut with bangs. Practical in the hot summer. Otherwise, she seemed identical. Every feature matched--the slender, sculpted nose, the delicate mouth, the chin.

"Trudy! You're a day early coming back from New Delhi."

"I'm Jessica Nicholson. I called you."

"That's not a bad American accent, Trudy. Come on, give us a kiss." She walked over to Jessica and kissed her cheek. "Now, what's all this? Did You call me?"

"Yes. You don't understand. I'm not Trudy--I don't even know who Trudy is--I'm Jessica Nicholson, and it's very important that I speak to you."

Vicki pulled away and stood in front of Jessica, looking closely at her face. "You're not Trudy?"

"No. Who is she?"

"My sister." She crossed the room to the telephone and lifted the receiver and dialed. After a few seconds, she said, "Hello, this is Vicki. Is that you, Trudy? ...Nothing, Luv, I just wanted to find out if you were coming back tonight or tomorrow...Yes, of course, I remember now, it's tomorrow ...No, no, I'm just a little light-headed due to the wedding ...I'll see you tomorrow." She hung up the phone and looked at Jessica, at her high cheekbones and her American clothes. "It seems that you're not my sister."

"Could we sit down?" she asked. Vicki motioned her to the couch. "I came because I think your life is in danger."

"How did you know that?"

"You're aware of the danger?"

"Yes. I've received a number of threats in the mail. There is a very militant faction in this country that doesn't approve of my husband marrying a non-Indian. He's the son of the maharajah, you see, and this faction is very nationalistic. They'd even prefer him to marry a Moslem woman."

"Does this faction have any connection to Brazil?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Did you know a Brazilian pianist named Helena Valensia?"

Vicki thought for a moment and said, "Wasn't she the woman who won the Rachmaninoff medal last year?"

"Yes, do you know her?"

"Personally? Oh, no. I've never even heard her play. Could you please explain how this concerns me?" she asked, insistently.

"I'm not sure," Jessica replied. She told Vicki about her trip to Rio, and about Helena and the Boyoga brothers. And she told her that her picture had been found on Jorge Boyoga's body. When she finished, Vicki said, "And now you'd like to find out why you have found two women

who look identical to you?" Jessica nodded. Vicki rose and walked to the piano and took a picture off the wall and handed it to her. "I've been used to having a double all my life." Jessica's eyes widened. "That's my twin sister, Trudy. You can see why I mistook you for her."

"Christ," said Jessica.

"Now you've found three."

"I don't believe it." Jessica rose from the yellow sofa and stood, but with nowhere to go, sat back down. She grabbed her hand bag and fumbled with the clasp, trying to open it. "I've got to have a cigarette."

"I think we could both use a good, stiff drink." Jessica nodded in agreement and Vicki walked across the room to a standing liquor cabinet and pulled out a bottle of Bombay gin then poured out two tall glasses. She brought them to the couch and sat next to Jessica. "This is quite a shocker."

Jessica took the glass and downed half of it in a single swallow. "When were you born?" she asked.

"May 3, 1960."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure. Is that your birthday, too?"

Jessica shook her head. "No. Mine's April 9, 1960. Three weeks before. It doesn't make sense."

"I'm positive Trudy and I weren't adopted. I've seen pictures of my mother pregnant."

"Did she ever say anything about it?"

Vicki shook her head. "My mother died giving birth to us."

"Maybe she had more than twins."

Vicki downed the last of her gin and looked closely at Jessica. She took two slender fingers and brought them to Jessica's face, touching her cheek lightly. "Well, Jessica, we have quite a bit to talk about."

Craig paced his room, nervously walking between the mosquito-net covered bed, and the white porcelain sink in the corner. Jessica had been gone for over four hours and, partially because of the exhaustion that still gripped him from travel and partially because Kashmir gave

him the creeps, he had imagined a hundred horrible scenarios in which Mustache Man, fresh from killing Victoria Downes in any number of ways, grabs Jessica in the Casbah and does her in as well.

He tried writing in his journal, but he couldn't sit still and resumed his pacing. He sneezed; to add to everything, he was getting a cold.

He heard a knock on the door and raced to answer it. "Jessica, where the hell have you been?"

She walked into the room and sat comfortably on the chair next to the veranda. "Just getting to know my win sister. I've got another one to meet tomorrow."

"What?"

"Vicki has a twin sister named Trudy."

Craig blew a stream of air through his lips. "Wow. Did you find out for sure that you're sisters?"

Jessica spoke quickly, excitedly. "After I saw her and talked to her, there wasn't any doubt. Our birthday's are off by about three weeks, but they're close enough to have been changed on our birth certificates. My mother must have lied to me about being adopted--to protect me I guess. Well, I can't blame her for that."

"How do you feel about it?"

"Great. At last I know who I am. Vicki's mother--my mother too, I suppose--died in childbirth. I can understand why Vicki's father didn't want to keep quadruplets. Twins are enough for a widower to handle."

"Did you speak to him?"

"No. He's arriving the day after tomorrow for Vicki's wedding. He'll be surprised to see me. Oh, you're going to love Vicki--she's wonderful." She paused to catch her breath. "Hey, Craig, you don't look so hot. You should get some sleep." She rose. Her cheeks seemed to glow with happiness. "I'm tired, too. I think I'll get some sleep myself." She walked to the door. "Oh, I forgot to tell you the most important thing. Vicki knows why her life's in danger. Some crazy Indian sect is out to get her because she's marrying the maharaja's son and she's not an Indian. But she's taking all sorts of precautions, and she's really perfectly safe." She pushed her hair back and smiled. "Hey Craig, thanks for helping to bring us together." She walked to him and kissed him lightly on the forehead. "Good night," she said, and left the room.

Craig walked to the veranda and looked over the lake. Something wasn't right. It did

seem to make sense that Jessica was adopted--he was willing to believe that--but an Indian sect couldn't have been responsible for the murders in Rio. Or could they? There were still too many unanswered questions.

Carefully, he closed the door to the veranda and latched it. He had meant to remind Jessica to keep her door locked as well. He got into bed but his mind continued to reel with ideas, trying to make sense out of the events, and it took him over an hour to get to sleep.

Jessica was still exuberant at breakfast. "I told Vicki we'd come to her house for lunch, Craig. She's had a very interesting life. Her family wasn't very rich when she was born--her father was only a minor diplomat--but he climbed the ladder until he became the consul general to India, which is quite a prestigious position. Now she lives in the most gorgeous house."

At lunch, Jessica met Trudy and the reunion seemed complete. The resemblance among them was incredible, Craig noticed. Trudy and Vicki both wore their hair quite a bit shorter than Jessica, Trudy's was curlier. Trudy was perhaps five pounds heavier than the others. When they stood side by side, Vicki appeared to be an inch taller than Jessica. Otherwise, they were identical.

Both Vicki and Trudy spoke in very precise British accents, but Vicki was by far the more animated of the two, with a certain energy and spark that her sister lacked. Jessica and she were already getting along famously, filled with vitality at the discovery of each other, and for Vicki it was compounded with the excitement of her upcoming wedding. Trudy was more reserved, thoughtful about Jessica's sudden arrival. She was unwilling to accept a new sister so quickly. Eagerly, she awaited their father to come to legitimate Jessica's claim, to explain.

They went into the garden for coffee after lunch and strolled among the carefully tended rows of Jagu trees. Craig found himself talking to Trudy, as Jessica and Vicki went off to another part of the garden.

"You must be quite surprised by all this," he said.

"Rather," she answered. "We had no idea we had another sister."

"It's incredible, really, that Jessica's parents never told her she was adopted, even when she was older," Craig said. Trudy nodded. "The funny thing is, we found Jessica's birth record, and it indicates that she was born to the parents who raised her."

She raised her eyebrows. "Really?"

"Jessica thinks her parents had them doctored. But it would be interesting to see yours and Vicki's. Do you happen to have them?"

"Oh, no. That's all kept by the family physician."

"Ah. Then they must be in England."

"No," she answered, thoughtfully. "We've lived in Kashmir since we were ten."

"But your doctor here wouldn't have records from before the age of ten, would he?"

"As a matter of fact, he was the same doctor we had in England. He transferred here the same time as my father." She looked across a flower bed at a marble bench where Jessica and Vicki had sat down, and were chatting like old friends. "I think it's rather a good idea to check those records. I'll go and see Doctor Hendley this afternoon."

"May I go with you?" She looked at him, doubtfully. "I'm a reporter you see, and I've had some experience with this kind of thing. I may be able to see something in the documents you might not notice."

Trudy agreed. "His office is in Srinagar. I'll drive you both to your hotel, and then we can go over there."

"Phillips!" Jessica yelled to him. He and Trudy walked over to them. "Vicki just told me that their father was stationed in America in 1960, and they were born in Boston!"

"Yes," said Vicki. "It all seems to make perfect sense now."

Doctor Handley was about forty-five years old, an amiable man with graying temples and wrinkles around his mouth from smiling a lot. "Trudy, how nice to see you," he said when she and Craig walked into the office.

"Doctor Hendley, you're the only one who can always tell the difference between me and my sister."

"I've known you since you were babies. Besides, you always wear flats and your sister wears high heels." They both looked down at her black pumps and laughed. "I don't remember seeing your name on my appointment list. You're not ill, are you?"

"Oh, no. Nothing like that. Doctor, I'd like you to meet Craig Phillips."

They shook hands. "How long have you been in Kashmir, Mr. Phillips?"

"Only since yesterday."

"The reason we're here, Doctor," Trudy said, "is to take a look at my birth records."

"Birth records? What would you want those for?"

"It's all rather peculiar," she responded. "Mr. Phillips came to Kashmir with a friend, a woman named Jessica Nicholson. She's an American, too, and, well, she looks as much like me as Vicki does."

"Really? That is peculiar."

"Doctor," Craig said, "were you present at the Downes' birth?"

"No," he answered. "I was only a medical student at the time. I took on the duties of family physician shortly after they were born, however."

Trudy looked at the Doctor intensely. "Do I have any other sisters besides Vicki?"

He returned her look, then his eyes met Craig's. "Not that I know of."

"Could I see my records, please?"

"Of course," the doctor replied. "Unfortunately, my secretary's gone for the day. She's the only one that understands this blasted filing system. Why don't you come back for them tomorrow?"

"Did you know Helena Valensia, Doctor?" Craig asked.

"No," the doctor answered without pause.

"According to Miss Nicholson, Helena Valensia is another, well, sister."

"Who is she?" he asked.

"A Brazilian pianist," said Craig. "She's dead now."

"Did you know her?"

"Not really," Craig answered.

"Well, this is all very peculiar. It's really quite a shock. Have you asked your father about this, Trudy?"

"No, he won't be in Kashmir until the wedding."

"I'd very much like to wet Miss Nicholson," the doctor said. "Would you all be my guests for dinner tonight?"

"I'm afraid I have wedding rehearsal," said Trudy.

"Mr. Phillips? The invitation still holds for you and Miss Nicholson. I'd be more than happy to show you some of the sights of the city."

"Yes, I think we can both make it."

"Good. Why don't you wait here at seven o'clock?"

At the appointed hour, Craig brought Jessica to the doctor's office. "You certainly do look like a Downes," he told her. "It's uncanny."

Doctor Hendley brought them to an exquisite curry restaurant in (\_\_\_\_), in the center of the city. He was extremely cordial to the pair, and didn't run out of questions to ask them, especially Jessica. He asked questions a reporter would ask, Craig thought. After dinner, Craig said, "You know, Doctor, what I'd really like is a drink. Is there anywhere to get one in this city?"

The doctor chuckled. "A capital idea, Yes, there is a bar in the (\_\_\_\_), a speakeasy of sorts which the police ignore. In fact, I often see them go in for a little nip themselves."

He brought them to the oldest section of the city, where the wooden buildings leaned into one another, some so ancient that the floors had settled into concave curves, like great bowls. The bar was in the basement of one such building. There were two rooms in the bar, decorated in Arabic style, with Middle-eastern stars carved into wooden screens, and brass plates on stands for tables. An Indian man met them at the door and, recognizing the doctor, bowed slightly to him.

"Do you have a table for us?" the doctor asked.

"Yes, of course," answered the man. "But the lady will have to sit in there." He pointed to the smaller of the two rooms, where three or four women sat quietly around a small wooden table."

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry," the Doctor said. "I forgot all about the rule here--women can't go into the room where they serve alcohol. I'm awfully embarrassed."

"Maybe we should leave," said Craig.

"Oh, no, don't be silly," said Jessica. "I don't mind. I don't want anything anyhow, and I wouldn't want to deprive you."

"I'll only have one," Craig promised.

Jessica went into the small room and sat at the table with four Hindi women, dressed in black (\_\_\_\_), staring ahead silently. Through the screen she watched Craig and the doctor sit on the far side of the other room. She saw the doctor speak to the waiter and watched as he prepared two drinks at the bar. She couldn't quite see what kind of drinks he was pouring, but figured that Craig had ordered Scotch. The waiter's actions seemed peculiar to her, however. As if he were

making a specialty drink, rather than a plain scotch on the rocks. She felt nervous as she watched him bring the drinks on a tray to their table.

She jumped from the table, ignoring the Indian women's scowls, and walked to the border of the other room. "Craig," she called, trying to sound nonchalant. "Could you come here for a second?"

Craig stood from his seat and walked over to her. "What is it?"

"I think the waiter poisoned your drink."

"Don't be ridiculous."

"I watched him pour it. He did something weird. Did you bear Doctor Handley order it?"

"Yeah, but he spoke in Hindi." His face whitened.

"There's something very odd about the doctor. I'll bet he told the waiter to put something in your drink."

"I'd better not drink it. Is the doctor looking this way?"

"He was and I smiled at him. How are you going to get out of drinking it?"

"Let me think for a minute." He bit his lip. "I've got it. Do you have any pills on you?"

"Pills?"

"Yeah. Anything--aspirin, allergy pills, vitamin C, it doesn't matter."

She opened her purse and looked quickly through it. "Just these," she said, pulling out a flat, round container.

"What are they?"

"Birth control pills."

He frowned. "What are you doing with birth control pills?"

"Never mind that now. Do you want them or not?"

"Do you think it's safe for me to take them?"

"It won't do a thing, I promise you."

"All right, give me two."

She pressed two out of the plastic holder and handed them to him. Swiftly, he walked back to the table. "Sorry," he said. "Jessica reminded me that I had to take my allergy medicine." He popped the two pills in his mouth. "Oh, God, those taste terrible." He tried to force a smile. "If I don't take these pills I'm a basket case." He could see Jessica through the screen laughing slightly.

"Why don't you have a bit of your drink to help them go down," the doctor suggested.

"Good idea," Craig said and lifted the glass to his lips. Then he took it away. "Oh, I nearly forgot. I'm not allowed to have any alcohol for six hours after taking those pills. How stupid of me. And I really wanted that drink. Oh, well, maybe some other time."

The doctor frowned. "What kind of allergy pills are they?"

"Ah, I don't remember. I just follow the doctor's orders." Doctor Hendley tapped his fingers on the table. "Well, there's not much good in our staying here if neither you nor Miss Nicholson can have a drink, now is there?"

"Nope, let's go." He rose and motioned Jessica toward the door.

On the street, he said, "Boy, those pills always make me sleepy." He yawned loudly, stretching his arms over his head. "I'd really like to go back to the hotel and get some sleep. Well, thank you, Doctor, it was a very pleasant evening."

"Let me drop you off at your hotel," he said.

"No, we can walk," Craig responded, quickly.

"Don't be silly. It must be a ways away. What hotel are you staying at?"

"The New..." Jessica began.

"It's a new hotel," Craig interrupted. "Its called the Kashmir Arms. Its not very far, and I'd like a chance to walk off that delicious meal."

"Very well," said the doctor. He turned to Jessica and, smiling, said, "It was very nice meeting you. I trust I'll be seeing more of you."

Once Craig and Jessica had walked a few blocks from the bar, they jumped into a cab. "God, I'm glad to get away from that guy," Craig said.

"Well Phillips, looks like I saved your life this time."

"You still owe me a couple."

She laughed. "Let's hope you won't have to collect on that."

It would be tricky following the doctor, but Craig felt sure that he could do it without being seen. He arrived at Hendley's office at 7:30 in the morning, and sat in a restaurant across the street, where he could see the door clearly. The doctor arrived at 8:00 sharp and went into the office. While drinking an endless stream of rich, black Indian coffee, Craig watched as people came at regular intervals to the office, stayed for up to an hour, and then left, just as any doctor's patients would. At 1:00 he saw one of the Downes sisters walk up the street. He looked at her feet--flats. At first he was surprised, then remembered that Trudy was to pick up her records that day. Craig considered meeting her as she left the office with the files in bar hand, but decided it would be better to wait in the shop. He could see the records later that day.

Doctor Hendley, dressed in a blue and white seersucker suit, came out the door of his office at 2:30. He paused in front of the door, looked at his watch, then up to the clear sky, and headed on foot down the narrow street. Craig waited half a minute and followed. The doctor's stride was quick, and he led the reporter through a maze of winding streets, past rows of office buildings into a slightly industrial section of the city, where a number of dilapidated warehouses stood. The doctor paused at the door of one, looked to his side, and unlocked the door, pulling it open.

Craig, crouched in a doorway, looked at his watch. It was five minutes to three.

On the hour, another man turned the corner onto the street. He passed directly in front of the doorway, and Craig saw him clearly. It was the man with the mustache.

Craig held his breath, afraid that the man would hear the sound of his lungs and see him.

He watched the man slide open the warehouse door and slip inside, then slide it shut.

He stood in the doorway for only a few minutes before the two men emerged from the warehouse, locked the door, shook hands and then parted in opposite directions. After he was sure they were far away, Craig ran across the street and examined the lock. He pulled a jackknife from his pocket, and in a minute he was inside the warehouse.

It was small for a warehouse, and dirty. He found the power switch and turned on the lights. For the most part, the room was empty. A few boxes were stacked to the side, covered in cobwebs, but the only other objects were a few large machine parts, rusted, and obviously too far in disrepair to be usable. He saw a winding iron staircase in the corner.

The black stairs were clear of dust, and he decided to climb them. They led to a second floor room. It was pristine, with white tiled floors, and stainless steel shelves with medical implements--scalpels, stethoscopes, a small heart-monitoring machine--neatly placed atop. He

walked to the shiny operating table. A few feet away were two aluminum boxes, the size and shape of caskets, but with heavy clasps between the main body and the lid, and a number of controls and gauges to one end. He had never seen anything like it before.

There was nothing else in the room no files or books to help him. He looked again at the aluminum contraption, trying to relate it to anything he had seen before, but it was completely foreign to him. Quickly, he descended the stairs and exited the building.

"We're in big trouble," he told Jessica, who was waiting for him in the hotel.

"What happened?"

"Mr. Mustache is in town, and he's pals with the good doctor. They have some sort of operating room in a warehouse, and it looks like surgery

She took a puff of her cigarette. "Vicki's wedding is tomorrow. She plans to fly to Italy for the honeymoon in the evening. Doctor Hendley must know that, so..."

"If they plan to do something, they'll do it before tomorrow night."

"I don't think Vicki's problems have anything to do with a militant Indian sect."

"That would be a piece of cake compared to these guys."

Jessica sat on the bed and then lay back, looking up to the ceiling. "Why? Why are they doing this? Vicki is a wonderful person. Do you know that she founded and runs a program to raise aid in England for impoverished Indian families, and that she is organizing a program to encourage birth control in rural areas? She doesn't ha-a to do those things, you know. She lives like a queen, for God's sake. And Helena Valensia! She was a saint." Her voice grew louder. "Who are these people? Who are they to take Helena and Vicki away?"

Craig sat next to her on the bed and took her hand in his. "I don't know. It doesn't make any sense to me, either. We'd better tell Vicki right away. And Trudy. There were two of those machines, and I have a feeling they're meant for both of them."

"We should go to the police," Jessica said, sitting up.

"I agree. But I don't think they'd listen to us. We're foreigners here, after all. But if we can get Vicki to tell them what we know, maybe they'll listen." He stood. "Let's go to her house right now."

Jessica nodded her head. She looked up at him. "You know, now that I've met Vicki and Trudy, I don't know what I'll do if I lose them."

Craig threw 100 rupees into the front seat of an old, white Chrysler cab and begged the driver to race to the compound. The cabby nodded and ripped away from the curb; in a moment they were going 150 kph out of the city and toward the British resort. When they reached the consulate, Craig and Jessica leapt out of the taxi and to the door. Jessica pressed the bell repeatedly, until the Indian servant calmly opened the door and motioned them to enter.

Vicki met them in the sitting room. "You've come at the perfect time. I've just had the final fitting for my wedding gown. Come and see it, Jessica."

Jessica sat on the yellow couch. "We rushed over here."

"What's the matter?" Vicki asked, just noticing their serious expressions.

"You're in danger," Craig said, "and not because you're marrying the son of the majarajah."

"We're all in danger," added Jessica. "We had dinner with Doctor Hendley last night and I saw him try to poison Craig's drink. Then this morning Craig followed him and saw him with the man with the mustache who tried to kill me in Rio!"

"Doctor Hendley?" said Vicki. "It's not possible. He's been my doctor since I was a baby."

"There's something very peculiar about the doctor. I followed him to some weird lab where he had all kinds of equipment set up."

Vicki looked at them, her blue eyes darting between them. She rarely panicked. It was a point of pride that she always remained self-composed. But suddenly, she lost her balance and had to reach her arms to the back of a chair to keep standing. "Trudy left two hours ago to see Doctor Hendley. He called and told her that he had given her the wrong medical records--that he had a more complete set in his office. She just drove out there to switch them."

"We'd better go to his office right away," Craig said. "Do you have another car?"

Vicki nodded and soon they were driving in a brown Mercedes sedan through the winding road back to Srinagar. They went about three miles, when they were stopped by a police car, its lights flashing, coming at them from the opposite direction. A police officer, a tall Indian man with a gleaming gold tooth in the front of his mouth, jumped from his car and walked to the driver's side of the Mercedes, which had pulled over to the side of the road. "Miss Downes, I thought this was your car. I was on my way to your house."

"What's the matter, Sanjay?"

"I have bad news. Terrible. Trudy was in an accident."

"Oh, my God. Is she alive?"

He shook his head. "She coast have lost control. We found her Subaru about a mile out of Srinagar. She went into a tree, and the car exploded."

Vicki brought her hands to her face and began to cry. She leaned forward and tears fell onto the dashboard. Jessica put her arms around Vicki's shoulders, to comfort her. She felt the loss, too.

"Did they bring the body to the hospital?" Craig asked.

"No," answered the policeman. "There wasn't much point."

"Will there be an autopsy?"

"I don't think so. The body's very badly burned."

"How do they know for sure that it's Trudy's body?"

"She happened to be carrying an alligator skin purse with identification in it. It survived with only a bit of damage. And we knew the car."

Craig nodded, thoughtfully. "Sir, Trudy's life was in danger when she left her house. This may not have been an accident."

The policeman looked at Vicki, who had regained her composure. "Do you know what this gentleman's talking about?" She nodded. "We'd better go back to the station, and you can have a talk with the captain."

Vicki was well known in Srinagar by most public officials. The police captain greeted her in his office with a warm embrace. He was a good friend of her father, and met the news of Trudy's death with personal remorse in addition to his professional concern. He was also, however, a good friend of Doctor Hendley, and when they explained their suspicions he greeted the suggestion with disbelief. "I understand your grief, Vicki, but to think Doctor Hendley had anything to do with Trudy's accident is preposterous."

"Captain Edlington," said Craig, "I saw the doctor in the company of a professional murderer yesterday. He has some reason to want both Downes sisters dead."

The policeman looked at this young man, a stranger in Kashmir, with incredulity. "What reason?"

"I don't know. It doesn't really make sense, but these women's lives are in danger, and the doctor is connected to it in some way."

The captain tapped two fingers on his desk, the nails sounding on the wood veneer. "I'll call Doctor Henley's office. He should know about the accident anyhow." He pushed the buttons on his desk telephone.

"Yes, this is Captain Bedlington, let me speak to Doctor Henley...I see...Well, instruct him to call me as soon as he returns. It's quite urgent." He hung up the receiver. "He's not there."

"You see!" said Craig.

"That doesn't prove anything."

"Charles," said Vicki to the policeman, "my sister was a very good driver. She was going to Doctor Henley's office when her car went off the road. Mr. Phillips may be right--at least partially."

The policeman clasped his hands tightly together, as if in prayer. "All right, I'll check things out at his office."

"We might find him in the warehouse," suggested Craig. "It's worth a try."

Craig had carefully noted the location of the warehouse and was able to guide them there in the police sedan. It was locked, but the captain looked the other way as Craig whipped out his jackknife and picked the lock. He opened the door. It was dark in the warehouse and he immediately turned the power on.

"Those weren't there this afternoon," he said, pointing to two long wooden crates in the middle of the room. The word "Munchen" was printed in large letters on each. "This is the way to the lab," he said, leading them to the winding staircase. They walked up silently. Jessica felt nervous.

"This isn't the way it was at all," Craig said, scanning the room when they had reached the top. The medical implements were in disarray. The operating table was spotted with blood. "There's the machine I told you about." He walked to one of the aluminum boxes. "There were two, though," Craig said. He examined the latch. It was unlocked, and he was able to lift the lid, exposing the empty interior, with its smooth aluminum walls. "This isn't very much help," he said, letting the lid drop with a thud. "Where could the other one be, I wonder?"

"Maybe it's in one of the crates downstairs," Jessica suggested.

"It's lucky," the captain said, as they descended the stairs, "that we're in India. If we were in England we'd need a warrant for all this."

The crates were identical with a single exception--one was nailed shut. Craig took a claw hammer laying nearby and pried the nails out, and he and the policeman lifted the heavy top.

Inside was the second aluminum box, its meters activated, a quiet hum emerging from one end. Craig touched it lightly. "It's cold." The others touched the surface.

"We'd better open this one up, too," Captain Bedlington said.

They unfastened the latches and slowly lifted the lid.

"Trudy!" Vicki shouted. "My God, is she alive?"

Craig put his finger on her neck. "There's no pulse."

"Then whose body was in the car?" Jessica said.

"Some poor girl they killed to use as a cover, I'd guess," responded Craig. He closed the lid. "Well, Captain, do you believe us now?"

The policeman nodded his head. Vicki had started to cry again, and Jessica held her tightly, herself staring at the crate.

"I'll call some of my men to come out here and take your sister's body. If we're lucky, Doctor Henley won't find out that we've been here before we find him."

The sitting room, with its brightly upholstered furniture and freshly cut tropical flowers, seemed spiritless as Jessica, Craig, and Vicki quietly sat, drinking a flavorless tea. There was little to say. Vicki had called her fiancé, in New Delhi and told him of the tragedy. Of course, they had agreed to postpone the wedding. Her father had already left for Kashmir by train--he refused to travel by airplane--and would learn of Trudy's death on his arrival that evening. They awaited a call from the captain, with news of the search for Doctor Henley.

"They must have moved quickly," Craig said. "Henley must have performed the whole operation in less than an hour."

Vicki nodded her head, absently.

"I only wish we could have seen the birth records."

"The birth records?" said Vicki. "They're over there, on the desk." She gestured to a small, antique writing desk in the corner.

"What!" exclaimed Craig. He walked to the desk and found the records in a folder. "What are these doing here? I thought she brought them to Henley."

"She made a xerox," Vicki explained. "She was suspicious when he called her."

He took the records from the file. On the top were two birth certificates--one was Trudy's, the other Vicki's. "This all looks pretty Kosher," he said, glancing quickly over them. "It says you were born on May 3, 1960, Cambridge General Hospital, that's just outside Boston, that your parents are Edward and Lillian Downs, and it says, quite plainly, that you and Trudy were born twins. There's nothing about any other sisters here."

"These records could have been changed," Jessica said.

"Maybe." He looked through the ream of papers. "These look a lot like yours, Jess. They're really detailed records of Vicki's and Trudy's first few years. Boy, it even has lists of the girls' friends, and how they spent their playtime." He spoke to Vicki. "You played Rapunzel in second grade."

She smiled, slightly. "Yes, I did. I'd forgotten that. Is that in my medical record?"

"Uh, huh. There's no way Henley had a more complete set of medical records in his office. He probably gave her these accidentally. What's this?" He pulled a sheet of letterhead from the pile. "Do you know a Doctor Freilinghaus in Munich?" he asked Vicki.

"No," she answered.

"Look at this letter to Doctor Henley," he said, handing it to the two women.

The name Rolf Freilinghaus was printed at the top of the sheet, and at the top corner was a Munich address. The letter was dated August 24, 1983.

Dear Steven:

Thanks very much for the photos of Victoria and Trudy. Their resemblance to Nina is truly marvelous. I only wish that I could see the three of them together at one time!

It's interesting that both Nina and Victoria have expressed a talent in the theater. Trudy seems more different from Victoria than Nina does.

Well, thanks again. Let's hope Bill doesn't find out about our picture swapping. I'll see you soon.

Rolf Freilinghaus, M.D.

Vicki's brow tensed. "Nina?"

"If she resembles Vicki and Trudy, she must resemble me as well," Jessica said, then cried out, "How many sisters do I have?"

"I don't think we should jump to conclusions," Craig said. "There's not enough here to make any assumptions."

Jessica shook her head. "Yes, Craig, there is!" she insisted. "I don't think there can be any doubt that this doctor is talking about a fifth sister, and we've got to get to her before Henley does."

"I don't think there's enough to go on," countered Craig.

"Munich," said Vicki. "That was how the crates were labeled, didn't you notice? 'Munich' was printed on each of them."

"God, you're right," said Jessica. "They were planning to send the body to this doctor in Munich."

The phone sounded. Vicki lifted the receiver before the second ring. "Hello, yes? Captain ...no, he's on the train now from New Delhi ...no... He bas?...Is there anything you can do?...I will ...good-bye." She returned the receiver to its cradle.

"Did he find Henley?" Jessica asked, urgently.

Vicki shook her head. "He's left town. He took a private plane to New Delhi and from there could have gone anywhere."

"He must have found out that we knew," offered Craig. "It doesn't take too much to guess that he went to Munich."

"We must go to Munich and find this Doctor Frielinghaus," said Vicki.

Jessica placed her hand on Vicki's shoulder. "I agree, but Craig and I will go. You've got to stay here and take care of things."

Vicki nodded. "My father thinks that he's coming to Kashmir for a wedding. But he's coming for a funeral."

"We should take the next plane to Munich," Craig said to Jessica. "We might be able to get out this afternoon."

"No, we've got to wait until this evening," Jessica said. "We have a lot of questions to ask Mr. Downs and, well, I'd like to see him now, just in case something happens to me in Munich and I don't ever have the opportunity again."

"I understand."

The consul general arrived at seven o'clock sharp and was greeted by only one of his daughters. He was a tall man with thin, light hair that had once been blond and thick. A pair of conservative tortoise shell eyeglasses hung low on his nose, and behind them, two shrewd brown eyes, expecting to see the jubilant expression on his soon to be wedded daughter, instead met Vicki's sad blue eyes. She brought him to a secluded corner of the station and explained the events of the past two days. With characteristic British reserve, he met the news of the tragedy with only a slight reaction. One of dismay.

In an hour, he was ready to see Jessica. When she walked into the sitting room with Vicki and Craig, his first thought was that someone had played an awful trick on him, that Trudy was alive, and was now pretending to be this long-lost sister.

"Hello, Mr. Downs," she said with her distinctly American accent, and extended her hand to him. "I'm Jessica Nicholson."

The consul stood and took her hand, trying to muster a smile. "Your arrival was quite a surprise."

"I know," she responded. "Mr. Downs, Vicki has probably told you why we came here. We thought that her life was in danger. We were right, but we didn't know what we were up against." He was silent. "I came to find out if there is some relationship between us."

"You look very much like my daughters," he remarked, finally.

"Can you help me find the truth?"

He sat back in his chair and shook his head slightly. "I don't think so."

"Did your daughters have any sisters?"

"No," he responded.

"I know that you may not want to answer this, that you might have hoped that this question would never be asked, but did your wife give birth to more than twins?"

"No," he answered, again, "Trudy and Vicki were our only children."

"Daddy," said Vicki, "you needn't feel that you have to protect us from anything. Are you sure that we weren't more than twins?"

"Just twins. I'm sorry, Miss Nicholson. I can't help you explain why you look so much like my daughters. I promise you, however, that I'm telling you the truth. My wife gave birth to twins, not to quadruplets."

"Were you in the operating room yourself?" Jessica asked.

He shook his head. "That wasn't done in those days," he said. "You know that my wife died in childbirth. She died, and Vicki and Trudy lived. If there had been others, I would have raised them just as I raised my two daughters."

Jessica sat on the couch next to Vicki, further accentuating their resemblance to one another. "I'm sorry, Dr. Downs, I know that this is a sad time for you. It's been rough on all of us. But Craig and I have to leave tonight, to try to find these people before something else awful happens, otherwise my questions could wait."

"It's all right," he said. "I want to help you if I can."

"I was born in a hospital very close to the one in which your children were born and only three weeks before. You can see that it's quite an amazing coincidence. Why were you in Boston?"

"I was assigned to the United States."

"But why in Boston?" she pressed. "Don't most diplomats live in Washington?"

"My wife knew that her condition was desperate, and we were told that the Boston hospital was the best place for her to go. She had seen a specialist there on another occasion, perhaps a year before, and so we went there. Unfortunately, they couldn't save her."

Jessica leaned forward and took his hand in her own. "Mr. Downs, I believe that you're being honest with me, that you think you're telling me the truth. I wish you could have cleared everything up, but I want you to know that I believe Vicki and Trudy are my sisters. I don't know how, but I'll find out. And when I do, I'll come back and tell you and Vicki."

PART THREE

MUNICH

Happily, they were able to secure two first class seats on a direct flight to Frankfurt, and from there boarded the Bavarian Express for the four-hour train ride to Munich. The sleek, silver and black locomotive cut through the German countryside, past vineyards where fields of new hybrid grape shoots had recently been planted and were just beginning their climb toward the sun. Growers predicted that the newly developed grapes would be sweeter and juicier than any others ever developed.

Jessica pulled a yellow legal pad from her Louis Vuitton bag and sat upright in her plush red seat to study the top sheet. "I've been making a list of everyone we've met, and everything that's happened," she announced.

"You have?" Craig looked crestfallen. "But that's what I do."

"You too, huh? Well, I guess everyone involved in this sort of thing does. I learned about it from Agatha Christie novels. It's Hercules Poirot's method. Where did you learn about it?"

"I just know--I'm a reporter."

"Anyhow, I started it last night. There must be some way to connect everything that's happened logically. Take a look." Craig snatched the pad from her hand and examined it closely:

Sisters

Me

Helena Valensia

Vicki Downs

Trudy Downs

Nina

Their Known Backgrounds

Me--

Born April 9, 1960

Birthplace Boston

Father Deceased, Mother Alive

No siblings

College educated

Unmarried

Currently living in California (perm. res. Boston)

Enemies--None

Helena Valensia--

Birthdate unknown

Birthplace unknown

Father Deceased, Mother Alive  
 No siblings  
 Musical education  
 Unmarried  
 Shot in apartment in Rio  
 Very talented  
 Enemies--None

Vicki Downs--

Born May 3, 1960  
 Birthplace Cambridge (Boston)!  
 Mother died in childbirth, Father British envoy to India  
 Twin sister, no other siblings  
 Educated at Cambridge University  
 Engaged to Maharajah's son  
 Living in Kashmir  
 Helps poor  
 Enemies--militant Indians

Trudy Downess--

Same as Vicki, except not engaged  
 Car found wrecked  
 Trudy found dead in warehouse in Srinagar  
 Enemies--none

Nina--

Lives in Germany?  
 Nothing else known, except looks like us

"Is this all?" Craig asked, handing the pad back to Jessica with an air of superiority.

"What's wrong with it?" she asked.

"Well, there's nothing wrong exactly," he answered. "It's just so incomplete. What about all the shady people we've met? The doctors? The hit men? And what about the logical progression?"

"I haven't gotten to those points yet, Phillips. As far as I can tell, the relationship between my sisters and me is the key here. We're the ones getting shot at. If we can figure out some reason why we five are in danger, we'll might be able to figure out who these creeps are." Craig nodded. The threat to his ego now resolved to his satisfaction, he looked more generously at Jessica's contribution. Her effort was certainly not as sophisticated as his own, but there was something to be gained by talking it out with her. She was pretty smart, for a Yalie. "I agree, Jess. But let's be precise about a few things. For one, we don't have any reason to believe that Nina, whoever she is, is in danger."

"Except for the fact that her doctor is a chum of Doctor Henley, which doesn't bode well."

"True. For another, we don't know if Helena or Trudy had any enemies. There might have been lots of people who wanted them dead."

"Oh, come on. Who would want to kill Helena? And Trudy..."

"To be honest, we don't know mien about her."

She agreed. "I feel as if I've known Vicki for years. But there just wasn't time to get to know Trudy."

"The next thing, Jess, is that we still don't have positive proof that you five are all sisters."

"We've got to be. There's no other way."

"It does look probable," he agreed, "but it isn't certain. For one thing, you've all got different parents, none of whom have ever said anything about adoption, and for another, you weren't even born on the same day."

"We've already said the dates could have been changed."

"Yeah, they could have. But why would Mr. Downs insist that his wife had twins, and not quintuplets?"

"He wasn't at the birth. It's Possible that she had quints. There's so much linking us. I don't even think it's a question, anymore."

Craig shook his head. "You've got too much at stake, Jess. You're not looking at this objectively."

"No, I guess I'm not. But can you blame me? All my life I've been an only child. Now I discover that I may not have just one sister, but four."

Craig took the list from her hands and scanned once more. "An only child," he repeated. "So was Helena. Trudy and Vicki didn't have any other brothers or sisters."

"What are you thinking?"

"I'm not sure. It's just a funny coincidence, that's all."

"Well, let's see your list, Mister Reporter," she said.

"I don't know if I should show it to you. It's a bit more objective than yours." He finally

assented, however, and pulled his journal from his brown vinyl briefcase. "Here," he said, opening to a densely filled page. "I've made at least a dozen different lists and charts. This one's the most current."

Absently, she lit a cigarette as she studied the detailed chart, with its arrows connecting the different names in the different areas and notes scrawled here and there. It was impossible to ingest the whole thing at once, but a few key sections caught her eye:

### Deaths

Helena Valensia, shot in apartment

\
  
Links--both look like Jessica, suspicious doctors

Trudy Downs, found dead in warehouse, cause unknown

Rudolfo Commons, shot in street

Dr. Carracos, run down in Corcovado parking lot

Jorge Boyoga, penned to death

### Person (or Persons) responsible/Motives for killings

Helena- -Boyoga brothers, motive unknown

Trudy--Doctor Henley (?), had medical records-\

Rudolfo Commons--Boyoga brothers, accidental

medical records!

Dr. Carracos--killer unknown -----/Carracos had

was bringing med. records                      Jess' too

Jorge Boyoga--Me, the bastard deserved it

Jessica's face whitened as she read the lists, her mind vividly recalling each of the horrible events as her eyes fell upon its written equivalent. "You forgot something," she said, quietly. "Helena's body was burned badly after it was stolen from the morgue, just like the body we thought was Trudy's."

He thought for a moment. "So maybe that wasn't Helena's body at all that was found?"

Jessica nodded her head and continued reading:

### General thoughts

--Jessica, Helena, the Downs, and maybe Nina must be sisters. I tend to agree with Jessica's belief that Mrs. Downs had quadruplets or quintuplets.

--Who hired the Boyoga brothers? Hendley?

--Are all the sisters in danger, or were the killers only after Helena and Trudy?

Were the others just in the way? But that doesn't explain the two machines in the warehouse.

--Trudy, Vicki and Jessica all had incredibly detailed medical records? Why? How much do the doctors know? Carracos knew Jessica and Helena. Henley knows Trudy, Vicki and now Jessica (and Nina, through Doctor Frielinghaus). What is the relationship between the doctors?

"They were all in Boston when we were born," Jessica said, aloud.

Craig did not know which point Jessica had reached in the chart. "What?"

"That's the relationship between the doctors, other than the fact that they are our doctors. Carracos was a medical student at the time, and so was my doctor back home. Henley said the same thing, you told me."

"Good thinking," he said, pulling a pen from his breast pocket to add Jessica's ideas to the chart.

"Hold on a second," she said, as he attempted to pull the journal away from her hands. "What's this little note?" She read from the same list of general thoughts.

--"Why did Jessica have birth control pills? Who the hell is she sleeping with?"

She turned and stared at him.

Craig loosened his collar. "I'm just trying to be 'objective,'" he offered.

"Phillips, I'm not Elizabeth Taylor. You have no right to pry into my personal life."

He shrugged his shoulders. "It wasn't going into print. It was just another piece of information that I happened to be curious about." He shifted uncomfortably in his chair. She laughed, lightly. "Phillips, I don't think there's any way to get your mind out of the gutter. But I'll tell you about the pills--I don't really care if you know. I mentioned that I had a boyfriend at Berkeley, didn't I?"

"You broke up with him, right?"

"Yes. But only a few days before I left the country. I suppose that was a catalyst for finally going to Rio. Well, taking the pills had become a habit, so I kept on with them. Besides, I'm not a nun."

Craig put his hand delicately on her cheek and shook his head, slightly. "Thank God, no." He looked into her clear, blue eyes, and simultaneously they leaned forward, their lips meeting for a long kiss.

"I shouldn't be kissing you," he said, after the brief union had ended, "I've got a cold." "I don't give a damn," she responded, and pressed her lips once more against his. She rubbed her

face against his, letting the rough skin of his unshaven cheek scratch, ever so slightly, her own perfectly smooth skin. Her heart pounded.

His heart pounded.

The train whistle blew, and the engine groaned to a halt. They had reached the great iron and glass station, a relic from the late nineteenth century, when progress was heralded with this great monument to the industrial age. Light streamed through the huge windows onto the platform, bathing Craig and Jessica as they emerged from the train, capturing them for a moment in a living enactment of a Monet painting.

The city seemed to them the most charming place they had ever been. Their hotel, a half timber inn nestled in the corner of a cobblestone street, was bordered on one side by a small beer hall where grandmothers and six-year-olds joined the other townspeople each evening in drinking liter steins of Spaten beer, and on the other side by a watchmaker. It was in the heart of the old section of town, one of the only major urban districts in Germany to survive the air raids of World War II, keeping traditional Bavarian customs and way of living intact.

The bakeries on the street exuded pungent, early morning scents--linzer tarts, chocolate and hazelnut tortes, apple and cinnamon pastries. Around the corner, in the main square, the enormous glockenspiel, the oldest clock in the world, set into the tower of the ancient city hall, chimed six o'clock, and small doors opened to the side of the face allowing tiny wooden puppets to dance in the hour while a pipe organ filled the chamber created by the surrounding buildings with a melody after Mozart.

With the kiss on the train, their exhaustion had dissolved and when they were alone in their room in the four star hotel after the bellboy left they fell onto the bed together, their lips meeting once again, hers becoming part of his, his becoming part of hers. She smothered his face and head with kisses as they wrapped around each other, expressing a passion that suddenly seemed incredibly urgent. In a moment, they were nude on sheets, exploring the secrets of each others bodies. There was no hesitation.

The desire to hold back that is usually felt with a couple's first kiss, or the first time they make love, was completely absent.

"So here we are, with only one hotel room. Want me to sleep on the floor?"

"Not a chance, Phillips."

She awoke first, just in time to hear the one o'clock bells and accompanying music ring from the glockenspiel. She slipped out of bed to shower and dress then left the hotel. The sun was bright and the area familiar. Jessica had spent a summer in Munich four years before, as part of her studies, but it never seemed so lovely then as it did this day. During that summer, Munich had made her uneasy. It was too self-consciously lovely, she felt. How could the pre-World War

If values of Germany, the values which had given the German people the excuse to support Hitler, still be going so when the site of Dachau was only a twenty minute train ride away?

She toured the small stores and bakeries on the block, and returned to the hotel room, where Craig was just rising. "I thought this would be nicer than room service," she said, pulling fresh rolls, cheese and sausage from her bag, along with a bottle of sweet wine. She called the bellboy to bring an opener and some glasses and the feast lay before them on the sideboard.

"If I have any wine, I'll be knocked out for the day," Craig said, lightly wiping his nose with a linen handkerchief supplied by the hotel. He looked at the sparkling glass and reconsidered. "Maybe I'll just have one--what the hell. Today's a day to celebrate."

They toasted themselves, and Jessica said, "I'm going to go to Doctor Frielinghaus' office after we eat."

Craig shook his head. "No, it's too dangerous for you to go. He'll recognize you of course. It would be better for me to go."

"I've got a plan," Jessica said, excitedly. "I'm fluent in German. I'll go to the doctor's office and pretend I'm Nina, I'll get the records somehow, and from them I'll get the information to find her."

"That's pretty clever," Craig admitted, "but too risky. He's bound to ask you something personal that you won't understand, and you'll give yourself away." He downed the remainder of wine in the glass and refilled it.

"Maybe you're right," she agreed, absently.

Craig, dressed only in his robe and still in bed, sneezed definitively. "Damn this cold!" He pulled his journal from his case propped up against the night stand. "Jess, do you know what DES syndrome is?"

"Yes, I was tested for it I think."

"You were? Good," he said. "Looking over my notes, I noticed something in Vicki and Trudy's file that might help us. Apparently, their mother took DES when she was pregnant, and Vicki and Trudy both had uterine problems and reported vaginal bleeding."

"Serious?"

"Not too. Luckily, it was only a minor case, and shouldn't prevent Vicki from having children. But you should know that if you were tested."

"No," she responded. "I don't have it at all. My tests came back negatively, thank God."

"Negatively?" he questioned her. "That's odd."

"Why?"

He shrugged his shoulder. "I don't know, it just strikes me that way. It's probably nothing. I'll check into it later."

Craig pushed the remainder of his lurch away, having finished very little of it. Jessica walked to the bed and sat next to him, smoothing his hair with her fingers. "You've got a bit of a fever," she said, feeling the warmth of his forehead with her fingers.

"It's just a cold," he said, and sneezed once again.

She leaned forward and pressed her lips on his cheek. "You'd better take care of yourself."

"I've got to go to Freilinghaus' office."

"That can wait." His eyelids grew wearier and with his head cradled in her hands he drifted into a deep sleep. She tucked the edge of the blanket under his shoulders.

For a moment she considered Craig's warning to her, but decided that it was worth the chance. She walked to the mirror and pulled her hair into a bun and set it with a barrette--that was the most neutral hairstyle, she thought. She took her white, leather pocketbook from the dresser and left the room, intending to go to Frielinghaus' office herself.

Jessica found the doctors office easily; during her stay, she had dated a young broker who worked only three buildings down. A single bead of sweat ran down the side of her face as she entered the medical building, but with a quick movement she wiped it aside and, composing herself, she summoned the elevator and rode it to the fourth floor. Frielinghaus' door stood opposite her as the elevator doors drew apart on arrival.

She went into the office, and with textbook perfect German she said to the receptionist, "Hello. Can Doctor Frielinghaus see me now?"

"Nina!" The receptionist, an elderly lady, thought she recognized her. "I was just talking about you to the doctor. Ax, it's good to see you. You haven't been in for a long time."

Jessica smiled, graciously. "Good to see you, too."

"The doctor is with another patient, let me check if he can see you."

She took a kindly hand and patted her cheek, [In German... ]"So good to see you," then rose and knocked on the interior office door and went inside.

Jessica's eyes lit on a file laying on the receptionist's desk. It was right on top. It was labeled "Nina Edstan." She blinked. She looked quickly at the interior office door. It was still closed. She snatched up the folder and slipped out of the office.

The elevator was in use, and she knew that it would not take long for the doctor to leave his office. She ran to the stairwell and pulled the heavy iron door open. Behind her she heard the door to the doctor's office open and a man's voice yell to her in German, "Come back here, whoever you are. Come back right now!" The four flights seemed to stretch on and on, but she finally felt the marble floor at the bottom under her feet. She tripped. Her heel broke off her shoe, and she took them both off and carried the pair in her hands as she ran out the door. Ten yards from the building, she heard the man's voice yell to her, "Are you Vicki? Come back here."

She didn't look back. With all the strength in her legs, she ran as quickly down the street as she could, ignoring the sting of the sharp pebbles under her feet, the edges of the rocks tearing first into the soles of her pantyhose and then, slightly, into her feet. She turned a corner, and then another. When she was reasonably sure that she was at least ten blocks from the office building she stopped and, panting, looked behind. No one was in pursuit.

It wasn't safe to return to the hotel, she thought. In case someone was still following her. She looked up at bright lights on the stores and bars in this area, unfamiliar to her. It was the red light district of Munich, where she had definitely not been during her summer's stay. A seedy man whistled at her from across the street and called to her in Spanish, "Aii, Chica!" She went into the first bar she saw, the "Playboy Pen." A public place seemed safe to her, safer than going directly back to her hotel, in case she was being followed.

Momentarily, she forgot Nina as she stared, amazed at this new world. She had always wondered what these places were like. Around her, men standing at the bar, where a topless woman wearing only a tinsel clad bikini bottom danced quietly, and men seated at small round tables on the floor stared at Jessica, as fascinated by her as she was by them.

Nonchalantly, she slipped the her shoes back on and sat at one of the tables and took the papers from the file. A topless waitress with pert breasts came to the table and took her order. [In German] "What would you like?"

"Liebfraumilch. bitte."

The waitress brought her a glass of sweet wine and Jessica engrossed herself in Nina's file. For two hours she pored through the records, as if it were a very personal and detailed biography. She found her birth record:

Nina Brunhilde Edstan  
Born 12:22 a. m., March 24, 1960, Cambridge General Hospital  
Sex: Female

Weight: 8 lbs. 1 oz.  
 Height: 17.5 inches  
 Blood Type: AB  
 Pulse at birth: (115/60)  
 Eyes: Green  
 Mother: Lily Edstan  
 Father: Gustave Edstan  
 Socio-economic class: Lower middle class, blue collar  
 Normal birth.  
 Lactose intolerance. Given soy milk substitute.  
 Discharged with mother March 29, 1960.  
 Health--Perfect.  
 Disposition--Greatly interested in surroundings. Perky.

Jessica came across Nina's second year report.

Second year report: Nina Edstan is a remarkably creative little girl, who is especially interested in her surroundings, more so than any other child of her age I have encountered. Because her mother works part-time as a secretary in a Volkswagen plant, she has been in a day care center since the age of three months. I have seen the center--it is not very good and the children get very little actual attention. Nina must rely on herself for entertainment and, incredibly, her mind seems constantly active. She has few toys so often creates her own amusements--a chair becomes a palace, her father's shoe a carriage, a salt and pepper shaker with their shiny tops the king and queen.

A few colds--minor. Gradually gaining a tolerance for cow's milk and cheese.

A few clippings from German newspapers around October, 1973. One showed a teen-aged girl, dressed in a plain cotton dress, shaking hands with an older man. Its caption read, "Nina Edstan, of Bad Vilbel, wins the young poets prize. Franz Heller, president of the German Youth Arts Council presents the young poetess with a check for (50 dollars]." A photograph taken a few years later, age seventeen Jessica guessed. It looked just like her own high school senior picture. A photograph of two identical girls. The photograph of Trudy and Vicki Henley sent to Frielinghaus. Copies of a few letters between the two doctors, all dated within the last year:

Rolf:

I put your request aside for a few weeks to ponder the wisdom of complying. Is it worth going against the express orders of our illustrious leader? After twenty years, what the hell! Enclosed you will find a photo of the Downs twins and a short history of each. Please send data on Nina.

Steven

Rolf:

The comparisons are fascinating. Nina's work is outstanding. Trudy pales in comparison, though Vicki seems to exhibit the same sensitivity. I'm surprised. I expected Nina to be undistinguished. Yes, I've heard that the Brazilian is competing in the Rachmaninoff competition. Incredible.

Steven

Rolf:

Bill has informed me that the experiment will be ending sometime next year, and at that time he will share the data with us. Our impatience was unwarranted. I'm anxious, however, to have details on the Brazilian and the American.

Steven

One was dated only two months before.

Rolf:

The old man is sick. He's moving the completion date up six months. It's truly exciting.

Steven

The final was hand written, and dated only one week before.

Rolf,

Don't be a fool. If you don't arrange it, someone else will. It's crucial to have all of them, even Nina. I've got to take care of two, for God's sake. It's not the most pleasant task in the world, but I'm not about to throw away twenty years of work for sentiment's sake. It's been planned for twenty years, Rolf. After all, they're not real.

Bill isn't about to do without one. This is about the most important thing in his life, now. I think he's dying, though he won't admit it to me.

Steven

Jessica's hands trembled as she read through the letters. The palms were sweaty, and dampness was spread on her hair as she pushed it back from her brow. She saw one last letter.

Dear Rolf:

Steve has hinted that you're a little squeamish about this whole thing. Well, that's

understandable. But I assure you, its absolutely necessary. And it's the right thing to do. For scientific and for humanitarian reasons. It isn't right to let them live. As I get older, this is clearer. That doesn't mean the experiment isn't right-it is.

Your role is crucial. You've got to coordinate the three cryogenic cases through Europe. I look forward to your arrival in Cambridge. I think that you'll shed all remaining doubts when you see the incredible data generated by the experiment.

Warmly,

Bill St. John

The letter dropped from Jessica's hand into the pile. She had to get out, quickly. She felt faint. She scooped up the pile and shoved it into the file. She ran from the bar and into the street, now crowded with men off work checking out the prostitutes standing in the doorways.

For a moment, she was disoriented, unable to recall where she was, in what city. The neon lights flashed against her smooth skin, and she looked into the faces of the prostitutes.

The unevenness of her shoes made it difficult to walk. They came off.

She ran out of the district, the cuts on her feet paining her. The scenery grew more familiar. A park she used to visit with her boyfriend during her summer in the city, a building from the nineteen twenties with a great art deco mural over the doorway. Finally, she found the hotel and ran into the lobby and up the stairs, staining the blue carpet with the blood from her feet, to the room.

Craig looked up from the bed at her pale face as she burst through the door. "Thank God you're back," he said.

"I've been to Doctor Frielinghaus' office," she said, standing in front of the doorway, lost in the space surrounding her, detached from any of the furniture, the desk, the bed, the armoire.

"Are you all right?"

She passed through his question. "I have Nina's file."

"Good going!" Craig said, sitting up in bed, excitedly. "You know, Jess, I've been thinking. There's something that I can't resolve. DES syndrome is passed from the mother to the fetus, and in the case of twins both have to get it. So it makes sense that Vicki and Trudy both had it, but if you really are their sister, you should have it too."

"You don't understand," Jessica said, blankly. "They aren't my sisters--they're me." Speaking the words brought her to a new level of realization. She had figured it out in the bar,

but hadn't verbalized it, and so she hadn't completely understood it. Now she felt terribly weak, and her limbs loosened. The papers fell from the folder. She fell to the floor.

When she woke, Craig was kneeling beside her, holding her head in his hands. "I'm the one who's supposed to be sick," he said, and smiled at her.

She lifted her head and kissed him, passionately.

"I kind of like that," he said. "But you might catch something from me."

"I don't care," she said. "I'm really happy that we were together this morning." He smiled at her. "Help me up."

Gently, he put his arm around her shoulder and supported her as she lifted herself off the ground. He brought her to the bed and they sat next to each other on the edge. Jessica clutched the empty folder tightly in her hands. "Vicki, Trudy, Helena, Nina," she said, "and I are," she paused to find the appropriate words, "involved in some sort of experiment. I don't know exactly what it is. We aren't sisters, though, we aren't real people at all."

"What are you talking about?" Craig said. "What did you see in Nina's file?"

"You can read it yourself," she said quickly, pointing to the mess of papers strewn on the floor. "We aren't real. We're artificial people of some sort, and because of that they have to kill us."

He grasped her shoulders firmly with his hands. "Slow down. You're not making any sense."

"I'm making perfect sense. It wouldn't make any sense for them to kill us if we were normal sisters."

"I still don't understand. Maybe it's because I'm sick..."

"How do you feel?" she interrupted him. Intensely, she pressed her hand on his forehead. "You're not well at all, you're quite sick, and all I can do is talk about myself. I'm so selfish. I don't mean to be, honestly I don't. We should bring you to a doctor right away."

"Don't worry about me right now," Craig said firmly, "I can go to the doctor tomorrow. Just explain what's in the file."

"Why can't you understand!" she yelled. "I'm not real, and neither are Vicki and Trudy and Helena and Dios." Her voice quickened. "We're clones or something. Artificial, not real. Did you ever read The Boys from Brazil? Some doctor takes blood from Hitler and he's able to make a hundred Kitlers. That's what we are, except we aren't Yitlers, we're Eva braces or

something." She stopped talking and her body quaked. She looked directly into his eyes and, her voice dropping in intensity, said, "Oh Craig, I don't know what I am. I'm so confused." Then her eyes filled with tears. It was the first time he had seen her cry.

He rubbed her back with the palm of his hand and leaned over and kissed the nape of her neck lightly. "Let me take a look at the files. You're very upset. You're not thinking properly." He looked down. "Your feet are bleeding."

She was reminded of their pain. "My heel broke at the doctor's office. I had to run in my stocking feet."

"I'll take a look at it now. Why don't you take a nap--you look tired. You'll feel a lot better if you get some sleep."

"Mmm," she assented. She leaned forward and rolled her pantyhose from her legs, then went to the bathroom and washed her feet; the moist washcloth felt good against the roughened skin. She returned to the bedroom a moment later. I'm exhausted."

"Take a nap. I'll read Nina's file while you're asleep, and when you wake up I'm sure we'll be able to find some reasonable explanation."

"Sure," she said, nodding her head yawning.

Craig scooped the papers into the file and carried them to an upholstered wing chair next to the window. He sat in the comfortable chair and laid the papers on his lap, trying to exude a calm, anxiety-free air for Jessica's benefit. He watched her slip in between the sheets and said, "Sleep well."

Jessica's eyes closed and within seconds the taut muscles in her face relaxed and her breathing became regular.

Craig sorted the file, putting the pages into a chronological order, and began to read from the beginning. "Nina Edstan, Born 12:22 a.m., March 24, 1960, Cambridge General Hospital, Cambridge, MA." He opened his journal and added Nina's name to the chart. Carefully, he read through the progression of doctor's reports and clippings and photographs. It was more detailed, even, than the three other files he had seen.

Halfway through the file, he took a break. Jessica was now soundly asleep, and Craig felt a great weariness overcome him. He went into the bathroom and found a thermometer in his shaving kit. His temperature was 103.5 degrees. He took three aspirins.

So far, he had found nothing surprising in the file. It was strange that it was so detailed, but that was part of the pattern. Then, he found the letters. He read them twice. He looked in his journal, at the page where he had written notes about DES syndrome.

He understood.

Jessica tossed slightly in the bed. Craig's wiped sweat from his forehead. His mind filled with ideas, explanations, but he wasn't able to sort them out. His body ached, and the aspirin wasn't taking effect. His last movement before falling asleep in the chair was to place the file neatly on the table next to the window.

"Jess, wake up." Craig shook her shoulder lightly, and her eyes opened.

"What time is it?"

"About ten." She looked toward the window and saw that it was dark.

"I feel great," Craig said. "The aspirin worked like a charm. I think we should get out of this room, try to relax a little."

Jessica agreed. "I feel better, too. Where should we go?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Let's just walk around for a while. I'm sure that we'll come across something."

The streets were damp from an early evening rain shower that left the air clean and clear. Sounds of singing and laughing rang from the beer halls and echoed in between the buildings, back and forth across the street, over the couple's heads. Craig kissed Jessica.

"Do you still love me?" she asked.

"Of course."

"Even though I'm a clone?"

He laughed. "Even though you're a clone."

"You know, it's not so bad after all. It makes me feel special, though I suppose a clone is about as non-unique as you can get."

"I'm glad you're able to joke about it."

"Are you kidding? I've got a million of them--you've heard the new song, 'Send in the clones,' and of course there's always 'A thousand clones.'"

Craig put his hands on her waist and pulled her near. "Right now, I'm romancing the clone." They kissed again, their passion for one another intense.

An elderly German couple passed them, the woman muttering disapprovingly of their embrace.

Craig and Jessica giggled.

"Where should we go?" Jessica asked.

They were in front of a cabaret, and could hear the voice of a singer and a small band. "In here, of course," Craig responded.

They were seated and instantly a bottle of wine and a plate of sausages and cheeses was set in front of them. "Look, there's Nina," Jessica said, pointing behind Craig.

He whipped around and saw her--the perfect likeness of Jessica, Vicki and Helena pointing in their direction. Then he saw his own double and started to laugh. "That's the reflection in the mirror."

"I know," she giggled. "I was just teasing you."

"Please stop this cloning around!"

The singer was working the audience, going from table to table, microphone in hand, as he sang a Gershwin tune:

They laughed at me wanting you  
Said I was reaching for the moon,  
But ho! you came through  
Now they'll have to change their tune.

They all said we'd never get together,  
They laughed at us and how,  
But ha! ha! ha!  
Who's got the last laugh now!

He came to their table. "Vere are you two lafbirts from?" he asked.

"The United States," Jessica answered with a smile.

"How enchanting. Vat brings you to Vest Germany?"

"I came to find my clone," she answered.

"Vell, good luck to you," he replied. "Hey, vat's the matter vith your fella?"

The spotlight fell on Craig, who was staring at the singer, a horrified expression frozen on his face.

"Vat's your problem, Mister. Haven't you never seer, your clone, before?" His teeth, exactly the same as Craig's teeth, shone in between his lips, which parted into a wide smile. His eyes, identical to Craig's, sparkled with delight. "Look around you, friend. Vy don't you just lighten up a little, huh?"

Craig's head turned, his eye falling on table after table. A man and woman sat at each table. Every man was Craig's double, every woman Jessica's. The men in the band were all Craig, the hat check girl was Jessica.

Sweat poured out of Craig's face. "Jessica, do you see?"

"Uh, huh. Isn't this pleasant, all your brothers and my sisters in the same room at the same time. It's a nice little family reunion."

"I'm a clone, too?" he asked, desperately.

"Af course you are," the singer answered, his voice singing with condescension. "Vy else vat you be here?"

"No!" he yelled out in terror.

"Craig," Jessica touched his shoulder.

His eyelids sprung open. "What?"

"You were having a nightmare. Come to sleep in the bed. Don't stay in that chair."

He looked up at her, and at the hotel room. He felt the beads of sweat on his face converge into little rivers and flow to his chin, then fall off in heavy drops.

"I think I should go to the hospital."

She nodded and called the hotel desk.

In the waiting room of the ultra-modern (\_\_\_\_) hospital, Jessica was told by the doctors that Craig had a bacterial infection, but that he had reached the worst stage, and his fever should break by morning. They would take blood tests then to be sure, but they thought he should be fully recovered in a few of days. They urged her to return to the hotel, but she refused. She sat in the brightly painted lobby and thought. Returning to the hotel was out of the question--she felt it would be terrifying to be there alone--and so she sat the night in a red plastic chair, deciding what she would do.

Her first priority was finding Nina, warning her, telling her. You're "artificial." She wanted to call Vicki or, better yet, go back to Kashmir and talk to her in person. You're Part of an experiment. What she really wanted was to go back to Boston, confront her mother, get comfort from her. Why didn't you tell me what I am? Do you even know yourself? You must have been part of it. Talk to her doctor. Talk. Talk to Craig. Does he understand now? There had to be someone to talk to, someone to tell her the truth. That was why she had set out for Rio in the first place, to find out the truth. Maybe Dr. Frielinghaus. Dangerous. But he knew, and the letters showed that he had some doubts about "following orders." Maybe he would be honest with her. He's as dangerous as the others. She could call him over the phone before going to see him. Or, if she found Nina, she could ask her if he was trustworthy. Is anyone trustworthy? Maybe Craig. Yes, definitely Craig.

By morning, Craig's fever broke, and the doctors were predicting that he would be out of the hospital by the next day. The antibiotics had left him groggy, but when Jessica came into his room, a double that he shared with a local burgermeister afflicted with a brutal case of hiccoughs, he mustered all his strength to sit up in bed and squeeze her tightly when she leaned over to hug him.

"Phillips, how could you fall apart on me just when I need you the most?"

He stroked her hair. "How're you doing?"

"Not bad, considering the fact that I just read that I'm not a real person, and that some doctor is probably trying to have me killed."

The burgermeister hiccoughed loudly. Jessica pulled the curtain between the two beds.

"It's pretty weird, all right," Craig said.

"At least it'll give you something to write about for that rag of yours." He didn't respond. Jessica could see that he was trying hard to think, to make his brain work in spite of all the drugs in his system coaxing him to sleep. "I'm sorry, Phillips, I won't make fun of the Enquirer anymore, promise."

"It's not that," he said, shaking his head. "I'm just trying to remember exactly what I read last night. But it's hard to concentrate."

"Try to sleep," she told him.

"Was there," he tried to conjure up the memory, summon a clear image in his mind to break through the drug-induced fog, "in Nina's file, something about Bill St. John?"

"I think so." Her faced tensed, slightly. "He sent the last letter to Frielinghaus, telling him to kill Nina."

"I know him. He was one of my professors at Harvard."

"The letter was on Harvard stationery."

He fought to keep his eyes open. "There's something really weird going on. Doctor St. John is a harmless guy who does very important research on artificial organs. He couldn't be involved in anything wrong."

"I hope you're right," Jessica answered. She watched as Craig's eyelids quiver slightly as they fell over his eyes, and he succumbed to sleep.

The burgermeister hiccupped once more, and she left the room.

She returned to the cheery lobby and placed a call from a pay phone. With perfect German, she spoke to the receptionist. "Hello, please may I speak to Dr. Frielinghaus. Thank you. Hello, Doctor Frielinghaus, do you know who this is?"

"Nina! Is that you?"

"So you recognize my voice."

"Of course I recognize it. Why are you calling here--it's very dangerous."

"Doctor, this isn't Nina. My name is Jessica Nicholson. I came to your office yesterday and I took Nina's file from your receptionist's desk."

"Mein Gott." A pause. "You're from America, then?"

"Yes. Doctor, I was in Rio de Janeiro when Helena Valensia was killed, and in Kashmir when Trudy Downs was murdered. I know that Trudy's body was supposed to be sent to Munich--to you--and I've read Nina's file."

"Then you know..."

"About the experiment. And I know that Nina's life is in danger, and that you're trying to kill her."

"No!" he said into the telephone. "You don't understand anything at all. I am in a very delicate situation, but if things are handled right, Nina will be safe. You are endangering her life."

"I am?"

"Yes. You don't understand the delicacy of the situation. Let me meet you and explain."

Perhaps I can help you, too. You are also in grave danger."

Jessica paused, unable to decide whether to believe him. Nervously, she fingered the black phone cord. Finally, she said, "I can't trust you."

"You have to. It's not just your own life that's at stake--it's Nina's too."

"Where is Nina?"

"In a safe place."

"All right, I'll meet you, but in a public place with lots of people around."

"I'd prefer to meet you privately, but I understand your caution."

The doctor cancelled his afternoon appointments, and timidly, shirt buttoned up to the neck and necktie pulled taught, Frielinghaus walked through the door he had always passed by into the dark, steamy interior of the Playboy Pen. He spotted Jessica easily, sitting alone in the exact middle of the sea of round tables. The waitress smiled at him.

"Why are we meeting here?"

"Safety precaution," she answered, letting cigarette smoke escape through her lips. "They know me here. They wouldn't let anything happen to me."

"I see," he said, though he didn't.

The waitress took their order, a St. Pauli Girl and a glass of liebfraumilch.

"Now tell me," Jessica said, mentally bracing herself.

"What do you want to know?"

"What I am. What this experiment is all about."

He nodded his head. "Those are hard questions. I'm afraid I can't give you full answers, but I'll tell you everything I know. You have a right." He took a long sip from his beer, wanting to feel its alcoholic effects immediately. "Twenty-five years ago, I was a medical student at Harvard University. There were lots of foreign students then, all of us coming to America to get the best training we could, planning to return to our own countries to serve once we had received our degrees. One of my teacher was William St. John, a great man. I admired him.

"One day he gathered three of my fellow students and myself into his office and asked us to help him with a very elaborate experiment. He couldn't give us all the details, he said, until it

was over. He hoped we weren't impatient, he said, because it would take twenty-five years to complete. You see, he had implanted four women with five identical fetuses and he wanted to observe them as they grew in the different cultures where the mothers lived, and where we, as doctors, intended to serve.

I say serve, because we were all very serious and idealistic students then, wanting to do our best to serve mankind.

"We weren't told how these fetuses came to be, only that they were the result of years of research and that their identical nature had somehow been artificially induced. Our task was to watch the girls as they grew and report their development. We were given very detailed instructions about what to watch for. And we were told not to ever speak of this among ourselves, or with anyone else."

"And you followed Nina's development?"

"Yes." He smiled. "A beautiful girl. Like you."

"I gather from the letters that you disobeyed orders."

"I was curious. Though I didn't really know the goal of the experiment, I wanted to know how the other girls had developed. Steven Henley and I exchanged data, as you know."

"Doctor Frielinghaus, what has happened to Nina?" She stared directly into his eyes, forcing him to look at her even as he took another sip from his stein.

"I received a letter from Doctor St. John last year--I'm not sure if it's in Nina's file--instructing me that the experiment would soon be completed. The girls, women now, were to be killed and brought to Harvard in specially constructed cryogenic cases, human freezers, to preserve the tissue. He wanted me to coordinate the shipping of the cases through Munich, and he wanted me to help..." He brought his hand to his face.

"You couldn't do it, could you?"

"No." He shrugged his shoulder. "I found that I loved Nina. She is hiding now, in a safe place just outside of Munich. There are men here looking for her, to do the dirty work."

"The same men who killed Helena and Trudy?"

"Yes. I must pretend to help them, while I myself hide Nina."

"Don't they suspect you of hiding her?"

"I don't know for sure. Maybe. Perhaps I will suffer the same fate that befell Rene

Carracos. I only know that I must try to save Nina."

"Why don't you tell the police?" Her voice rose in anger. "Why didn't you stop him long ago?"

"Doctor St. John is a great can, I'm sure of it. I trusted him. Now it's too late, the killing has started. And there are others with him who are very strong, stronger than the police." He shook his head as he looked down at the empty beer stein. "God help us. You're in danger, too, you know. Perhaps you were smart when you slipped away from them, but now they must know where you are."

"I'll go to the police."

"No one will believe you. Your only hope is to stop him yourself. But I, unfortunately, cannot tell you how."

The topless waitress, seeing the empty mug, returned to the table. [in german] "Would you like another beer?"

"Nein," the doctor answered.

"Phillips, I've made the reservations, and as soon as you get out of here, we're flying to Boston."

Craig looked at Jessica, looked at the meal on his tray--Bratwurst, sauerkraut, and lime jell--looked back at Jessica. "The sooner we get out of this country, the better."

After leaving Doctor Frielinghaus, Jessica had spent the afternoon sitting in the square, watching the glockenspiel perform on the hour, thinking about all that she had learned. She still didn't have all the answers she wanted, though now she knew where to get them. But Jessica was sure of one thing. She was going to take her future in her own hands, possibly for the first time in her life.

"It's the new, assertive me," she announced.

"I could get into domination," Craig replied, slyly.

"No thanks, I don't look good in leather."

Craig made a stab at his bratwurst. "I can't believe that Dr. St. John has anything to do with this."

"According to Frielinghaus, Dr. St. John has been behind this all along."

"I don't understand it. When I was at Harvard, I worked closely with him, and he never once mentioned anything even remotely related to any experiment like this."

"What did you work with him on?"

"Artificial organ implants in animals, rabbits mostly. Nothing to do with genetics."

"Could he make clones?"

"Are you kidding? Scientists have only just learned how to clone single-celled bacteria, much less whole organisms. Cloning humans is decades in the future--if they ever do it. The moral implications are so big, people might not ever dare to do it. Dr. St. John couldn't possibly have been doing any advanced research in cloning--he never could've kept that under his hat."

"I told you exactly what Frielinghaus told me."

"I know. But it doesn't make sense."

"Do you know how to reach him when we get to Boston?"

"Of course. In fact, I was invited to go to a banquet honoring him next week. I wasn't planning on going, but I guess that under the circumstances I will."

"What kind of banquet?"

"He's just won the Whitney Macdonald award. 180,000 dollars scott free, to use anyway he wants. It's a researcher's dream. It certifies him as a great guy."

Jessica smoothed the folds on the lap of her blue, cotton skirt. Her fingers gripped the brown, tweedy fabric of the chair arms and she said, seriously, "Craig, I know that you have had a lot of respect for this doctor, but I think you should look at him a little more objectively. Everything we've found out shows that he's masterminded some sort of awful experiment, one that's affected me and my ...sisters, in a more far-reaching way than I think we know yet." She heard her voice rising, but concentrated to control her rising emotions. To keep her sanity, she knew she had to keep her rationality. "Furthermore, he seems to be partly responsible, maybe mostly responsible, for the deaths of Trudy and Helena. And for the attempts on my life. I'm sorry, Craig, but you have to face the facts."

No European country has embraced modern technology as willingly and lovingly as West Germany. Children are not taught to tell time by anything other than digital watches, and no German citizen would even consider adding a string of double-digit numbers without a calculator. For Craig, this meant a control panel on his hospital bed that could make it rise, fall and contort itself in more ways than he thought possible. After Jessica left the room, he spent ten minutes experimenting with the knobs and dials to make the bed assume just the perfect shape,

and his body lay snugly in its newly formed groove, like a waffle in its iron, as he mentally constructed charts and ripped them up, trying different combinations which each led to the same conclusion. William St. John, his mentor from Harvard, and the man he had most admired in his life, was ultimately responsible for all the horrible things he had seen happen. His mother had said that Dr. St. John wished Craig would give up writing and go into research. Would that research have led to finding Jessica dead, frozen in a cryogenic case brought to his laboratory?

The man Craig knew at Harvard had taken him under his wing, shown Craig nothing but warmth and kindness and he was honestly disappointed when Craig chose writing rather than biology as a profession. As it happened, Craig loved biology, and knew that he had a gift for it. But he couldn't stomach it. They would study the rabbits for a few weeks, observe them carefully before experimenting with the artificial organs. In that time, Craig always found himself becoming extremely fond of them, thinking of them as pets, and when it came down to it, he would always balk at cutting into them. Dr. St. John laughed at him, told him he'd get over it some time, and did it himself. But even though he advanced far ahead of most undergraduates, Craig couldn't get over his squeamishness and so he chose the bloodless profession of writing.

Bloodless until he met Jessica.

He looked over at the burgermeister, who finally had some solace from the hiccoughs and was sleeping comfortably on his back, his big Bavarian belly rising and falling with every breath. Jessica had returned to the hotel for a well deserved nap, and would come back to the hospital early that evening to pick him up upon his release. Early the next morning they would catch their flight to Boston, back to the place Craig had gone to college, the place where Jessica had been born.

PART FOUR

CAMBRIDGE

1958

Professor William St. John stepped from the Coop into Harvard Square, hectic as usual on the Saturday before the beginning of fall term. He stood for a moment on the curb across the street from the subway station, trying to remember the one errand still remaining to be done that morning. He barely noticed the bum siding up to him for a hand-out until he heard, "C'mon, mister, not even a dime?" St. John dug absently into his pocket and dropped a dollars's worth of change into the man's brown hands. "Good luck to you."

At thirty-two, St. John was the youngest tenured professor at Harvard. He had graduated from Yale with a bachelor's degree in chemistry at age nineteen, switched his interest to biology and gone through Harvard Medical School, his internship and residency in an unprecedented six years. For a year he was on the staff at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston; when he quit he was immediately wooed by Harvard for a prestigious research and teaching position. He could have been a brilliant surgeon, 'out Bill St. John wanted more. He wanted a Nobel prize.

He remembered the errand. Before heading back to his lab, he stopped at Out of Town News to pick up the latest copy of Science magazine. He flipped through the journal to find his own article, "The Hereditability of Trait in the Rabbit." He smiled at the opening page. An artist had drawn a cartoon showing three generations of criminal rabbits--grandpa rabbit was a burglar breaking into a neighboring rabbit hole and stealing a silver carrot serving dish, dad rabbit was a bankrobber stealing bunches of carrots from the bunny bank., and son rabbit was a crooked politician accepting a bribe, a bunch of carrots, of course.

"Dr. St. John, I read your article, and I think it's brilliant."

He looked up from the magazine at Sabrina Jamieson, a pretty blonde Radcliffe student who had been in his seminar the previous spring. "Why thank you. I was just looking at the illustration. Rather amusing."

"It's absolutely incredible the way you've been able to connect behavioral and biological traits and link them genetically."

"Well, only a few traits, and only in rabbits."

"Why do you work with rabbits and not humans?"

"Oh, I don't know," St. John. answered. "Rabbits are cuter."

"Are they?" she asked, her clear blue eyes sparkling at him.

He laughed slightly, awkwardly.

"Dr. St. John, my parents want me to take on a part-time job, and there's nothing I'd like more than to work in your lab. Do you need an assistant? I know my way around a lab, and your work is so fascinating, I wouldn't mind doing even the most mundane tasks."

He remembered that she had been a good student. A very good student, in fact. He had given her an "A," and he considered her far and away the smartest kid in the seminar. "All right," he said. "I'm sure I can find something for you to do. Come to the lab when school starts and we'll set up a schedule."

"Excellent!" she exclaimed, her face lighting up with a tremendous smile.

He returned to his small lab, tucked away in the 'casement of Edison Hall. Although he had only two tiny rooms for his work, both crammed with equipment, they were pristine and perfectly ordered. His desk, covered with neatly-piled stacks of books and journals, sat against the far wall of the first room, which was characterized by floor to ceiling cabinets filled with small microscopes, glassware, and assorted-sized rabbit cadavers preserved in formaldehyde. It was his brilliant work with rabbits that was bringing him attention, and he liked to have them displayed in this outer room.

The inside room held the dissecting tables, where the messy work was done. A small freezer for storing tissue dissected from the animals, dominated one wall, and was surrounded by other equipment he had been able to amass in the last five years. It was in this room, too, that he kept the row of petri dishes nobody knew about. The minute he entered his lab, he walked to this inner room and to the corner of the gray speckled formica counter. The seven petri dishes filled with a thick, blue liquid, were unobtrusively lined up on this counter. He selected the dish marked 47-B and took it over to the high power microscope set up by the window. With a piece of glass tubing, he dabbed a sample of the blue gelatin onto a glass slide and slipped it under the twin clasps in the microscope. He focused the instrument, bringing its magnification to 100x.

The cell was dividing.

His heart pounded.

Incredibly, his secret experiment was succeeding. He had been working on this for months--it was big. And now it was actually working. He had taken the ovum from a female rabbit and inserted the DNA, genetic instructions, from the pancreatic cells of a different rabbit. The ovum was dividing, growing as if it had been fertilized in the normal way, but the rabbit that it would become, could have nothing to do, genetically, with the female that donated the ovum. It would be an exact copy of the other rabbit. The DNA did not have normal genetic coding; the genes would not re-form into a new and unique combination. Should the ovum continue to divide, it wouldn't be a son or daughter, but an exact copy. A clone.

But only if it actually became a rabbit. Successfully implanting it in a surrogate mother was still a difficult step ahead. But surely creating the ovum clone was the key. An actual rabbit

clone was close at hand.

He laughed. He was alone in the lab, and he wished someone was there to celebrate with him. But he had been so secretive that no one assisted him on this particular experiment--the petri dishes on that particular shelf were strictly off limits to the students and other assistants who came to work there. He'd have to celebrate alone, so he took a beer, a Bud, from the mini-refrigerator in his office. He shook it so it would foam up, and when he flipped the top open it sprayed onto his desk. It felt kind of nice to be making a mess for a change.

He sat at his desk and reflected. Publication, recognition, was in the future, a year or two at least, but he wanted to tell someone now. All those old professors who waited years for a success like this one, and here he was, at age thirty-two, decades ahead of anyone else in the field. The beer tasted good.

There was a knock on his office door. He hoped it wasn't a student--he hated to have them see him with a beer in his hand.

It was Mort Drucker, a behaviorist in the Psychology Department. He had been a classmate of St. John's at Yale, and had taken four years, a ridiculous length in St. John's opinion, to get his Bachelor's degree, then another six to get his doctorate. But now he was at Harvard, in an assistant professorship. He was striving to make a reputation for himself, too, in the relatively new field of psychometrics--the measurement of mental capacity. Bill liked him because he wasn't as conservative as most Harvard professors; in fact, he was a bleeding-heart liberal.

"Billy the boy professor, drinkin' a beer in the lab. How 'bout our game of tennis?"

"Shit, I forgot all about it." He took another Bud from the refrigerator and tossed it to Drucker. "My experiment's a success, help me celebrate."

"All right--screw tennis. Which experiment are we celebrating?"

"It's a secret..." He burped. "...but I've got to tell someone. Might as well be you."

"I'm flattered."

St. John straddled a folding chair, resting his arms on the back. "I've cloned a rabbit."

"Cloned?"

"Yeah. Made an exact copy."

The psychologist stroked his van dyke, a remnant of his grad school days. "How?"

"It's kind of complicated. But I did it. Man, the big shots in this department aren't going

to believe it!"

"What do you mean a copy? Did you get a baby through artificial insemination, or something?"

"You're missing the point completely, Mortie. This rabbit is a new generation, but not a child. There's no recombination of genes, no evolution. He is an exact copy of only one parent. I've overcome the hardest obstacle, and I should be making real clone rabbits in a few months."

Drucker thought for a moment, then puckered his lips and let out a long whistle. "This is big, all right. Can you do it with people, too?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Maybe, I don't know. There's not much point in it, really. Bunnies or humans, experimentally it's much the same. Harvard isn't ready to clone humans."

"Are you kidding? These professors would want to make copies of themselves."

They laughed and had another beer. And another.

Drucker noticed a letter on the desk. It was on letterhead of the Shlockey corporation, a California-based organization which funded social research experiments. He couldn't believe his eyes. Just the night before, at the faculty club, he had gone on a diatribe against this organization. He detested the fact that a number of psychologists in the department accepted the corporation's money to continue their research. "What the hell is that bastard Shlockey writing you for?"

"Shlockey? He read an advance copy of my article in Science and totally misinterpreted it. Well, so do most people, if you saw the illustration. They think I'm saying that all behavior, including deviant and anti-social behavior, is biologically based. All I show, and only in rabbits, is that basic social activities, like foraging and teaching little bunnies the basics of life, seem to have biological and environmental impacts. It really isn't much of a study. I was surprised Science took it, in fact."

"That Shlockey is a mother-fucking racist--it figures he'd jump on this." Blood surged to his small, upturned nose and to his round cheeks. "He probably wants to apply your findings to Negro criminals. You're not going to take any money from him, are you?"

"I don't know. No, I mean. I haven't even answered his letter."

"I hate it when bastards like him have so much money. They can 'prove' anything they want."

"Don't get so upset about it. I'm not going to cooperate with him."

They started another six pack.

"You know," Drucker said, squeezing an empty red, white, and blue can in his fist, "it would be great to prove the bastard wrong."

"How? "

"He thinks that all behavior is biologically based, even though we know that it's clearly environmental."

"It's an old argument—nature vs. nurture. There've been plenty of studies and they've all been inconclusive."

"But those studies didn't have your clones. With a large group of exactly identical people, we could prove that behavior is environmentally, not biologically, based."

"They've done studies with identical twins."

"Identical twins aren't clones. For one thing, they're not the same as the parent, and for another, twins are only two people. We could do it with four, or six identicals."

"Hold on. I work with bunnies, not people."

"Don't be so goddamned close-minded. A genius like yours shouldn't be chained to bunny rabbits."

St. John was prone to agreement. "Do you know how much a study like this would cost?"

"I've already diverted thousands of dollars for my experiment. As it is, I'm short-funded already."

"Money's no object with Shlockey. Look around your lab. Your equipment is second rate, and Harvard doesn't give you nearly the space you deserve. You won't get decently equipped facilities until you're an old man here, no matter how good you are."

St. John glanced around the lab. He saw the ancient x-ray machine, the inexpensive deep-freezer, the tiny work space. "If we take the money from Shlockey, we'll have to do what he says."

The psychologist shook his head, vigorously. "We're much smarter than he is. That's the beauty of this whole thing. We'll take his money, you get a better lab, we run a perfect experiment, get some deserved recognition from the academic community, who knows, maybe even that Nobel prize you want so much. Best of all, we prove his racist theories wrong in the process."

"Let me think about it," St. John said, and tossed an empty can into the trash can.

"Good shot!"

He feigned disinterest, but soon agreed to adjourn his work for the afternoon.

By the beginning of spring semester, St. John and Sabrina were putting in twelve to sixteen, hours of hard work a day in the lab. They were filled With the adrenaline of nearing success. Finally it happened. Martha, a brown (\_\_\_\_\_) rabbit, gave birth to Frank, a white rabbit, no relation. Frank was an exact duplicate of Hank, a two-year-old Himalayan rabbit who had donated a few cells from his pancreas, only to have them turn into Frank, young enough to be his son, but not his son. They broke out the Becks.

A week later, the three partners, St. John, Drucker and Shlockey, met in the psychologist's office. Drucker always hosted these meetings, and made it a point to serve Bailey's Irish Cream Whiskey, which he personally detested, but which he knew to be Shlockey's favorite. He enjoyed brown-nosing Shlockey, making the supplier of their new-found wealth think he was loved. Drucker only regretted that he couldn't come right out and tell Shlockey that they were taking him for a ride. That would have to wait.

Robert Shlockey was a small, compact man, with a pencil thin, mustache in the style of Clark Gable, but without the intended effect. His face was staid, with the same judicious economy of movement as a praying mantis about to strike a smaller insect. But his hands moved quickly, for in them was the genius the world associated with him. With those hands he had developed the systematic-equalizer, the necessary piece of machinery to make the development of television possible, and that gave him the money to fund any projects which correlated to his own prejudices.

"Mort tells me you finally succeeded in cloning a rabbit."

He shrugged his shoulders modestly. "We've been close for a long time. We finally got our pay-off."

"I'm glad that my contribution to your lab has helped make this possible."

St. John noticed that Shlockey mentioned his contribution as often as possible.

"Billy-boy is amazing, all right," Drucker piped in. "So you don't think I've been slacking off, I've already got 10 candidates to show you for the implants once were ready to ...do humans." Proudly, he spread the ten folders before them, each marked with a woman's name. "Each one of these women is childless, unable to conceive, but able to carry a child through to term. They're all married, want children badly, and in each case either the husband or wife has blonde hair and blue eyes."

"Do you already know what the clones are going to look like?" Shlockey asked.

"We have a volunteer," St. John answered.

"Go on," Shlockey said, gesturing to Drucker.

He cleared his throat. "As you can probably tell from the names, they're from all over the world. You'll find socioeconomic profiles on the families and a description of the environment in which the child is likely to be raised."

Shlockey examined the folders. He read the names aloud. "Lily Edstan, Maria Lozano, Ethel Turner, Helen Nicholson, Helga Gunter, Cornelia Hodgman, Tanya Burbank, Clara Wilson, Lillian Downs, Julia Valensia. Where did you find these women?"

"Some are barren women who've come to the clinic trying to find a way to become pregnant. Some I've found myself. For instance Julia Valensia. I went to Rio, to a slum, and I looked for women who didn't have any children and who fit the prescribed description. Since they're completely uneducated about birth control, I had a hunch that childless women probably have tried, but not succeeded to have children."

"They do breed like rabbits, don't they?" Shlockey said, with a chuckle.

Bastard, thought Drucker. "You know it, Bob," he answered with a strained smile. "She's about the poorest. Any baby born there will have as miserable a life as possible."

"We'll use her," he said, flatly. "Who's the richest?"

"Helen Nicholson. She's Boston Brahmin, all the way through, and so's her husband. They've got a townhouse on Beacon Hill, a house on Martha's Vineyard, and a hideaway in Bermuda."

"Their baby's gonna be lucky."

Drucker nodded his head. "The rest are pretty much middle-class, some slightly better off than others."

"I don't care which you use," Shlockey said, waving his hand lightly in the air. "How many are we going with?"

"I thought five, among four women." He smiled slightly. He had thought of this particular twist the night before, just before going to bed, and he was proud of it. "We'll put two into one, comb--twins. As a control pair. If two are brought up under the exact same circumstances, they'll be a control for studying the others." He watched for the other's reactions. "We can make twins, can't we, Billy Boy?"

"Why not?" St. John replied.

"Tell me about this 'volunteer, " Shlockey said.

"She's my lab assistant," the biologist responded. "She's the only one other than ourselves who knows about this. I thought it would be safe to use her. She's a very neutral subject, comes from Upstate New York, middle class, Protestant, blonde hair, blue eyes."

"The perfect Aryan," Drucker said drily to Shlockey.

He passed over the comment. "I suppose she'll be fine, for a start.

But in subsequent groups, we'll want to study criminal Negroes, Catholics, Jews, Protestants—people we'd really like to learn about. Or at least people we'd like to collect data about to prove things we already know."

"The sky's the limit," Drucker said.

"How will you keep track of the babies, especially those in other countries?"

"A piece of cake," the psychologist responded. "Billy gets med students from all over the world who come to study at Harvard and then go back to their countries. His students adore him. They'll do whatever he asks of them. I'll design infant tests and forms for them to record their observations and they'll send them back to us regularly during the course of the experiment. Say, twenty-five years."

"That's a long time."

"We'll be able to analyze a lot of the data before then, but to be completely thorough, we should follow the ... girls ... well into adulthood."

"Then what?" the mantis asked, clasping his hands together.

"Oh, I don't know. I guess we leave them on their own, and hope they never meet." He chuckled. "With the diversity of backgrounds they're going to have, that isn't very likely."

"Hmm. Will you tell the mothers anything?"

"Are you kidding?" said Drucker. "They're going to think that Billy is performing a simple operation that'll help them and their hubbies have babies just the way everyone else does. We won't even say anything about implants."

"Well, Mort, it sounds like you've worked things out very thoroughly. I have just one reservation. Are you sure you can trust these medical students?"

"Absolutely," St. John answered. "We'll tell them as little as possible, but they can be trusted to follow instructions."

"Good. Very good. When do you expect to start the implants, Bill?"

"June, hopefully. Maybe even May."

Shlockey gave a nod of his head in satisfaction.

After he left, Drucker let out a sharp, superior laugh. "What a supreme ass-hole that man is. What a throwback. He expects all these clones to end up exactly the same, no matter where they live and how they're raised. Mark my words, the girl who's brought up on Beacon Hill is going to make a lot more of herself than the girl who has to survive the flavellas of Rio."

The decision to use Sabrina's cells for the first group of clones was arrived impetuously. The day Frank was born, and after they had drunk a beer, Sabrina said, casually, "You're close to cloning people now, aren't you?"

He breathed in deeply, savoring the question. "Yes, I am. We are. In theory, we could do it tomorrow."

"I think you've always wanted to work on people, rather than bunnies."

"No, that's not entirely true. I like working with rabbits, both because they're cute and fuzzy, and because anatomically I find them interesting. But the ultimate goal in this kind of research, of any medical research involving animals, is to be able to apply it to humans."

She put her slender fingers on his shoulder and massaged the tense muscles. "It must be scary to jump from animals to people."

"I guess. You're always afraid that you've forgotten something, that there's something you should be thinking about with humans that you didn't need to think about with bunnies."

"Does that worry you with the clones?"

He thought for a moment. "No. There's nothing I haven't thought about."

"You don't have to explain to bunnies what you're doing to them. What are you going to tell the mothers--or the babies?"

"Why tell them anything? The mothers will get pregnant, that's what's important to them. They couldn't bear children any other way, could they? And there's no reason to tell the children themselves. You don't tell kids when they're adopted, do you? Of course not. Let them think they're really the children of the people who raise them. Besides, if they knew what they were, it

could prejudice the experiment. Mort agrees with me completely.”

“You’re right, of course.” She stood behind him, continuing to massage his shoulders and he let his head fall back into her arms. “Who will you clone first?”

“Oh, I don’t know. It’ll be kind of tricky, because I think that we’ll have to tell people if we take their cells and make clones out of them. We wouldn’t want to break any copyright laws.” He laughed at his own joke.

“I’ll do it.”

“Do what?”

“Volunteer. You can take some of my cells and make clones of me. You’ll have my permission, and I can give Mort as detailed a background of my life as he needs for his study.”

“OK by me. It really doesn’t matter who we are, in the long run. Mmm, that feels good.”

The more he thought about it, the more St. John liked the idea of using Sabrina as the cell donor. She was intelligent, talented and beautiful, and it would be fascinating to see how that incredible potential would develop under different circumstances. If anyone could overcome the difficulties of the flavellas, it would be someone with her characteristics. And just think of the heights she could reach if she were raised with all the advantages of wealth from the very beginning of her life.

He took the cells from Sabrina's pancreas a month later, a minor operation that kept her on the operating table for only twenty minutes and in the hospital only one night. She was back to work in the lab three days later.

St. John was operating on a rabbit when she came into the lab, carrying a bunch of flowers. "I brought these back from the hospital. Thought they'd liven this place up." She saw the animal lying on its side on the table, its skull cut open. "What are you doing to Frank?"

"Brain section. We've watched Frank for three months now, he's full grown, and we've watched his brothers." There were ten other clones of the same rabbit, all born within a week after Frank. "They've all been tested in varying environments and the only thing left to do is see how those environments have affected the actual brain."

"Poor Frank."

"He's only a rabbit, after all."

"I suppose. I'll wash up and give you a hand."

"How are you feeling?"

"Great. I'm anxious to start separating the DNA from the cells you took."

"I hope you aren't squeamish studying your own genes."

"Not at all. Just a little squeamish about Frank."

They began the long process of identifying the double helix of nucleic acids and taking it out of its cellular home and putting it into a deep freeze.

In June they were ready for the first operation, on Lily Edstan, the wife of an assembly-line worker at the BMW plant in Munich. Mort Drucker found her through a clinic in Germany and brought her to Harvard, telling her that a wonderful philanthropist in Switzerland had chosen to make her dream of having a child come true. She, like the other women too poor to come to Cambridge, accepted the god-send at face value, and happily accepted the stipulation that they never tell anyone, their husbands and daughters included, about the simple operation which would miraculously allow them to finally have a child.

The next implant was performed on Helen Nicholson, whose chauffeur drove her to Massachusetts General Hospital in a 1954 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow. The next week, Drucker escorted Julia Valensia to Brigham and Women's Hospital after her first airplane ride ever. Lillian Downs was the last, implanted with twins in August.

The operations were simple and quick, and the women were able to return to their husbands within two days. St. John insisted that they return to Boston to give birth, for he wanted to be present at each one.

Lily Edstan arrived at the hospital a week before her due date, huge with child. Her blonde hair was bobbed, her cheeks round and red. "She doesn't look a thing like my mother," Sabrina commented to St. John.

"No one expects their children to look just like them. She'll see a baby with blonde hair and blue eyes and be satisfied."

As the birth day approached, the excitement mounted in the lab. Although he projected a cool visage, Dr. St. John was nervous as hell. Perhaps he had overlooked something. Perhaps there was something different about cloning humans. He wouldn't sleep completely soundly until he held the baby in his hands.

Drucker was anxious to begin his experiments immediately, intending to administer tests to the babies within minutes of their birth, to discern how the differing environments had affected development in the womb.

Sabrina was anxious to see herself as a baby.

But she wasn't present at Nina Edstan's birth. St. John was unable to reach her when the midnight call came to him from Cambridge General. The birth went perfectly, triumphantly, and the doctor came out of the delivery room glowing with self-satisfaction, leaving Drucker to conduct his observations.

A young woman, her hair in curlers under an olive-colored scarf, ran up to him. It was Wendy Hiller, Sabrina's roommate. "Dr. St. John, thank God you're here. Sabrina's been in a horrible accident?"

Where is she?"

"Here. They brought her to this hospital."

He ran through the halls to the emergency ward. The nurse on duty recognized him. "Where's Sabrina Jamieson?" he demanded.

"Is she that poor girl who was in the car accident? She's in operating room 3. Dr. Sinclair is attending."

When he pushed the double door of the operating room open he looked immediately to the heart monitor. But it registered nothing.

Helen Nicholson delivered a week and a half later, and Julia Valensia a week after that, but St. John's heart wasn't in it. He tried to disassociate himself from the babies he was bringing into the world, tried not to think of Sabrina as he looked into each pair of new, blue eyes. The surge of triumph he had felt when he delivered Nina Edstan vanished the moment he learned that Sabrina had died. Now he was going through the motions of his experiment without any real satisfaction.

The twins were due the first week of August. Lillian Downs went into heavy labor early in the morning on the third, and fifteen hours later she still hadn't given birth. There were complications and she died after giving birth to two perfectly healthy, identical girls.

St. John was visibly shaken as Lillian Downs' life slipped away from him. He had never seen a death in the operating room, not even during his residency, and he certainly did not believe it could happen while he was the attending surgeon. After the body was wheeled out of the room he quickly exited, peeling off his rubber gloves and throwing them to the floor. Drucker caught up with him in the post-op room.

"Don't take it so hard, Bill. It wasn't your fault. There were complications you couldn't control."

"No, Mort, it is my fault."

"You weren't the only doctor there. Sinclair couldn't do a thing, either, and he's a god at this hospital.

"You don't understand," he said loudly. "I never should have put twins in that woman. Dammit!" He pounded the wall with his fist. "I should have seen that she couldn't handle giving birth to twins. It was obvious, really, I just wasn't thinking about her welfare. Damn this whole experiment. It's cursed. From the first birth, it's been cursed."

Drucker put a hand on his colleague's shoulder. "It isn't your fault. If anyone should be blamed, it's me. I was the one who wanted the twins in Downs."

"But you couldn't know."

A week later they met with Shlockey.

"I want to discontinue the experiment," St. John. said, shortly.

"Don't be ridiculous," responded the funder. "The five babies are all perfectly healthy. The experiment's a huge success."

"Some success. One mother died in childbirth, and we're to blame."

"Come now, mothers die in childbirth all the time. It has nothing to do with this experiment. Actually, it's rather beneficial. This way, Mort can study the effects on children raised in single-parent homes. That interests you, doesn't it?" he asked.

"You're a bastard," Drucker said.

"Am I? And I thought you liked me," he countered, drily. "Well, this is all irrelevant, because the experiment is only just beginning. These girls were only the test case. We have a lot more sets of clones to send out into the world."

We're not doing any more," the biologist insisted.

"But we are, Doctor St. John. I hope you don't think I've invested my time and money only to have five copies of your mistress roaming the world." He paused. "I'm sorry, that was uncalled for. Your willingness to dismiss this project has caught me by surprise, put me off my balance. I have been nothing but deadly serious about my interest in this venture. I want a group of Negro clones distributed to different environments, a group of Oriental clones distributed to different environments, and I want the same done with Catholics, one Jews. That was the agreement, and that is why I have agreed to fund your work." His voice had reached a peak of anger. Now he brought it under control. "I'm afraid that you're both committed to continue."

"We're not going to," St. John stated, flatly.

"You made an agreement."

"I'm sorry. If you want, you can take away all the equipment you've supplied Toy lab."

"I don't give a good goddamn about the equipment! You're committed, both of you." His hands flew through the air, gesticulating wildly. "Doctors, you are both at very tender stages in your careers. You especially, Dr. Drucker, but you too, Dr. St. John. Your ethics in this whole experiment have hardly been beyond question. Cloning people is not exactly an activity wildly endorsed by the Harvard administration. Nor is transporting poor women from the slums of South America to Boston and implanting them with babies that aren't their own. I don't even have to mention the case of Mrs. Downs whose death you attribute, Dr. St. John, to your own negligence. Criminal negligence under the law, I should imagine. I, personally, don't give a fuck about these things, out Harvard does, and so, I imagine, do a lot of people."

"You are an incredible bastard," the psychologist said, once more.

"I at least, Dr. Drucker, have been nothing but honest throughout our relationship."

Two days later St. John gathered four of his students, all on the verge of graduating in June, in his lab and Drucker and he explained, in very sketchy terms, the experiment and what they wanted each of them. to do. The young doctors represented as diverse backgrounds as had the mothers--Rene Carracos was a brilliant student from Brazil, Steve Henley was from a wealthy London family, Rolf Frielinghaus was an earnest student from West Germany, and Thomas Rogers was a poor kid from Connecticut who studied hard and made it into Harvard. Each was flattered that Dr. St. John had chosen him to participate in this extremely unusual, and important, experiment.

"Rolf, Nina 's assigned to you." Drucker handed him a folder with an instruction packet for recording observations and administering tests, as well as the necessary information about the baby's birth and first few days. "Steve, you have the twins." He handed Henley the Downs' packet.

"Do I get paid double?" Henley joked. "Actually, Bill, I'm happy to do as much as I can."

"What a brown-nose," Rogers whispered into Carracos' ear.

"What's that, Tom?" St. John asked.

"Nothing. You know that I'm going to Brazil for only two years, don't you?"

"We sure do," Drucker responded. "Rene will be in Boston for two years, so he'll look after Jessica Nicholson while you look after Helena Valensia. Then, you'll simply switch. It won't affect the experiment."

He handed both men their folders.

"What do we tell the girls when they're old enough to understand?" Rogers asked.

"Absolutely nothing," Drucker said, sharply. "It isn't our place to do that. It can only hurt them, in the long run."

"I suppose it wouldn't be very- nice to find out that you're a clone, after thinking you're just a normal person like everyone else," Frielinghaus said, seriously.

"At least you wouldn't worry about an identity crisis," Carracos joked. They all laughed.

"We're never allowed to tell them?" Rogers continued.

"No, it would seriously endanger the experiment ever to tell them," Drucker responded. Rogers looked into Drucker's intense eyes then looked away. "All your instructions are in your packets. If you ever have even the slightest question, don't hesitate to call me or Bill anytime. And one more thing, you're not allowed to talk to anyone other than Bill or me about this under any circumstances. That includes talking about it among yourselves. I'm sorry, but it's the only way to ensure we don't prejudice the experiment."

After the four students had left the office, Drucker commented to St. John, "Can we trust them?"

The biologist shrugged his shoulders. "Sure. They're good men."

St. John began to write his memoirs that night. After the events of the past two years, he felt his life was important enough to set it to paper for posterity.

For years he kept a record of the experiment in prose form, expecting to incorporate it into a text when he was an old man, and above criticism for any of the questionable practices in his youth.

--It is now a year since Nina Edstan, the miracle child was born. A year since Sabrina died, too. A curious coincidence. Nina does well in Germany, and so do her sisters throughout the world. Mortie is pleased as punch with the results so far. He says he is already able to see specific differences in the children. They seem of nominal importance to me. Shlockey is uninterested in the Sabrina clones. At his insistence, we have implanted twelve mothers with clones derived from a Negro convicted of a felony. He wants to prove that it's in the genes, that even, the ones brought up in wealthy homes will prove to be criminals. Mortie, of course, insists that only the ones brought up in the slums will become thieves, like their "father." My God, why am I a part of this?

--Six groups of clones are off in the world. I'm getting pretty skillful at this, and with the exception of Mrs. Edstan, not one casualty. Shlockey says that he will be satisfied with one more group. Is this only "for the tire being?" Conceivably, he could force me to make them ad infinitum. But it's gone too far already. Seven groups is enough. It bores me. The process is so easy. It takes too much time away from my other work, work that I can tell others about. As soon as this last group is born, and out of my hands, I think I'll go back to my bunnies.

--Success is sweet, and good things always come at once. Yesterday, I delivered a paper on pulmonary circulation in the rabbit at an international meeting of cardiologists, headed by Robert DeBakey, at MIT, and received a standing ovation. It could lead to lots of research money, which is more or less superfluous; but at Harvard, money equals prestige. More importantly-, my proposal of marriage was accepted by Amy Barnes. Dean Barnes is thrilled at the match. And Dina turned ten. The world has had clones for a decade, and doesn't even know it.

--Forgive the handwriting for this entry. Mortie brought over a bottle of champagne, which we drank, and then we polished off a fifth of Johnny Walker Black. He's finally been made a full professor. In our drunken state, we thought of all sorts of ways to knock off Shlockey. Mortie wants to paint him in blackface and handcuff him to a lightpost in the middle of Harlem. Even if people leave him alone, he'd be liable to die of fright. My method is less subtle. I think I'll inject him some disease, maybe norexia from one of my sick bunnies. By the end of the evening, we were reduced to drawing pictures of him, hanging them on the wall, and throwing darts at them.

--Harvard is encouraging me to do research in artificial organs. The dean of the Medical School told me that Harvard should be "on the cutting edge" of this field, and that I was just the man to be heading the research. He said that everyone "at the top" has had their eye on me "for some time," and consider me one of their biggest assets. I was ever so modest as I accepted his praise. Imagine, seventeen years since the first clone was born, and now I'm considered a great asset. I haven't done anything even vaguely as important in all this time.

--Today I saw a photo of Helena Valensia. It's the first picture I've seen of any of the girls from that group in years. She looks now as I remember Sabrina to have looked. But she plays the piano. I don't think Sabrina did. Perhaps when she was a child. In personality, none of the others seem to me like Sabrina. Not one of the girls is interested in biology, or science in general for that matter. Jessica Nicholson is applying to Harvard and her scores and grades are good enough to get her in. But that could be awkward. I'll have to exert my influence at the admissions department. She'll be happy at Yale.

--I read in The New York Times' "Science Watch" that a researcher in Germany thinks that he might, in a few years, be able to clone a simple bacteria. Well, bully for him. In England, they think they might be able to implant fertilized ova into barren women. I say it can't be done!

--Time magazine calls my artificial research "at the forefront of American science" and, I imagine, Newsweek will follow suit in their next issue. They even ran a very nice picture. I think that while I wasn't looking I became a respected old man of science. Everybody thinks I'm sixty-five, for some reason.

--"60 Minutes" is doing a segment on me, and I've been promoted. Why didn't I start out with artificial organs? It's a far more respectable field than cloning. I only wish that I had more than one or two good students a year. I need their youth and energy. The ones creative enough to be good scientists are usually interested in other things as well, though, and I lose more than I keep. Science isn't glamorous enough for them.

St. John learned he had won the Whitney MacDonald award for Excellence seven months before the May banquet. The MacDonald award, the most prestigious national prize in biology, was given out only once every three years. Its recipient received 180,000 dollars to use any way he pleased, without having to account for its expenditure in any way. In short, it guaranteed absolute independence, a researcher's dream.

The day after receiving notice of the award, Shlockey flew to Boston for a private meeting with St. John. Shlockey, too, had been in the public eye recently, for developing a new kind of micro-chip that further advanced the growing computer technology.

Shlockey had never been in St. John's lab before. Every meeting had been in Drucker's office or lab. This was, in fact, the first time the two men had been alone together.

"Congratulations, Bill, for the MacDonald prize."

"How did you find out about it? I only received word yesterday."

"Oh, I've got my ear to the ground." Shlockey took off his gray felt hat and unwrapped the heavy wool scarf around his neck. It was only November, but to the Californian, the cool fall weather was akin to winter, and he wore thermal underwear under his three-piece suit, and a thick, dark blue coat over that. "Does Mort know about this meeting?"

"You told me not to say anything--I didn't."

He sat comfortably in the suede swivel chair at St. John's desk and clasped his hands behind his head. "You know, Bill, I've been thinking about our experiment. It's been twenty-three years since the first group of clones went out, and nineteen since the final group was released into the world. Mort's done a great job collecting data--I couldn't be happier.

But you know, I don't think the results have really reflected the truth. Not to my satisfaction. In fact, I don't think there's any point in following the progress of the clones any longer. After all, twenty-five years is a random cut-off. Why waste six more years watching them, when the data is basically useless?"

"You want to end the experiment?"

"In its present stage--yes."

St. John's mouth curved into a smile. "I'm delighted. Well, I suppose this ends our relationship."

"Not entirely. Like I said, I've been doing a lot of thinking, about the clones, and about computers."

"Computers?"

"They're really amazing things, almost like humans in many respects. Fascinating things. You should know, you've got a personal computer in the lab, don't you?"

"Three of them."

"Ah. Well, I've been thinking that people are really just like computers. The thing about computers is, they can only do what they're designed to do. You can plug in all the software you want, but it's the hardware that ultimately determines what the machine are capable of. You see, Mort believes that its environment that determines how a person turns out. He's a software man. But, no matter what the data this experiment has generated shows, I'm still a hardware man myself. And there's really only one way to prove it."

"What?"

"Examine the hardware."

St. John shifted uncomfortably in his chair. "How?"

"Take the machine apart. Really take a look at the control center."

St. John knew exactly what Shocked was suggesting. The biologist had done the same thing to rabbit clones--it was routine. But to human clones?

"Brain sections?"

"Exactly," said Shocked. "Let's just see how much environment has really affected the way these people operate. I think we can show that the clones that came from bad people are still bad where it counts, in the hardware. The same goes for the good clones, and all of them in between."

"I can't. No. This has gone too far, your not thinking of the consequences."

"Oh, I am, Dr. St. John. We went too far long ago, and now the consequences are clear, I don't think you realize them, though."

"What are they?" he asked, softly.

"You've become pretty famous with all this artificial organ business, Dr. A regular idol in biology. I saw you on television last Sunday, and it looked to me like you're enjoying all this attention. Unfortunately, if events from your past were revealed, it could really shatter the saintly image everyone seems to have of you. It's sort of like what happened to Miss America, isn't it."

"This is blackmail."

"No, not blackmail." I simply expect you to complete the experiment as you agreed some twenty odd years ago."

"But I can't commit murder."

"Sure you can."

## THE PRESENT

Jessica peered through the window over the sleek, hawk-like wing of the Concord as the New York skyline, a graph from the Dow Jones Industrials, came into view. Once landed at Kennedy Airport, they connected within minutes for a Boston flight. By late afternoon they were safely nestled in the small house of Craig's aunt in Brookline. This seemed the safest place for them to stay secreted away. Jessica's house on Beacon Hill would be too obvious a place for the killers to look.

Craig's Aunt Gussie, a tall, thin woman with bad taste in furnishing, had been given only an hour's notice that they would be coming. Barely enough time to wipe the plastic coverings on the blue vinyl living room set with a damp clod:, and to dust off the plastic palm trees which stood under the reproduction of Gainsborough's "Blue Boy." After a meal of chicken livers and potato lakes--"If you had called earlier I would have made a brisket"--Craig swore his aunt to secrecy about their visit. Only if she absolutely couldn't stand not telling anyone could she call his mother. There was little risk of the secret getting out of Queens.

Late in the evening they jimmied the lock to St. Johns lab. "Its just as I remember it," Craig commented. "Dr. St. John is compulsive about keeping it spotless."

"Does he conduct all his experiments here?" she asked, her eyes fixated on a rack of test tubes on one counter.

Craig nodded. He walked to a row of filing cabinets next to the desk. "I'm not sure what we're going to find here, but I can't think of any better place to start."

"What will you look up--'clones?'"

"You're in pretty light spirits."

"If I laugh, 'tis that I may not weep."

"Byron!"

"Very good."

"I'm not sure what to look up. I'll try the doctors' names, and the names of all your sisters. Why don't you look on his desk. There may be a stray letter or something that will help us out."

As Craig checked file after file, Jessica sorted through the neatly ordered piles of papers and correspondence on St. John's oak desk. The draft of a short article about the rabbit nervous system for Scientific American, a letter from Morley Safer thanking him for appearing on "60 Minutes," a copy of a student's thesis to review. She looked through the drawers. Paper, pens, a calculator, a pair of scissors, some small scientific reference manuals. An appointment book. It was one of those lush art calendars—Dutch paintings at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. She took the calendar from the drawer and set it on the desk, opening to the most recent entries. She found that day's opposite a Rembrandt studio scene: "Meet Amy for lunch at One Potato, Two Potato; Paper in to New England J.; Order more slides." She scanned the pages of the previous month.

"Craig..."

"Yeah?"

"Listen to the entry for May 7: '6a.m., meet Boyoga, Johnson Hall.'"

"Tomorrow's May 7—so Boyoga's in Cambridge."

"Where's Johnson Hall?"

"About a block from here. Near the physics lab. Something must be happening if they're meeting that early."

She looked at her watch. "It's three o'clock now."

"It's not worth going back to Brookline for three hours, and I don't think we're going to find anything else here. Could you stand going to the river and sitting on a bench with your arm around me until the sun comes up?"

"I could stand it."

Half an hour before St. John's appointed rendezvous, the pair hid themselves behind a hedge lining a building across the courtyard from Johnson Hall. At six o'clock sharp, Boyoga and St. John appeared at the columned porch of the hall, shook hands, and stood watching the street expectantly. At ten after, a long freight truck pulled up to the curb and two teamsters got out, one handed St. John a clipboard and pen and watched him sign a form while the other unlocked the rear door and took out a dolly. Boyoga jammed the door of Johnson Hall open and guided the workers in as they hauled crate after wooden crate from the truck to the building.

"Those are the same as the crates we saw in Kashmir," Jessica said.

"I'll bet I know what's inside."

“There can’t be that many sisters. Could there?” She pressed his hand in her own.

“I don’t know. I doubt it, though. From what Frielinghaus told you, it sounded like you only have four sisters. But that doesn’t mean there aren’t other groups.”

“Of sisters?”

“Or brothers. Who knows? We’ll have to go into the building and find out.”

“But how will we find the boxes?”

“I’ve been in the building before. All the upper floors have classrooms. They must be putting the crates in the basement.”

“Should we go in when they leave?”

“Too dangerous. It’s likely that St. John or Boyoga will show sometime and see you. That would be too convenient—finding you in a room full of those cryogenic cases. We should wait until nightfall.”

She agreed.

Altogether, twelve boxes were unloaded. When the workers finished they drove away. St. John said a few words to Boyoga and walked away from the hall, toward Harvard Yard. Boyoga watched him for a moment, then went into the building.

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After he saw that the crates were safely moved to the storage area, St. John stopped at Au Bon Pain for a croissant, brought it to his office, ate it, poured himself an eight ounce glass of vodka and downed it. He hadn't looked in the cryogenic cases yet, only supervised as they had been brought to Johnson Hall the last few weeks. He would start the brain sections tomorrow. Only one task remained--to tell Drucker.

He refilled his glass halfway. When St. John drank in the morning, it was vodka. Stolichnaya didn't leave an odor on his breath. Drucker arrived at noon, unaware still of the events since St. John's private meeting with Shocked. When St. John called him the week before, he couched the invitation for lunch in casual, let's-get-together-to-catch-up terms.

"Hey, Billy!" he patted the biologist warmly on the shoulder. "How 'bout a drink before lunch?"

"Great. I'll have a scotch. On the rocks." He stroked his full, professorial beard.

St. John poured out two glasses from a bottle of Glenfiddich be kept behind the Petri dishes in one of the cupboards. They made small talk. They drank their drinks. St. John refilled them.

"I think," St. John said, finally, "we should start wrapping up data analysis for the experiment."

"Wrapping up?"

"Yeah. It's been twenty-five years since the Sabrina clones, and nineteen years since the last set. Shocked and I think..."

"You've spoken to Shocked recently?"

"Uh-huh," he responded, casually. "And we both agree it's time to ...wrap up the experiment."

"I don't know, Billy. It's true we have most of the data we need, but if we halt everything now we won't be able to compare the groups to each other properly." He took a sip of scotch. "But on the other hand, maybe the sooner we end this thing the better."

"My opinion exactly. And Shocked's, too. He's eager to tabulate all the data. He still thinks he'll prove his theory."

Drucker laughed. "The man's a fool. All the preliminary results show him wrong, wrong, wrong. If anything, I would expect him to extend the experiment in the hopes of something suddenly happening."

"Like what?"

"Oh, I don't know. Like someone from the 'B' series committing murder."

"Shocked is expecting something to happen, Morris."

"What do you mean?"

"He thinks we'll find something out that will prove his theory. But it won't be by examining their behavior--it'll be by examining them."

"What are you talking about? They're clones, aren't they? They're exactly the same."

"Not necessarily. It's possible that they've changed on the inside since they were born. That their ...how can I explain it ...their hardware has changed even though their behavior doesn't yet reflect it."

"Their brains?"

"You got it. It's really pretty routine. I used to do it with my bunnies."

"Do what? What the hell are you talking about?"

"Brain sections. Examine the control centers in the brains to see how they differ from one another. Personally, I don't think it will really change the results of the experiment, but Shocked's really into it."

Drucker stared blankly at him. "Let me get this straight. You want to cut into the clones' brains?"

"Uh huh. Once we do that, we'll be done with the experiment and Shocked will be off our backs once and for all."

"Billy, what are you saying? Slicing into their brains will kill them."  
"I know."

"I don't believe we're even having this conversation. Christ, we've already sunk pretty low in this experiment--but murder."

"It's not murder. It's part of the experiment. It sounds gruesome, Mortis, but we ha- to do it."

"No we don't. Shocked can't make us do that."

"He already has."

His breathing became heavier. "My God, Billy, you haven't been doing brain exams on them?"

"No, not yet. But soon. Maybe as soon as tomorrow."

"How are we going to get the clones to come here? Send them a mailing? 'Please report to Dr. St. John's laboratory, Harvard University, for your brain section. It won't hurt a bit, and will further the cause of science.'"

"They're already here, Mortie. They're dead."

"Dead?"

"Shocked hired some people to bring them here dead. They're perfectly preserved in cryogenic cases until I can operate."

"All of them?"

"Almost. There are still a couple these men haven't been able to find. But they will."

"So all the clones are dead and you're going to do brain sections on them?"

"Yeah."

"And there's nothing I can do about it?"

"There's nothing we can do about it."

The latch unfastened easily, and Craig lifted the lid. Helena's nude body, perfectly preserved, lay in the smooth box. "It is her."

Jessica brought her slender hand to Helena's pale face. Her skin was cold to the touch. Between Helena's breasts was a small, clean round hole the size of a .45 bullet. It gouged into her chest like a small crater. The wound looked fresh. It had been scrubbed, and the blood treated so it wouldn't clot.

"That's where Boyoga shot her," Craig commented.

She stared at the body, at Helena's beauty, even in death. "I think she was the prettiest out of us all. She had the most fire." Jessica gently lifted Helena's hand. It was more muscular than her own and, unlike Jessica's smoothly manicured nails, Helena's fingertips were characterized by uneven, short nails. They had grown slightly past death, longer than they had ever been, for in life the pianist kept her nails cut back to the fleshy part. Jessica released her hold on the hand. The elbow hit the metal with a low thud, the forearm extended and the hand fell back into place next to the body.

Craig closed the lid and replaced the latch.

"Let's look in the other cases. I want to see the extent of this experiment." They walked to the "B" series cases. Opened, they revealed a dozen identical Black men, each about twenty-one years old, with strongly defined cheekbones. Some had slim, feminine shoulders, others were more powerfully built. One had a pierced ear. All had the stubble of a few day's growth of facial hair.

The six coffins in the "C" series held the bodies of as many young Chinese women, each with small features and fine, black hair. Their bodies were more variously shaped than any other group. Some were small--perhaps under five feet tall and weighing only 90 pounds. Others were more robust--well over five feet tall, and weighing up to 110 pounds. Two had faces already characterized by deep lines. One had a long scar beneath her abdomen where a caesarian section had been performed. Her face seemed the oldest of all those in her group.

Jessica stared at the face incredulously. "What were they trying to prove? What could they gain from all this?"

"Do you want to open the others?" Craig asked.

"No. I think we should go to the police now. There's enough here to convince them to arrest St. John."

"Not really. We still don't have any positive proof other than Frielingletter connecting him to the experiment, and that's not solid enough evidence for the police. If the cops come here now, St. John will be tipped off and if he's smart--and believe me, he is--he'll destroy any evidence connecting him to this. We've got to get into his records concerning this experiment; then we can go to the police."

They heard the shifting sounds of something in the hallway. "What was that?"

"Don't worry--there are rats in the basement here. I saw one before," she assured him.

"Christ. As if this place weren't creepy enough."

"We've got to find a way to get these bodies out of here, give them decent burials," Jessica mused.

"Let's get out of here," Craig said. "We've seen enough."

He gathered his instruments into the leather bag. Jessica took one last look at the rows of gleaming boxes and switched the lights off.

Outside Johnson Hall, the air was warm and heavy with humidity. The courtyard in front of the building was luxuriant with newly lain sod, the lines between the strips of farm-grown and transplanted grass still visible. In the distance, a pair of sprinklers on either end of another lawn chugged steadily, spraying the thick green mats with arcs of water.

"I'm going to take my gear to Drucker's office and try to get into his files."

"I'll go with you."

He shook his head. "It's too dangerous. If they find you, they'll kill you. They have no reason to want me dead. You go back to my aunt's, and I'll meet you there in an hour. Then we can decide our strategy."

"All right," she assented. She didn't reveal to Craig her own plans. She knew he'd disapprove.

She kissed him and they parted.

At the side of the building, behind the thick trunk of an ancient oak tree, Antonio Boyoga hesitated, debating whether to follow Craig or Jessica.

Jessica walked south from the building, toward Harvard Square. Craig walked in the opposite direction, toward William James Hall, the home of the psychology department's laboratories and offices.

Boyoga chose Craig.

The reporter whistled a tune from his childhood as he followed the path out of the courtyard and into the area behind the zoological museums. He began to sing, "Whistle while you work. La bee da do du us day."

"Snow white and the seven, an, dwarves, no?"

Craig halted. "Who's there?"

"Turn around and look. You recall me?" Boyoga stroked his mustache lightly with the tip of his handgun. "Did you have a good visit to the little cemetery in the basement'." Craig's eyes darted around the lot, trying to ascertain if the killer was alone. He looked for escape routes in the dark hallways between the buildings. "What do you want?"

"What do you think?"

"You can put your gun away. I'm not going anywhere."

The Spaniard spread his thick lips in a toothy grin. "Are you sure you aren't carrying any pens with you?"

"No, I'm switching to word processors."

"Put your bag down, amigo." With the .45, Boyoga pointed to the ground between them, and Craig tossed his tools onto the grass. They clanked loudly.

"Your hands up, amigo," he directed. Slowly, aiming the gut. at Craig's heart, Boyoga walked toward him, then extended his hand and patted his pockets and chest. "I an happy you don't carry a gun. They are very dangerous. All right, senior turn around."

"You really don't need that thing, you know. I'm as gentle as a kitten."

"Unfortunately, I at, a very, ah, cowardly can. This gun helps me to overcome my natural shyness." He pushed the sun barrel hard against Craig's spine. Boyoga's voice tightened. "Walk

forward, slowly."

The pain rode up Craig's spine, and he obeyed. They walked across the courtyard, toward the biology labs. Craig kept his hands raised as Boyoga followed behind, pointing his gut toward the center of his captive's back.

Craig was on the sidewalk. Boyoga, now ten feet behind, stepped on a petal nozzle buried in the thick grass. The sprinkler came to life, and water blasted out suddenly. "A-ii!" the killer yelled and, losing his footing, slipped onto the grass. His gun went off, wounding the lawn. Craig bolted between two buildings.

Boyoga, his front soaked from the spray, scrambled to his feet and followed.

Craig knew these buildings well, and he slipped into a recess in the facade of the physics building. Boyoga ran past, and swiftly, Craig sprinted across the path. Boyoga spotted him. He ran along the side of the building, pushing hard against the pavement with the balls of his feet, forcing them to spring him forward quicker. He was in front of the (\_\_\_ - \_). A huge bronze statue of a rhinoceros stood above him. Craig was hyperventilating. The humid air was still. He felt sure that Boyoga could hear his renting, and he stuck two fingers into his south and bit down or, them. He felt like throwing up. It was almost a relief when the gun butt hit him in the back of his head, and he fell unconscious against the marble base of the statue.

"Wake up, amigo," Boyoga entreated him, slapping him lightly on the cheek. Craig's eyes opened, and the Spaniard pulled him to his feet. "I don't want to lose you again.."

They walked to the biology labs once again, this time using the sidewalk. Craig rubbed the back of his head. "Unlock it," Boyoga commanded, handing Craig the key to the lab entrance. "To the second floor."

They weren't going to St. John's office, Craig knew. That was on the fifth floor. He hoped to God that some nerdy graduate student would be working late into the night in the building.

Boyoga directed him to noon 218. Light escaped from under the door. They heard a computer printing out a document. "Shit!" the Spaniard grunted. "Abre Is puerta."

Craig turned the knob and pushed the door open. A man leaning over the printer, watching the data emerge, looked up at him and stood erect. "Who are you?" He saw Boyoga. "W'hat the hell are you doing here'."

"I have found an old friend of mine. He was making a trip to the cemetery with Jessica Nicholson."

Drucker's brow tensed. "Where is she?"

Boyoga shrugged his shoulders.

"What's his name?" the psychologist demanded.

Boyoga jabbed the gun into Craig's side. "What's your name, amigo?"

"Craig Phillips."

"Where is Jessica Nicholson?" Drucker asked.

"I don't know."

"I'd better get Bill."

"Take your time," Boyoga told the psychologist as he left the room. "Perhaps I can convince him to direct us to the slippery young lady."

"I don't know where she is," Craig repeated himself when the door had closed.

"Don't worry, señor, I won't make you tell me where your friend is. If Doctor Drucker had not been here, I would have had the time to, ah, coax the information out of you before killing you. But since he will return soon, I think I should shoot you right away."

Craig stared at the gun in Boyoga's hand. "You can't kill me. St. John won't want you to."

"What's he going to do--call the police on me?"

"You have no reason to shoot me."

"No?" He extended his arm and tensed his finger around the trigger. "Señor, I don't think you are such a good amigo after all. No, my brother did not think so either."

The door swung open and St. John., who had run down the three flights from his lab, entered the room. "Craig!" He glared at Boyoga. "Put your gun down," he yelled at the killer. Boyoga hesitated, then dropped his arm. "You only put off the inevitable."

"Hello, Doctor St. John."

"How the hell did you get involved in this mess?"

"He was with the girl, Jessica Nicholson."

"Where is she, Craig?" Phillips stayed silent. "You don't understand, Craig. It's very

important that we find her. I know it's hard for you to see it, but in the long run its so much better for her, too."

"You're not putting her in one of those tin coffins."

St. John met his former students eyes.

"He won't tell us," Boyoga said. "Lets kill him."

"Christ!" Drucker burst out.

"Of course I'm not going to hurt you, Craig," the biologist assures him. "But its obvious you're not prepared to tell us where Jessica Nicholson is? Mortie, you stay with his, for a few minutes. Antonio, give him a gun." Boyoga pulled another pistol from inside a holster inside his jacket and handed it to the psychologist.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," he said, and motioned Boyoga to follow him as he exited the small room.

"You're Drucker?" Craig asked.

"Yes." The printer continued to spew out data. "Why don't you turn that thing off?" he said, and pointed to a red switch on its side. Craig pressed it and the machine was silent.

"So this is where you do all the calculations for the experiment," Craig said.

Drucker nodded his head. "We've kept the records here for years." Behind him were rows of green filing cabinets.

"I worked in the lab upstairs for three years, and I never had any idea this was down here."

"You can understand why we kept it a secret."

"You're a bastard."

"I know that." He motioned with the gun at a chair next to the printer. "Sit down, please. This gun makes me as nervous as it must sake you."

Craig complied. "This is where all the doctors' reports are kept."

"That's right, yes."

"Did you prove what you wanted?"

"Were not sure yet. It will take some time to tabulate all the data."

"I suppose you must have designed the experiment. Dr. St. John couldn't have done that."

"Right again. Bill said you were one of his brightest students."

"Not bright enough. I've been racking my brain trying to figure this out. It's some sort of behavioral test, clearly, testing the affects of environment on a large group of biologically identical people. Why else would you have put them in such diverse settings?"

"Basically, yes. Of course, its much more complicated than that."

"But generally, that's it. What I don't understand is why you're killing them."

"I'm not, Mr. Phillips."

"I don't believe it was Dr. St. John's idea."

"No, he ...isn't doing it voluntarily. You see, Shocked is making us go along with him. Otherwise he'll expose all the mistakes we've made."

"But why have them Killed?"

"Shocked wants 2111 to do brain sections on them. A final test of the environment on personality."

"And that explains the deep-freeze boxes--to keep the brains perfectly preserved."

"I want you to know that I'm completely against this final stage of the experiment. I'll defend everything else we've done, but not this."

"Then why didn't you stop it?" Craig yelled at him.

"They didn't tell me about it until the killings were completed. If I had known, I would have stopped them." Drucker had been pointing the gun at Craig as they talked. Now, he lowered his arm to his side, pointing the barrel of the revolver at the floor. "They want Jessica Nicholson, too. And the others in her series. I want to help save her."

"Then stop them."

"I can't. But I can warn her, help her to hide from them."

"She's safe where she is."

"They'll keep you here until she comes to get you. Tell me where she is, and I'll warn her.

"Believe me, I want to help."

Craig stared into Drucker's small brown eyes. "I can't tell you. If you really want to help, let me go, and I'll warn Jessica."

"Bill and Boyoga are right outside. You'll never get by them."

"No, I don't trust you."

"You've got to."

"Jessica's smart. She knows enough not to come here by herself."

"They'll hold you until she has no choice. You don't understand them. They have the patience to wait until they can flush her out."

"I ... have to think for a minute."

They heard St. John's voice in the hallway. "Quickly, Mr. Phillips," Drucker urged him.

St. John put his key in the lock of the door. The tumblers clicked loudly. "You can trust me, Mr. Phillips," Drucker pleaded. "Tell me now, before it's too late."

Craig watched the knob turn. "No."

"No what?" St. John asked, pushing the door open. He had a slight smile on his face. Boyoga stood silently across the hall next to the stairwell. "Morris, come here for a second." Just outside the door, the colleagues whispered a few words to each other. St. John motioned toward Boyoga.

"All right, Craig," St. John said, finally shifting his attention toward his former student, "why don't we go up to the lab. Mortie needs to get back to work here." Craig stood without saying a word and stepped out the door. The Spaniard glared at him. "Give me the gun," he said to Drucker. "Just in case Craig gets the 'Dad' idea of trying to escape."

The psychologist handed the pistol to the biologist. "I'll get back to work on this data."

"Good." Boyoga pushed his hand against the chicken-wire embedded glass of the staircase door and exited. "You know the way," St. John said to Craig, and they climbed the three flights to the lab. "It's been quite some time since you've been here," he commented, as they entered the familiar, antiseptic operating room.

"Actually, I was here last night. I picked the lock hoping to find some records."

"Ah, that was you. We thought it was a grad student trying to find drugs. Well, you wouldn't find anything about the experiment in here."

"I never knew you had that room downstairs."

"It's a well kept secret. Let's sit down," he said, motioning to a pair of leather chairs about five feet apart. "I'm sorry this isn't a normal social call. A gifted student returning to school to pay his respects to a sage professor. I'd love to bear what you've been up to, Craig. But that'll have to wait."

"I won't tell you where Jessica is."

"You'll reconsider. But let's not talk about that now. It'll take a while to convince you. You've become quite the detective, Craig. Bo yoga told me he found you in the storage room with the cryogenic cases."

"A reporter has to be resourceful."

"Ah, yes. You're still working for the National Enquirer, I'd forgotten. It's such a waste of a great talent for research. You know, the offer to join me in my work here still stands."

"I never had the stomach for killing rabbits. I definitely don't have the heart to kill people. I'm surprised you do."

"Don't condemn me yet, Craig. You don't know enough."

"I've seen a lot, Dr. St. John. I've seen some of the work that your new associates, the Boyogas have done."

"They disgust me as much as they disgust you, I assure you. Unfortunately, they are a necessity."

Craig looked away from his old mentor. His gaze fixed on a rack of test-tubes filled with green liquid. "Did you learn a lot from your experiment?"

"Yes and no. The clones varied tremendously from their generators. We still aren't sure if that was due to environment, or to changes in the brain. We made a lot of mistakes of course in the design of the experiment, more than Mortis is willing to admit, I suspect. The clones which were 'biologically criminals,' at least according to Shocked, were placed in various environments from poverty-stricken slums to wealthy estates. But none of them ever committed a crime. We never realized that there was one major difference in their environments from the environment of their generator. He grew up with constant beatings and abuse. Because of the

very nature of our experiment, where the surrogate parents had been attempting for years to have children, the clones were far more desired and loved than their generator had been. They never received a bruise. How such of a difference that made, we can't say for sure. Well, we missed other points like that as well."

"Will examining their brains really tell you anything?"

"It may. It wasn't my idea. In fact, I was violently opposed to it when it was first suggested. But now... I see that its necessary."

"You've really been sucked into this, haven't you?"

"I accept my share of the responsibility for the mistakes we've made. But I defend the experiment. It was a breakthrough experiment. I don't know what the brain examinations will show, but we succeeded in putting to rest a lot of wrong, and very harmful beliefs. Now that the experiment is almost over, the people that weren't meant to be, shouldn't be any more."

"So you think you have the right to kill them?"

"I know I do. I made them, didn't I? They aren't originals, they're duplicates, Craig. They shouldn't have been born in the first place. They served an important purpose, so I can justify their presence here, but I can't justify their continuance once the experiment is over."

"I don't believe my ears. You're talking as if you're God."

"Just the opposite. These clones weren't created by God. None of the magic of life, of procreation, of the mixing of two parents' genetic materials, went into their birth. If they were real people, only God would have the right to take them away. But they aren't."

"You're wrong, Dr. St. John. They're as real as you and I. Maybe in your test tube they were exactly the same, but they've become 'real' people, in your terms. Jessica's a 'real' person."

"Are you in love with her?"

Craig nodded his head.

"She's an easy woman to fall in love with," St. John said. "But since you love her, you'll come to realize that it's better for her to submit to the final phase of this experiment."

"Better to have her brain sliced open?"

The biologist pressed his hands together, as if in prayer, and held them just below his lower lip. "Craig, I'll admit to you that I made a big mistake agreeing to do this experiment under Shocked's terms. I've been confronted over and over with its wrongness. But I've also grown

philosophical about it and I've decided one important thing. Only the original has the right to live, and I mean truly live. The clones are replicas, but lack that fundamental right. Jessica and all the others in her series came from a woman named Sabrina. Sabrina died before any of them were born, and, for a while, I thought they could replace her. But they couldn't. God meant for Sabrina to die, and since she died, the others should die as well. Jessica would understand that, I assure you."

Craig's body tensed, and he gripped the arms of his chair tightly with his fingers. The leather cracked a little. "You're insane, Dr. St. John."

"No, just pragmatic. All the clones have to die. Jessica, too. I'm sorry."

"I'll never tell you where she is."

"It's a moot point, Craig. Boyoga has found her by now and killed her."

"You're bluffing."

He shook his head. "While you were with Dr. Drucker, I called your mother. She trusts me, Craig. Knows I only want what's best for you. I told her I needed to find you, and she told me where you and Jessica are staying."

"I don't believe it! She wouldn't have told anyone."

"Jessica is at your aunt's house, on Commonwealth Avenue in Brookline."

Craig jumped out of his chair.

St. John lifted the revolver and pointed it at him.

"Sit down, Craig. It's hard, but it had to be done. You'll come to understand that, and you'll agree, eventually. I know you must feel terribly, now. But it will pass. And Boyoga's very good--I'm sure Jessica died painlessly."

"You son of a bitch!" Craig yelled and lunged at his professor.

He grabbed at the gun, struggling to wrest it from St. John. The doctor was strong. As strong as Craig, who was still weak from the blow he suffered from Boyoga's gun. St. John swivelled in his chair and pushed him away, hurling Craig onto the counter, where he bounced into the rack of test tubes, causing them to fly into the air, spraying the blue enzymes onto St. John. Some of the liquid went into his eyes and he screamed in pain, dropping the gun and lifting his hands to his eyes to rub them. Craig jumped on the gun. St. John recovered, and, seeing the gun in Phillips' hand kicked it out of his grasp and into the air. Craig's grabbed the bruised hand with the other, and didn't even defend himself as St. John leveled a strong punch

against his jaw. In a moment, St. John had the gun.

Both men panted.

"I'm sorry that had to happen," St. John said, finally.

"Can't you see what you've turned into?" Craig said, emotionally. "Let me go. There still may be time to save Jessica."

"No, she has to die. Dammit, she has to!"

Craig pressed his teeth together in pain. His hand hurt, his head pounded. His shirt was ripped, and a gentle trickle of blood flowed from a cut on his back. "You'll have to kill me, too, Dr. St. John. I'm not trying to be brave. I'm weak."

"No. You'll come around. You'll understand."

"You'll have to kill me eventually, because I won't ever believe what you've done is right. And I'll expose you. You might as well know that. I'll tell everyone, and they won't believe what you've done is right, either. People think you're a great man, Doctor St. John. But they won't if you let me live."

"No, Craig. You're only being emotional."

"You're damn right. Let me go, now, Doctor, or kill me."

"You can't stop him," St. John said. "And I can't let you tell anyone. I'm sorry." Lie extended his arm and cocked the trigger. Craig drew in his breath. St. John hesitated. He lowered his arm.

"I'm going." He turned around and walked toward the door.

St. John fell into the chair. "Craig," he said softly, "you really don't have to tell people about it. For my memory, don't tell them."

He lifted the gun, placed the barrel in his mouth, and pulled the trigger.

When he heard the shot from St. John's gun, Craig froze in his place for a moment. The bullet hadn't hit him. The wall in front of him was unblemished. Then he turned around and saw St. John lying on the floor in a pile, his face on the floor in an expanding pool of blood, and his hand stretched forward still grasping the gun tightly. He looked away from his old mentor and turned toward the door.

He ran down the stairs three at a time to the second floor. He pounded on the computer

room. Darkness peeked through the crack at the bottom. Drucker wasn't there.

The phone in the lobby. His aunts line was busy.

He ran out of the building. The nearest cab stand was in Harvard Square. He jumped into a checker cab and threw a twenty dollar bill on the driver's lap.

"Please, drive as fast as you possibly can to 1249 Commonwealth Avenue in Brookline. It's an emergency! Christ, let's get going!"

The Haitian cabby repeated the address slowly. "Twelve-Forty-Nine Commonwealth Avenue in Brooklyn."

"Not Brooklyn--Brookline!" Craig got out of cab, went to the drivers door, took another twenty from his wallet and handed it to hire. "Move over," he pleaded. The cabby shrugged his shoulders and slid over to the passenger side, yielding the drivers seat to Craig.

He pressed his foot down hard on the gas pedal and the cab peeled away from the curb and down Massachusetts Avenue, forcing two undergraduates walking arm-in-arm to jump to the side of the road.

When Jessica had left Johnson Fall, her feelings were difficult to identify. After seeing the forty cases with as many dead bodies, costly she felt disbelief. And horror. And anger. And the anger was centered on St. John. On a completely personal level, she felt a deep sense of violation. She had understood, in a way, when she read Nina's file in the bar in Munich. But the cold bodies lying in the sterile metal boxes really brought home the realization that, without her knowledge, and certainly without her consent, she was a passive subject in a horribly cruel experiment.

She did not feel any sense of danger as she left the rail, however. Now that she had seen the cases which were, in her opinion, direct proof of St. John's guilt, she knew she could get him. At last, she was on the offensive rather than the defensive.

Aunt Gussie was on the phone to her daughter in Minneapolis when Jessica came through the house, but yielded it to Jessica after frantic pleading. She placed a call to Florida, received four Boston numbers and called them, and sat at the pink dinette set in the kitchen and waited. Aunt Gussie prepared tea and reminisced about her gall Madder surgery-.

Boyoga was now half way between 'Harvard Square to Brook line.

The psychologist debated his actions after St. John told him, in the hallway outside the computer room that Jessica had been found. Casually, he had asked the biologist for the address, and St. John had given it to him. Now, Drucker's commitment to his words--"I want to help Jessica"-- would be tested. If he went to Brookline he would go against Boyoga, a situation he

didn't relish. If he stayed at the lab, watching as the computer generated more and more data, Jessica could die. Somehow, her death would be more his responsibility than the deaths of the forty people in the basement of Johnson Pail.

He decided to go to Brookline.

Craig hadn't driven in Boston traffic for years, but was fearless as he sped through red lights and around complicated networks of interlocking loops. The cabby crossed himself when Craig went the wrong way on Memorial Drive, the expressway that ran along the Charles River, but Craig righted the error and made it across the bridge into Brookline.

He drove onto the curb, shifted into park, and jumped out of the cab.

The lights were on and he could see into the living room and dining room. They were empty. He saw the movement of shadows in the corridor leading to the kitchen.

He ran to the back of the house. There was a door leading to the kitchen.

He heard a rustling sound coming from the neatly trimmed shrubs that lined the back of the house. He heard a man's groans.

Craig followed the sounds to the crumpled body of a man lying on the dirt at the corner of the house. It was Drucker. Craig couldn't see any injuries, and he shook his shoulders, trying to revive him.

The psychologist opened his eyes and immediately brought his hand to the top of his head. "Ow," he said. He recognizes Craig's face.

"Who did this to you?"

"Boyoga . "

"Oh, God." Craig jumped up from the body and toward the door.

He turned the knob, but froze momentarily when he heard a gunshot only a few feet away. He went into the kitchen..

"Phillips, what the hell took you so long?" Jessica demanded.

He looked around the cheerfully decorated kitchen. His aunt was standing next to the stove holding a cast-iron skillet, Jessica was standing next to the door, three young men with cameras were sitting at the dinette and one strong looking man was standing in the center of the room over Boyoga who lay sprawled, his gun a few feet away.

Craig was dazed. Jessica put her hand on his shoulder to steady him. "We were waiting for you to get back. I had the greatest idea when I left you. You said that St. John would be able to get out of a regular police probe, even if we showed them the bodies. But he could never get away if the Enquirer got a hold of the story. I called your editor in Florida—Michael—and he put me in touch with these photographers who work for the paper here in Boston. We were going to make a little midnight raid on St. John and on the bodies and plaster his face on this week's cover. We were expecting you, but somehow Boyoga came through the door. I guess he was expecting to find me alone with your aunt, because he practically had a heart attack when he saw the room full of photographers. He took his gun out, but Eddie here laid a beautiful right cross on his chin. Craig meet Eddie."

"I used to be a boxer in the Navy-," Eddie said.

"What was the gun shot?"

Jessica pointed to the black hole in the ceiling. "Boyoga's gun went off when he hit the floor. We're lucky weren't hurt."

Craig nodded and, still slightly disoriented, sat on a chair.

"How did Boyoga find out where I was?"

"St. John told him."

"How did he know."

"He's dead, Jessica. He shot himself. I just left his office."

"Oh, Craig."

"Why don't you guys go home now," Craig said to the Eddie and the three other photographers. "We can call the police now. There'll be plenty of time to take pictures in the morning."